Exploring African perspectives in the analysis of literary texts of pre-service English teachers

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DECLARATION

I, Carmenita Bansen, herewith declare that the work contained in this dissertation entitled, “Exploring African perspectives in the analysis of literary texts of per-service English teachers” which I herewith submit to the North-West University is compliant with the requirements for the set degree, is my own work, has been text-edited in accordance with the requirements and has not already been submitted at any other university.

Signed:

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at the promotion of African knowledge and values in response to the calls for Africanisation/decolonisation of education, particularly higher education institutions. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to draw awareness to the way in which Africa and Africans are portrayed in literary texts as well as the study guides which inform the interpretation of these texts. The study also explores ways in which these texts can be analysed in order to understand and appreciate African knowledge and values. In addition to this, the literary analyses of the texts offer interpretations of Africa and Africans which are alternative to dominant interpretations. This study is specifically focused on the prescribed literature which forms part of the initial teacher training programme of English students at a South African tertiary institution. The texts chosen for this study are *Things fall apart* by Chinua Achebe, *Disgrace* by JM Coetzee and *Othello* by William Shakespeare. The study is qualitative and critical discourse analysis is employed to understand how Africa and Africans are presented in the texts. The literary analyses of the selected texts indicate that African lenses can be used to great effect in order to offer alternative views of Africa and Africans other than the views presented in the texts. This study could thus be useful for an initial teacher training programme in Africa as it provides opportunities to engage in discourse around African knowledge, identity and experiences.

Key terms: **Africanisation, African philosophy, knowledge construction, indigenous knowledge systems, literature, initial teacher training, decolonisation.**

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie is daarop gemik om Afrikakennis en -waardes te bevorder en gehoor te gee aan die oproepe om Afrikanisering/dekolonialisering van die onderwys, veral in hoëronderwysinstansies. Die doel van hierdie studie is dus om 'n bewustheid te kweek van die wyse waarop Afrika en Afrikane uitgebeeld word in literêre tekste en in die studiegidse wat die vertolking van hierdie tekste rig. Die studie ondersoek ook wyses waarop hierdie tekste ontleed kan word om begrip en 'n waardering vir Afrikakennis en -waardes te bewerkstellig. Daarbenewens bied die letterkundige ontleding van die tekste in hierdie studie vertolkings van Afrika en Afrikane wat verskil van dit wat studente gewoonlik geleer word. Hierdie studie fokus spesifiek op die voorgeskrewe werk wat deel vorm van die aanvanklike opleidingsprogram vir Engels-onderwysstudente aan 'n Suid-Afrikaanse tersiêre instansie. Die tekste wat vir hierdie doel gekies is, is *Things fall apart* deur Chinua Achebe, *Disgrace* deur JM Coetzee en *Othello* deur William Shakespeare. Die studie is kwalitatief en kritiese diskoersanalise is aangewend om te verstaan hoe Afrika en Afrikane in die tekste voorgestel word. Die letterkundige ontleding van die geselekteerde tekste het aangedui dat Afrika-perspektiewe effektief aangewend kan word om beskouings oor Afrika en Afrikane te vorm wat anders is as dié wat in die studiegidse aangebied word. Hierdie studie kan dus baie nuttig wees vir aanvanklike onderwysopleidingsprogramme in Afrika, aangesien dit geleenthede skep om diskoers te voer oor kennis, identiteit en ervarings eie aan Afrika.

Sleutelterme: Afrikanisering, Afrika-filosofie, kennisbou, inheemse kennisstelsels, literatuur, aanvanklike onderwyseropleiding, dekolonisering

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

A country in Africa, in which the majority of the people are African must inevitably exhibit African values and be truly African in style - Steve Biko

Since their inception, African universities have been informed by European and/or Western values and, according to Higgs (2016:1), remain a mirror image of their colonial predecessors. Continuing to follow these Western models ultimately reinforces the colonial view that European and/or Western knowledge is superior to African knowledge. This view is echoed by Heleta (2016), who argues that the dominant Eurocentric curriculum is slow to change and continues to support European/Western supremacy and privilege. In light of this, many scholars agree that there must be a reaffirmation of African knowledge. Universities must restructure current models to reflect the values of the majority of its student population in order to avoid the apparent disconnect between student and content that is a result of the negation of lived experiences and relatable, useful knowledge (Webbstock, 2017; Letsekha, 2013; Botha, 2007). This is related to the stance Biko took when he asserted that universities in Africa should reflect the shared culture of African people. This would imply that the African backgrounds of students and teachers could be seen as a basis to build on and inform teaching and learning, and should not be treated as a deficit that is unrelated to what is considered valuable knowledge. Such sentiments inevitably lead to discourse about decolonisation/indigenisation/Africanisation of curricula.

Calls for the decolonisation/indigenisation/Africanisation of the South African curriculum, particularly that of tertiary institutions, have been a point of contention dating back to the 1960s (Crossman cited by Letsekha, 2013:5; Fataar, 2018). These calls should be heeded, especially since the acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and Africanisation play a vital role in remedying the harm done by apartheid and colonial dogmas (Msila & Gumbo, 2016:iv). An additional factor linked to the Africanisation of the curriculum is the concern with the failure of South African institutions to adequately serve the needs of the African student. These needs are not only limited to the socio-economic needs, but also include the sociocultural, emotional and intellectual needs. Coetzee (cited by Botha, 2007:207) believes that one of the dimensions to be addressed when Africanising universities should involve emphasis on the “needs, circumstances, and aspirations of Africans”. In terms of this study, this may include the accommodation of African perspectives, and the platform to critically engage with African issues.

In light of this, the proposed research stems from the curiosity to ascertain whether the curriculum, specifically prescribed/previously prescribed texts of pre-service teachers, adheres to the calls for

an Africanised curriculum by particularly analysing a selection of these literary works and their supplementary texts. These may include the study guides, which inform the interpretation of these literary works as well as academic articles written on these literary works. English literature was chosen as part of the discipline of English because of my interest in this field, as well as the belief that it is paramount for African students to be exposed to literature in which they see themselves. It is imperative for African students and, essentially, the African child, to see their cultures and beliefs reflected in the stories they read and listen to, since stories have the ability to influence the way a child perceives reality and affects their views on identity, gender, and race (Albers, 2016). Stories that African children see themselves in, shape and validate their identities.

This research was conducted in order to ascertain whether the selected texts lend themselves to the inclusion of African perspectives. African knowledge and perspectives in the analysis of literature may be essential in the process of authenticating and restoring the belief in African and indigenous knowledge, which has been undermined by the dominant Eurocentric and Western approach. Hence, it must be worth exploring. Essop (2016) argues that decolonisation is about the affirmation of African knowledge and further states that this process should not be limited to the inclusion of African authors but should be approached in terms of the underpinning of values of institutions. It was therefore of great significance that different types of knowledge, knowledge construction, and the deliberate and unintentional validation of certain knowledge systems above others be investigated in this study.

I examined previous/current prescribed literature and the related supplementary material of an initial training programme of English teachers at a South African university in an attempt to gain insight into the narratives told in these stories and the interpretations presumed when engaging with literature with an African context and/or African characters.

1.2 Concept Clarification

1.2.1 African

While a dictionary search of this term offers the explanation of an African as someone who is a “native or inhabitant of Africa” or “a person of African origin” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020), there are contradictory views about who is African. One view concurs with both these definitions, that an African is a person who is of African origin or native to Africa, meaning that the person is black. This means that a person could be African regardless of their geographical location, such as an African American. According to the first definition, an African could also be someone who

lives in Africa. It should also be noted that Africa is a continent with 54 countries, each with its unique cultures and traditions. This understanding of the term African is broader than a racial categorisation and implies that the person's ancestry may lie elsewhere in the world, such as India, Asia, or Europe. It should be noted that many people in Africa, who are of another origin, were born in Africa and have never inhabited another continent. It should also be noted that, although some live on the continent, they do not identify as African. The understanding of who is African has implications for this study, as it may give rise to the question of who gets to tell African narratives, and how their position on being African or not may influence the interpretation of Africa and Africans. Moreover, it cannot be taken for granted that while individuals of another origin may see themselves as African, their position, history, culture, and beliefs are different from that of native Africans. For the purpose of this study, an African is understood as someone who is of African origin and, more specifically, a black person. It should be noted that in this study, and more specifically related to the South African context, the term black includes Coloured and Indian people. This is aligned to the definition of Black as set out by the Black Consciousness movement of the 1970s in South Africa (Buthelezi, 1987:32). However, it may include anyone who was born in Africa, lives in Africa, and – more importantly – identifies as African. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the term African is seen as all-encompassing and both the aforementioned definitions apply.

1.2.2 Africanisation

Africanisation can best be described as a "renewed focus on Africa" (Louw, 2010:42), with the intention of "re-instilling Africa and Africans with a sense of pride". Urch (1968) (as cited by Msila, 2014:311) defines Africanisation as the process of valuing that which was once respected in African culture. Msila (2014:431) understands Africanisation to be the implementation of that which reflects African values and endeavours to establish an identity unique to Africa. Another suitable definition for Africanisation is "a necessary counter-narrative to the historical and continuing hegemony of Western epistemological and ontological canons in Africa" (Prinsloo, 2010:20). For the purpose of this study, Africanisation can be understood as discourse related to the pursuit of promoting what is African.

Furthermore, Africanisation can be understood as a process of re-establishing, prioritising, and promoting African knowledge systems. It can also be seen as the process of validating African knowledge as equal to other knowledge systems.

1.2.3 African philosophy

African philosophy can be understood as the critical evaluation of African people's view of life (Oruka, 1990:16) and their ideas around what is considered important constructs (Oyeshile, 2008:58). Mbiti (1970) asserts that African philosophy is "the understanding, attitude of mind, logic, and perception behind the manner in which African peoples think, act or speak in different situations of life". It can therefore be said that these ideas, understanding, attitudes, perceptions, and actions are unique to the African way of life and can be seen in the four strands that encompass African philosophy. These strands are *ethnophilosophy*, which is concerned with the religious and moral beliefs of Africans. *Sage philosophy* relies on individuals who hold African or indigenous knowledge. *Political philosophy* is ideological philosophy disseminated by liberation movements, and, finally, *pure or professional philosophy* focuses on the work of African philosophers and their contributions to the body of scholarship (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013). These trends are defined and applied according to the understanding of scholars in the field, particularly Henry Odera Oruka, Kwasi Wiredu, Peter Bodurnrin, and Paulin Hountondji (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013). These trends of African philosophy are also applied as a lens for the analysis of the literary texts in this study.

1.2.4 Knowledge

Multiple definitions of knowledge exist with some contradicting and others overarching. While a wide variety of sources define knowledge according to Plato's understanding of "a justified true belief", this has been contradicted by Edmund Gettier (1963:121), who proved that a person might have a true belief that is justified, but that does not necessarily qualify as knowledge. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2020) offers a range of definitions for knowledge, which includes knowledge as the "condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association" or the "circumstance or condition of apprehending truth or fact through reasoning". Bolisani and Bratianu (2018:2) explain the two perspectives through which the concept of knowledge can be understood. The first is that of rationalism, pioneered by Plato, which can be understood as that which is derived from reasoning. The second type of knowledge, which opposes the former, is linked to empiricism (introduced by Aristotle) and emphasises knowledge as being created by our senses through interaction with the real world (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018:4).

Banks (1993:5) understands knowledge as the way in which an individual interprets reality, while Bruner (1962:120) describes knowledge as the model humans employ to structure and regulate experiences. In terms of African knowledge production, Kistner (2008) agrees with the definitions put forth by Bolisani and Bratianu by asserting that Africans produce and acquire knowledge

through the way in which they see, feel, imagine and reason, which is closely linked to the stance Bolisani and Bratianu take when they say that knowledge is created through sensory interaction with the world. Kistner (2008) also states that Africans use aesthetic qualities such as imagination and intuition to understand their world. For the purpose of this research, knowledge can be understood to be the truths, cultures, values and practices people gather through experience, which is closest to the view of Bruner and supports the stance taken by Kistner (2008) in saying that African knowledge production should be closely aligned to the "social, cultural, economic and political upliftment of Africa's people".

1.2.5 Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) are local forms of knowledge (Mawere, 2015:57). These knowledge systems can be seen as unique and contextualised ways to respond to social, economic, and environmental challenges (Mawere, 2015:58). Mkhize and Ndimande-Hlongwa (2014:10) stress the importance of embedding IKS into higher education (HE), as they believe that they are crucial to the transformation of HE institutions. IKS, specifically African IKS (AIKS), are focused on the development and use of local knowledge to understand the African context and the world. In this study, AIKS are revealed in the literary texts being studied, as well as the existence thereof in the African philosophy, which forms a focal point of this study. Thus, IKS in the context of these literary texts are explored as a means of reaching a deeper understanding of Africa, Africans, and the African perspectives this study explores.

1.2.6 Literature

On a basic level, literature or a literary text can be defined as fictional works such as "short stories, novels, plays and poetry" (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019:212). Other definitions offer that literature is texts worthy of selection by literature teachers for students (Hirsch, 1978:34). The definition by Hirsch (1978:34) seems to imply that, in order for a text to be deemed worthy, it should fulfil certain criteria. This notion is supported by Bloom (1994:19), who believes that certain criteria are necessary in order for a literary work to qualify as literature. These criteria include that the literary work should be aesthetically strong by exhibiting a "mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction".

However, Meyer (1997:1) argues that it is difficult to pinpoint an exact definition of literature and states that different approaches could be used to define literature. One approach is the critical approach, which prescribes that a literary text should meet certain criteria in order to qualify as literature (Meyer, 1997:1). This is the approach Bloom seems to endorse. Another possible

approach Meyer (1997:3) speaks of is the prototype approach, which rests on the idea of a very good model (prototype) being used as a standard which other literature should resemble.

Meyer (1997:4) offers that, when defining literature according to this approach, the literature usually displays the following features:

- *written texts*
- *marked by careful use of language, including features such as creative metaphors, well-turned phrases, elegant syntax, rhyme, alliteration, meter*
- *in a literary genre (poetry, prose fiction, or drama)*
- *are read aesthetically*
- *are intended by the author to be read aesthetically*
- *contain many weak implicatures (are deliberately somewhat open to interpretation)*

Some researchers, such as Stecker (1996:681) and Wilczek (2012:1687) concur with this approach, as they believe that in order to qualify as literature; a text should possess these aesthetic qualities. It should also be noted that Meyer (1997:4) argues that literature should not be excluded as "literature" if one or more of the above features are absent. For the purpose of this study, literature can be defined as texts that reflect the human condition and experience, and adhere to the features which are aligned to the prototype approach.

1.2.7 Initial teacher training

Initial teacher training or initial teacher education can be defined as a programme or course aspiring teachers attend in order to eventually fulfil the role of a teacher. Musset (2010) defines initial teacher education as the "entry point into the profession" which, if well organised, is crucial for ensuring quality teachers. In the South African context, initial teacher training takes the form of a four-year Bachelor's degree or a three or four-year degree in a particular field of study, followed by a postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE) completed over the course of at least one year (DBE, 2019). In the context of this study, the initial teacher education course taken by students who wish to become English teachers is focused on by exploring how this course includes or fails to include African perspectives when studying texts with African characters and/or contexts.

1.3 Background to the problem

After the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the subsequent democratic election in 1994, South Africa was on what seemed to be a path of reconciliation, transformation, and freedom for all South Africans. It is therefore disconcerting that more than two decades into democracy, many South Africans claim to be manacled still by the legacy of colonial and apartheid South Africa. Letsekha (2013:6) maintains that the South African tertiary curriculum does not truly reflect African knowledge and values. In order to better understand this issue within the context of this study, I elaborate on the place of English as a language, as well as English literature in a South African context. In addition to this, my views on the Africanisation of curricula will be shared, as well as the importance of considering African perspectives, specifically when analysing literature.

1.3.1 English as a world language

English has emerged as an international language and has grown from approximately 6 million speakers in the 1600s to over 100 million in the 1910s (Pennycook, 2007:13). By the year 2000, it was estimated that around 1.5 billion people used English either as a first or foreign language (Crystal, 2003:6) and, currently, the number of people who use the language as a foreign language supersedes English native speakers (Tan, Farashaiyan, Sahragard & Faryab, 2020:22). According to Yano (2007:28), this is due to emigration, colonial policy, the Industrial Revolution, and the emergence of the United States as a super-economic power. Yano (2007:34) further states that although there are other international languages such as French and Spanish, the spread of English is more extensive, resulting in it steadily becoming the language of education and communication. Another reason for the spread of English as an international language is globalisation, which has become important, especially to young people (Yano, 2007:34). Van der Walt and Evans (2019:17) maintain that English has a significant place in society as it is recognised as a global language of advancement. This is supported by Makoni (2016) and Rao (2019:67) who argue that the dominance of English for education, trade, and industry necessitates proficiency in the language. Rao (2019:67) further argues that English has also become more important to students as the study material for fields such as engineering, IT, medicine, and business is mostly in English. In the South African context, tertiary institutions such as Stellenbosch University, the University of Pretoria, and the University of the Free State, all previously Afrikaans institutions, have amended language policies to include English as a medium of instruction in order to promote inclusion (Balfour, 2017). In response, the North-West University (NWU) has also developed a new language policy, which promotes multilingualism and offers access to students to receive classes in either English or Afrikaans, with the majority of postgraduate classes being offered exclusively in English (NWU, 2018). The new policy also

makes provision for the academic development of the indigenous languages of the North-West region, namely Setswana and Sesotho (NWU, 2018).

1.3.2 The complexities of English Literature

Literature can be described as a reflection of society (Dubey, 2013:84) that can empower people to think about the world in which they live (Baharti & Ahmad, 2015:1). This implies that literature has the ability to challenge individuals to engage critically with core issues relating to themselves and society. Van der Walt and Evans (2019:211) refer to literature as "cultural artefacts", while Parkinson and Thomas (2000:87) comment on its agency to put forth a model for the use of a language and its ability to enrich students culturally. The latter is reinforced by Sell (2005:90) who argues that "literature provides learners with a truly cultural competence", which may result in them being sensitive to issues of ethnicity, religion, and race (Sell, 2005:90). In other words, literature offers a lens through which students can learn about their own culture as well as the cultures of others, which may result in students being aware of these cultural differences and in turn be more tolerant and empathetic to others. Todorov and Lyons (2007:17) expand on the importance of literature by explaining the significant role of literature to act as a tool to help understand lived experiences and broaden our universe, and further state that literature allows for endless opportunities for engagement and enrichment, as well as the prospect to assign meaning and beauty to the world. This understanding of the role of literature is also validated by Wenzel (2005:74) who favourably comments on the capacity of literature to act "as a facilitator for culture, language, and critical thinking". Taking the views of these scholars into account, it may be said that literature plays a vital role in the affective development of young people and may lead to the development of individuals who have an acute awareness of themselves and not only an understanding, but an appreciation of their society and those of others.

While the benefits of studying literature are acknowledged, there are contrasting arguments about what constitutes literature, specifically English literature, which is relevant to this study. English literature can be defined as novels, short stories, dramas and poetry (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019:211) that are not limited to authors, playwrights and poets from England, but those who write in English (Burgess, 1979:9). On the one hand, literature is understood to be works that are defined by its "possession of certain artistic values" (Stecker, 1996:681).

Literature in possession of these artistic values, along with the impact it has on readership, contribute to the work possibly being recognised as iconic and authoritative; thus forming part of the literary canon. The literary canon can be defined as a "collection of key works" (Wilczek, 2012:1687) or a category of the most significant literature of a particular time or place (Luhar, 2014:13).

Conversely, some believe that this definition of literature is problematic and limiting. Limiting, because adherence to the canon prohibits the selection of works, which may not possess all the artistic qualities but still speak to genuine and relevant lived experiences. Lawall (1986:25), for example, states that a major challenge concerning the implementation of the canon is that choices of texts are limited to texts that form part of the canon and adhere to the "Eliotic masterpiece" model. This means that the literary works are typically written by white European men, and are usually written within the Greco-Roman tradition and by implication rely on interpretation, which supports this tradition (Lawall, 1986:25).

Tocqueville (1969) (cited by Kronick, 2001:38) argues that another reason why studying only canonical literature may be seen as problematic, is that the establishment of the canon is intended to work best in an aristocratic government and not a democracy. Kronick (2001:37-38) argues that this is because, in an aristocratic government, the selection of literature would be decided on by the ruling class, and because it reflects the decisions made by a select few, it is an elitist selection. The reason it would be difficult to establish a canon in a democracy is that democracy usually strives toward equality and is subject to adaptation with every generation. A canon, however, demands rigid and strict rules, which is in contrast to the nature of democracy, making it ill-suited to a democracy. More problems related to the canon are argued by Weixlmann (1988:277), who, like Lawall (1986:25), notes that the majority of the authors whose works form part of the canon, are white males. This brings issues of representation and diversity into the equation. Abu-Shomar (2013:73) contributes that the very idea of the canon is to exercise social and political power over some and to deliberately promote the values of those in power. Van der Walt and Evans (2019:211) argue that English literature should be applied more widely and should not be limited to texts that form part of the "so-called" canon and are written in England. The same researchers (2019:212) further advocate that English literature should be seen as literature written by first language speakers as well as second language speakers. I concur with this sentiment, since including literature from second language speakers will ensure that a wider variety of stories are told from different perspectives and are more likely to include narratives that reflect the diversity of Africa and South Africa.

1.3.3 The paradox of English as language and literature studies in South Africa

Whilst Africanising the curriculum has been considered as crucial by researchers such as Botha (2007), Letsekha (2013) and Higgs (2016), to mention a few, there is a paradox, especially with regard to English, which is a language in practice due to colonisation and has since grown into the lingua franca of the country. While mother tongue education is advocated by researchers and policy makers who advise that learners be taught in the mother tongue for the first three years (Owen-Smith, 2010:31), English is employed as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in the majority of South African schools. By 2007, 65.3% of South Africans were using English as their LoLT (DBE, 2010:16) despite the language being ranked as the sixth most commonly spoken language (Docrat, Kaschula & Ralarala, 2019), with only 8% of South Africans who speak English at home (Nkanjeni, 2019). Presently, more focus is placed on mother tongue education, which is motivated by a successful pilot that saw over 2000 schools use mother tongue based bilingual education (BusinessTech, 2020). However, there is still a strong trend toward English as LoLT as there are over 8 066 single medium schools in South Africa, of which 6483 are English (BusinessTech, 2020). Reyneke (2014:31) argues that parents from previously disadvantaged backgrounds have high expectations for their children to learn through the medium of English in order to be prepared for the world where English functions as a global language. In addition to this, English is also favoured because it is associated with economic growth; it is dominant at tertiary institutions and the private sector, and it is recognised as a global language (DBE, 2010:22). At tertiary level, English is progressively becoming the language of instruction, policy, and research (Sharra, 2016: ix). English is seen as a passport to the shaping of a global identity of an individual and an influencer of success, both of which is a priority to young people. Therefore, the paradox of English in South Africa is this: although research and the constitution supports mother-tongue education, South Africans still prefer English as the LoLT for various reasons. While the extensive use of African languages would be better aligned to the call for Africanisation, English is preferred as the link to the global society and the language better suited to economic gains with regard to the publishing of books and research. The implications of this are the slow development of African languages as academic languages, as well as English literary texts being selected to be studied, which may not necessarily reflect African realities.

Since English has grown into the lingua franca of the country and is the medium of instruction at the majority of South African public and private schools, the study of English literature has become enshrined in South Africa's national English curriculum.

South Africa's English curriculum across phases from basic education to tertiary education consists of literary works that form part of the canon, such as those written by Shakespeare, but has also included the work of African writers. In the Senior and FET phases, for instance, literary works such as Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart, A grain of wheat* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Alan Paton's *Cry, the beloved country*, John Kani's *Nothing but the truth,* and Bessie Head's *Maru,* have featured in the curriculum.

An argument regarding the studying of English literature is that, on the one hand, literature studies should be in African languages and not a European language, which is reinforced by Prah (2017:1), who argues that true intellectual development in Africa is stunted in the absence of the intellectualisation of African languages. On the other hand, it is argued that the study of English literature, more specifically canonical works, is beneficial to students academically and socially (Coles, 2013:53). Coles (2013:50) further states that these works have the ability to promote democracy and unity. It should however be noted that Coles (2013:50) writes from the context of British schools which validates this claim since the authors in the canon are mostly European males (Lawall, 1986:25; Weixlmann, 1988:277) and thus more likely to reflect the values of these students. In the African context, however, the employment of canonical works should be considered more carefully since these authors do not reflect the values and realities of the African learner and student. Then again, it is argued that because English is South Africa's lingua franca (Khokhlova, 2015:985), English literature can be used to acquire the language more successfully (Hişmanoğlu, 2005: 53). This is because it allows students to engage with the language being used in real-life contexts as well as the language intended for mother tongue speakers; thus, they are exposed to different forms, functions, and meanings (Hişmanoğlu, 2005:54).

1.4 Why should African perspectives be considered?

It is believed that one major factor contributing to the failure of the curriculum to address the needs of African students is curricula, which have been informed by European and Western values (Botha, 2007:203). Rufai (2016:33-40) contends that the curricula in African universities are alien to the African diaspora and that systematic attention should be given to the development of a model acutely aligned to the needs of African students. Letsekha (2013:8) echoes this sentiment by putting forth that European knowledge, particularly "white male knowledge", serves the interests of the aforementioned at the expense of local knowledge, which is in turn "silenced and marginalised". The dilemma of the current education system is encapsulated by Letsekha (2013:8), who contends that although progress has been made in terms of contextualising the didactics, "Western ways of knowing" are still favoured. This means that although the teaching

and learning environment is beginning to take into consideration the unique context of African students, what is considered valuable knowledge is still derived from Western thought.

While there have been what may appear to be great efforts to research the issues around decolonisation of the curriculum and to transform African universities accordingly, student protests such as the *Fees must Fall* (2015-2016) and *Rhodes must Fall* (2015) reveal the frustration with the current education system, which, according to these students, is not adequately addressing their needs. Heleta (2016) argues that, while South African universities have policies that advocate equality and transformation, little has been done to promote the exploration of different kinds of knowledge and she believes that this discrepancy can be addressed by means of an epistemological change. This means that the production of knowledge and how it is transmitted needs to be reconsidered, especially since "knowledge building" is fundamental to learning (Scott, 2014 cited by Young, 2014:9). The epistemological change suggested by Heleta is significant to the African and African institutions, since the promotion of Africanisation can ensure that students have access to knowledge systems that are more aligned to their contexts, needs, and aspirations.

The necessity to move away from a colonised approach and Africanise the curriculum was catapulted into the education scene in 2015 amidst the *Fees must fall* movement. This movement saw South African students voicing their frustrations, primarily around the inability to access tertiary institutions due to financial constraints, but also against the colonised approach of the current education system to knowledge construction. Disemelo (2015) explains that the *Fees must fall* movement was not limited to the issue of free education, but involved various interrelated socio-political and economic issues, such as the eradication of exclusions and structural marginalisation. Students are aware of the persisting nature of colonised knowledge construction and the favouring thereof in South African universities, and have repeatedly expressed the necessity for this to change. Jonathan Jansen, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State and an advocate for transformation and unity (UWC, 2015), in response to the numerous studies conducted in the wake of student protests, rightfully asked: "What does decolonisation even mean?" (Jansen, 2017:8). A reason for this could be that although many scholars acknowledge the need to decolonise curricula as pertinent, there does not seem to be a clear understanding on what such a curriculum should look like and there does not appear to be an implementable plan on how decolonisation should occur. Jansen (2017:8) further notes that the term "decolonisation" was carelessly thrown around without the conceptual and political interrogation such a process warrants.

Griffiths (2019:143) believes that higher education remains in crisis and unable to change because there are no tangible ways for how to address this. Du Preez (2020), in a lecture on

decolonisation of higher education, explains that, although Decolonisation is imperative, institutions may be participating in “decolonial washing”, which means that false impressions are created about the progress on decolonising curricula. She further stresses that decolonisation cannot be addressed through “quick fixes”, as it demands significant individual and collective efforts (Du Preez, 2020). While it should be noted that this research does not attempt to significantly contribute to the decolonisation debate, I do believe that analysing literary texts from African perspectives may lead to the promotion of African philosophy and values, which may be aligned with the calls for decolonisation. I am also of the belief that considering African perspectives when analysing literature with African characters and/or African contexts may promote the African voice and African knowledge, thus heeding the calls for Africanisation in the South African education system.

1.5 Problem statement

From the above, the following problem is apparent: South African institutions still reflect colonial systems and dogmas. In an attempt to transform from colonised institutions to African institutions, universities should drive African research and promote African values that will serve its people. It is however apparent that, while researchers have been able to articulate this dilemma – which is that Western/European knowledge is favoured – there are no clear-cut ways to transform institutions to reflect African knowledge and values.

The need to transform is also acknowledged in the annual performance plan of the North West university’s initial teacher training programme for English teachers that was analysed in this research, as it recognises the decolonisation and the transformation of the university as a key focus area (NWU, 2018). The goal to transform is further encapsulated in the language policy of the North West University, which not only aims to enhance epistemological access for all in a multilingual environment, but also to develop indigenous languages of its regions as academic languages (NWU, 2018).

As a response to this challenge, this research aimed to suggest a literary analysis approach with the purpose to uncover any deliberate and unintentional misconceptions, misinterpretations, limited interpretations, distorted interpretations and negative interpretations of African characters and/or African contexts, should these exist.

This approach might also work to uncover ways in which African knowledge and perspectives are accurately or positively portrayed in these literary texts as well as the supplementary material used to understand the texts. In order to realise this aim, research questions were devised to guide the research and to offer solutions to the problem stated.

Research questions are crucial to the successful completion of a qualitative study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:227). In light of the important role research questions have in directing a study (Cohen *et al*., 2011:227), the following research questions were asked as outlined in the subsequent section.

1.6 Research questions

1.6.1 Primary research question

- How can English literary texts, featuring African characters and/or contexts, be analysed to promote African knowledge and values?

1.6.2 Secondary research questions

- How are African characters and/or African contexts portrayed in English literary texts?
- What interpretations are dominant when analysing the supplementary texts (study guides) of prescribed English literary works featuring African characters and/or African contexts?
- What suggestions can be made for the implementation of analyses to incorporate African perspectives and discourses related to African knowledge and values?

1.7 Research aim and objectives

1.7.1 Research aim

The purpose of the proposed study was to explore which interpretations are dominant when analysing English literary works that have an African context and/or African characters and suggest plausible ways this literature could be analysed to promote African perspectives. This research also aimed to identify and expose possible gaps in the approaches taken when engaging

with the aforementioned literature from only a Western or European perspective and suggested a framework on how to analyse texts which have African perspectives.

1.7.2 Research objectives

In order to fulfil the aforementioned aim, the following objectives have been identified:

- To explore how African characters and/or contexts are portrayed in the selected English literary texts, as well as in the analyses of these texts.
- To identify and discuss the dominant interpretation of these literary texts.
- To identify and discuss how the African perspective might be promoted, neglected or misinterpreted in the studying of these texts.
- To suggest alternative approaches when analysing texts that have African characters and/or an African context, which may in turn promote African perspectives.

1.8 Research Methodology

The following section describes the theoretical framework, research design and the philosophical orientation this study followed in order to answer the research questions and fulfil the research aim and objectives.

1.8.1 Theoretical framework

Critical theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study. This is due to the nature of the study – a critical exploration of literary works to uncover possible gaps and/or distortions related to the analyses of African characters and/or contexts in literary texts – which reflects the characteristics of critical theory to uncover meanings related to “gender, race, class and other kinds of social oppression” (Jansen, 2016:23). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was employed as data analysis method, since it focuses specifically on the analysis of texts; how social issues are portrayed in a text by focusing on language and issues of dominance and resistance (Van Dijk, 1997:17). CDA draws from social theory and the ideas of philosophers like Marx, Gramsci, Habermas, Foucault, and Bourdieu, who were interested in power relations in discourse (Fairclough, 1995).

1.8.2 Research design

This is a qualitative study informed by the combination of two philosophical orientations, namely Social constructivism and African philosophy. This research relied on the analysis of texts, and therefore document analysis was employed with CDA as the specific method of analysis.
The chosen research design is discussed in Chapter 3 of the study by defining the selection of each of the features and justifying its selection by discussing its relevance to the study. The success of the research design in answering the research questions and fulfilling the research aim is also discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

1.8.2.1 Approach

In order to meet the aim of this study, a qualitative approach was used. This is because qualitative research is concerned with explaining the social world through answering questions about people's behaviour, as well as the formation of views, attitudes, and cultures (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009:7). The qualitative approach is well suited to this study as the study analysed literary texts in an attempt to explore the perceptions that arise from these texts.

1.8.2.2 Methodology

Nieuwenhuis (2016:102) describes discourse analysis as being concerned with the analysis of texts for the purpose of uncovering bias, inequality, and dominance. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) usually endeavours to explore a text critically in order to reveal how certain ideologies and inequalities are represented (Hart, 2010:13). CDA also concentrates specifically on the language of a text (Hart, 2010:13). Due to the aim of CDA to uncover issues related to power and dominance, the following questions proposed as essential to CDA (Janks, 1997:329), were used to analyse the literary texts selected for this study:

- How is the text positioned or positioning?
- Whose interests are served by this positioning?
- Whose interests are negated?
- What are the consequences of this positioning?

1.8.2.3 Sampling

This research relied on my first-hand analyses of literary texts as well as supplementary material such as study guides and articles that were used to analyse these literary texts. The texts were selected according to certain criteria in an effort to fulfil the research aim, which was to explore dominant interpretations when analysing literary works with African characters and/or African contexts. In light of this, purposive sampling was used to select these texts, as this sampling method was employed with a specific purpose in mind (Maree & Pietersen, 2016:168).

The criteria applied to select these texts were that the texts should either be prescribed currently, or have been prescribed for initial teacher training programmes in the last ten years at the higher education institution of interest. In addition to this, the text should have an African character or African context. When these criteria were applied, the following texts were found to adhere to the criteria: *Things fall apart* by Chinua Achebe, *Disgrace* by JM Coetzee and *Othello* by William Shakespeare. All these texts have African characters, and two of the texts – *Othello*, and *Things fall apart* – have a black protagonist. *Disgrace* and *Things fall apart* are set in Africa. These novels are acclaimed works, with JM Coetzee having won the 1999 Booker Prize for *Disgrace*, which also contributed to Coetzee winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 2003. Similarly, *Things fall apart* contributed to Achebe winning the Man Booker International Prize for fiction in 2007, and constituted one of the first accounts of colonisation from an African perspective (Franklin, 2008). While Shakespeare existed before the time of literary awards, the success of this drama is illustrated by the fact that *Othello* is still being studied more than 400 years after it was first performed and has been made into film more than 10 times. In South Africa, the drama is regularly being prescribed for study at secondary school level and at tertiary level. The success of these works further justifies their selection.

1.8.3 Philosophical orientation

This research was conducted from two philosophical orientations, namely Social constructivism and African philosophy. Social constructivism focuses on gaining insight and understanding, which can be done by using open-ended questions and document analysis (Grosser, Oosthuizen, Simmonds, & Van der Vyver, 2018:22). African philosophy entails the understanding of important constructs such as justice, morality, religion, and politics (Oyeshile, 2008:58) that are unique to the African reality. Since this research is concerned with gaining insight and understanding by seeing how texts could be analysed from an African perspective, both these philosophical frameworks underpin this study.

1.9 Significance of the study

The educational value of this research lies in its aim to identify gaps when analysing literature from only a Western or European perspective, and endeavoured to show the value of analysing texts from an African perspective. In an effort to show the rich possibilities that are lost or misinterpreted when analysing through an exclusive Western/European lens, the study suggested ways in which these texts could be analysed to promote African perspectives and an alternative understanding of the texts. This type of analysis is essential in restoring African knowledge, values, and identity and should thus be taken into consideration when analysing the literature of pre-service teachers.

1.10 Positioning myself in the research

In a qualitative study, the researcher assumes the role of a "research instrument" (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:79), implying that the researcher's perspectives of the events unfolding in relation to the study are also deemed valuable (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:79). This was especially applicable to this study, since I had to interpret the literary texts and the analyses of these texts as set out in the available supplementary material. As a former English teacher and current junior lecturer, I appreciate the agency of literature to allow one to look at oneself and the world critically. I was drawn to conducting this research after facilitating a mini-dissertation where students were required to respond to a topic with reference to the literature they had studied over the course of three years. This particular topic was on the true meaning of courage and one student wished to portray Chinua Achebe's protagonist, Okonkwo, as an example of a cowardly character. After challenging the student as to why this character, who refuses to yield to colonialism, should not rather be labelled as courageous, I realised something. When studying a character through a predetermined Western/European lens, it is easy to have a one-dimensional and maybe even a distorted view of a character who, in this case, is African. Thus, as the research in this study, I set out to critically analyse the literary texts and analyses of these texts. In my analyses I aimed to apply African perspectives, challenge current analyses that neglect or distort meaning, and suggest alternative ways to evaluate literature with African characters and/or contexts.

1.11 Chapter division

This study was structured as follows:

- Chapter 1: Background to the study

In this chapter, the background to the problem as well as the rationale for conducting the study is thoroughly explained.

- Chapter 2: Literature review

  The body of scholarship relating to the pertinent issues of knowledge construction, African philosophy, and English literature are discussed in this chapter.

- Chapter 3: Methodology

  This chapter offers the research design encompassing the approach, methodology, and methods of data generation and analysis.

- Chapter 4: Analysis of *Things fall apart*

  Chapter 4 entails the analysis of *Things fall apart* by Chinua Achebe as well as the supplementary materials used when analysing this text.

- Chapter 5: Analysis of *Disgrace*

  In this chapter, JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* and accompanying study guides were analysed.

- Chapter 6: Analysis of *Othello*

  Chapter 6 is a critical analysis of *Othello* by William Shakespeare. The supplementary materials which inform the understanding of this text were also analysed in this chapter.

- Chapter 7: Conclusion

  The implications emanating from the literary analysis are discussed and suggestions are made on how to incorporate African perspectives. The research questions are answered in this chapter, and I discuss limitations, implications for future research, as well as the possible contribution to scholarship in the field of promoting African perspectives.

1.12 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research problem and rationale of this study. It was said that South African higher education institutions were mirrored after, and continue to reflect colonial institutions despite calls for transformation. This chapter also highlighted the main problems related to the implementation of colonial education systems- one being colonial education is not related to the majority of South African/African students and the second being that the emphasis

on colonial knowledge systems works to silence indigenous knowledge systems. This chapter detailed the small way in which this research hopes to contribute to the development of an education system which promotes African perspectives and knowledge systems. This was done by detailing research objectives and questions which sought to explore and suggest ways in which literary texts could be analysed to promote African perspectives and knowledge systems. In the following chapter, there are vigorous discussions which emanate from the existing body of scholarship on topic areas that were vital to this study. These topic areas include Africanisation, African philosophy, African Renaissance, indigenous knowledge systems, knowledge construction, the role of literature, and initial teacher training.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the body of scholarship dedicated to what it means to Africanise institutions as well as the associated challenges. The importance of knowledge construction is discussed by specifically focusing on what knowledge construction means in the African context, as well as the place of AIKS in the education system. In addition to this, the meaning and implications of Africanisation are explored, by explicitly focusing on the implications that Africanisation may have on globalisation. Finally, the importance of literature in shaping society is explored, as well as what literature should be considered as valuable for initial teacher education and the possible benefits of exploring these texts from different perspectives.

2.2 Africanisation of HE

What is taken for education in Africa is in fact not African, but rather a reflection of Europe in Africa – Higgs (2016:89)

Africanisation of education refers to a system that is conscious of the relevance of Africa (Letsekha, 2013:5). This means taking into account the knowledge systems and experiences that are unique to Africa. Africanisation goes further than validating African knowledge, but is instead founded on African knowledge. Botha (2007:205) states that Africanisation is about upholding the "aspirations; descent; cultural heritage; ideas; rights; interests and ideals; self-concept and own rationality" of Africans in an intercultural context. Simply put, Africanisation is "the assertion of the right to be African" (Letsekha, 2013:6). This means that Africanisation of education should, therefore, mostly be a reflection of Africa and its people. The aforementioned points affirm that it is important that education systems in Africa are African, and while it seems that this should go without saying, the Africanisation of the education system is difficult to realise in a continent where much work has been done to invalidate African knowledge and ways of being as "uncivilised" or "under-developed". This is due to Africa's colonial past, which displaced Africans by undermining their knowledge and cultural systems. This has resulted in an emphasis of Western and European models that persist long after colonisation has ended. This has greatly affected Africa and for this reason, Africanisation of education is imperative and this is proven in the subsequent arguments. Andindilile (2016:1) asserts that, "Africa has been a victim of misrepresentation since the advent of colonialism". Thus, the process of Africanisation is important for establishing African identity,

and for competing on a global stage as a unique entity instead of an impersonation of a colonial system.

Mokgoba (1997) (as cited by Letsekha, 2013) contends that the affirmation of African cultures and identities on a global platform is important to the process of Africanisation. Lebakeng, Phalane, and Dalindjebo (2006:75) argue that, instead of universities in Africa being African, they are merely sites for the transmission of Western culture and values. Researchers believe that Africa should be at the centre of educational dialogues in Africa (Higgs, 2016; Letsekha, 2013, Louw, 2010). However, scholars argue that this is not the case, as institutions still reflect colonial paradigms (Higgs, 2016:89; Letsekha, 2013; Botha, 2007:203). Rufai (2016:33) agrees with this by arguing that the current content and learning experiences are non-African, and that this is especially true for teacher education, which is what this research focuses on. Researchers also agree that, currently, HE in Africa is not relevant to Africans and go as far as to call it “alien” (Lebakeng *et al*., 2006; Botha, 2007; Letsekha, 2013). This has been proven by student #MustFall movements (*Fees must fall, Rhodes must fall*), which Becker (2017:2) believes aimed to construct new meanings of humanity and reality by opposing the Western and European systems and frames of reason. This is echoed by Griffiths (2018:143), who puts forth that the protests reveal a failure on the part of higher education institutions who persist in perpetuating European culture and privilege instead of addressing necessary postcolonial transformation. Higgs (2016:88) continues by saying that African culture and ways of knowing were severely impacted by colonial education, while Botha (2002:203) contends that, although the history of Western supremacy makes the implementation of Africanisation difficult, Africanisation remains imperative to transforming HE in South Africa.

This is especially relevant in the South African context since the country also had to recover from an apartheid curriculum that served to maintain unequal social, economic, and political power (Botha, 2007:207). Lebakeng *et al*. (2006:70) argue that, although the new dispensation provides an opportunity to construct new discourse, HE in South Africa still prioritises Western symbols, rituals, and behaviours. Letsekha (2013:6) also purports that any attempts to transform HE is nullified when the knowledge system is in disaccord with the culture and context of the people the system is supposed to service. Letsekha (2013:6) goes further to say that, while universities have attempted to transform by Africanising their staff, the curriculum and pedagogy have remained the same. Masaka (2017:442) offers a different perspective by contending that, while Africanisation is necessary, not enough attention is spent on deciphering exactly what needs to change and how this should be done. Masaka (2017:442) argues that there is no deliberate action aimed at documenting African IKS and philosophy, which results in these desired changes remaining theoretical. The implication of not having viable plans to implement Africanisation is

that knowledge systems deemed valid and prioritised as the knowledge which will ensure future success is not only non-African, but serves to alienate the African from African knowledge and systems.

Based on the above arguments, it is evident that these scholars advocate for the Africanisation of HE institutions but how this Africanisation should be implemented, remains a challenge. Higgs (2016:81) suggests that the curriculum be examined when attempting to transform these institutions. Koma (2018:101) echoes this sentiment by stating that reconstructing the curriculum is crucial for establishing Africanisation. Higgs (2016:81) states that a curriculum is designed with the purpose of ensuring that knowledge is transmitted in a way that is carefully considered and structured and he suggests that this curriculum include African epistemologies. This means that the knowledge systems in Africa should be founded on and oriented towards indigenous knowledge (Higgs, 2011:3). Founding education on African epistemologies would result in students being able to relate to the content and the teaching and learning methodologies, which would work to repair the apparent disconnect students experience with current models. Rufai (2016:34) recognises the importance of curriculum in establishing Africanisation, and particularly focuses on the need to develop Afrocentric teacher education. Rufai (2016:34) believes that Afrocentric education is important because teachers are currently being trained through a system that is inconsistent with the ideologies and world views of the African students it is meant to serve. This is problematic because teachers trained according to these European or Western ideologies act as purveyors of this knowledge, which could potentially result in the continuation of a focus on this knowledge for future generations. The importance of transformation in the classroom is also discussed by Du Preez (2018:20), who contends that curriculum should not only pertain to the planned/official curriculum but should include the content we choose to teach and what we choose not to teach, as well as how and why we teach in a certain way. This implies that teachers and the ideologies they are informed by play a vital role in the transformation of education at grassroots level.

These views emphasise the importance of changes to be implemented within the curriculum and by implication stresses the importance of the transformation of teacher education, as this will ensure transformation at a foundational level of education in Africa. This also implies that tertiary institutions need to prioritise Africanisation of the curriculum as part of their agenda. From the research, it is clear that questions about why Africanisation should occur have been answered and that more focus should be placed on actual implementation.

Koma (2018:100-101), who also advocates for the Africanisation of HE institutions and sees this process as vital for the affirmation and identification of Africa in the global community, maps out possible ways for Africanisation to be realised as follows:

- HE institutions should collaborate with “uncertified” Africans (Africans with no/limited formal education) in an effort to promote skills development and not alienate students from their community but instead make them conscious of their society.
- African traditional systems, political systems, codes of conduct, literature and other art should be valued as valid scholarly pursuits.
- Books by African historians and academics such as Biko, Sobukwe, Magubane, Makgoba, Kwesi Kwaa Prah, and others should be a part of the curriculum.

These points are closely aligned with the four trends of African philosophy this study focuses on to analyse the texts. *Sage philosophy* focuses on men and women in society who are wise and critical of their community, such as elders, priests, and traditional healers, and resonates with Koma’s idea of collaborating with “uncertified” Africans who hold knowledge essential to a deepened understanding of African society. *Ethnophilosophy* focuses on belief systems and the way in which Africans make sense of the world they live in, and is closely connected to Koma’s (2018) second point. The call to study African historians and academics is associated with both *Political* and *Professional philosophy,* which is based on the understanding that Africa should have political systems founded by Africans and unique to Africa and that the work of scholars who are well versed in these fields should be studied. While not explicitly stated, Koma’s (2018) suggestions on how to Africanise are closely linked to African philosophy, which makes a case for how African philosophy can be used as the foundation to inform education systems in Africa.

While it has been established that the Africanisation of HE in Africa is important as it aligns to the cultures, ideas and interests of Africans, the process of Africanisation cannot materialise if African knowledge is not validated. In light of this, knowledge as well as issues pertaining to the legitimacy of African knowledge must be conceptualised.

2.3 Knowledge construction

For the advancement of knowledge in Africa, we need many written works as well as ordinary dialogues that uncover African-centred approaches - Msila and Gumbo (2016)

All learning can be described as knowledge building (Young, 2014:9) and all humans are “aware and use a form of knowledge” (Bernstein, 1999:159). Knowledge is essential to human development, as substantiated by Young (2013:101), who states that the capacity to generate knowledge and pass it on to generations is what distinguishes humans from animals. It can then be said that knowledge formation is an important aspect of humanity and education. This also implies that knowledge is diverse. Deng (2015:723) states that questions related to knowledge are the most fundamental to curriculum theory and that these questions are specifically related to what knowledge is most important and how it should be selected and taught (Deng, 2015:723). He also notes that little attention is given to knowledge questions in the designing of educational policy and curriculum development (Deng, 2015:723). However, many issues arise when determining what knowledge is important and should be transmitted from one generation to the next. Young (2013:101-102), for instance, states that knowledge should not only be carried over from the previous generation to the current, but that it should develop and renew as individuals and society develop. In light of this, the questions of what knowledge should be generated and which knowledge can be classified as important, are pertinent. Young (2013) distinguishes between two types of knowledge, namely “the knowledge of the powerful” and “powerful knowledge”. The former relates to how what is taught is determined by powerful people in order to serve their agenda. Apple (1993:5) explicitly states that, “education and power are terms of an indissoluble couplet” – in layman’s terms, knowledge is power which implies that the knowledge of those who are favoured, has power. A recurring point in this study is that, for the most of Africa, colonial knowledge systems are favoured which reiterates the assertion made by Apple that the system usually favours those in power. Apple (1993:10) goes further to state that people in power and social movements wield education like a weapon in attempts to legitimise their ideas of knowledge. The problem with this is that knowledge is then ultimately limited to that of its creators and the power relations among them (Young, 2013:195). The other type of knowledge that Young (2013:196) refers to is “powerful knowledge” – the comprehension of the world, which includes natural and social elements that he believes all learners are entitled to. Young (2013:109) further explains “powerful knowledge” as specialised knowledge with clear boundaries. An example of this type of specialised knowledge includes, but is not limited to, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects.

From the analysis of a variety of texts about knowledge construction, it is evident that there are conflicting views on what constitutes knowledge. For instance, while Young (2014) rightfully advocates that all learners be entitled to knowledge, he also believes that “powerful knowledge” goes beyond individual experience. Young (2013:110) defines experience as the acquisition of context-specific concepts and further explains that concepts related to certain subjects go beyond these experiences. This is in contrast to scholars who believe that knowledge systems should be related to context (Letsekha, 2013).

While it has been established that a curriculum that serves its population is crucial – especially since curricula can provide access to knowledge (Cigman, 2012) and play the important role of transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next (Young, 2014:7) – an existing dilemma that has become apparent in South African institutions of higher learning, is that the knowledge being transmitted is not that of the majority of people in South Africa. The issue of “type” of knowledge to be prioritised in education systems has been the site of a hotly contested debate. On the one side of the argument, scholars such as Schön (1983), and Connelly and Clandinin (1990) (cited by Doecke, 2017:231) place emphasis on the inclusion of practical knowledge. This implies that "everyday knowledge of communities and workplaces" are taken into account and is reliant on the knowledge gained through "local experiences". This view contrasts with that of Young (2013), who makes a case for the inclusion of propositional knowledge, which is specialised and guided by universal standards such as STEM-related subjects. Young (2013) believes that schools should be access points to knowledge, which could greatly affect the lives of disadvantaged students. This is because knowledge in the fields of STEM, for example, are the keys to further education and job opportunities, which could greatly affect lives. Young’s argument is an effort to ensure that learners from disadvantaged communities are not left behind, and receive the same knowledge as learners from advantaged communities. Young (2013:112) opposes an over-personalised curriculum that relies heavily on local experience, as it may be without substance and deny the learners who need it most access to powerful knowledge. The “powerful knowledge” Young refers to is what is generally accepted as “legitimate knowledge” or mainstream, and in the case of many African societies, Eurocentric knowledge. This has implications for the African student who, in order to access tertiary institutions and have job opportunities, has to contend with mastering this “legitimate knowledge” which, as shown in this study, does not always align to their contexts and world views. The task of African institutions is then how to address both of these aspects. This study is not focused on denying what Young classifies as powerful knowledge in favour of a curriculum that is focused on local knowledge. Instead, the argument is that local knowledges have not been given the opportunity to develop, and, hence, are not seen as legitimate knowledge.

A contributing factor to this issue is encapsulated by Abu-Shomar (2013) who puts forth that, although previously colonised nations are liberated, colonial legacies that perpetuate certain forms of knowledge are still firmly in place. Another contributing factor is that colonisation left the impression that Africans are unable to produce knowledge (Mangu, 2005). In the South African context, black South Africans were consistently in a subordinate role (Msila, 2014:310), which may have contributed to the lack of knowledge production. According to Lebakeng *et al.* (2006:71), HE institutions are supposed to foster knowledge production. The predicament that African institutions are in, is that knowledge from Africa has historically been seen as "defective, inferior and in need of being developed and refined" (Lebakeng *et al.,* 2006:71). The negation of African knowledge and experience in favour of Western knowledge dismisses African knowledge as illegitimate. At this point it should also be noted that this study does not wish to delegitimise what is accepted as powerful knowledge; it acknowledges the power of this knowledge in terms of access to higher education, job opportunities, and keeping up with global trends such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution. However, the premise is that a more contextualised approach could be implemented when dealing with this content. In other words, STEM should be contextualised in a way that allow learners to recognise it in their own environment so they can apply the knowledge in response to their challenges. This resonates with the argument of South African student protestors that the education system should be adapted to their needs and aspirations. A final related point is that, although African students should have access to this powerful knowledge, it should not be taken for granted that local knowledge could also be "powerful knowledge" when given the attention and discipline afforded to existing STEM. This means that IKS should be rigorously explored and implemented into mainstream education in order to show its benefits and to be recognised among the range of global knowledge systems. De Beer and Petersen (2016:449) support this notion by advocating for a more Afrocentric approach to the science curriculum in which IKS could be mobilised as an authentic source for scientific inquiry. De Beer and Petersen (2016:450) assert that infusing IKS into the science curriculum could allow for a broader access to epistemology in order to cater to the diverse South African learner population. Finally, IKS should not be labelled as an "alternative", but should be prioritised, documented and intellectualised in classrooms and lecture halls.

The implications of the above arguments for initial English teacher training programmes are that these should, in terms of literature, expose students to texts and textual analyses that are able to instil powerful knowledge not limited to what is traditionally accepted as powerful knowledge. This study suggests that a plausible way to do this is through incorporating different perspectives when analysing literary texts, particularly African perspectives. The analysis of literary texts from an African perspective can address three of the current challenges expressed above by Abu-Shomar (2013); Mangu (2005) and Lebakeng *et al.* (2006:71): firstly, it would counter the impression

created by colonisation that African knowledge was irrelevant, by proving the importance of this knowledge. Secondly, exploring texts from an African perspective works to ensure that the knowledge produced is more consistent with African contexts; this responds to the request for the inclusion of relatable, useful knowledge that gives Africans the agency to not only better understand their contexts, but also influence their contexts through critical thinking. Thirdly, it could work to promote African culture and philosophy, which could be instrumental in recovering African pride and identity that may have been lost due to colonisation.

In light of the importance of promoting African ways of knowing, African philosophy and African Renaissance, are discussed in the next section.

2.4 Re-establishing African ways of knowing

The following section makes a case for African knowledge by conceptualising African Renaissance and African philosophy and explaining the significance of its implementation for HE institutions.

2.4.1 African Renaissance

African Renaissance can be understood as the “rebirth, renewal and re-awakening” of the African continent with self-identity, critical awareness and self-determination as its core values (Koma, 2018:98-99). When looking at this definition, it is apparent that African Renaissance can be seen as the process of emancipating Africa as this is closely related to Africa determining its own identity. Mekoa (2018:65) echoes this by defining African Renaissance as the revival of that which has been lost in terms of culture, philosophy, literature, and science. The loss of these aspects within Africa can be attributed to colonialism’s attempt to dismiss African thought and indigenous knowledge (Andindilile, 2016:133). Andindilile states that this dismissal has led to a void, which continues to pose many challenges for Africans. As a response to this, Higgs (2016:88) argues that educational paradigms should be rooted in African world views and indigenous sociocultural and epistemological frameworks in order to promote an African Renaissance. This means that Africans themselves should acknowledge the legitimacy of African knowledge and systems to validate these as the foundation of Africanisation. Koma (2018:99) states that African Renaissance and Africanisation are linked and that, while African Renaissance is the re-establishment of African ways in terms of educational, social, and educational dimensions, Africanisation is the vehicle for promoting and transmitting these ideas. More (2002:61) explains that the speech by former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, entitled, *I am an African,* placed new focus on an African Renaissance and the importance thereof.

According to Adebajo (2016), Mbeki's call for an African Renaissance became a critical component of his governance, which was viewed as a new social standard. Since then, Mbeki's vision for an African Renaissance did not gain the anticipated momentum. According to Adebajo (2016), this could be attributed to two main reasons: the first is that policies were not implemented and officials were not utilised to aid the promotion of this vision. Secondly, Mbeki's definition of an African as an all-encompassing concept that includes a multitude of races and cultures was continuously defied by politicians' referring only to Black people as Africans; excluding Coloured[1], Indian, and White South Africans. In spite of this, an African Renaissance remains an important aspect of Africanisation and the promotion of African knowledge. For this reason, Higgs (2016:90) supports the promotion of an African Renaissance, which he believes is crucial to arresting the notion that Western and Eurocentric knowledge is the only viable knowledge. As mentioned before, the establishment of an African Renaissance may be beneficial, but its implementation faces a few obstacles. An example of one of these is noted by Koma (2018:100-101), who argues that an African Renaissance is often seen by some as racially charged with the purposes of intimidating or promoting political propaganda. Koma (2018:100-101), however, opposes this view by characterising an African Renaissance as inclusive and non-racial instead. Koma (2018:100) reinforces this view by stating that the movement toward an African Renaissance does not mean a complete rejection of European cultures but rather an affirmation of "African perspectives, values and cultures". In other words, European cultures can be included but African cultures and values should be prioritised.

This closely resembles the study's definition of who an African is, as well as Thabo Mbeki's definition of Africans as individuals who identify as African and acknowledge their differences, but are cognisant of and accept the other's cultures. More (2002:61) notes that there are often two opposing views of an African Renaissance: one is pessimistic and views this "return" as regression, while the second views "return" as progress. He goes on to say that the former is often based on the distorted western perception of Africa as a dark, uncivilised, and backward continent. This is linked to the previous assertion that it is important for African knowledge and systems to be seen as valuable, especially by Africans themselves in order for these backward and limited views to change. African Renaissance is thus important in dispelling these derogatory notions of Africa. The next section focuses on indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). IKS are knowledge systems that are unique to Africa and are based on the insights of indigenous people. IKS not only provides valuable knowledge but also possible solutions to African challenges. IKS is aligned to African Renaissance as both focus on the self-actualisation of Africa and Africans.

[1] A term used to identify a group of people of mixed heritage such as white and black. This term is unique to South Africa

2.4.2 IKS

IKS is defined as the “skills, experiences and insights” of local people, which should be “protected, documented, and studied” (Mekoa, 2018:12). Researchers such as Msila and Gumbo (2016:20), and Mkhize and Ndimane-Hlongwe (2014:10) argue that IKS are indispensable to the transformation of HE in South Africa. Mekoa (2018:12) contends that IK should form the basis of a country’s knowledge systems, while Higgs (2016:87) argues that IKS should be recognised as legitimate knowledge among the range of knowledge systems in the world. IKS can be seen as valuable knowledge in the local and global sense. Kaya and Seleti (2013:33) maintain that AIKS are pertinent to sustainable development in Africa and propose the inclusion of AIKS in the formal education system in order to acknowledge AIKS as a form of knowledge and counter the narrative of “one standard, benchmark system that is based on western values and ways of knowing” (Kaya & Seleti, 2013:37). This is linked to a previous assertion that it is important for education systems in Africa to be represented as unique entities instead of impersonations of colonial systems.

Although a case is made for the importance of the implementation of IKS in South Africa and many African countries alike, IKS have not been promoted since the introduction of Western science and technology, through colonisation, sought to dismiss the IK instead of being absorbed into the existing systems (Prah, 2017:35). Mkhize and Ndimane-Hlongwe (2014:14) also comment on the role colonisation played in silencing pre-colonial education, which functioned by exposing the youth to cultural, social, economic, medical, and other knowledge systems indigenous to Africa. This reminds me of my previous argument: these knowledge systems should be reclaimed as they have always been there.

Kaya and Seleti (2013:30) elaborate on the importance of implementing IKS by contending that IK, specifically African IK (AIKS), can work to promote the relevance of HE in South Africa. This is in response to the argument made earlier that education in South Africa and Africa at large is not relevant to students due to the employment of Western models. Battiste (2002) (as cited by Kaya & Seleti, 2013:34-35) puts forth that the integration of AIKS into HE may hold the following benefits:

- Students learn about their community’s values for a sustainable livelihood. This is based on the understanding that Africans have been able to benefit from the environment whilst living in harmony with the environment. Mekoa (2018:11) concurs with this statement by maintaining that IK involves the insights of people who use IKS as their “social capital’ to maintain and improve their livelihood. Kaya and Seleti (2013:35) maintain that this might also develop a sense of care for the environment.

- Students will automatically engage with culture owing to AIKS being kept active in cultural forms such as folklore (songs, proverbs, myths, etc.)

- Students are given the opportunity to engage with their community, which benefits both the community and students who may in turn develop renewed appreciation and respect for their culture.

When looking at the aforementioned benefits of the integration of AIKS, it is clear that AIKS may offer solutions to African challenges and may contribute to a greater cultural and societal awareness. There are also parallels between these benefits and the trends of African philosophy. For example, the nature of IKS, which relies on the insights of community to respond to challenges, is aligned to ethnophilosophy and sage philosophy, which are concerned with the knowledge and experience of Africans.

The inclusion of IKS in the initial teacher training programmes is important, as these will equip aspirant teachers with the ability to appeal to the lived experiences of their learners and provide them with an opportunity to impart knowledge that is unique to their communities and other African communities. This is aligned to the calls for the Africanisation of the curriculum in two ways: it addresses the challenge of the current system not being relatable to the African student; in other words, it is concerned with knowledge that is relevant and useful. Secondly, it promotes knowledge, which is unique to Africa and allows learners to solve problems unique to their contexts in a way that is best suited to these contexts.

Although the inclusion of IKS would be beneficial, it also requires careful consideration owing to the fact that some features of IKS may contradict the constitution (Romylos, 2018:35). These may include being limited to dangerous initiation practices and degrading views about homosexuality.

In terms of this study, a critical analysis of possible indigenous knowledge systems, which are evident in the texts, was conducted. The IKS are presented in terms of the customs and social and political practices or structures in the literary text that may develop a deeper understanding and appreciation in students. The following section defines African philosophy and examines the importance of African Philosophy in Africa as a part of establishing African knowledge.

2.4.3 African Philosophy

Philosophy can be understood as discourse related to the critical evaluation of people's outlook on life and a reflection of the ideas that represent reality (Oruka, 1990:16). This understanding of philosophy is reinforced by Oyeshile (2008:58), who explains that philosophy is the critical examination of human beings' ideas relating to important constructs such as justice, morality,

politics, and religion. Literature and philosophy are intertwined in that both aim to question and explore the nature of the world (Vidmar, 2015:7). Andindilile (2016:134) asserts that literature and philosophy have a similar agenda, as both unite in “debunking the often myopic, reductive and grossly biased Eurocentric thoughts about the much maligned Africa to bring about a new consciousness and a new understanding about Africa”. When studying literature, it is thus beneficial to consider different philosophies when studying a literary text, as this can influence the type of questions we ask about the text and our understanding of the text. Appleman (2009:3) asserts that applying different lenses when engaging with a text aids the reader in paying close attention to certain aspects and provides readers with the “tools to uncover the often-invisible workings of a text”. Viewing texts from different perspectives or from different philosophies could be beneficial for developing critical thinking and multifaceted thinking about the world and literature, which is a representation of the world. African philosophy can be prioritised when engaging with texts that have African characters or contexts, or tell stories of Africa. In the case of this study, African philosophy was applied as the critical lens through which the literary texts were analysed in an attempt to uncover the African knowledge and perspectives these texts yield.

African philosophy can be understood as philosophy that critically examines African realities. Oruka (1990:16) contends that African philosophy should be separated from Western philosophy due to the difference in history, culture, and environment and further asserts that Africa should be true to its unique traditions if it is to contribute meaningfully to human civilization. Since philosophy can also be understood as being self-critical (Oruka, 1990:16), it can be implied that a focus on African philosophy will allow Africans to be critical and reflective, and thus develop the philosophy in its own right. This is echoed by Hountondji (1983) (cited by Oyeshile, 2008:57) who states that philosophy is self-conscious. This has an important implication for this study, as analysing the texts from an African perspective does not mean that everything European or Western is negative and everything African is positive; but it is important to create opportunities to discuss these traditions, cultures, values, and beliefs critically in order to grow. African scholars recognise Odera Oruka, Kwasi Wiredu, Peter Bodurnrin and Paulin Hountondji as either the pioneers or most significant contributors to the four strands of African philosophy. Their work was thus elaborated on in an attempt to better understand these philosophies. The four strands of African philosophy can be defined as follows:

Ethnophilosophy

This can be defined as philosophy that is concerned with Africans’ way of life and their unique ways of making sense of their experiences (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013:42). Higgs and Smith (2017:14) concur and further argue that ethnic philosophy is concerned with the religious and moral beliefs of Africans that are notably vast and diverse and should thus be

viewed holistically. They also note the importance of this philosophy as an opportunity for Africans to understand and criticise their own traditions (Higgs & Smith, 2017:14).

This definition of ethnophilosophy is strongly opposed by Hountondji (2018), who asserts that one philosophy cannot be accepted as true for all people. Hountondji is an African philosopher who reviews many aspects of African philosophy, and particularly focuses on ethnophilosophy. He rejects the unanimity of ethnophilosophy, which suggests that there is a shared culture and that all people agree (Hountondji, 2018:10), based on the view that this understanding limits intellectual and cultural diversity. He further suggests "philosophy by Africans" as a more appropriate term for African philosophy for the following reasons:

- He believes that not all philosophy conducted by Africans is about Africa and that it should be an acceptable endeavour to investigate problems and traditions that are not necessarily African, but deal with universal issues.
- Ethnophilosophy assumes that it can only be practised by African philosophers, which opens up questions about who is African. He questions the practice of defining the work of black philosophers as "African philosophy", even if it does not necessarily serve the black community, but excluding a white scholar who has spent a considerable time in Africa and whose work promotes the agenda of Africans.

I am inclined to agree with Hountondji on this matter, and believe that Africa is a continent with diverse people who have different lived experiences and world views. Ethnophilosophy was included in this study by exploring whether ethnophilosophy is evident in the three literary texts that were analysed. I also looked at finding proof of Hountondji's view that there is not one type of philosophy which is applicable to all Africans.

Sage philosophy

This philosophy can be understood as an approach that focuses on men and women in society who are known to be wise and critical of their community (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013:45). Sage philosophy is holistic and does not generalise "world views, customs, folktales, and beliefs" (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013:45). This philosophy is concerned with individuals who hold knowledge that is decidedly African or indigenous, and can include persons such as traditional healers, priests and elders (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013:46).

Odera Oruka is known to have characterised the four trends of philosophy and significantly added to the knowledge on sage philosophy. In order to understand this philosophy, it is

important to understand what is meant by the term “sage”. A sage is an individual who has extensive knowledge about the history and customs of their communities (Oruka, 1983:386). A sage is often recognised by their community as being wise and is often able to articulate the challenges experienced by their communities. In his description of sagacity in philosophy, Oruka (1983:386) contends that being a sage does not necessarily qualify these individuals as philosophers, but that sagacity in philosophy is accomplished when the individual is not only knowledgeable about traditions, but also critical and often in conflict with their communities for presenting views that oppose commonly accepted practices.

As previously mentioned, there is a direct link between sage philosophy and IKS, as a sage is most often knowledgeable about IK. IKS and sage philosophy are important to this study, as both are connected to the process of legitimising African knowledge, which is important to the process of Africanisation and a focal point of this study. As with IK, this study aimed to uncover possible aspects of sagacity by looking at specific characters in the literary texts who might display these characteristics. The study also focused on the role these characters play in providing insight into African customs, traditions, and knowledge that fit the characteristics of a sage.

Political philosophy

This philosophy can also be described as ideological philosophy as it stems from the ideologies that were disseminated by liberation movements (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013:47). Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2013:47) expands on the understanding of this philosophy by explaining that it is rooted in acknowledgement that European models have failed Africans and that there is a need for Africans to be liberated and re-establish an African identity. A defining characteristic of political philosophy is that it is different and it should be unique to Africa and, consequently, different from other political philosophies (Higgs & Smith, 2017:14). This means that, while political philosophy is aimed at political theories and focuses on the ideas of justice and laws, African philosophy is the same, with the exception that it is exclusively focused on Africa.

Kwasi Wiredu’s work within the field of political philosophy is inextricably linked to the importance of the decolonisation of African philosophy and Africa in general. In order to accurately present his stance on this matter, it is important to understand what Wiredu means when he refers to decolonisation. Wiredu (1998) defines the decolonisation of African philosophy as “divesting African philosophical thinking of all undue influences emanating from our colonial past”. Wiredu (1998) emphasises the word “undue” (meaning unwarranted or excessive), which implies that this process of decolonising African

philosophy is not one that completely rejects knowledge from a colonial past, but specifically focuses on eliminating knowledge which is unreasonable or irrelevant to Africa. This is because certain western knowledge or knowledge which emerged as a result of colonisation may be beneficial to Africa and humankind at large. Wiredu (1998) believes that colonisation was as much a cultural imposition as it was a political one. This is why he later stresses the important role politicians play in developing political philosophy, as they are to initiate national reconstructions that should contribute to reasserting the culture and identity that was stifled by colonialism (Wiredu, 2008:332). Andindilile (2016:132) also highlights the important role politicians such as Kwame Nkrumah, Sedar Senghor, Kenneth Kaunda, and Julius Nyerere have played in establishing ways to re-instil a sense of pride and identity in their people. In the South African context, former president Thabo Mbeki stressed the importance of an African Renaissance and made the reassertion of African culture a key component of his presidency. From the above it is clear that political philosophy is centred around the agency of politicians to lead and to put forward political agenda and political theory that is focused on restoring African culture and identity. It should be noted that political involvement is often necessary to ensure transformation. This is especially evident in the South African context where changes have been effected due to political movements. An example of this is the end of apartheid in 1994, which saw the education system change to conform to equality and transformation.

Political philosophy is vital to this study since two of the texts are set in Africa, one against the backdrop of postcolonial South Africa and the other depicting the devastating impact of colonisation on African culture. In light of this, it is important to carefully consider the political aspects of these texts as well as the possible role of political philosophy when interpreting these texts.

The final strand of African philosophy to be discussed is Pure or Professional philosophy which is concerned with the work done by prominent scholars in the field of African philosophy.

Pure or Professional philosophy

This philosophy centres on the work of African philosophers and their contributions to the body of philosophical scholarship (Higgs & Smith, 2017:14). Hapanyengwi-Chemburu (2019:49) argues that, although there are notable differences between European and African philosophers due to different cultures and backgrounds, it should not be assumed that there is a difference in their use of reason. In light of this, critical thinking is central to the philosophy conducted by professional philosophers (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru,

2013:49). When looking at Hapanywengwi-Chemhuru and Oyeshile's papers on African philosophy, it is evident that professional philosophers have an important role in Africa. Bodurin (as cited in Oyeshile, 2008:61), for instance, notes that the role of African philosophers is to analyse and criticise cultural beliefs and issues that affect Africa. This implies that the task of the professional philosopher is to engage in rigorous discussions concerning African issues in order to bring light to these issues and offer viable solutions. These issues are also particularly related to education in Africa, in which professional philosophers should be focused on issues that reflect and affect educational realities in Africa (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2019:49). Since this research is situated in the educational sphere, it is important to look at the role African philosophers have played in education. This is articulated exceptionally well by Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru:

> *African philosophers of education need to critically engage questions about the aims of education in Africa, as well as the nature of the curricula and methodologies that facilitate learning in African educational institutions. In sum, African philosophers of education ought to interrogate educational theory and practice with a view to offering prescriptions that render them responsive to the contemporary needs of the continent*
>
> (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013:50).

This means that the role of these philosophers should be to directly affect the education system in order to improve Africans' way of life. Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2013:51) further notes that the role of these philosophers is to engage with policies with the purpose of developing the learners and to address questions of identity as well the role of individuals in society. This denotes that this philosophy is completely centred on the development of Africans.

Oruka, who initially identified the four stands of African philosophy, explains that professional philosophy has professionally trained philosophers as its managers. Since this includes philosophers who contribute to the other three strands of philosophy, it would suggest that all strands of philosophy should ultimately be aimed at the development of Africa.

2.5 Africanisation versus global competitiveness

The call of Africanisation is neither an advocacy to be anti-West, nor is it a discouragement to learn from the West – Letsekha (2013)

An important aspect to look at is the impact that globalisation has on the process of Africanisation. Globalisation has become important for many nations and has an influence on HE institutions the world over. Letsekha (2013) maintains that internationalisation has become a defining issue for HE institutions across the world. Tsui and Tollefson (2007:vii) define globalisation as a complex process that has an effect on many societies. They further suggest that the impact of globalisation is evident when taking into account the language policies of many countries (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007:viii). Some researchers welcome globalisation on the condition that local knowledge and research are developed. Louw (2010:46), for example, believes that HE in Africa should restructure current models to reflect African realities in order to be taken seriously. This is supported by Neale-Shutte and Fourie (2006:121), who argue that internationalisation is only possible if Africans create their own identity. Lebakeng *et al*. (2006:81-82) outline some of the contrasting views of globalisation. One of these views is that globalisation could be beneficial, as it holds many prospects for regions that have been marginalised. Another view is that globalisation is "nothing more than Western imperialism", which has been masked by the more acceptable term of "globalisation" (Amuwo, cited by Lebakeng *et al.,* 2006:82). Another argument against globalisation is that it stifles local knowledge development. This is further explained by Higgs (2016:89) who argues that globalisation has affected Africa's communication, political and economic practices, as well as changed knowledge, skills and cultural values. Letsekha (2013) notes that scholars such as Botha (2007) and Crossman (2004) rebut the notion that the process of Africanisation would result in the inability to form part of the international society. Letsekha (2013) further contends that Africanisation should not be seen as a deterrent to internationalisation and suggests that HE institutions should not neglect local knowledge and should remain African while participating in international scholarly pursuits. Du Preez (2018:25) echoes this view by stating that internalisation and decolonisation should not be seen as mutual threats, and instead asserts that engaging in internalisation could lead to a more profound understanding of local knowledge. This is because internalisation requires understanding between and among different cultures (Du Preez, 2018:25). This reiterates the quote by Letsekha (2013) that the call for Africanisation is not a discouragement to learn from the West, but that African universities should not forsake their African identities in order to do so. At present, Africa is in the unique position to construct models that endorse African epistemologies and learning from Western models. The inclusion of this broader frame of reference would address the concerns raised by Young (2013:196) around the importance of access to "powerful knowledge".

These arguments point to a dilemma with regard to globalisation and its subsequent practices in the education sphere. While institutions are under significant pressure to keep up with global trends, some believe that globalisation is another way to stifle the development of uniquely African

knowledge systems. On this issue, I gravitate toward the view of Louw (2010:46), who asserts that more attention should be given to the development of African knowledge. In the context of globalisation, this will ensure that Africa is a contributor to global knowledge and a determiner of global trends instead of a mere consumer of knowledge.

Since this study is concerned with the analysis of literature, one could observe that literature is also under pressure to adhere to global demands. An example of this is the vast number of literary texts being written in English instead of African languages. In addition to this, the analysis of these and other literary texts are greatly influenced by Western perspectives. While the research does not aim to debunk these types of analyses, it advocates for the inclusion of African philosophy and knowledge systems when analysing these texts in an attempt to better understand the African characters and contexts that may be represented in these texts.

2.6 The importance of literature in society

Texts are messages to and about the future – Michael Apple

English literature in the context of this study can be defined as “short stories, novels, plays and poetry” (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019:211) written in English. Dubey (2013:84) contends that society is mirrored through literature. This is supported by Baharti and Ahmad (2015:1), who believe that literature is a tool that can be used to influence the way people think about the world. This reiterates the important role of literature in initial English teacher training, since literature can inform aspirant teachers on a personal and professional level. This also emphasises the significance of text selection for initial teacher training programmes, as it would be beneficial for teachers to be exposed to texts that foster critical thinking and sound morals and values.

It is believed that the use of short stories, novels, plays, and poetry hold many benefits. Lazar (1993) summarises as follows:

- It can motivate learners and has significant educational value.
- It is authentic material. Hişmanoğlu (2005:54) makes a case for the use of literature for English second language (ESL) learners by explaining that the texts are authentic material that reflect real-life contexts, which, in turn, allows the ESL learner the opportunity to see that language functions in a natural setting.
- It develops an understanding of different cultures. Exposing learners to a variety of texts is beneficial, as it allows them to learn about their own and other cultures. This is supported by Wenzel (2005:70) who recognises the importance of literature in

developing world views as well as identity. In light of this, it is important to explore literature from different perspectives as it can lead to understanding, awareness, and acceptance of different world views, and the development of one's own identity and world view.

- It can aid language in terms of acquisition and language awareness. Sell (2005:87) asserts that literature can be used as a model for good writing and improve linguistic competence. In addition to this, it can aid language enrichment as students are exposed to multiple lexical and syntactic patterns (Hişmanoğlu, 2005:54).

- Students enjoy literature and it develops their interpretative abilities, which also allows them to express their own ideas.

In the context of knowledge construction, the selection of texts may also be closely studied, as it functions as distributor of knowledge. This is supported by Apple (1993:46-49), who states that texts inform our future, are measures of truthfulness and are a reflection of the genuine interests of real people. In addition to this, texts are also sites for the "reproduction and production of power relations" (Apple, 1993:5). This is also important to the CDA aspect employed in this study since CDA is concerned with analysing how language is used to expose power relations in a text. Thus, the employment of CDA is not only valuable in this study but could be a worthwhile method of analysis for literary texts done at tertiary level in the South African/African context. Additionally, in light of the importance of texts, it should be carefully considered which texts are prioritised. Wenzel (2005:76) argues that, because learners learn about themselves when given the opportunity to compare themselves to others, they should be given the opportunity to study a variety of texts, which could include Western and African texts. This argument makes a strong case for the selection of "multicultural" literature. While the literature studied by aspirant English teachers may reflect a variety of texts that could be considered multicultural, the study is interested in the perspectives and narratives that emerge as dominant when interacting with these texts.

2.7 What literature should be prescribed?

When it comes to English literature in HE, there are many debates about which texts should be prescribed. This debate is discussed here by looking at the global and African view. Some scholars such as Hirsch (1978) and Bloom (1996) believe that it is best to prescribe literary works that form part of the literary canon. The canon refers to English literature, which can be considered

essential or foundational. Wilczek (2012:1687) defines the literary canon as a categorisation of literature deemed the most important literary works of a specific time. Wilczek (2012:1687) further notes that the literature that forms part of the canon is characterised by being continuously selected for study. A good example of this is the work of William Shakespeare. The notion of the canon rests on the literary works adhering to aesthetic qualities that justifies its selection as notable works of literature. A key word that surfaces when defining the canon is “consensus” (as seen in Wilczek, 2012:1687; Weixlmann, 1988:277) which implies that certain people in society agree on which literary texts form part of the canon. Some see this as a point of contention since it implies that the decision concerning work that forms part of the canon is an elitist one (Tocqueville, 1969 as cited by Kronick, 2001:38). This may in turn function to serve the social and political agenda of those decision makers (Abu-Shomar, 2013:73). The inclusion of only canonical works would contradict the development of African knowledge as these are mostly written by white males and mostly reflect Western cultures. While some of these works may include African characters or contexts, the portrayal of these characters and contexts may be done from a Western perspective and may not fully capture African values. In the African context, it is problematic to only study literature from the canon, as it does not always give an accurate account of the African identity and experience. This could be attributed to the formation of the canon being informed by politics that often does not promote equality (Weixlmann, 1988:273-275). Similarly, Coles (2013:51) notes that the very process of prescribing literary works is contentious, as one set of knowledge is necessarily privileged over another. Anderson and Zanetti (2000:344) look to a number of scholars such as Kermode, Culler, and Said to successfully summarise arguments for and against the canon. One of the arguments against the canon is that it can be seen as a tool used by the ruling class to promote its own cultural and social interests whilst excluding others (Kermode & Culler, 1979) (as cited by Anderson and Zanetti, 2000). Said (1985) (as cited by Anderson and Zanetti, 2000) concurs with the view of the canon as a tool that promotes Western culture while misrepresenting non-Western cultures. In light of this, some scholars believe that the canon should be altered to include a wider range of authors while others believe that it should be abolished altogether (Von Hallberg, 1984) (as cited by Anderson and Zanetti, 2000:344).

Again, the implementation of the literary canon in Africa is troublesome for a number of reasons. One argument is that the canon does not reflect the diverse culture of Africans. Weixlmann (1988:277), Anderson and Zanetti (2000:344), and Lawall (1986:25) all refer to how the literary canon is mostly exclusive to white males. Kom (2001:2) argues that African writers should not be confined by the parameters of the existing canon but should assume autonomy. This means that writers should write stories that speak to African realities, even if it does not strictly adhere to the criteria of the canon. Samuel (1995:97) offers a neutral perspective by putting forth that, although learners should be able to identify with the books they read, it should also be noted that learners’

perspectives have broadened beyond their own contexts and reading material should be able to keep up. This is even more applicable to university students who in some cases are introduced to different cultures and world views when they enter university. This implies that learners should not only be exposed to African literature but a variety of literature, which should assist in the development of a broader awareness of the world they live in and the different cultures and world views presented. It should also be acknowledged that not all students in South Africa share the same cultural background. In addition to this, one should also keep in mind that not all students at university in South Africa are Africans. In earlier assertions about the identity of Africans, it was established that in the case of this study, Africans are people indigenous to Africa but also people whose origins may not stem from Africa but identify as African. This also means that there are people who live in Africa, may contribute toward Africa but do not necessarily identify as African. These students should also be catered for in terms of their cultures, albeit proportionally.

An argument that might favour the use of canonical works is that the intellectualisation of African languages has been neglected and without proper planning (Kaschula & Maseko, 2014:10), which accounts for English being used as the medium of instruction in many African countries. English as a global language not only serves as a medium of interaction for 52 nations on the African continent, but it also serves as the official language of the African Union (Crystal, 2012; Negash, 2011:4). In light of this, English literature is important as it could lead to an improvement in language use (Hişmanoğlu, 2005:53) which would positively influence academic achievement. This is because, through literature, learners are exposed to the use of the language in context as well as excellent models that could improve their own language use. Since English is the medium of instruction in 52 nations, an improved proficiency in the language could improve all round academic achievement. The role of literature does not only serve to promote academic achievement, but is also a tool to aid leaners' affective development. So, while English literature can assist in terms of academic development, it is also important for learners to be exposed to the type of literature where they can see their cultures reflected and develop their identities. It should also be noted that African stories could be written in English, which could address both these points: it may assist English language development that is linked to academic achievement, while representing characters and contexts that appeal to the affective development of students. The prescription of literary texts leads to debate about what can be considered valuable texts for African students. In light of this, the place of English literature in African societies is elaborated on in the next section.

2.8 The place of English literature in African societies

This section is concerned with the use of English as a medium to tell stories from Africa. Burgess (1979:9) explains that English literature is not restricted to England but is for authors who use the language to write. He further explains that "literature is an art which exploits language; English literature is an art which exploits English" (Burgess, 1979:9). Van der Walt and Evans (2019:211) concur by stating that English literature should be considered the work of first and second language speakers of the language. This understanding of English literature rests on the understanding that anyone from anywhere can contribute to English literature. Some African scholars however, denounce the use of English to tell African stories. One such scholar is Prah (2017:1), who vehemently speaks of the need to intellectualise African languages, and who rejects the use of European languages to tell African stories. Prah (2017:24) recognises that, currently, African literature is defined as literature written by Africans whether it be in English, French, or Portuguese, which he calls a "gross anomaly" which works to deny African cultural and linguistic identities. Prah (2017:35) makes a strong case for the use of African languages by arguing that "it is in African languages that the intelligence of Africans is most acute, vibrant, and living". This is congruent with the observation that Coetzee (1999:117) makes in *Disgrace* when commenting on the inability of English to give an accurate account of an African story: "English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa…Like a dinosaur expiring and settling in the mud, the language has stiffened". While I agree with Kwesi Prah's view that African stories are most authentic when written in an African language, I disagree with the notion that African stories told in English do not qualify as African stories. If one considers only the former view as valid, the works of African authors such as Chinua Achebe, J.M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Alan Paton, to mention a few, may be considered gross anomalies (Prah, 2017). These works, although written in English, have eloquently encapsulated African stories. Also, to deny colonisation or apartheid and "its languages" completely would be to deny a part of African history which, although negative, has become a part of the African story. African stories are stories told by Africans. Based on the aforementioned authors, my understanding of who an African is, is not limited to black Africans, but is closely aligned to former president Thabo Mbeki's understanding of what it means to be African. I mentioned earlier that I embrace an all-encompassing view of what it means to be African. I feel it necessary to quote extensively from former President Thabo Mbeki's speech:

> *I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence and they who, as a people, perished in the result...*

I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me.

In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence. The stripes they bore on their bodies from the lash of the slave master are a reminder embossed on my consciousness of what should not be done.

I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom.

My mind and my knowledge of myself is formed by the victories that are the jewels in our African crown, the victories we earned from Isandhlwana to Khartoum, as Ethiopians and as the Ashanti of Ghana, as the Berbers of the desert.

I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves at St Helena and the Bahamas, who sees in the mind's eye and suffers the suffering of a simple peasant folk, death, concentration camps, destroyed homesteads, a dream in ruins.

I am the child of Nongqause. I am he who made it possible to trade in the world markets in diamonds, in gold, in the same food for which my stomach yearns.

I come of those who were transported from India and China, whose being resided in the fact, solely, that they were able to provide physical labour, who taught me that we could both be at home and be foreign, who taught me that human existence itself demanded that freedom was a necessary condition for that human existence.

Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that - I am an African.

What Mbeki encapsulates with these words is that Africa's history has shaped the continent and its people. Colonisation cannot be denied because it has forever changed the course of African history and continues to have a legacy. This study being conducted in English and the fact that English is the medium of instruction in many African countries is evidence to this fact. However, Mbeki suggests that this past, no matter how controversial, has affected Africans and should be acknowledged and understood for how it can shape the present and future. Furthermore, Mbeki's definition of African is not limited to a specific race, but is all encompassing, as in the context of this study. After gathering some insight on the place of English literature in African societies, the following section examines what the initial teacher training programme, particularly related to that of an English teacher in Africa, should offer students.

2.9 Initial teacher training for the African English teacher

Initial teacher training for English teachers in Africa is unique in that it should be cross disciplinary. This is because, while the programme should address the calls to Africanise the curriculum, English, a subject and a language that was introduced to Africa due to colonisation, is not the native language of majority of South Africans, yet is studied by majority of South African learners. In order to be considered an English specialist, aspirant teachers should study English literature from the canon. However, because this teacher is situated in Africa, he/she should also be well versed in literature that reflects the African experience and allows for the development of African identities and world views.

Scholars such as Ash-Shaynaivy (1979) and Llyong (1990) (as cited by Rufai, 2016) have identified criteria for establishing core principles for an Afrocentric teacher education.

These criteria are also discussed and abbreviated by Rufai (2016:52-54):

- An African world view should be the foundation of all principles.
- Principles should be generated from African sources, which means that societal knowledge, doctrines, and religious ideologies should be used to guide these principles.
- An Afrocentric teacher curriculum should be dynamic and entail mindful diversity in terms of race, language, and faith.
- This type of teacher programme should also take into account that the teacher should hold some knowledge and values about African arts and culture.
- An African teacher programme should contain indigenous knowledge (IK) in terms of philosophy, psychology, economics, health science, and education.

The challenge for the English teacher programmes in Africa is attaining the balance that would adhere to these principles, while including seminal works of literature that would qualify an individual as an English teacher. As discussed earlier in the research, English literature has a positive influence on the affective and academic development of students. Mustakim, Mustapha, and Lebar (2014:35) aptly articulate the role of English literature in education by stating that it should be “aimed at developing the potential of students in a holistic, balanced and integrated manner encompassing the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects in order to create a balanced and harmonious human being with high social standards.” This understanding of the role of literature sheds light on the importance of the teacher who should be an agent in ensuring

that this function of literature is realised. In the South African context, the English teacher should be active in promoting a culture of reading, cater to the diverse linguistic needs of the students, as well as cater to affective needs of learners in this diverse context. In order to address this role adequately, teachers should be exposed to and teach texts from the canon and South African and African contexts.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, a literature review was conducted in which topics were discussed that are relevant to this study. The chapter looked at the body of scholarship pertaining to the topics of Africanisation, African philosophy, African Renaissance and indigenous knowledge systems. The literature review also looked at the body of scholarship pertaining to knowledge construction, literature and initial teacher training in the African context. The following chapter, offers a thorough account of the research methodology that was followed in order to achieve the objectives of this study.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the research methodology of this study, which is concerned with exploring African perspectives in the analysis of literary texts prescribed for initial English teacher training. This qualitative study, which employed critical discourse analysis, was well suited to this study as it allowed for a critical look into how texts portray African characters and settings, and what limitations exist with the current analysis of these characters and settings. In this chapter, the research questions are restated, and the applicability of the research design, method of analysis, and ethical considerations are discussed.

3.2 Research questions

The research was guided by the following main research question:

> *How can English literary texts, with African characters and/or contexts, be analysed to promote African knowledge and values in initial English teacher training?*

The successful exploration of the above research question was achieved by answering the following secondary research questions:

> *How are African characters and/or African contexts portrayed in English literary texts?*
>
> *What interpretations are dominant when analysing the supplementary texts (study guides used in initial English teacher training) of prescribed English literary works which have African characters and/or African contexts?*
>
> *What suggestions can be made for the implementation of analysis to incorporate African perspectives and discourses related to African knowledge and values in initial English teacher training at a South African university?*

3.3 Research aim and objectives

The above research questions informed the following research aim and objectives:

3.3.1 Research aim

The aim of this research was to explore the interpretations that are dominant when analysing English texts with an African context and/or African characters and to suggest plausible ways in which this literature can be analysed in order to promote African perspectives. In doing so, the research aimed to expose gaps in the approaches taken when engaging with the aforementioned literature from only a Western or European perspective and suggest a framework on how to analyse texts, which have African perspectives embedded in them.

3.3.2 Research objectives

The following objectives were designed in order to answer the research questions and fulfil the research aim:

- Establish how African characters and/or contexts are portrayed in the selected English literary texts, as well as the lecturers' analysis of these texts emanating from supplementary material.
- Identify and discuss the dominant interpretation that emanates from the supplementary material/teacher training material of these literary texts.
- Identify and discuss how the African perspective might be promoted, neglected or misinterpreted in the studying of these texts in initial English teacher training.
- Suggest alternative approaches to analysing texts with African characters and/or an African context.

3.4 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework/paradigm can be described as the "blueprint" of research (Heale & Noble, 2019:67) with the significant role of directing one's study. Conducting research from a paradigm is important because it allows for inquiry as well as the appropriate approaches to follow through with this inquiry (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:52). It also informs research in respect of the

methodology, literature and research design and impacts the way in which knowledge is understood (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006:2). In light of the significance of the selection of a paradigm, critical theory was chosen as the paradigm for this study.

Kincheloe and Mclaren (2002:87) describe critical theory as a challenger of the status quo and a formidable contributor of new knowledge. This sentiment is echoed by Bronner (2011:XX-1) who describes critical theory as radical and further argues that this theory is instrumental in solving problems that arise in a changing society. Critical theory emerged as the framework for this study because of its nature of being focused on critical meanings, and how these relate to issues such as “gender, race, class and other kinds of social oppression” (Jansen, 2016:23). Furthermore, critical theory was well suited to this study, since I aimed to uncover African perspectives and realities that may be lost, misinterpreted, or undermined in initial teacher training when analysing literature despite this literature having African characters or being set in an African context.

Lather (2006:38) further expands on the understanding of critical theory as a paradigm by offering two key features: “reality is subjective and constructed on the basis of issues of power” and “discourse is embedded in (and controlled by) rhetorical and political purpose”. These definitions of critical theory provided guidance in justifying its selection for the study concerned with issues of transformation in the way literary texts are analysed and the discourses that result from the studying of these texts.

Critical theory is furthermore a paradigm, which is an umbrella that houses a variety of sub-theories. For this research, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was the most applicable. Some key characteristics of CDA, which are directly linked to this study, are that CDA is problem-orientated, which means that it is concerned with current societal issues; CDA is also intentional about assuming a critical position when studying a text, which is especially important since CDA tends to look into issues of dominance and resistance related to social issues (Van Dijk, 1997:17). Van Dijk (1997:17) further notes that critical discourse analysis can be seen as a combination of social theory and discourse analysis in order to describe, interpret, and explain the realities of society. Furthermore, CDA has a deliberate interest in understanding, uncovering and transforming conditions of inequality and uncovering issues related to “power”, particularly power relations related to privilege in institutions and bodies of knowledge and further looks to the use of language to mediate these relationships.

CDA was thus most applicable to this study since the study is concerned with literary texts that contain African characters or contexts that may be misinterpreted or neglected through analysis and which tend to look at these characters and/or context through a Western/European lens. The study required a careful exploration of the themes, characters and language to uncover African

knowledge or values it may hold, as well as African knowledge and/or values that are neglected, lost, or negatively portrayed by the authors of the literary texts or analyses of these texts. This was achieved by employing CDA, which forms the theoretical basis of this study. Another reason why CDA was used for this study is that CDA is preoccupied with language and how it is used to signify power and social practice, which is significant especially since the study of the language used by the authors of the chosen texts was one of the focal points in the analyses of the literary texts.

3.5 Research design

A research design is the "master plan" the researcher follows in order to answer the research questions, address the research problem, and meet the aim and objectives of the study. A qualitative approach was followed in this study with a philosophical orientation of Social constructivism and African philosophy. This research endeavoured to critically analyse literary texts and supplementary texts used to study the chosen literary texts. Thus, the research strategy employed was analytical research, which explores concepts through document analysis (Grosser *et al.,* 2018:19). It should also be noted that the research relied on texts/documents as data collection method and critical discourse as method of data analysis.

3.5.1 Approach

Qualitative research can be described as "a powerful tool for learning more about our lives and the sociocultural context in which we live" (Merriam, 2002:xviii). It furthermore relates to the comprehension of human experiences (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007:21). Strauss and Corbin (1990:11) expand on this definition by defining qualitative research as that which is concerned with "persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, feelings as well as about organisational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena and interactions between nations." Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explain that qualitative research accommodates multiple meanings of individual experiences as it centres on a constructivist approach that is supported by Merriam (2002:1), who acquiesces that this approach is based on the premise that people construct meaning socially through interaction with their world.

Qualitative research was well suited to this study as its philosophical framework was a Social constructivist one and because the study was concerned with exploring literature from an African perspective, which may be significant in the appreciation of African knowledge that may be neglected in the current analyses of texts. Grosser *et al*. (2018) state that some purposes for conducting qualitative research include gaining deep insight into the research problem and

creating an “agenda for change and reform” (Grosser *et al.*, 2018). These purposes for conducting qualitative research corresponded directly with the questions and aim of this research – to suggest possible ways to include African perspectives when analysing literature, which could in turn serve the purpose of promoting African knowledge. While this study does not include human participants, it explored the lived experiences of fictional characters in the texts, which further justifies the suitability of the qualitative approach for this study. As this research relied on texts and their analysis instead of participants, the research strategy employed was analytical research.

3.5.2 Sample

The study employed purposive sampling in order to reach its aim and objectives. Purposive sampling was appropriate to this study because it is usually used when the researcher has a specific purpose in mind (Maree & Pietersen, 2016:168). In this research, the goal was to identify literature containing African contexts and/or African characters that could not be fully explored if the African perspective was disregarded or neglected. The sample, being the texts in this instance, was limited to literature that is prescribed at present or has been prescribed in the English literature course of the initial English teacher training programme for the Senior and Further Education and Training Phase at one South African university. Only three texts were selected to limit the selection of the literary texts in order to ensure in-depth analyses of these texts. Although the study was focused on literature prescribed over the last ten years, at least two of these texts should be prescribed at present. The selected texts were:

Disgrace (1999) – JM Coetzee

JM Coetzee is a celebrated writer who has won the Booker Prize twice; once in 1985 and in 1999 for *Disgrace*, and the Nobel Prize for literature in 2003 (McCrum, 2015). The novel focuses on the life of David Lurie, a 52-year old professor of Communications who struggles to find his place in South Africa’s new dispensation after the dismantling of apartheid. *Disgrace* is a viable selection because, while the protagonist is a white male, it explores important issues related to colonisation and apartheid and the consequences of these systems. Furthermore, the portrayal of the postcolonial setting and black men, such as Petrus, as antagonists is important to this research since the study is concerned with the portrayal of African characters and African contexts.

Things fall apart (1958) – Chinua Achebe

This novel focuses on the life of Okonkwo, a man respected in society for his accomplishments in battle as well as his home life. When the English arrive and introduce Christianity, many of the tribe – including Okonkwo's son – convert, and this causes conflict in Okonkwo's society and his home. The novel, written by Nigerian-born Chinua Achebe, has sold more than 20 million copies and is seen as a seminal work of African literature. As pointed out earlier, the novel contributed to Achebe being awarded the Man Booker International Prize for fiction in 2007.

Othello (1609)

William Shakespeare is widely recognised as the best poet and playwright of all time (Bloom, 1996). *Othello*, named after the protagonist of this play, focuses on the downfall of a war hero who is overcome by jealousy. Even though some scholars have argued against the implementation of the canon, this text has been chosen in an effort to show that it is possible to look at Shakespeare from an African perspective. Yandell and Brady (2016:54) conducted research on the interpretations of Shakespeare in different contexts. One classroom was set in Essex, London and another in Ramallah, Palestine. What became apparent was that students responded to the text based on their cultural and historical background. This resulted in *Romeo and Juliet* taking on different meanings depending on where it was being studied. Yandell and Brady (2016:54) note: "How these students read and respond to the text is a product of culture and history – of different, and specific, cultures and histories. The sign, *Romeo and Juliet*, takes on different meanings in these two classrooms. So, too, do other signs: 'mother', 'father', 'daughter', 'family', every bit as much as 'revenge', 'loyalty' or 'society', simply do not mean the same thing in Ramallah as they do in Essex." These different interpretations emanating from these different classrooms align to a previous assertion that good literature contains "many weak implicatures" (Meyer, 1997:4), meaning that it is open to interpretation. In the same way, *Othello* can be interpreted from an African perspective, especially when considering the ethnicity of the protagonist and the challenges he experiences in a prejudiced society that could be compared to challenges in South Africa. *Othello* has also been chosen to align to an assertion that South African English teachers should study a variety of texts and not only South African and African literature.

These three texts were chosen for very specific reasons. The most obvious reason was that they have either an African character or African context or both. The protagonist of *Things fall apart* is a black African man and the story is set in Africa. The novel further gives a depiction of African life prior to colonisation, and showcases a culturally rooted people which was rare in African novels at that time (Alam, 2014:102). *Disgrace,* on the other hand, is a portrayal of postcolonial and post-apartheid South Africa and focuses on complex issues, such as race relations and reconciliation that are associated with a young democracy. While *Othello* is not set in Africa, it

offers an interesting portrayal of an African character outside an African setting. The three texts are significantly different, which was another reason for their selection. The texts offer three very different accounts of African characters and the impact their settings have on them. These texts also offer an opportunity to critically look at these different characters and different contexts with the application of different African perspectives and philosophies. All three texts have been studied at secondary and tertiary level in South Africa, which also points to the relevance of the selection of these texts. The selection of these texts also support an earlier assertion, that a South African English teacher must be exposed to a variety of texts which forms part of the canon and also represent the South African context and the African continent as a whole. These texts fit this description with *Othello* being an international text that forms part of the canon, was written in the 1600s, and provides insight into the views of African characters before colonisation. *Disgrace* is a South African text that was written shortly after apartheid ended and thus reflects the challenges related to postcolonial and post-apartheid South Africa, while *Things fall apart* is a Nigerian text about colonisation written in 1958. Furthermore, the selection of these texts also align to an assertion made earlier that not only black Africans should relate African stories but that these stories can be told from different perspectives.

In addition to literary texts, supplementary texts were also analysed and provided insight into how the literary texts are analysed and which interpretations/perspectives/narratives are dominant when analysing these texts. These supplementary texts included study guides and/or student supplementary workbooks.

3.5.3 Method of data analysis

Critical discourse analysis, hereafter referred to as CDA, is a combination of social theory and textual/discourse analysis which functions in describing and interpreting the social world (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berks, Mosley, Hui & Joseph, 2005:366). CDA is rooted in Critical Theory, which is concerned with issues pertaining to power and justice (Rogers *et al.*, 2005:7) and is especially concerned with issues related to gender, race and class (Jansen, 2016:23). Hence, CDA is invested in “understanding, uncovering and transforming conditions of inequality” (Rogers *et al*., 2005:368) and takes critical analysis of the role of language in relation to this. According to Denscombe (2010:287), a crucial aspect of discourse analysis is that what is represented in the text should never be taken at “face value” but that further inferences should be made about the hidden meanings in the text. Denscombe (2010:287) further advocates that a text is able to create, interpret and strengthen cultural messages and involve the reader in the active process of uncovering this.

CDA is then a careful study of the construction of a text and what it reveals and leaves to the reader to uncover. This method of analysis is well suited to this study, since there is a specific interest in uncovering issues around the misinterpretation or negation of knowledge, values, and culture pertaining to the African characters and contexts of the selected texts.

Since the research is concerned with analysing literary texts as well as analysing the existing secondary sources (student supplementary workbooks) the research employed CDA, as it is an analytical approach that focuses on the way texts represent power and inequality in society (Wodak & Meyer, 2009:12). McGregor (2010) further expands on CDA by explaining that the use of CDA aims to expose dominant forces that wish to narrate the versions of society's reality best suited to its interests. This description of CDA is echoed by Hart (2010:13), who puts forth that critical discourse analysis is a means to analyse the relationship between language and society and specifically explores the way aspects such as ideology, identity, and inequalities are represented in texts and in the language of these texts. This is supported by Perakyla and Russuvuori (2011:531), who state that critical discourse analysis is focused on merging the social with the linguistic. It is worthy to note that critical discourse analysis and critical linguistics are often used interchangeably.

This methodology was chosen since I endeavoured to look at how African characters and/or contexts are represented in literary texts and the analyses of these texts with a special interest in whether these texts and their analyses exclude, misinterpret, neglect, or undermine these characters or contexts. The research was thus specifically related to issues of ideology, identity, and inequality, which are aligned to the CDA methodology. Another important focus of this research was to pay special attention to how language is used to portray issues of ideology, identity, and inequality. In that respect, the research was closely linked to the aim of CDA, since this methodology is also focused on how language and social power are intertwined as language can be used to express and challenge power (Wodak & Meyer, 2009:12). CDA, therefore, calls for a direct focus on language and how it is used to create and hide meaning. Fairclough's (1995) micro-, meso-, and macrolevels are applicable to this study. I endeavoured to incorporate these in my analyses. At the micro-level, I considered aspects such as syntax, use of metaphor and rhetorical devices. The meso-level refers to aspects such as production and consumption, and may ask questions such as which institution produced a text? And who is the target audience? These questions are similar to those suggested by Janks (1997) mentioned in Chapter 1. The macro-level refers to intertextual and interdiscursive elements and broad societal issues that influence texts being analysed. Denscombe (2010:287) says that "words are chosen", implicating that the words which are carefully selected by the author for and about the African character and setting cannot be ignored when searching for meaning. In addition to this, McGregor (2010)

rightfully explains that a text is often a depiction of its social context and that the issues pertaining to “oppression, repression and marginalisation go unchallenged if the text is not critically analysed” (McGregor, 2010).

The questions proposed by Janks (1997:329) which are outlined in Chapter one of this study, were crucial to this study, as they pertain to issues of power. A focal point of this study was to determine whether African knowledge, values, or cultures are undermined, misinterpreted, and/or neglected in literary texts and supplementary material that are related to issues of power.

3.5.4 Philosophical orientation

This research functioned under two philosophical orientations: African philosophy and Social constructivism. Social constructivism was well suited to the study as constructivism is related to the theory of knowledge and how people learn (Abdal-Haqq, 1998:1). Mogashoa (2014:52) relies on the work of many researchers to define constructivism as the process through which learners build knowledge through active participation. Social constructivism can then be understood as the building or constructing of knowledge through social interaction. This active participation and social interaction can play a vital role in ensuring that the learner or student does not lag behind, a concern raised by Young (2013) who stresses the importance of equal access to powerful knowledge. Social constructivism is furthermore concerned with meaning/knowledge building. This concern was closely related to this study, as I set out to explore the knowledge that is disseminated and neglected or misinterpreted when engaging with literary texts and supplementary material.

Below is a table explaining the characteristics of the Social constructivist framework compiled by Grosser, Oosthuizen, Simmonds, and Van der Vyver (2018:22).

Column C illustrates why the Social constructivist framework was aligned to this study:

Characteristics	Social constructivist	Applicability to this study
Data collection	Open-ended questions, interviews, visual data, and document analysis (Grosser *et al.*, 2018:22).	Document analysis was used in this study as literary and supplementary texts were critically analysed.
Type of data	Words, qualitative, inductive (Grosser *et al.*, 2018:22).	This was a qualitative study, which relied on the analysis and interpretation of texts, making it qualitative and inductive.
Purpose	To explore, gain insight and understanding and to generate theory (Grosser *et al.*, 2018:22).	This research aimed to explore the current interpretation of literary texts as presented in the supplementary material of texts with African characters and/or contexts and gained insight into the limitations when analysing these texts from a solely Western/European perspective. It also aimed to suggest a method of analysis that promotes African knowledge and awareness.

While Social constructivism was chosen for this study, African philosophy was also applied as the theoretical framework underpinning this study, especially because it can be understood as the exploration of African experiences and knowledge (Msila, 2014:311). This is reinforced by Higgs (2012:37), who justifies that the employment of African philosophy as a framework is vital in the creation of powerful knowledge that will ultimately afford Africans the opportunity to engage in their educational development. African philosophy, therefore, is concerned with African world-views. When the literary texts were analysed, it was crucial to refer to African philosophy to show how African perspectives can be included in the analyses of these texts.

In an attempt to understand African philosophy, it was important to understand that Africa is a "community of nations and a continent with a rich mix of cultures and identities" (Amah, 2015:12). In light of the rich and diverse nature of the continent, it is challenging to define African philosophy, as it is not homogenous, monolingual, or static. When trying to understand African philosophy, it should also be noted that African people's way of seeing the world has been significantly impacted by colonisation (Higgs & Smith, 2017:15) and that African identities have thus been distorted.

Higgs and Smith (2017:14) explain that, in response to this, an increased number of postcolonial scholars' desire to develop social and economic philosophies that will promote African development. Amah (2015:12) suggests that, in order for philosophy to be truly African, it should be cognisant of the diverse communities and ethnicities of Africa. In 2000, Asante explained that while Africa is diverse, there are some commonalities shared by Africans such as the way in which they approach constructs like the universe, society, and divinity (cited by Amah, 2015:12). With these two considerations – that African philosophy is "multiplex" in nature but that there are commonalties – as backdrop, the four discourses of ethnophilosophy, sage philosophy, political philosophy, and pure philosophy were used in the analysis of texts. The characteristics of each of these philosophies were carefully considered when analysing the literary texts and supplementary texts related to this study. Having an understanding of African philosophy served as lens which informed the reading and analyses of the chosen literary texts by specifically looking at whether the current depictions of African characters and/or contexts in these texts correspond with the promotion of African perspectives.

3.5.5 Trustworthiness of the study

Guba and Lincoln (1994) acknowledge four important criteria that ensure the trustworthiness of a study, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which are discussed in relation to this study.

3.5.5.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the compatibility of the findings with reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:123) and the extent to which the findings are a true reflection of the participants' opinions and feelings (Kumar, 2014:219). Since there are no participants in this study, credibility was ensured by interpreting the identified literary texts as well as supplementary material and articles in a fair and transparent manner. Credibility was ensured by not misrepresenting the information in the literary texts, supplementary material, or articles in order to suit my views on how these texts should be analysed.

3.5.5.2 Transferability

Nieuwenhuis (2016:124) suggests that, in order to ensure the transferability of a study, thick descriptions should be provided in terms of the participants (texts, in this case), context and research design. This study adhered to this criterion by thoroughly explaining the criteria for the selection of the literary texts as well as the supplementary material and articles.

The transferability of this study has been ensured by providing data which can be applied in a different context. For instance, a researcher might use the same methodology but apply it to different texts which also have an African context and/or characters. In order to ensure the transferability if this study, the context of this study was diligently explained by looking specifically at issues related to knowledge construction and African philosophy. In addition to this, the research design was also explained in detail by describing the research aim and research methodology and by accurately reporting the findings of this study. These detailed explanations make the study accessible to researchers who may want to study existing literature and ascertain whether there are alternative interpretations that could work to promote African perspectives.

3.5.5.3 Dependability

This refers to how reliable the study is (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:124). In order to ensure the dependability of the study, the steps followed when conducting the research as well as the findings were recorded in a detailed manner. As this study was reliant on the analyses of texts, thick descriptions of analyses of these texts were provided as well as the analyses of these texts in supplementary materials and articles. The questions used to guide these analyses and the findings were reported in a detailed manner. Nieuwenhuis (2016b:124) argues that a research design and its implementation in a study can demonstrate dependability. This study's research design and implementation demonstrated dependability in the qualitative approach that was followed, the strategy of inquiry (CDA), and the philosophical world view, which included Social constructivism and African philosophy. All of these contribute to ensuring dependability.

3.5.5.4 Confirmability

According to Trochim and Donnelly (cited by Kumar, 2014:219), confirmability is the extent to which the findings of the research can be supported by others. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define confirmability as "the degree of neutrality or the degree to which the findings of a study are shaped by the sample, and not by the researcher's bias, motivation, or interest". Because this research was dependent on interpreting literary texts as well as the existing and/or dominant interpretations thereof, and interpreting supplementary study material, the findings (interpretations) were cross-examined and confirmed by the supervisor and co-supervisor of this study. Findings were also related to existing literature.

3.5.6 Ethical considerations

Research should at all times be conducted in an ethical manner (Strydom, 2011:123). While this research did not involve participants, certain measures were put in place to ensure that the

research upheld ethical considerations. For one, since I am a student of the North-West University, I familiarised myself with the ethical procedures of the university and adhered to these by applying for ethical clearance as required (see appendix A). I also successfully completed mandatory ethics training offered by the institution. Secondly, although this study qualified as a low-risk study due to the absence of human participants, the Research Ethics Guidelines state that the accurate and fair treatment of the work of other researchers should be prioritised when conducting a literature review (ERSA, 2019). Although I endeavoured to look at the literary texts and the supplementary study material critically, I treated the authors of these works fairly by not misinterpreting their works. Furthermore, I did not make derogatory comments about the authors or the literary texts, and did not undermine the authors of the study guides and articles that were used by misrepresenting their research. In addition to this, I was transparent about my methods of conducting research and acknowledged the authors and sources used for this research and did not present the ideas of others as my own. As some aspects of this research dealt with cultures and values, I conducted the research in a sensitive manner and, although I took a stance for the promotion of African knowledge and values, I did not present information in a biased manner. I gave a brief insight to who I am as researcher in order for the reader to appreciate my point of departure for this study.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the research methodology that was implemented in this study. This qualitative study functioned under Social constructivism and African philosophy as its philosophical framework. This chapter also provided a detailed explanation of how CDA was applied as the method of analysing the literary texts and supplementary material. In addition to this, this chapter also outlined the role of the researcher and the ethics taken into consideration while conducting the research. The following three chapters, namely Chapters 4,5 and 6 entail the literary analyses of the three texts; *Things fall apart* by Chinua Achebe*, Disgrace* by JM Coetzee and *Othello* by William Shakespeare. The analyses of these texts are arranged in two parts: the first part is the analysis of the literary text, and the second is the analysis of supplementary material to this text. In order to fulfil the purpose of this study, the three texts have been analysed by focusing on aspects that are aligned to CDA as well as the philosophical underpinning of this study. This has been achieved by addressing the questions posed by Janks (1997:329), which are argued to be essential to CDA. When answering these questions, it was important to keep in mind the aim of this study which is to;

Explore the interpretations that are dominant when analysing English texts that have an African context and/or African characters and to suggest plausible ways that this literature can be analysed in order to promote African perspectives.

The questions suggested by Janks (1997:329) are listed below along with an explanation of how they were applied to the study and how the application thereof aligns to the research aim of this study:

- ***How is the text positioned or positioning?***

  When looking at the positioning of the text, I explored the fictional context/setting that is created in the text and interpreted how this context is positioned in terms of social problems, discrimination and power relations. Secondly, I looked at how this text is situated within a particular historical context; in other words, how the era it was written in may have influenced the writing of the text and subsequent portrayal of the African context and/or characters. In addition to this, I also looked at how the writer's positioning may have influenced their portrayal of the African contexts and characters. Lastly, I looked specifically at how African characters are positioned in the text by looking at their specific character traits, as well as how the fictional context and actual historical context influence the portrayal of the African character/s of interest. In light of this, I looked at how the text is positioned as well as how the text positions African characters.

- ***Whose interests are served by this positioning?***

  This question was applied with specific attention to how the positioning of the fictional context/setting reveals issues pertaining to social problems, discrimination and power relations by determining who benefits from the positioning that was described in the first question.

- ***Whose interests are negated?***

  This question was applied with specific attention to how the positioning of the fictional context/setting reveals issues pertaining to social problems, discrimination and power relations by determining who suffers from the positioning that was described in the first question.

- ***What are the consequences of this positioning?***

  This question was applied by focusing on how the positioning of the context accounts for social problems, discrimination and power relations that are accounted for in the text. I also specifically looked at how the positioning of the setting contributes to the problems experienced by the African characters, and the effect these problems have on eventual outcomes for the African characters of the texts.

In addition to this, language was also analysed in order to understand its role in the portrayal of Africa and/or the African in the text. The analysis of language is important to CDA since language may reveal issues pertaining to discrimination, control and power (Wodak & Meyer, 2009:12). The analysis of the language in the text was approached by implementing Fairclough's dimensions of analysis (as cited in Janks, 1997:329). This was done by extracting passages, which describe social issues or relate to discrimination and/or power and abuse, and analysing these according to the following dimensions:

- text analysis (description), also known as the micro-level of analysis
- processing analysis (interpretation), also known as the meso-level of analysis
- social analysis (explanation), also known as the macro-level of analysis

Added to this, the analysis of the texts was also focused on uncovering African knowledge and uncovering possible links to African philosophy and AIKS. The second part of the analysis, which was focused on analysing the supplementary material, explored how African characters and/or

contexts are interpreted, and to what extent African knowledge or perspectives that are evident in the text, are explored.

CHAPTER 4 LITERARY ANALYSIS OF *THINGS FALL APART BY* CHINUA ACHEBE

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart* was analysed with the specific purpose of understanding how the African context and characters are portrayed and establishing whether there is cause for the application of alternative interpretations. In order to understand how the African context and characters are portrayed in this text, Janks's (1997) suggestion of questions related to CDA were applied. These questions are particularly concerned with the position or positioning of a text and the interests that are served and negated by this position or positioning, as well as what the consequences are of this position or positioning. In addition to this, the role of language in the text was also analysed by implementing Fairclough's dimensions of CDA (as cited by Janks, 1997:329). The literary analysis of this text also explored how African philosophy could be applied to the reading of the text, as well as what IKS are presented in the text. Finally, the chapter also includes an analysis of the study guides which accompany the reading of this text and form part of the coursework for the initial teacher training programme of interest in this study. This was done with the specific purpose of establishing which interpretations are dominant when analysing the text as well as how else the text could be interpreted which could in turn promote African perspectives and knowledge.

4.2 How is the text positioned or positioning?

Things fall apart takes place in Nigeria, Africa, and is divided into three parts that document village life prior to colonisation, the introduction of missionaries, and the impact of colonisation. From the onset, the author focuses on defining Okonkwo, the main character, as well as the society in which Okonkwo lives. Most of the story takes place in the village of Umuofia, which is home to the Ibo people. Achebe characterises this village and its people as a highly functional society which has a range of complex ideals, laws, customs and traditions. These ideals, laws, customs and traditions are illustrated to the reader in various ways including: the feasts and festivals of the villages, such as the *Feast of the New Yam* (Achebe, 1958 31), the honouring of their gods such as *Ani* (Achebe, 1958:25) and *Amadiora* (Achebe, 1958:28), gatherings for entertainment such as wrestling matches (Achebe, 1958:33) and organised village and family life with clear gender roles. This society is further portrayed as functional with a close look at farming practices such as sharecropping (Achebe, 1958:19), as well as gatherings to deal with societal issues such as murder (Achebe, 1958:8-10) and marital problems (Achebe, 1958:73). This characterisation of

Ibo society as functional and complex contradicts the notion of Africa as a dark, uncivilised continent. Prior to, and in order to justify colonisation, Africa was portrayed as a dark and dangerous continent which was the opposite of Europe (Bates, 2012) and thus in need of saving. Oguh (2015:8) argues that, in the past, Africa has been represented as a "helpless, war-torn, poverty-stricken and corruption-infested" continent which persists in Western media coverage of Africa today. This is also observed by Fatima, Jamil and Hanif (2015:40) who contend that the coloniser has divided the world into two parts, with the coloniser at one end as superior and cultured, and the colonised at the other end as inferior and savage. According to Melsenhendler (2003:101), these representations of Africa were initiated by Greek travellers as well as poets and writers, who, when comparing Africa to what was familiar to them, described it as the opposite of Europe. Melsenhendler (2003:101) further notes that ancient Greek writings paint Africa as a land of "deformed human-like, but nonhuman, monsters". When comparing Achebe's description of Africa and the African to these ideas, it is remarkably different and serves to humanise and give an identity to the African.

The author does not portray the society as poor, ailing or uncivilised; but showcases the richness of their culture, customs, traditions and practices, as well as their sense of community. This is shown repeatedly through the following five attributes; problems are solved collectively, respect for elders, customs and traditions are upheld, ambition is respected and lawlessness is dealt with decisively and fairly. These attributes are elaborated on in the following sections:

- Problems are solved collectively

The village of Umuofia is governed by the collective decision making of men with titles, priests and elders. When the community is met with a challenge, the village elders and people are summoned to a meeting where the nature of the problem is described and the best course of action is discussed. An example of this is shown early on when the men are summoned to a meeting after a daughter of the clan has been killed by a neighbouring village. Collectively, the men of Umuofia agree that the perpetrating village should offer a woman and young man in exchange for the life that was taken (Achebe, 1958: 8-11). Through these meetings it is clear that there is great respect for kinship and brotherhood; "we come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so" (Achebe, 1958:139), as well as the customs and traditions of the land: "The Feast of the New Yam was held every year before the harvest began to honour the earth goddess and ancestral spirits of the clan" (Achebe, 1958:31). In addition, these gatherings show that there is a strong sense of unity and that community takes precedence over the individual, which is most evidently shown in the fact that these communities are governed by a collective of people as opposed to one authoritative figure: "they (the missionaries) asked who the king of the village was, but the villagers told them there was no king. We have men of high title and the chief priests

and the elders" (Achebe, 1958:123). Through this, Achebe shows African ideology that is rooted in unity. This is reinforced by Metz (2020:32), who argues that, in Africa, the community's interests precede that of the individual, which is remarkably different to Western philosophy that places emphasis on individualistic values such as "pleasure, desire, satisfaction, autonomy, independence, rationality, creativity, authenticity and uniqueness". This emphasis on individualism reflects the views of French philosopher, René Descartes, who through his assertion "I think therefore I am" made the case that a human is "self-contained and self-sufficient; an inherently rational, mind-bound subject" (Birhane, 2017). This view is juxtaposed by African ideologies that advocate that humans develop their identity through interacting with society (Birhane, 2017). Descartes' ideology "I think therefore I am" is directly opposed by the African ideology expressed by African philosopher John Mbiti, (as cited by Birhane, 2017) "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." It should however also be considered that both western and African societies are constantly evolving and that the views that western societies are predominantly individualistic while African societies adhere to collectivism may not necessarily be true. Ferraiola (1996) (as cited by Romylos, 2018) and Bramann (2004) (as cited by Romylos, 2018) argue that Descartes's texts in support of individualism should not be taken as definite evidence of Descartes' commitment to individualism.

In view of this, Agulanna (2010:288) speaks extensively on African, and more especially Ibo people's understanding of the individual and society and their interactions with one another. Agulanna (2010:288) states that, in Africa, it is believed that an individual can only uncover the true meaning of the self through interacting with the community. Columbus (2014:209) echoes this view by stressing a sense of communality in African tradition in which an individual's life is shaped by and revolves around his/her community. Agulanna (2010:288) further states that in Ibo culture, an individual's will is determined by the will of the community. In African societies, unity is a defining characteristic that provides its individual members with a sense of amity and security. In *Things fall apart*, the portrayal of this strong sense of community is achieved through the depiction of a society who makes decisions that are in line with their shared culture as a whole.

This emphasis on community is well aligned with the Social constructivist framework of this study, since Social constructivism is focused on how meaning is created through social interaction. It is also reminiscent of the concept of 'Ubuntu' which is characteristic of African societies. Ubuntu, which is a Nguni[2] expression, can be directly translated into English as "humanness" but is best communicated through the expression "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" meaning "a person is a person through other people" (Bolden, 2014:799). Letseka (2000:48)) believes that Ubuntu is

[2] Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi people predominantly situated in Southern Africa.

deeply rooted in values that express humanism, such as “care, community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness” (Bolden, 2014:799). Although the concept is one that originated in Southern Africa, the philosophy is shared in many parts of the continent (Bolden, 2014:799) and can be seen in the Ibo society that is presented in *Things fall apart.* Another aspect of Ubuntu that can be applied to the text is that it is rooted in interdependence which also points to constructionist ontology, meaning that a person cannot be removed from their social context (Bolden, 2014:800). This is especially relevant to *Things fall apart* as the community is negatively affected once their sense of unity is threatened, which is proven later in this chapter.

- Elders are respected

Another defining characteristic is the great respect people have for the elders of their village. The elders of the village are often given preference at gatherings when they are given the opportunity to weigh in on important matters, “the elders of the clan had decided that Ikemefuna should be in Okonkwo’s care for a while” (Achebe, 1958:23) and given the first preference to break the kola nut which is served as a welcoming snack at gatherings: “The oldest member…The kola nut was given to him to break, and he prayed for the ancestors” (Achebe, 1958:138). Throughout the novel, there is a clear respect for the elders of a clan: “an old man was very close to the ancestors” and “whenever one of these ancient men appeared in the crowd to dance…young men gave way” (Achebe, 1958:102). In *Things fall apart*, respect for elders is also shown through the honouring of ancestors which is a focal point in the novel, “…Unoka prayed to their ancestors for life and health, and for protection against their enemies” (Achebe, 1958:5). This shows that there is great appreciation and respect shown for those who came before the present generation. Ikechukwu (2017:40), who specifically focuses on ancestral worship within Igbo societies, notes that ancestral worship is based on the belief that the dead continue living after physical death. Ikechukwu (2017:40) also explains that, in Igbo societies, ancestors who lived well are revered with the belief that these ancestors can influence fortune. There is evidence of this in *Things fall apart* as there are a number of instance where ancestors are revered. Through incorporating this aspect of African society, Achebe showcases existing culture of African society prior to colonisation. This is important, since culture is a key determiner of identity (Ikechukwu, 2017:37). Ikechukwu (2017:37) reinforces this idea by stating that; “culture gives a community both a sense of reality and dignity, integrity and continuity, security and social cohesion”. In addition to this, ancestral worship is also an aspect of African society that is opposed by western ideology. Ancestral worship is especially opposed to the Christian ideology that was mobilised to convert Africans and assist in the colonisation of Africa. Okeke, Ibenwa and Okeke (2017:4) note that, unlike the Igbo who believe in ancestors, Christians believe in present life on earth which opposes the view of life after death which is characteristic of an ancestor. This view could however be

limiting as it implies that the Igbo do not believe in present life on earth which would be incorrect. Also, it should be noted that Christians do believe in life after death but that this life will only occur after the second coming of Christ. Furthermore, Christians are opposed to the worship of ancestors since they believe that there is only one true God, and worshipping ancestors is likened to worshipping false gods (Okeke *et al*., 2017:7). Through the depiction of a community that venerates ancestors, Achebe portrays a society that is unique in their culture and ideologies, which often contrasts sharply with western ideologies.

- Customs and traditions are upheld

From the first chapter, Achebe introduces the reader to a society that is rich in customs and traditions and who upholds these even when they are difficult or uncomfortable. These customs attribute to individual accountability: “After the week of peace every man and his family began to clear the bush to make new farms” (Achebe, 1958:27), unity within the community: “And every man…was expected to invite large numbers of guests from far and wide” (Achebe, 1958:32), and promote morality and justice according to Ibo standards: “She (Ani, the earth goddess) was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct” (Achebe, 1958:31). The richness of Ibo customs and traditions is made apparent through African religious customs and traditions that are showcased in the novel. Examples of this can be seen in the honouring of gods and ancestors which are important to Ibo culture: “Okonkwo kept the wooden symbols of his personal god and of his ancestral spirits” (Achebe, 1958: 12). Furthermore, the importance of customs and traditions in Ibo society are exhibited through rituals Ibo people observe as well as specific ways in which gatherings are conducted. An example of this is seen with the use of kola nut in the text, which is often eaten before a gathering commences: “He who brings kola brings life” (Achebe, 1958:5), “He presented kola nut…which was passed around for all to see…” (Achebe, 1958:16). Another example of a unique Ibo custom is the gathering of the *egwugwu*, who are clan leaders that are masked in order to appear as an ancestor, and rule on important matters. The customs and traditions are unique to the African society Achebe presents and gives the reader insight to the daily lives of an Ibo society.

- Ambition is respected

In Ibo culture, men who work hard are rewarded with titles and wealth and are respected by their communities. Achebe makes it apparent that hard work is revered in this community by explicitly stating this throughout the text, “Fortunately, among these people, a man was judged according to his worth…” (Achebe, 1958:7); “…achievement was revered” (Achebe, 1958:7).

In Ibo culture, it is important for a man to earn his place in society, which is often shown through the protagonist's emphasis on the importance of success by Ibo standards. This is illustrated through Okonkwo's hard work: "…in spite of these disadvantages, he had begun even in his father's lifetime to lay the foundations of a prosperous future" (Achebe, 1958:16); "If ever a man deserved his success, that man was Okonkwo" (Achebe, 1958:23). Additionally, the importance of hard work in this society is shown through Okonkwo's disdain of his father for not having taken any titles in his life and for not acquiring any wealth or being able to provide for his family: "...he was possessed by the fear of his father's contemptible life and shameful death" (Achebe, 1958:16). It is further shown through Okonkwo's intolerance of lazy men: "he was struck, as most people were, by Okonkwo's brusqueness in dealing with less successful men" (Achebe, 1958:22), and his son Nwoye, who he believes is soft and resembles his grandfather: "…Nwoye, was then twelve years old but was already causing his father great anxiety for his incipient laziness" (Achebe, 1958:12). His disdain for laziness is fuelled by his community's high regard for success, which goes to show that this society is highly functional and emphasises hard work and ambition.

- Lawlessness is dealt with decisively and fairly

The Ibo society in this text has a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and do not delay in administering the consequences for lawlessness. This is shown in the following two examples.

When Okonkwo beats his wife during the week of peace, Ezeani, who is the priest to the earth goddess states that his punishment is that he should offer "one she-goat, one hen, a length of cloth and a hundred cowries" (Achebe, 1958:26). Even though Okonkwo feels that the beating he gives his wife is justified because she has not fulfilled her wifely duties of preparing a meal: "Okonkwo tried to explain to him (Ezeani) what his wife had done" (Achebe, 1958:25), Okonkwo adheres to the consequence of his actions as the law of the village prohibits violence during the week of peace. This speaks to the decisiveness of the village when it comes to disobeying customs and traditions, as well as the importance of an individual to uphold these customs in order to belong to the community: "The evil you have done can ruin the whole clan" (Achebe, 1958:26).

Another example of the community's decisiveness is when Okonkwo accidentally kills a sixteen-year-old boy at his father, Ogbuefi Ezeudu's funeral. Whilst observing the customs of the funeral such as beating drums, dancing and firing guns, Okonkwo's gun explodes, killing the sixteen-year-old boy (Achebe, 1958:103). As a result of this, Okonkwo is forced to flee to his village for seven years. Although the incident is unintentional, the law of the village stands and is prioritised above individual need and circumstance. This will be interpreted as manslaughter in a court of law today. Before dawn the next day, Okonkwo and his family flee his village and his compound

and animals are destroyed by clan members: “Andbefore the cock crowed Okonkwo and his family were fleeing...They set fire to his houses, demolished his red walls, killed his animals and destroyed his barn” (Achebe, 1958:104).

The above paragraphs were aimed at illustrating how the Ibo society is positioned in the text. Prior to the arrival of the colonisers, this society is proven to be functional with laws, customs and traditions firmly in place. However, this positioning of the Ibo as an organised collective begins to change upon the arrival of the missionaries. The missionaries are able to infiltrate this village by focusing on questionable Ibo customs such as the banishing of babies and the disregard of unaccomplished men and outcasts. In so doing, they are able to appeal to the Ibo people most affected by these customs who easily join the Christians: “And for the first time they had a woman…she was very heavily with child. But each time she had borne twins, and they had been immediately thrown away” (Achebe, 1958:125); “None of his converts was a man whose word was heeded in the assembly of the people” (Achebe, 1958:118). The more damaging aspects of the missionaries’ infiltration of Ibo society, is their disregard of Ibo gods and laws: “There is no other gods…All others are false” (Achebe, 1958:148). The missionaries disregard Ibo customs and traditions as negative and eventually access and gain power in this village by infiltrating the beliefs of villagers. The effect of this is seen when even newly converted clan members disrespect Ibo gods and customs. “Three converts had gone into the village and boasted openly that all the gods were dead and impotent and that they are prepared to defy them by burning all their shrines” (Achebe, 1958:129). This disregard of existing Ibo religion places a lot of strain on their society.

It also becomes apparent that the missionaries do not only wish to introduce a new religion but aim to introduce a new government: “the white man had not only brought a religion, but also a government” (Achebe, 1958:130). The introduction of the religion, laws and education that the white men bring begins to sow seeds of division among the Ibo people: “There were many men and women in Umuofia who did not feel as strongly as Okonkwo about the new dispensation” (Achebe, 1958:147). Through this, there is a slow unravelling of the Ibo society as the division among members of the Ibo society begins to tear at the fabric of this society, which is unity. This falling apart of unity in the text is juxtaposed with the manner in which the white man deals with problems: “I have decided that you will pay a fine…” (Achebe, 1958:160). Here it is apparent that, unlike Ibo people who take decisions collectively, an individual makes decisions about the fate of a group of people. This illustrates the drastic changes that Ibo society are subjected to because of colonisation.

4.2.1 Positioning of Okonkwo in the text

In the beginning of novel, Okonkwo is clearly in a position of power. Okonkwo is revered for his strength, which serves his community in wars and for entertainment. From the first chapter Achebe makes it clear that Okonkwo has a definite place in Ibo society, “Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond” (Achebe, 1958:3). From Okonkwo, we learn that the character is completely defined by his society’s customs and traditions, “Okonkwo had clearly washed his hands and so ate with Kings and elders” (Achebe, 1958:7).

The author goes to great lengths to place emphasis on Okonkwo’s strength and temperament as his defining characteristic: “He was a man of action, a man of war” (Achebe, 1958:9). This idea of Okonkwo being a man of war is further perpetuated by describing him as person who is more likely to solve his problems with violence instead of reason: “He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get his words out quickly enough, he would use his fists” (Achebe, 1958:4). This description is more in line with the idea of Africans being savages who are unable to rationalise. Jacques (1997:200) elaborately explains early depictions of the African based on accounts of colonisers. These depictions describe Africans as ignorant, savage and barbaric beings with no significant accomplishments in arts and industry.

While Achebe goes to great lengths to emphasise Okonkwo’s strength and temper, it becomes apparent that there is more to his character. Throughout the text, Okonkwo is depicted as a complex character who expresses remorse, regret, sorrow, delight and even vulnerability. This multifaceted nature of his character is exhibited through various incidents and interactions. Firstly, Okonkwo is remorseful when he disobeys his clan’s customs and beats his wife, Ojiugo, for ‘negligence’ during the week of peace: “Inwardly, he was repentant” (Achebe, 1958:26). In addition to this, he is struck by sorrow and regret after taking part in Ikemefuna’s death, “Okonkwo did not taste food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna” (Achebe: 1958:53). Okonkwo openly displays his regret for unintentionally killing a member of his clan and accepts help from his uncle, cousins, and friends who help him rebuild his life: “Obierika and a half a dozen other friends came to help and to console him” (Achebe, 1958:104). Another aspect which proves that Okonkwo’s character is developed beyond a wrestler and warrior is that he is willing to listen to elders and heed their advice and that he fully honours Ibo customs and traditions: “Okonkwo kept the wooden symbol of his personal god and of his ancestral spirits. He worshipped them with sacrifices of kola nut, food and palm wine, and offered prayers to them on behalf of himself, his three wives and eight children” (Achebe, 1958:12).

Okonkwo’s position in society is however tremendously affected by the arrival of the missionaries. His strength no longer serves his people and thus affects his standing in society. Prior to

colonisation, Okonkwo could solve his conflict by using violence: “in a flash Okonkwo drew out his machete” (Achebe, 1958:169). Alternatively, he could resolve problems by consulting his personal *chi* (god) or clansmen: “I have come to pay you my respects but also to ask for a favour” (Achebe, 1958:17). However, Okonkwo begins to believe that his *chi* may have forsaken him: “Clearly his personal god or *chi* was not made for great things” (Achebe, 1958:108), and doubts the integrity of his clan, who he is certain has changed since the arrival of the missionaries: “Umuofia had indeed changed during the seven years Okonkwo had been in exile” (Achebe, 1958:143). Despite his disappointment in his clan’s indecisiveness surrounding a course of action concerning the colonisers, Okonkwo remains resolute in his belief that they can overcome the coloniser and that the best course of action is what he, and his village, are most respected for – a war: “Umuofia was feared by all its neighbours. It was powerful in war…” (Achebe, 1958:10). Okonkwo remains true to his nature by refusing to surrender his way of life to accommodate the new dispensation which is seen in his attempts to suggest a war, “Let us not reason like cowards” (Achebe, 1958:133); “We must fight these men and drive them from the land” (Achebe, 1958: 145). The turning point for Okonkwo is when he realises that his community that was once celebrated as the fiercest village among the nine villages, no longer prides itself in strength and unity but are fearful and divided, “He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart” (Achebe, 1958:151). As previously mentioned, Okonkwo is a man who completely aligns himself to Ibo culture and is defined by his society’s ideals, customs and traditions. When his people do not celebrate the course of action he takes when he kills the messenger of the missionaries and do not join him in war, he comes to realise that his previous assertion that his community has fallen apart is true: “What is it that has happened to our people? Why have they lost the power to fight?” (Achebe, 1958:145). The ultimate sign of Okonkwo’s despair at this realisation is when he defies the customs, he once held so dear, by committing suicide, which is an abomination according to their customs. His choice to commit suicide might also be an act of defiance through which he distances himself from the clan that has betrayed him, since custom dictates that one’s clansmen may not bury a man who has committed suicide: “It is against our custom…a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen” (Achebe, 1958:172). Okonkwo’s suicide can be seen from various perspectives; one view could be that he does not want to face the consequences of his actions. This view then allows for Okonkwo to be seen as cowardly. However, other views of Okonkwo’s suicide could be that his suicide was his final rejection of the new colonial system, as he escapes their punishment in a way to avoid being punished by what he views as an illegitimate system. His suicide could also be viewed according to the above claim that perhaps he commits suicide as an act of defiance against his clan. These differing views align to one of the objectives of this study which is to approach a text from multiple perspectives.

4.3 Whose interests are served by this positioning?

Prior to colonisation

Ibo society is represented as a society where decisions concerning the functioning and well-being of the village are taken by the men of the clan. As previously mentioned, these decisions are made as a collective and are usually in the best interest of the entire community, thus taking a utilitarian approach to decisions which centres around making decisions 'for the greater good. This speaks to the fact that the interests of the community are prioritised above the individual. As previously mentioned, prior to colonisation, Ibo society is functional and put emphasis on hard work, customs and traditions. People within this society who understand this and align themselves to Ibo culture and act in a way that benefits the village, are thus favoured. This can be seen in the lives of characters such as Nwakibie, man with nine wives, thirty children who had taken one of the highest titles in the land, and Ezeudu, who is described as a great man who had taken three of the four titles in the clan, which according to Ibo culture, is a rare achievement. This is also explicitly seen in the life of Okonkwo who serves his community in battle and has thus earned the respect of not only his clan, but across the nine villages, "Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages" (Achebe, 1958:3).

Post colonisation

After the arrival of the missionaries, the positioning of Ibo society slowly begins to change. Because Ibo culture is no longer revered in the new dispensation, those who wish to uphold the culture lose their standing in society. The introduction of colonisation not only threatens the interests of individuals but Ibo society as a whole. In what is a clear attempt to eradicate Ibo culture, the interests of the coloniser are put above that of the native. This is achieved by a slow infiltration of Ibo society in which the interests of people who would not have otherwise been served are now served. Initially the interests of unsuccessful men and people, who were unfairly treated by Ibo customs, are served through the introduction of the colonisers. The colonisers' decision to assist the marginalised people in Ibo society may seem noble, but it becomes apparent that the motives are not necessarily to assist the marginalised, but rather to slowly infiltrate Ibo society. It is however apparent that the interests of the coloniser are then served which can be seen through the prioritising of a religion, government and education system that is foreign to Ibo society, "From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand" (Achebe, 1958:150); "The new religion and government and trading the trading stores were very much in the people's eyes and minds" (Achebe, 1958:151). Furthermore, the interests of an individual, the queen of England, begins to be prioritised above the interests of Ibo people: "we have a court of law where we judge cases and administer justice as it is done in my own country under a great queen"

(Achebe, 1958:161). The introduction of the coloniser is initially disguised as the introduction of a religion and goodwill but later becomes apparent that the agenda is to eradicate the systems, customs and traditions of Ibo people.

This notion is expressed through the following observation by Achebe:

> Mr Brown had thought of nothing but numbers. He should have known that the Kingdom of God did not depend on large crowds. Our Lord Himself stressed the importance of fewness. Narrow is the way and few is the number. To fill the Lord's holy place with an idolatrous crowd clamouring for signs was a folly of everlasting consequence. Our Lord used the whip only once in His life – to drive the crowd away from His church.
>
> (Achebe, 1958:152)

Through this, it is apparent that the emphasis is not necessarily on Christianity, as pointed out by Achebe in the above passage, but rather to recruit and convert as many people as possible. The intentions of the coloniser are thus questionable as it is apparent that the aim is to change Ibo people by starting with religion. Schmidt (2014) comments on the role Christianity played in the colonisation of Africa by stating that "Christianity can be seen as a force of pacification that helped to enable colonisation and the cultural assimilation of Africans". This view of religion being used to pacify is well aligned to the Marx's view that, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people" (as cited by Mckinnon, 2005). According to Mckinnon (2005), this saying implies that religion is used as a tool to control the vulnerable in society. Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, an anti-colonial activist further notes that, "when the missionaries arrived, the Africans had the land and the missionaries had the bible. They taught us how to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, they had the land and we had the bible" (Bible, 1611). These views speak to the significant impact Christianity played in displacing Africans in terms of existing religions and cultures which aided in the colonisation of Africa. Ironically, these descriptions of religion as a trap by the colonisers are in direct contrast to the intended purpose of Christianity which is to provide a sense of comfort and freedom; "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Bible, 1611). "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (Bible, 1611). The questionable agenda of the coloniser is solidified in the final chapter of *Things fall apart* where a leader of the colonisers wishes to learn about Ibo customs in order to write a book he is working on entitled "*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*" (Achebe, 1958:173). The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2020) defines pacification as "the act of forcibly suppressing or eliminating a population considered to be hostile". This definition serves as an accurate description of the portrayal of colonisation in *Things fall apart.* Ibo people are characterised as hostile, backward and violent in order to justify the forceful suppression or elimination of their culture and identity. This also shows that the main purpose is not the introduction of Christianity, but rather the pacification of the Ibo society.

4.4 What are the consequences of this positioning?

Prior to colonisation

Prior to colonisation, some rigid customs and traditions in Ibo society cause a breakdown in family life and within the community. This is explicitly illustrated through characters such as Nwoye, Unoka and men who are unsuccessful by Ibo standards.

When Ikemefuna is killed, Nwoye experiences great difficulty accepting this and begins to distance himself from his father: “Nwoye knew that Ikemefuna had been killed, and something seemed to give way inside him” (Achebe, 1958:51). Nwoye is also seen as weak and feminine by his father, a perception that is strengthened by his love of indigenous stories usually associated with women of the clan: “That was the kind of story that Nwoye loved. But he now knew that they were for foolish women and children, and he knew that his father wanted him to be a man” (Achebe, 1958:45). Okonkwo’s difficulty in accepting his son’s character makes Nwoye’s conversion to Christianity easier as he finds the new religion appealing and comforting. The strain these customs have on community life is also represented when Obierika, a friend of Okonkwo, questions certain Ibo customs such as the banishing of twin babies to the Evil Forest.

Post colonisation

Soon after the arrival of the coloniser, Okonkwo is able to note the drastic changes in his community. It is clear that Umuofia has lost their identity through the apparent changes that can be traced from when the village is first introduced to the colonisers at the end of the text, “he mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had so unaccountably become soft like women” (Achebe, 1958:151). The most devastating consequence of colonisation is encapsulated in the title of this text, “Things fall apart”. The introduction of a religion that aimed at superiority at the expense of the local religion causes dissonance between the Ibo and their religion, which is one of their defining characteristics. Columbus (2014:210) comments on the centrality of religion to Nigerians’ lives and culture. Columbus (2014:210) maintains that religion “permeates all dimensions of the lives and infuses the economic, social and political with meaning so pervading that it is often said that the cultural people live, breathe and eat religiously”. When taking this into consideration as well as observing the great emphasis people place on honouring their gods and religious customs, it is understandable why threatening their religion has a disastrous impact on their culture and community at large. A similar view is communicated by an elder in the text who notes that: “The white man is very clever, he came quietly and peacefully with his religion…He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart” (Achebe, 1958:145-146).

4.5 Whose interests are negated?

Prior to colonisation

Although Ibo society is represented as functional and rich in culture, it is also represented as a patriarchal society which condones the abuse of women. This is seen through the abuse Okonkwo's wives and children suffer which usually goes unpunished by Ibo society.
Although Ibo people observe that it is a sign of weakness for a man to beat a woman: "It is not bravery when a man fights with a woman" (Achebe, 1958:78) and Okonkwo is punished for beating his wife on one occasion, it is clear that the interests of women are negated in this society. Okonkwo is only punished because he has beaten his wife during the *week of peace*, and not necessarily because he has beaten her. Another example of abuse is when Okonkwo beats his wife and attempts to shoot her for seemingly no reason: "Okonkwo, who had been walking about aimlessly in his compound in supressed anger, suddenly found an outlet" (Achebe, 1958:33). The abuse of women in this society is also illustrated when a case of abuse is brought to the *egwugwu* (clan leaders who gather to resolve disputes) to resolve a case of a woman who is constantly abused by her husband, "…no single day passed in the sky without his beating the woman" (Achebe, 1958:76). The case is resolved by ordering the man to stop abusing his wife unless he wishes to suffer serious consequences while the wife should return home. What is disconcerting about this case is that some members of the clan see it as a trivial matter which should not be brought before the *egwugwu*: "I don't know why such a trifle should come before the *egwugwu*" (Achebe, 1958:78). This indicates that abuse against women is not seen as an important matter. Umuofia, which is usually intolerant and swift in dealing with wrongdoing, does not seem to have any concrete punishments for dealing with men who abuse women. Similarly, the disregard of women in Ibo society is exemplified in the demeaning manner Ibo men refer to men who have not taken any titles as *agbala,* meaning woman. Furthermore, the position of women in this society is to be subservient as the interests of men are served above that of women. Men are given preferential treatment in society and take the lead in making decisions for the clan. This society has very clear gender roles, with women not positioned in a beneficial way: "…the ceremony was for men. There were women, but they looked on from the fringe like outsiders" (Achebe, 1958:73).

In addition to the interests of women being negated, the interests of outcasts, people afflicted with certain diseases and twin babies are severely negated in Ibo society. Twin babies are seen as an abomination and are cast into the *Evil Forest* where they eventually die: "twins were put in earthenware pots and thrown away in the forest" (Achebe, 1958:61). The same treatment is given to people who suffer from certain diseases such as "swelling", "He was carried to the Evil Forest and left there to die" (Achebe, 1958:16). These customs are cruel and mindless and contribute to the missionaries' stance that Ibo people's customs and traditions are primitive and godless: "All

the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows and destroy innocent children" (Achebe, 1958:120). These aspects show that while Achebe shows many positive aspects of Ibo society, he does not portray a society that is without fault. While colonisation has damning effects on the Ibo people, Achebe shows that prior to colonisation there were parts of Ibo society that were not ideal and worth questioning.

Post colonisation

The interests of natives who do not align themselves to colonisation are negated. This is because the interests of native people are disregarded through the negation of Ibo culture which is seen as inferior and bad: “He (Reverend Smith – a missionary) saw things as black and white. And black was evil” (Achebe, 1958:152). The missionaries start by denouncing bad Ibo customs that seem to serve Ibo people well until it becomes apparent the agenda is to also replace existing systems such as government, trade and education. The division this causes starts to take a toll on family relationships as well as the community at large. This is seen when Okonkwo’s son joins the missionaries and Okonkwo fears that the rest of his family will do the same after his death, “Suppose when he died all his male children decided to follow Nwoye’s footsteps and abandon their ancestors?” (Achebe, 1958:126). Furthermore, Okonkwo and Nwoye’s relationship which is already strained due to Nwoye’s lack of manliness, is forever ruined when Nwoye joins the missionaries: “But he left hold of Nwoye, who walked away and never returned” (Achebe, 1958:126). The effect of this on the community is also initiated when more people join the missionaries, thus preventing the Ibo community to take action as it is against custom to kill members of one’s clan. An important question to ask is what is lacking in Ibo society for this to happen? Achebe may hint that this in itself requires introspection in the Ibo community. The effect of colonisation is made clear through the life of the protagonist who cannot be separated from his culture and resorts to taking his own life rather than submit to the colonial system.

The previous sections show that Ibo society, as well as Okonkwo, are depicted as complex with their culture firmly in place. Achebe not only depicts the positive aspects of Ibo society but shows the negative aspects as well, such as the banishing of twins and violence toward women. In so doing, Achebe depicts a society which has challenges just like any other society. Irele (2000:1) asserts that *Things fall apart* is a powerful depiction of an African society in that it depicts a community with its own social processes that challenges the West’s representation of Africa as a formless, dark continent. Sadeghi (2014:49-50) believes that Achebe’s unique and unprecedented portrayal of Africa reflects his own journey as someone who grew up “at the crossroads of cultures” (Innes, 1971 as cited by Sadeghi, 2014:49). This is because on one side, Achebe attended a mission school in which he received a British education and was introduced to Christianity, while on the other side he came from a family that honoured ancestors. In *Things fall apart*, the clash of these two worlds are clearly illustrated. In addition to this, Sadeghi (2014:49) points out that Achebe grew up in a time when European policy was beginning to be protested which is illustrated in the novel’s depiction of the destructive elements of colonisation.

4.6 The role of Language applying Fairclough's dimensions of CDA

The literary analysis functioned in showing how African society is positioned in the text before and after colonisation as well as Okonkwo's position before colonisation and the effect the arrival of the missionaries has on him as an individual. CDA will be applied in order to illustrate the role language plays in positioning the African context and Okonkwo. Fairclough's dimensions of analysis (as cited in Janks, 1997:329) were applied to the selected extracts from the text that show the positioning of Ibo society before and after colonisation, as well as Okonkwo's character before and after colonisation. These dimensions of analysis are:

- text analysis (description);
- processing analysis (interpretation);
- social analysis (explanation).

Things fall apart

Text analysis:	*Things fall apart* is the title of the novel which comes from a poem by WB Yeats –*The second coming*, which was a reaction to the devastation of WW1 and predicts the end of one era due to the emergence of another era which is destructive (El-Dessouky, 2010:99).
Processing analysis:	Achebe juxtaposes the collapse caused by the "Great War" and the destruction caused by the colonisation of Nigeria (and by extension, the rest of Africa).
Social analysis:	The title not only symbolises the destruction of precolonial Africa in terms of culture which is forced to change due to colonisation, but also shows the destruction of community life, family life, and the destruction on an individual level which is seen in the life of the protagonist, Okonkwo.

The deterioration or "falling apart" of the Ibo society, which the title refers to, is explained by looking at how language is used to portray Ibo society and the protagonist, Okonkwo, before and after colonisation.

Before colonisation, Ibo society is described as a society that operates in unity, solves problems collectively and decisively deals with lawlessness. It is also portrayed as a society that values independent ambition while holding elders, customs and tradition in esteem. Achebe carefully selects language in order to show these aspects of Ibo society. The portrayal of Ibo society before colonisation is shown below:

- Solving problems collectively, respect for elders and dealing with lawlessness.

  Many others spoke, and at the end, it was decided to follow the normal course of action. An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation (Achebe, 1958:10).

Text analysis:	This extract depicts a gathering of Okonkwo's clan who meets up after a member of the clan is killed by someone from a neighbouring village. The extract shows that the people of Umuofia come together to discuss the issue and decide on a course of action. "Many others spoke" shows that people, specifically men with titles and elders, have the opportunity to weigh in on important matters. The word "immediately" shows that the clan is swift in dealing with disorder.
Processing analysis:	The language that is used to describe the course of action is clear and precise, which speaks to the clan's manner of dealing with issues in a prompt and effective way. This extract also illustrates the clan's emphasis on unity in the beginning of novel, as many members of the clan are allowed to contribute to the solution. In addition to this, the extract also reveals that Ibo people are rational as the course of action is thought through and compromises are made in order to avoid a war. This contradicts the view that Africans are savage and incapable of rational thought.
Social analysis:	This extract reveals that, although Ibo people have issues pertaining to crime and disorder, they are able to solve their problems and do so collectively. This reinforces the idea that Ibo society is independent and functional. It also shows that there are laws in place that serve to protect the interests of the entire community (Utilitarianism). In addition to this, placing elders and men with titles at the forefront of decision making shows that the community has great respect for elders, whom they look to for wisdom and guidance.

- The importance of ambition

"There were only four titles in the clan, and only one or two men in any generation ever achieved the fourth and highest. When they did, they became the lords of the land" (Achebe, 1958:102).

Text analysis:	This extract points to the importance of titles in Ibo culture, which are awarded to men who observe customs, work hard and fulfil roles to the satisfaction of their community. This specifically applies to Okonkwo who fulfils the role of a warrior and garners great respect for it. The fact that only one or two men in every generation achieve the highest title shows that it takes extraordinary effort to reach this level. By saying that men who achieve these titles become the lords of the land, the importance of seniority based on hard work, is emphasised.
Processing analysis:	The emphasis on titles in this extract and throughout the text illustrates that ambition and hard work is respected in Ibo culture. The importance of titles is explained by Opata and Asogwa (2017:1) who state that "For long, title-taking has remained one of the intangible cultural heritages among the Igbo" as well as Landy (2020) who states that titles are of great cultural significance to Igbo people and are linked to status, responsibility and leadership.
Social analysis:	Ambition is respected in Ibo society, which is seen in the text as men with titles are often tasked with making decisions on behalf of the clan. Also, men with titles are treated with great respect, as is suggested in the extract. It is also an indictment on the exclusionary policies, which leaves women out of decision making.

- Upholding customs and traditions

"I beg you to accept this little kola," he said. "It is not to pay you back for all you did for me in these seven years. A child cannot pay for its mother's milk. I have only called you together because it is good for kinsmen to meet" (Achebe, 1958:138).

Text analysis:	In this extract, Okonkwo is talking to members from his motherland in which he wishes to thank them for their kindness during his time in exile. Kola nut is a welcome snack which is shared whenever men meet to discuss an important matter. This is seen throughout the text. In this extract, attention is given to a few aspects of Ibo culture, such as the importance of customs, respect, and unity, which is explained hereafter.
Processing analysis:	With the breaking of kola nut, attention is given to customary greetings and the way in which Ibo meetings usually commence. According to Chidume, Osisioma and Echem (2015:51) the kola nut is of great socio-cultural significance in Igbo culture. Chidume *et al*. (2015:51) also explain that the kola nut is usually dealt with in three specific steps: the presentation, breaking, and sharing – which is characteristic of communion and not only bonds the men of the clan but also represents a covenant between the living and the ancestors. The second aspect of Ibo culture is illustrated through the proverb "a child cannot pay for its mother's milk", which Ngozi and Ahiazunwa (2016:55) explain means that a child cannot ever repay a mother for their kindness and is thus eternally indebted to their parents. By using this proverb, Okonkwo conveys a similar message, which is that he is grateful to his mother's kinsmen for their kindness that he cannot ever repay. Finally, the importance of unity is expressed through the statement that it is good for kinsmen to meet. This places emphasis on the importance of unity and brotherhood, characteristic of Ibo society.
Social analysis:	In this extract, it is illustrated that language provides insight into Ibo culture and all its complexities. In addition to this, as with all languages, there is formal language for formal occasions, and informal language for everyday occasions. The language used for formal occasions, such as in this extract, is characterised by ritual, and plays a central role in upholding tradition and cementing social relations. Words are chosen carefully to mark the occasion appropriately.

After colonisation

After colonisation, it is clear that these values of Ibo society are undermined. This can be seen when analysing the following passages:

"The elders consulted their Oracle and it told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them" (Achebe, 1958:114).

Text analysis:	Here Obierika is telling Okonkwo about a missionary who entered a neighbouring village. Obierika explains that the elders of this particular village consulted their Oracle to offer advice on how to deal with the person who had entered their village. The use of the word "strange" to describe the missionary suggests that the missionary does not belong and is someone that is not understood by Ibo people. An Oracle is "a medium or messenger who receives messages from the gods" (Retief, 2015:237).
Processing analysis:	The warning from the Oracle acts as foreboding for what happens later in the story. The suggestion that the clan would be broken aligns to the title -*Things fall apart.* This is reinforced by the suggestion that destruction will be spread among them. These words are particular in suggesting that the strange man will not physically destroy them but will cause destruction among Ibo people themselves. In other words, the "strange man" will sow division and cause people to turn on themselves. The extract also reveals that, in times of uncertainty and trouble, the Ibo do not simply act without thinking, but rely on advice of elders and spiritual leaders. This way of dealing with problems proves to be effective, since the Oracle's prediction is accurate.
Social analysis:	The language of this extract provides insight into Ibo people's decision-making process as well as their spiritual convictions. It also reveals that there are genuine attempts to protect their society.

How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peacefully with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers and our clan no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart (Achebe, 1958:146).

Text analysis:	These words are spoken by Obierika to Okonkwo. In this, he explains how the coloniser managed to infiltrate Ibo society and what the consequences of this infiltration has been.
Processing analysis:	The idea that Ibo society is ruined because of no longer being unified, dominates this extract. This is achieved through the repetition of this idea, "our own brothers have turned against us", "our clan no longer act like one", "he put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart". The use of possessive adjectives and personal pronouns reinforces this loss of unity. Describing the white man as clever which has a connotative meaning of being calculating or contrived, illustrates the cunning that was used to overpower Ibo people. This is reinforced by suggesting that the white man appeared to be non-threatening and used religion as a pretence to infiltrate Ibo society. Additionally, imagery is used to show the forceful effect that colonisation has on their culture and identity as a people: "He has put a knife on the things that hold us together". The extract also reveals that Ibo people were naïve to the intention of the coloniser and thus initially undermined the missionaries which facilitated the infiltration of Ibo society.
Social analysis:	In terms of the social meaning of this extract, attention is drawn to the fact that unity forms a cornerstone of Ibo society and that a destruction of this unity has caused the demise of the Ibo society. The implication is also that colonisation has been damaging since it has destroyed the unity of Ibo society, which is their defining characteristic.

In addition to describing Ibo society before and after colonisation, language also plays an important role in establishing Okonkwo's character and showing the changes that he experiences due to colonisation:

Prior to colonisation, Okonkwo is described as a great warrior and wrestler who uses his fists instead of words to solve his problems as illustrated in the following passages:

"His fame rested on solid personal achievements" (Achebe, 1958:3).

"He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get the words out quickly enough, he would use his fists" (Achebe, 1958:4)

"…he was not afraid of war. He was a man of action, a man of war" (Achebe, 1958:9)

"*And so when Okonkwo of Umuofia arrived at Mbaino as the proud and imperious emissary of war, he was treated with great honour and respect…"* (Achebe, 1958:11)

"Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand" (Achebe, 1958:11)

"But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness." (Achebe, 1958:11).

"*He put it down to his inflexible will"* (Achebe, 1958:21)

Text analysis:	These extracts play a significant role in positioning Okonkwo in the text. Through these descriptions, he is depicted as a powerful character who has worked hard to achieve success. It also shows that he is useful to his community since he is able to represent them well in times of war.
Processing analysis:	These descriptions suggest that Okonkwo's greatest strength is his physical strength and that his community relies on this strength. However, these descriptions also show that Okonkwo's strength is at times misguided as it is suggested that he abuses his wife and children. This is reinforced with the idiomatic expression that he rules his household with a "heavy hand". This points to his authoritative nature which is further reinforced with the implication that he has an "inflexible will" which suggests that he is stubborn and unable to adapt. There is also the suggestion that although Okonkwo is strong, he has a weakness which is his fear of failure. The use of the word "dominated", suggests that Okonkwo is controlled by the fear that motivates many of his decisions in the text and affects his relationship with his son, Nwoye, whom he believes is weak. These quotes provide deep insight into what motivates Okonkwo's actions and indeed allows a reader to feel pity at the loss of a great character due to a fundamental flaw and external factors.
Social analysis:	When looking at Okonkwo's character within his social surrounding, it is easy to understand why he places emphasis on achievement, since his community respects achievement and is generally intolerant of laziness. Okonkwo is celebrated by his community for these achievements and is aligned to the Ibo standard of manliness and success. The language used emphasises Okonkwo's strength and, at the same time, supports the notion that Africans are savage and incapable of reasoning. This is reinforced through the suggestion that Okonkwo is a man of few words who resorts to violence when faced with a challenge, be it personal or otherwise. Achebe may have assigned these characteristics to Okonkwo in order to align to the colonisers' perception of Africans during the time of colonisation (Jacques, 1997:200).

Looking at a king's mouth, said an old man, one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast. He was talking about Okonkwo, who had risen so suddenly from great poverty and misfortune to be one of the lords of the clan. The old man bore no ill will towards Okonkwo. Indeed, he respected him for his industry and success. But he was struck, as most people were, by Okonkwo's brusqueness in dealing with less successful men (Achebe, 1958:22).

Text analysis:	These words are spoken by an old man in the clan in response to Okonkwo's intolerance of men who are not successful.
Processing analysis:	The proverb, "Looking at a king's mouth one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast" suggests that Okonkwo is arrogant, which is frowned upon by the old man and the rest of his society, since it is stated later in the text that the rest of the clan sided with the man Okonkwo had insulted. The extract suggests that, while the old man is not in conflict with Okonkwo, he questions his high-handed conduct. This extract could also show that, while the Ibo society respects Okonkwo for his success, he is not above reproach and that communal well-being is prioritised in this society. The reprimand reminds Okonkwo that, despite his success, he still forms a part of a society which he needs to respect.
Social analysis:	In this extract, Okonkwo is portrayed as an individual who differs somewhat from the general ideologies of his clan. It should also be noted that the society does not tolerate individuals who threaten the sense of the community. Elderly people are respected and Okonkwo crossed that line in his treatment of the old man.

Post colonisation

"Let us not reason like cowards" (Achebe, 1958:133)

"We must fight these men and drive them from our land" (Achebe, 1958:170)

Text analysis:	The first quote is Okonkwo speaking to members from his motherland in which he urges them to take action against the coloniser. The second quote is Okonkwo speaking to Obierika, expressing his inability to understand his clan's lack of action in dealing with the coloniser and, again, appealing for action to be taken.
Processing analysis:	In these quotes, it is evident that Okonkwo remains true to his nature. Earlier in the novel, he is described as a man of war and of action. These quotes show that Okonkwo refuses to accept the coloniser and is willing to fight for his home and the future of his clan. It should also be noted that, unlike previous descriptions of Okonkwo as someone who is incapable of thought, his appeal to the clan for reason shows that he is capable of thinking things through and that he consults on important matters. It is, however clear, that he lacks persuasive and bargaining skills. Okonkwo's pride as an Ibo man is also evident in these extracts since he wishes to preserve what belongs to the Ibo – the land. This is made evident with the use of the possessive adjective "our". This is also a call to act in unity, which before colonisation, was also characteristic of Ibo society.

Social analysis:	In this, we see the consequences of inaction. It is suggested that the clansmen of Umuofia have already lost their identity, as their lack of action is not characteristic of their village which is described as powerful in the beginning of the text. It can also be said that Okonkwo remains true to his identity and his clan, as he is not willing to yield to the coloniser. If read from a Western perspective, Okonkwo's inability to change could be seen as a flaw that is motivated by his fear of weakness and ultimately leads to his demise. However, when looking at this decision from an African perspective, it could be said that Okonkwo fights to hold on to his identity and culture. The interpretation of Okonkwo's character could thus be context bound, resulting in differing interpretations dependent on one's context.

"And immediately Okonkwo's eyes were opened and he saw the whole matter clearly. Living fire begets cold impotent ash. He sighed again, deeply" (Achebe, 1958:128).

Text analysis:	This is an observation Okonkwo makes when thinking about his son, Nwoye, who had converted to Christianity and who Okonkwo resents for his weakness. Okonkwo makes this observation after questioning how he, who was described as a "roaring flame", could have a son which is so different to him. After much reflection, Okonkwo comes to the conclusion quoted in the extract above. The extract shows that Okonkwo gains new insight on the matter and is saddened by this realisation.
Processing analysis:	The quote can be interpreted in two ways: the first is a literal interpretation that while Okonkwo was a "flaming fire", the remnants of fire is cold ash. This could literally refer to the next generation, Nwoye, who does not resemble Okonkwo. Another interpretation could be that, due to Okonkwo's fiery nature, his son has turned away from him. The quote could also be directly related to Okonkwo's life. The quote could suggest that Okonkwo's constant hard work and fighting would have all been in vain, as his legacy will not be preserved.
Social analysis:	The social understanding of this scenario could speak to the expectation parents have for their children. It could also point to a change of the new generation, who has a different set of ideals. The quote also shows that Okonkwo is capable of deep reflection which is remarkably different to the beginning of the novel, where he is described as someone with an inflexible will. This counters the narrative that Africans are irrational.

In *Things fall apart,* language functions as a powerful tool in narrating an African story and an African account of colonisation. The language of the text is vital in displaying the rich culture of Ibo people and positioning this society as developed and functional. While the story is written in English, many Igbo words are used to describe their identities, beliefs and culture, which authenticate the culture of the Ibo. The vast Ibo vocabulary defies the notion of an underdeveloped society and functions in portraying this society as unique. The richness of Ibo culture is further illustrated in the use of Ibo-specific language idiosyncrasies and the use of proverbs. An example of this is the use of the word *agbala* which can take on different meanings in Ibo culture. The word *agbala* may refer to a woman, or a man who has taken no titles. *Agbala* is also a deity in the Ibo religion. Another example is the categorisation of crimes according to its severity – if it is a serious offence, it is called a male *ochu*; if it is a lesser crime (e.g. one committed by accident), it is called a female *ochu*. The importance of language in African societies is also illustrated by drawing attention to the fact that, in Ibo society, the ability to speak a language is dependent on the ability to use proverbs. These proverbs do not only speak to the richness of Ibo culture but also function to conceptualise complex ideas.

Ibo people have a high regard for the good use of language. This is made apparent through the high regard of proverbs: “Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten” (Achebe, 1958:61) and respect for orators: “Ogbuefi Ezeugo was a powerful orator and was always chosen to speak on such occasions” (Achebe, 1958:9). The appointment and respect for orators who are usually employed at gatherings highlights the importance of communication in Ibo culture. The emphasis on communication is also made clear by the fact that Ibo people usually come together to talk and often use proverbs to communicate problems or offer solutions to these problems.

Through language, Achebe is also able to show the conflict between Ibo people and the colonisers. It is clear that there is a language barrier between the Ibo and the colonisers. This is depicted through the use of translators in order to communicate, as well as through the following interaction between Okonkwo and Obierika: “Does the white man understand our custom about the land?” “How can he when he does not even understand our tongue?” (Achebe, 1958:145).

Sadeghi (2014) similarly notes that the coloniser’s failure to understand the African customs in *Things fall apart* is due to his ignorance of the language. Not only does the coloniser not attempt to learn their language, which could play a significant role in building relationships with Ibo people, but they also disregard Ibo people’s use of language. This is seen when one of the colonisers reflect on the Ibo’s use of language: “One of the most infuriating habits of these people was their love of superfluous words” (Achebe, 1958:171). This quote also reveals that the coloniser refers to the Ibo people as “these people”, which in itself is demeaning, as they are not mentioned by

name. Additionally, the fact that the coloniser refers to the Ibo's abundant use of words as 'superfluous' may reflect his inability to understand the language, which is highly metaphorical for the colonisers' inability to understand and disregard of Africans.

Finally, Achebe also uses language to illustrate Ibo society's high regard of nature. Ibo society sees nature as a living and dominating force which is seen in their honouring of gods such as *Ani,* the earth goddess. It can also be seen through Achebe's personification of nature:

> Evergreen trees wore a dusty coat of brown. The birds were silenced in the forests, and the world lay panting under the live, vibrating heat. And then came the clap of thunder. It was an angry, metallic and thirsty clap, unlike the deep and liquid rumbling of the rainy season. A mighty wind arose and filled the air with dust, palm trees swayed as the wind combed their leaves into flying crests like strange and fantastic coiffure (Achebe, 1958:107).

This quote, in which nature is given human qualities, suggests that nature is alive: the trees are personified to wear coats, the world lays panting – as if exhausted by the heat, the thunder claps, and the wind combs the palm leaves. Nature is described as a vibrant and majestical force, which shows a deep appreciation of nature. Nweke and Nwoye (2016:106) contend that Igbo people respect nature and believe that they are connected to nature:

> In Igbo thought system, human persons see themselves as connected to nature, as a knot in the wider cosmic arrangement, which includes the Mother Earth and all therein in terms of plants, animals, air, sun, seas, stars, the moon etc. This idea forms the bedrock of indigenous Igbo world outlook (Nweke & Nwoye, 2016:106).

This description of Africa also functions in portraying Africa as a diverse and vibrant setting. Phillips (2010) states that Achebe's description of Africa is powerful in that it gives a relatable, animated description of Africa that opposes the dark, mysterious, barbaric description of writers such as Conrad and Marlowe.

4.7 The role of African philosophy

African philosophy, particularly the trends of *sage philosophy* and *ethnophilosophy* can be traced in the text. A defining characteristic of *sage philosophy* is that a Sage is usually venerated in a society for being wise, being knowledgeable about indigenous knowledge and being critical of

their society. These characteristics are explicitly seen in at least two characters in *Things fall apart*. The most prominent example is the character of Obierika, who shows his wisdom by offering advice and questioning Ibo customs on more than one occasion: “Obierika was a man who thought about things” (Achebe, 1958:104). The first example is when he does not accompany the men of the clan to Ikemefuna’s execution. While the character does not explicitly state that he is against this, he questions Okonkwo’s presence at the event and seems displeased with the incident: “…if the Oracle said that my son should be killed I would neither dispute it nor be the one to do it” (Achebe, 1958:56). In addition to this, he questions the banishing of twins: “He remembered his wife’s twin children, who he had thrown away. What crime had they committed?” (Achebe, 1958:104). Obierika also queries his community’s customs when Okonkwo is banished after accidentally killing a young member of the clan: “Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offense he had committed inadvertently?” Through these incidents, we can see that, although Obierika observes Ibo customs, he is also wise and inwardly at odds with the customs and beliefs of his community. His character resembles that of a sage as he shows deep insight into matters that are often in contrast to customary beliefs. This is supported by Ekwealo (2012:212), who argues that Obierika is a custodian of Ibo thought who offers sound advice to Okonkwo throughout the text, thus qualifying him as a sage. Ekwealo (2012:212) also asserts that Obierika’s continuous contradiction of Ibo customs are aligned with Odera Oruka’s beliefs that a sage is someone who is critical of their communities. Obierika’s stance on certain matters also reflects that he is introspective and indicates progressive thought in terms of issues related to human rights that emerge in the text. This may point to the possibility that, if given time, this society would have developed on its own and abandoned cruel customs without the interference of colonisation. This is an important observation to counter the idea that Africa would have remained in a barbaric state without the intervention of the colonisers.

Other representations of sages are illustrated through the characters of Ogbuefi Ezeudu and Uchendu. According to Ekweala (2012:210), Ezeudu reflects the qualities of a sage when he warns Okonkwo not to participate in the killing of Ikemefuna because the boy calls him father: “That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death” (Achebe, 1958:45). This advice contradicts the behaviour that Okonkwo and Ibo society would characterise as manly and obedient, since the instruction to kill Ikemefuna had come from the clan’s Oracle. Uchendu disregards the judgement made by the to participate in Ikemefuna’s death which he questioned for by Okonkwo “You sound as if you question the authority and the decisions of the Oracle, who said he should die” (Achebe, 1958:56). Uchendu also reflects on the characteristics of a sage when he calls a meeting with his sons and Okonkwo to educate them about the important role women play in society: “But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland. You mother is there to protect you…that is why we say mother is supreme” (Achebe, 1958:110-

111). This view is remarkably different from the position the rest of society takes regarding the place of women in society, thus illustrating the opposing role Uchendu assumes to the rest of his society.

In addition to sage philosophy, ethnophilosophy is also seen in the text as people across the nine villages have a shared culture and participate in many of the same festivals, such as the Feast of the New Yam and wrestling matches. However, there are also instances that oppose ethnophilosophy. This is especially evident with characters such as Obierika, Ezeudu and Uchendu, whose views are contradictory to customary beliefs and thus reflect the views of African philosopher Hountondji, who asserts that one philosophy or worldview cannot be applied to all Africans. Through their differing opinions, they prove Houndtonji's point that philosophy is self-conscious (cited by Oyeshile, 2008:57). This means that African philosophy is different to European philosophy but also that an individual is also governed by their personal views and worldviews. Hountondji's view is further justified in the novel by accounts of the different villages conducting different practices: "They have a big market in Abame on every other Afo day…" (Achebe, 1958:115). These differences align with Hountondji's critique of *ethnophilosophy*, which rests on the premise that the stance of ethnophilosophy limits intellectual and cultural diversity. The significance of diversity is also noted in *Things fall apart:* "There is no one story that is not true, said Uchendu. The world has no end, and what is good among one people, is an abomination with others" (Achebe, 1958:116). These words by Uchendu assert that people have different worldviews and that there is more than one truth, hence rejecting the notion of an all-encompassing philosophy for African people.

In addition to sage philosophy and ethnophilosophy, political philosophy is also evident. This is because *Things fall apart* can be seen as a representation of Africans that aims to dispel the negative and one-dimensional representations of Africans in literature prior to *Things fall apart,* such as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Cary's *Mister Johnson* (Kenalemang, 2013:4). This is supported by Gbaguidi and Ahossougbe (2018:31), who argue that Conrad and Cary's descriptions of Africa worked to portray the continent as bestial, savage, dark, cannibalistic and demonic. Evidence of his can be seen in Conrad's description of an African woman in *Heart of Darkness*, "She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent She stood looking at us without a stir and like the wilderness itself, with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose" (Conrad, 2014:102). Examples of the descriptions of Africans as savages can be seen in Cary's Mister Johnson, "Do you think a big man like me, Johnson, is going to be swindled by a lot of savages?" (Cary,1952:17); "Shoes—how dare you? My shoes are English shoes—the very best shoes—they're not for savage people—bad thievish people like you." (Cary,1952:17). Conversely, *Things fall apart* offers a more accurate and fair depiction of Africa and its people.

The novel showcases the positive and negative attributes of an African society. The novel is thus a counter-narrative to the one dimensional, inaccurate and damaging portrayals of Africa and works to restore those negative beliefs, it is thus well-aligned to African political philosophy which is aimed at justice and liberation. It is apparent that, before colonisation, Ibo people had their own way of governing and educating their society. The arrival of the coloniser clearly deemed these inferior, and sought to replace existing systems with systems that were foreign to Ibo people. This was initiated with the introduction of religion, which sought to replace the existing African religion. This depiction of colonisation reflects the socio-political setting of Nigeria at the time in which it was written. The novel thus serves as a valuable source that offers insight to the injustices of colonisation. In light of this, applying African political philosophy to the analysis of this text could be beneficial, since it could revolve around restoring African knowledge which was lost due to colonisation.

4.8 The role of AIKS

Things fall apart is rich in indigenous knowledge systems (Adebiya, 2015:1). There are at least three forms of indigenous knowledge systems which are evident in *Things fall apart.* The first is indigenous forms of communication, which is reliant on the indigenous language, indigenous legal regimes and indigenous food security practices. Indigenous communication comes across strongly in the novel as Achebe firstly employs many words in the indigenous language. The use of the indigenous language illustrates that the indigenous language is a suitable medium to communicate African stories and shows the Ibo's unique way of communicating. Adebiya (2015:7) asserts that Achebe employs various kinds of media as indigenous communication. Adebiya (2015:7) explains that one example of this indigenous communication is the use of music. Adebiya (2015:7) expands on this claim by discussing the following examples which are evident in the novel:

- Unoka's love of music (Achebe, 1958;4);
- Wrestling matches are accompanied by song (Achebe, 1958:36);
- Ikemefuna uses of song to deal with the dilemma of being away from home and wondering if his mother is still alive (Achebe, 1958:43);
- Music is used to celebrate the marriage ceremony of Obierika's daughter (Achebe, 1958:83).

In addition to this, indigenous ways of communicating with proverbs and folktales is also apparent in the text. Proverbs are used to great effect to communicate how a character is feeling, to offer advice, or offer solutions to a problem and to reprimand an individual. Adebiya (2015:9) argues that Achebe understands the importance of proverbs in African communication. He (2015:9)

further explains that proverbs play a vital role in disseminating “traditional wisdom of the people”. Proverbs and folktales offer a look into the worldview of Ibo people and is a reflection of their culture. This is supported by Adebiya (2015:9), who states that proverbs document worldviews and experience. Ngozi and Ahiazunwa (2016) illustrate Achebe’s use of proverbs by explaining that Achebe uses calque, which is to loan a translation. In the novel, Achebe uses proverbs that are calqued from indigenous language.

Ngozi and Ahiazunwa (2016:54) illustrate the meaning of these proverbs by offering the English equivalent to these proverbs. Some examples are:

Ibo proverb	English equivalent
“He who brings kola brings life” (Achebe, 1958:5)	“Hospitality precludes evil”
“If a child washed his hands, he could eat with kings” (Achebe, 1958:7)	“Manner maketh the man”
“An old woman is always uneasy when dried bones are mentioned in a proverb” (Achebe, 1958:18)	“A guilty conscience needs no accuser”

Through this, it is evident that proverbs express Ibo values and are used to communicate customs and lessons.

In addition to communication, indigenous legal regimes are communicated in *Things fall apart*. Coker and Coker (2008:21) explain that the worldview of the Ibo people are expressed through their judicial administration, which flows from the head of the family (husband/father), through to the clan, and then the elders of the clan. As mentioned before, when there are problems or there has been a violation of some sort, Ibo men meet to discuss a course of action. The community decides collectively on a course of action. The idea is that this will ensure that the course of action is reasonable, there is no hidden agenda, and it strengthens a sense of community. This judicial system only applies to men, as women are excluded from all forms of decision making or governing. Anyadike (2005) (as cited by Coker & Coker, 2008:54) also recognises this as a problem, since it raises questions related to misogyny. In many cases brought before the judicial system, women are involved. Their fates are decided upon entirely by men.

Finally, indigenous knowledge concerning food security is also made available in the text. This is seen when grasshoppers descend on Umuofia and are eaten by the clan. Ngumbi (2018) explains that eating insects is an ancient African practice, which has various benefits such as being a good source of protein and being a viable option to combat hunger and food insecurity. Blasquez,

Moreno and Camacho (2012:164-169) show that grasshoppers are a source of minerals and vitamins A, B and D as well as protein. In addition to the health benefits, eating grasshoppers has environmental benefits as well as this could relieve the world's meat crisis. This is supported by Van Huis (2015:1) who argues that the demand for meat and reduction in the availability of land makes alternative sources of protein, such as insects, a viable option. Van Huis (2015:2) reinforces this claim by stating that insect production is more sustainable and releases lower greenhouse gases and ammonia emissions than that of livestock. This shows that this Ibo custom serves as valuable knowledge within the range of global knowledges.

4.9 Analysis of supplementary material

In order to gain insight to the interpretation of this text, the corresponding supplementary material was analysed. The supplementary material for this particular text is in the form of a student workbook that contains questions and activities for critical engagement. It should be noted that this text is read at first-year level, and that the activities are set at this level.

The workbooks for the years 2011-2014 (Kaiser, 2014) had mostly the same questions and activities, which can be summarised as follows:

- There is a significant focus on postcolonial themes in which students are expected to focus on themes as they relate to colonisation, namely:
    - social and cultural change or erosion
    - misuse of power and exploitation
    - colonial abandonment and alienation
    - the use of English language in literature
- The student workbook also places emphasis on character development with a look at the internal conflict suffered by Okonkwo and Nwoye. The activities also require students to look at external conflict related to "man versus man, man versus nature and man versus society".
- Students are expected to discuss symbols such as folktales, yams, fire and ash.
- In addition to this, the student workbook requires students to analyse Okonkwo as a tragic hero. This activity requires students to look at the characteristics of a tragic hero and discuss how they may apply to Okonkwo.

Extract 4.8.a:

Outcomes:
By the end of this session students should be able to:

- Discuss the characteristics of a tragic hero and apply them to Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*.

Activity 1:
Watch the Powerpoint on the characteristics of a tragic hero. Achebe is very conversant with Western literature and its traditional forms. He borrows from the tradition of Greek tragedy by centering the story of *Things Fall Apart* around a tragic hero, Okonkwo. In your opinion, what contributes most to the final tragedy of Okonkwo?

- In addition to this, there is a significant focus on the role of men and women in society and Umuofia as a male dominated society.

Extract 4.8.b:

One of the central features of Things Fall Apart is Achebe's balancing of principles through the metaphor of masculine and feminine a metaphor that seems to derive from deep within Ibo thought. Thus, the god who, above all others, regulates life in Umuofia is Ani, the earth goddess. And it is a reflection of Okonkwo's failure, to seek balance between the manly virtues and the womanly virtues as understood in Umuofia, that each of the disasters that afflicts him can be seen as a crime against the earth... A mark of Achebe's mastery is that he manages to communicate this ideal of balance ... even while describing a culture that will strike many modem readers as overwhelmingly---- even oppressively---- dominated by men.
---- Kwame Anthony Appiah

Write an essay of 600 words in which you discuss how this lack of balance in Okonkwo's life causes his downfall. Your essay should be submitted on **15 April 2011.**

Extract 4.8.c:

Homework:
You should divide into groups of 4 for a debate on the following topic. 2 of you will argue for the point and 2 will argue against it. You will take turns to state your arguments and, as you are working in teams of 2, you should prepare your arguments accordingly. You will get a chance in class to debate your points and you will be assessed by means of the following rubric:

The Ibo culture is chauvinistic

When looking at the questions and activities in these workbooks, the following observations can be made:

The activities pertaining to postcolonial themes are well aligned to the critical discourse analysis that was done on this text, and clearly explores issues related to the positioning of the Ibo society after colonisation. These activities also indicate that there is an exploration of the language the text is written in as well as the Ibo words and proverbs Achebe uses in the text.

Similarly, the activities related to the internal conflict suffered by Okonkwo and Nwoye and external conflict in the text are related to CDA, as it looks at the positioning of characters in the text. It also looks at the positioning of characters in relation to their contexts.

In addition to this, the discussion of symbols such as folktales and yams may lead to important discussions of cultural aspects of Ibo life which is in line with ethnophilosophy, that is concerned with the shared culture and philosophy of African people.

There is also a focus on the roles of men and women in society and students are to debate whether Ibo society is chauvinistic. This is similar to observations made in the literary analysis of the text, where it is noted that women are negated and abused in this society by the men. It is interesting that students are to debate this point as it could be argued that Ibo society is not chauvinistic, but rather has clearly-assigned gender roles that dictate behaviour. It could also be argued that the role of women is valued as Uchendu, Okonkwo's uncle, comments on the significant role women play in society. Allowing students to develop both arguments may lead to a critical, yet fair analysis of Ibo culture instead of making a negative statement, which could be seen as leading the students in a direction.

Finally, there is a focus on Okonkwo as a tragic hero. This centres on the idea of the character having a fatal flaw that eventually leads to his downfall. While this may be the case, the supplementary material does not adequately address the role of the coloniser in Okonkwo's downfall (the idea of external forces having an influence on the character) and does not take into account that Okonkwo's tragic flaw, which is his fear of failure, is only disadvantageous in the new dispensation. Prior to colonisation, Okonkwo's success, which is motivated by his fear of failure, is revered by his community and attributes to his fame. It is acknowledged in the supplementary material that the concept of the tragic hero is borrowed from western tradition which accounts for the limited view this affords the African character. Through the interpretation of Okonkwo as a tragic hero, the validity of the statement made by a character in the text is even more applicable: "There is no one story that is not true," said Uchendu. "The world has no end, and what is good among one people, is an abomination with others" (Achebe, 1958:116). Through a western lens, Okonkwo can be seen as a character that succumbs to his tragic flaw. However, when looking at Okonkwo within his African context, the same quality which is seen as a flaw is in fact seen as a strength, and the reason why Okonkwo is successful within Ibo society. When looking at Okonkwo as a tragic hero, it could be said that he is stubborn and inflexible; conversely, it can be said that Okonkwo is not willing to surrender his culture and identity, which is admirable. Therefore, Uchendu's statement in the text can be seen as accurate, since there is always more than one truth that could be applied. This is especially dependent on the background a reader brings to the text, or the lens that is used when reading the text. This corresponds with the assertions made by Janks (1997) that the reader's understanding of a text is dependent on the knowledge he/she brings to a text, which could result in reading with or against a text. When applying a western lens, it is easy to read against the text and see Okonkwo's qualities as a weakness. However, if

one has an understanding of the importance of culture and identity in African culture, one may be more likely to resonate with Okonkwo's decision not to surrender and fight for his culture and identity. Therefore, the analysis of Okonkwo as a tragic hero limits his character to western notions and does not fully encapsulate his character. Furthermore, applying an alternative view when analysing Okonkwo proves the pertinence of the research question of this study, which is to ascertain how texts with African characters can be analysed in order to promote African perspectives.

The following set of workbooks are for the period of 2015-2016 (Kaiser, 2016). Some activities are the same as in the 2011-2014 workbook; therefore, this section only focuses on new questions and activities. The workbooks for 2015 and 2016 are the same for the most part, consisting of the following questions and activities:

- Okonkwo is discussed as an individual as well as a member of a community.

Extract 4.8.d:

1. What do we learn about Okonkwo? What is his self-image? The view of the village? Your opinion? Does Achebe use Okonkwo as a representation of his society, or does Achebe want us to see Okonkwo as an individual?

- Attention is given to the role of women in society.
- The role of rituals is also looked at in these workbooks.
- Laws in Ibo society are explored.
- The role of evil in *Things fall apart* is also discussed.
- The following question is asked, "What do you learn about the missionaries?"
- In the 2016 workbook, there is a much stronger focus on the portrayal of Okonkwo as a tragic hero although not much scaffolding of this task is given to the students. Students are required to compare Okonkwo's character to two Greek mythological figures in addition to writing an essay about Okonkwo as a tragic hero;

Extract 4.8.e:

Icarus (IK-uh-rus). Son of Daedalus who dared to fly too near the sun on wings of feathers and wax. Daedalus had been imprisoned by King Mino of Crete within the walls of his own invention, the Labyrinth. But the great craftsman's genius would not suffer captivity. He made two pairs of wings by adhering feathers to a wooden frame with wax. Give one pair to his son, he cautioned him that flying too near the sun would cause the wax to melt. But Icarus became ecstatic with the ability to fly and forgot his father's warning. The feathers came loose and Icarus plunged to his death in the sea.

Extract 4.8.f:

Prometheus (proh-MEE-thee-us or proh-MEE-thyoos). Titan; benefactor of humankind. Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to mortals, carrying it away from Mount Olympus in a fennel stalk (a method of transporting fire that was used down into historical times). As a consequence, Zeus chained Prometheus to a rock where each day an eagle pecked out his liver (which regenerated itself each night).

The questions pertaining to whether Achebe wants the reader to see Okonkwo as an individual or as a member of society is important as it speaks to the positioning of the character. In *Things fall apart*, it is clear that the author wishes to portray Okonkwo as an individual, as the first three chapters are dedicated to describing his character. Achebe creates a protagonist who is very much an individual who simultaneously reflects the ideals and culture of his community. Achebe shows on more than one occasion, that being part of Ibo society does not mean blindly following customs, which is made apparent with characters such as Obierika, Uchendu and Ezeudu, who are proud members of the community but question certain practices. The same goes for Okonkwo, who is shaped by his community and is attached to the customs and traditions of his clan, but is still an individual who exercises his individuality. These questions are valid since they allow discourse and various interpretations of Okonkwo's character.

The focus on the role of rituals and laws takes into consideration the African perspectives this study aims to explore, since these rituals and laws are unique to Ibo society and offer a perspective on African customs and traditions. Furthermore, a focus on laws in the Ibo society aligns with the claim made in the literary analysis that Ibo society is functional. Through the analysis of these rituals and laws, African cultures and experiences are explored, which is aligned

to CDA in that the positioning of the text is taken into consideration. It is also aligned with the research question, which aims to explore how texts can be analysed to ensure the promotion of African values. These types of critical questions offer an answer to the question of how texts can be analysed in order to promote African knowledge and values.

The question on the role of evil things in *Things fall apart*, could elicit a range of responses. Students could answer this by focusing on the evil represented in Ibo society, such as the banishing of twin babies, the exclusion of albinos and the abuse of women. Students could also focus on the evil represented by the coloniser, such as the encroachment on Ibo culture, or could do both. This could lead to critical engagement around questionable customs, as well as provide opportunities to engage with issues pertaining to colonisation negating the interests of traditional Ibo men and women.

Different ways to analyse Okonkwo's character have already been discussed in the previous section. However, it has been added again to show that, instead of trying to associate Okonkwo's character with Greek mythological figures, more emphasis could have been placed on associating his character with African philosophy. This may offer a different, and more accurate understanding of his character. This would imply that such philosophies should be taught and then applied to texts.

The following questions are from the 2019 student workbook which details the following questions:

Extract 4.8.g:

The discussion will include the following considerations:

1. The novel is presented in three parts. What are Achebe's reasons for dividing the novel into these three parts?
2. *Things Fall Apart* has two interlinking narratives. The first is about Okonkwo's fall, and the second is about the disruption of Nigerian civilisation occasioned by British colonisation of the region. What are the most obvious links between these two narratives? How do they dovetail and interweave?
3. According to one of the proverbs quoted in *Things Fall Apart*, "When a man says yes his chi says yes also."
   The concept of the chi is an important one in this novel. Consider the main characters. Do you think that the proverb applies to them, as they are depicted in this novel?
4. In the writing of his novel, Chinua Achebe wanted to challenge misrepresentations of Africa. For example:
   - Africans were savages before they came into contact with European civilisation; they had no civilisations of their own.
   - African societies were (and still are) undifferentiated, more or less all the same.
   - Before African countries were colonised, they were peaceful, idyllic, free of conflict.

   How does *Things Fall Apart* challenge these and other misrepresentations of Africa?

These questions are completely related to the literary analysis conducted on this text and offer an opportunity for critical engagement which takes into consideration African perspectives, the impact of colonisation, and the negation of interests of Ibo people caused by colonisation. It also focuses on the Ibo's connection to their religion, as well as their use of proverbs, which showcases their culture.

4.10 Concluding remarks

From the analysis of *Things fall apart,* it emerged that Ibo society has been characterised as complex and functional. In creating this society, Achebe contradicted misconceptions about Africans as a backward and uncivilised people. It also emerged that, while there are many positive depictions of this African society, they are not without fault, as seen through questionable practices such as the banishing of babies and the abuse of women. In response to this, Achebe creates characters such as Ezeudu, Obirieka and Uchendu, who are respected members of society and are critical of these questionable practices. In so doing, Achebe illustrates that the African society is capable of introspection and possibly change and growth without the interference of colonisation. When analysing Okonkwo's character, it is evident that more than one interpretation of the character can be applied, depending on the lens one uses when reading. The analysis also showed that it may be valuable to look at his character from an African perspective in order to understand the decisions he makes. Hence, the analyses of Okonkwo's character were well aligned to CDA, since one could read with and against the text and come to different understandings of the character depending on the stance taken. The analysis of *Things fall apart* also revealed the importance of language in positioning the African context and the African character. The exploration of language in this text produced insight into the culture, philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems of the Ibo society.

The study guides used to teach this novel at one tertiary institution revealed that there are opportunities for students to engage with the text and look at important issues pertaining to the positioning of Ibo society before and after colonisation. Students have the opportunity to take a critical look at the Ibo society by evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. In addition to this, there is a focus on postcolonial themes that are pertinent to this text. There are, however, some aspects of the interpretation of Okonkwo's character that are limited and thus worth challenging. In terms of promoting African perspectives, it would be worthwhile to interpret Okonkwo's character through the lens of African philosophy. The next chapter offers a literary analysis of *Disgrace* by JM Coetzee as well as an analysis of the study material which informs the reading and understanding of this text.

CHAPTER 5 LITERARY ANALYSIS OF *DISGRACE* BY JM COETZEE

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* is analysed. The analysis focuses on how this text positions Africa and Africans and tries to judge whether the text leaves room for alternate interpretations of Africa and Africans. In order to understand how the African context and characters are portrayed in this text, Janks's (1997) suggestion of questions related to CDA were applied. These questions call for a critical look at how the text is positioned or positioning, what interests are served and negated by this position or positioning, as well as what the consequences are of this position or positioning. In *Disgrace* language is used particularly well to show this positioning, thus, Fairclough's dimensions of CDA (as cited by Janks, 1997:329) are implemented in order to analyse the use of language in this text. The analysis of *Disgrace* also looked at how African philosophy could be applied to the reading of the text. Lastly, the study guides which accompany the reading of this text and form part of the coursework for the initial teacher training programme of interest in this study, were analysed to establish which interpretations are dominant when analysing the text. The analysis of the study material also sought to establish whether this text could be interpreted in alternative ways which could lead to the promotion of African perspectives and knowledge.

5.2 How is the text positioned or positioning?

The setting of *Disgrace* is post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa in the year 1997 in Cape Town and the Eastern Cape, three years after the country's first ever democratic elections. The text explores the challenges of a budding democracy such as race relations, reconciliation and the repositioning of white and black South Africans. Although the text focuses on the life of David Lurie, a white male, the text is told from a third person perspective and, as such, reveals much about African characters as well as the South African context, which is the focus of this section. The introduction of the protagonist, David Lurie, is inextricably linked to his disposition in the new dispensation, which is attributed to the evolving nature of South Africa. The author depicts a South African society that, despite its best efforts to transform, is still haunted by its past. This is shown through four prominent themes, namely the apparent racial divide, prejudices and "othering" that are noted in the text, the portrayal of the new dispensation as a regression, white fear which is juxtaposed with black violence, as well as white guilt and the process of reconciliation.

- Racial divide, prejudice and othering

The context of this text is first introduced through Lurie's reservations about his reformed role in the new South Africa. Through his negative view of his new role, the new dispensation is also viewed in a negative light. His views are clearly expressed through the observation that "…in this transformed and, to his mind, emasculated institution of learning he is more out of place than ever" (Coetzee, 1999:4). This illustrates that Lurie not only struggles to find his place in the new South Africa, but that he also looks upon the new systems disparagingly (Coetzee, 1999:4). This is further illustrated through the admission that "…he has no respect for the material he teaches…" (Coetzee, 1999:4). Lurie's distaste for the new content he teaches is motivated by his preference to teach literature and poetry related to the Romantic period as opposed to the communication courses he teaches, which are more attuned to the needs of the new dispensation. Lurie's disapproval of the content he is obligated to teach versus the material he would prefer to teach ties in with an earlier discussion in Chapter 2 of the place of the literary canon in Africa. A major argument opposing the implementation of the canon is that this literature does not reflect diversity and inclusion as it mostly includes the work of white males (Weixlmann, 1988:277; Lawall, 1986:25), which is punctuated by Lurie's interest in poets such as Wordsworth, Blake and Byron. Another argument against the canon is that it is better suited to an aristocracy instead of a democracy (Kronick, 2001:37-38) because the texts are selected by a particular group and only includes the works of a predefined group; hence, it would be ill suited to the young democracy represented in *Disgrace*. In addition, Lurie's inability to adjust to the changes occurring in South Africa is also evidence of the apparent divide between black and white South Africa, which is illustrated in his views of black Africans as he points out the differences between himself and the black South Africans of the text: "That is not how we do things. *We*: he (David Lurie) is on the point of saying, *We Westerners"* (Coetzee, 1999:202).

In addition to noting the differences between himself and black South Africans, Lurie is also suspicious of Petrus, who is a black male: "He has his own suspicions of what Petrus is up to…" (Coetzee, 1999:117), as is Ettinger, a white neighbouring farmer: "Not one of *them* (black people) you can trust" (Coetzee, 1999:109). Through the apparent differences and conflict between the races, an "other" is created. The concept of the "other" is explained by De Beauvoir (1949), who asserts that, "Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought" and further explains that a particular group cannot identify itself without simultaneously identifying an "other". The process of this "othering" usually results in one group being the superior group, while the "other" is inferior (Fatima, Jamal & Hanif, 2015:40). Fatima *et al*. (2015:40) further explain that, within the colonial and post-colonial context, "othering" usually revolves around Europeans viewing their own culture as rich and superior while the "others", who are the colonised, are seen as inferior/savage. This argument is especially relevant when looking at Lurie's character who is portrayed as the archetypal white male: arrogant and superior. However, through the many mistakes the character

makes throughout the text, such as having an affair with one of his students, it is clear that Lurie is not superior although he may view himself as such. The portrayal of black characters as violent attackers, thieves and rapists in *Disgrace* can be paralleled with the aforementioned assertion by Fatima *et al.* (2015:40) of the native's depiction as dangerous and savage.

The notable racial divide in *Disgrace* is further exemplified in the physical distance between races as it is noted that Soraya possibly resides in Rylands/Athlone, and the Isaacs family reside in George, historically an area where Coloured people reside. This is further emphasised by Lurie's observation of a shanty settlement along the highway, presumably occupied by black South Africans. This physical separation of the races in the novel can be accredited to *The Group Areas Act* that was passed by the apartheid regime, which implemented the separation of people to designated areas according to race. Alan Paton, a South African writer and anti-apartheid activist, vehemently opposed this act as immoral. He explains the objective of the act as follows:

> The ultimate theoretical goal of the Group Areas Act will be, for example, to place me, a white town-dweller, in a white urban group area, where all owners and occupiers will be white persons, all schools, churches, cinemas, shops, clubs, etc., will be for white persons, where the only non-white persons who may enter will be servants and workers. Similarly, Mr. X, an African town-dweller, will find himself in a black urban group area, where in the first place no black person will be able to own land at all, where for the most part all houses will be owned by official bodies such as municipalities, and where the inhabitants are subject to a host of regulations, some of which are quite totalitarian in character, where all schools, churches, cinemas, shops, clubs, etc., will be for black persons where the only white persons who may enter will be policemen, inspectors or officials, or persons who have obtained permits. The striking difference between the two sets of conditions is justified by the statement that the black man is only a "temporary dweller" in the white man's city.
>
> (Paton, 1957:13)

Through making mention of the areas in which different racial groups reside, the atrocities of the past and tense race relations accurately depict a society still affected by its past. This apparent "othering" of a particular racial group as well as the racial divide is motivated by prejudices that are presented in the text. These prejudices often manifest as stereotypes that are communicated by characters such as Ettinger and Lurie. Ettinger, in addition to saying black people cannot be trusted, states that he will bring a "boy" to assist Lurie and Lucy after the attack on the farm. "Boy" is an insulting term for a black helper. This is an example of pejoration as the meaning of "boy" assumed a negative connotation over time compared to its original meaning of a male child or

youth. The sense conveyed by this term illustrates the inferior status of the black helper and furthermore signifies a master-servant relationship.

In addition to this, Lurie's reservations about Petrus seem to revolve around his blackness. His ultimate distaste of Petrus is proven when he voices his frustration at the man's attitude toward the attack on him and his daughter by saying that Petrus is not an "old-style Kaffir". In this context, an "old-style Kaffir" would refer to someone who knows his place and respectfully bows down to the white man, knowing full well that his place is that of an obedient servant who shows gratitude for whatever the white man chooses to give to him. The term's etymology is Arabic (kāfir), which can be translated to non-believer or a person who does not have a religion. According to Baderoon (2012), this term is the most notorious word in South Africa and is indicative of the violence toward black people during apartheid. Baderoon (2012) further notes that the term is abusive and disregards the humanity of black people. The use of this term serves as a provocative reminder of South Africa's painful past and illustrates Lurie's inability to completely let go of the past. Finally, prejudice is illustrated through the apparent association of the violent attack and rape in the novel to the blackness of the three men who commit the crime. The narrator emphasises the fact that the attackers are black by describing them as "the dark trio" (Coetzee, 1999:122) and by again referring to the skin tone of one of the attackers "…pearls of blood emerge on the dark skin" (Coetzee, 1999:207). In so doing, Coetzee may be seen as perpetuating the stereotype that black men are thieves, rapists and cowards who attack in a pack. A decade long study by Malose Langa, an associate professor at Wits University, reveals that young black men are still viewed through a criminal lens which is perpetuated by the media's portrayal of young black men as "reckless, irresponsible, aggressive and violent" (Langa, 2020). Langa (2020) asserts that his research reveals that while young Black men are still characterised according to these stereotypes, there are positive changes in which young men seem to be focusing more on academic success and career goals. It is therefore disconcerting, that a post-colonial text that describes the new South Africa, ascribes to this negative stereotype of the black man instead of portraying a positive image. It should however be noted that the first impression of Petrus is not a negative one. Petrus is characterised as hard-working and helpful from the onset which only changes once Lurie begins to question his motives. It should also be noted that the negative portrayal of the South African context evident in the novel is not limited to the portrayal of the black male, but South African society in general. This is evident in the portrayal of Lurie as an arrogant white male who believes he is superior, which can also be characterised as a stereotypical view of white males.

The appearance of the "other", as well as racial prejudices justify the selection of CDA as the data analysis method. This is because CDA forms part of critical theory which is focused on issues

pertaining to “gender, race, class and other kinds of social oppression” (Jansen, 2016:23), all of which are evident in this text. Furthermore, CDA can effectively be applied in this study, as it is a method that focuses on the analysis of texts by looking at how issues of gender, race and class are explored in the text.

- Portrayal of the new dispensation as a regression

From the onset, it is clear that Lurie has difficulty accepting his place in the new dispensation, which he describes as a setback. This is depicted through the protagonist’s description of Africa as a dark continent on more than one occasion – one instance is when David says that; “He speaks Italian, he speaks French, but Italian and French will not save him here in darkest Africa.” (Coetzee, 1999:96) while he is trapped in the bathroom during the attack on the farm and cannot find the words to communicate to the attackers. In another instance, David wishes to tell his ex-wife, who is in Madagascar on business, about the attack on the farm and describes sending the letter to, “Rosalind in darkest Africa” (Coetzee, 1999:121). These references to Africa are reminiscent of the depictions of Africa as primitive and uncivilised, in need of culture and saving. Lurie’s notion of Africa as a backward dark continent is further proven as he seems to be surprised by Petrus’s achievements: “Petrus arrived as the dig-man, the carry-man, the water-man. Now he is too busy for that kind of thing“ (Coetzee, 1999:151). It is further illustrated through Lurie’s struggle to understand his role in relation to this new Petrus: “...he does not presume to give Petrus orders” (Coetzee, 1999:116); “It is a new world they live in, he and Lucy and Petrus. Petrus knows it, and he knows it, and Petrus knows that he knows it” (Coetzee, 1999:117). Lurie’s idea of the dispensation as a regression is further illustrated in the views he has of his daughter, whom he believes resembles a primitive woman: “Curious that he and her mother, cityfolk, intellectuals, should have produced this throwback, this sturdy young settler” (Coetzee, 1999:61). Lurie regards Lucy as primitive because she resembles an Afrikaner settler who is engaged in physical labour as opposed to a modern woman who is an intellectual. Lurie again asserts this view of Lucy as a settler when he describes her as “A frontier farmer of a new breed” (Coetzee, 1999:62). Through this, Lurie references the Frontier wars of the Eastern Cape which saw black people fight the coloniser for the possession of land. The suggestion that Lucy is a throwback who resembles an Afrikaner Frontier farmer seems to suggest that she is a somewhat primitive woman. This depiction works to reiterate his assertions of a country that resembles the past.

In addition, the idea of reversion is also apparent through Lurie’s observation that the country is coming to the city: “Country ways. Already Cape Town is receding into the past” (Coetzee, 1999:65); “the country is coming to the city. Soon there will be cattle again…” (Coetzee, 1999:175). Again, it is suggested that the country is moving backward as it is suggested that it will return to its primitive nature before colonisation. As previously mentioned, bringing civilisation

to an otherwise dark and backward place was a key proponent for justification of the colonisation of Africa. The subtle suggestion here is that South Africa will recede back to its pre-colonial state – undeveloped and rural. This is reinforced with Lurie's suggestion that, "Soon there will be cattle again" (Coetzee, 1999:175). The indication of the regressive state is further exemplified through the transformation of the protagonist, who seemingly has to regress in order to fit into this new society. This is illustrated through Lurie's development throughout the novel. In the beginning, he entertains beautiful young women with wine and music: "Wine, music: a ritual that men and women play out with each other" (Coetzee, 1999:12), while working on an opera on the life of Byron to be accompanied by "violin, cello, oboe or maybe bassoon" (Coetzee, 1999:63). This is remarkably different from Lurie at the end of the novel, who has an affair with Bev Shaw, a woman he admits is unattractive: "Bev. Never did he dream he would sleep with a Bev" (Coetzee, 1999:140). Instead of an elaborate opera on the life of Byron, his focus changes to the sad existence of Byron's middle-aged mistress (Teresa), accompanied by a banjo that he plays to a dog named Driepoot at the animal clinic: "…a mad old man who sits among the dogs singing to himself!" (Coetzee, 1999:212). Van Wyk Smith (2014:20) notes that the symbolism of the friendship between Lurie and the dog, Driepoot, lies in the symbolic meaning of the dog's name that means "tripod" in Afrikaans. Van Wyk Smith (2014:20) suggests that the name which could refer to a three-legged stool or cauldron, can be associated to mythology, especially the "Oracle of Delphi" who was known for giving signs and prophesies for those who sought it. In *Disgrace,* Lurie asks for a sign to indicate when the right time would be to euthanise Driepoot. The relationship Lurie forms with the dog could therefore be a sign of Lurie's regression to a more basic and primitive life and could also be symbolic of a society reverting to a simpler, more primitive existence.

- White fear and black violence

White fear is another aspect that characterises the South African context and the preoccupation with its violent past. As previously discussed, colonisation rested on the notion that Africans are savages in need of being civilized, apart from the major motives of exploiting the resources of colonised countries. This negative depiction of black people is perpetuated in *Disgrace* through the apparent fear white people have of black people. In the novel it is noted that white South Africans take precautions to guard against black people in the form of watchdogs: "Watchdogs, all of them" (Coetzee, 1999:61); "…a country where dogs are bred to snarl at the mere smell of a black man" (Coetzee, 1999:110) and extra security: "They ought to install bars, security gates, a perimeter fence, as Ettinger has done" (Coetzee, 1999:113). Ettinger's character plays a significant role in perpetuating the idea that white South Africans are in danger. It is worth noting the significance of the selection of the name "Ettinger" which is a German name denoting

Ettinger's foreigner status which is further reinforced by Lurie's observation that Ettinger "speaks English with a marked German accent" (Coetzee, 1999:100). Lurie describes Ettinger as, "a man of the earth, tenacious, eingewurzelt" (Coetzee, 1999:117). According to Lopez (2010:936), eingewurzelt is derived from the word "Wurzeln" which means roots and illustrates Ettinger's attachment to the land. Encounters with Ettinger make it clear that he believes his attachment to the land is threatened in the new South Africa which is made evident through his securing of his property. Lurie, however, believes that Ettinger's efforts in securing his property are in vain as he notes, "Even the days of Ettinger, with his guns and barbed wire and alarm systems, are numbered" (Coetzee, 1999:134) thus reinforcing the idea that white South Africans are in danger and have no place in the country. These fears seem to be justified when David and Lucy are attacked by three black men. The black perpetrators are portrayed as violent, with their attacks being racially motivated, as is proven by Lurie's assumption that the men acted out of vengeance: "Vengeance is like a fire. The more it devours, the hungrier it gets" (Coetzee, 1999:112). This apparent justification of white people's fear of black people is however misconstrued since violence, theft and rape should not be associated with black men only; Lurie himself abuses his power to take advantage of one of his students. Mattos (2012:13) states that rape is a crime that is associated with gender disputes more often than racial disputes, and adds that rape is a South African reality that threatens South African women of all races, in fact, South Africa has been labelled as the rape capitol of the world (News24, 2014). Ettinger seems to acknowledge that white South Africans may once have been shielded from these realities, but are no longer exempted from it when he states that, "…the police are not going to save you, not any more, you can be sure" (Coetzee, 1999:100). This quote also seems to imply that white South Africans will not be protected in the new South Africa, which reflect the views of some white people in post-apartheid South African who believe that they have to accept crime and injustices as punishment for past injustices. Glen (2009:90) explains that the novel represents this issue by suggesting that "crime is the way to bring recalcitrant whites to their senses, to making their peace with the new black power in the land". It should also be noted that, in this exchange, Ettinger's "not any more" implies that white South Africans were at one point protected by the police. This highlights incidences in South Africa's past when the police were used to protect the interests of the apartheid government and keep black South Africans in line, often with extreme brutality (Onishi, 2018). This quote could also imply that, for the first time, white South Africans will be subjected to the same realities that other South Africans have long been confronted with, such as crime, violence and the lack of service delivery.

- White guilt and reconciliation

After Lurie has an affair with one of his students, he is required to attend a hearing in which he has to assume responsibility for his actions. While Lurie admits to the affair, he shows no remorse for his actions. By maintaining that he was a servant of Eros with no control over his actions: "I was a servant of Eros... It was a god who acted through me" (Coetzee, 1999:89), Lurie admits that he is guilty and accepts the consequences for his actions, but does not take responsibility for his actions. Part of Lurie's problems is his inability to accept the realities of the new South Africa. Gaylard (2012:7) argues that, "Lurie is unable to live up to his own Wordsworthian ideal of a balance between archetype and reality, between vision and objects, because he is wrapped in his own ecstasy with Romantic archetype and vision." Lurie does not believe that his relationship with Melanie is wrong, which is reinforced when he is asked if he regrets his actions and he responds by saying no, and that he "was enriched by the experience" (Coetzee, 1999:56). Lurie's reaction to the action taken against him is the first of many encounters the reader has with the themes of white guilt and reconciliation. Since the novel is written so soon after the abolishment of apartheid, scholars such as Poyner (2000), Boehmer (2002) and McCoppin (2011:53) have drawn parallels between the hearing Lurie has to attend and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings of 1995-2002 in which white South Africans, who had played a role in apartheid, had to face their victims or victims' families and account for their actions during apartheid. This is reinforced by Poyner (2000:68), who contends that Lurie's transition to a greater moral and ethical awareness is mirrored against South Africans' own transition. However, what is missing in Lurie's admission is the show of remorse, and this does not sit well with the committee:

> Yes, he says, he is guilty; but when we try to get specificity, all of a sudden it is not abuse of a young woman he is confessing to, just an impulse he could not resist, with no mention of the pain he has caused, no mention of the long history of exploitation of which this is part (Coetzee; 1999:53).

These words are spoken by Farodia Rasool, one of two women on the committee assigned to Lurie's hearing. In this, Rasool questions the sincerity of Lurie's admission to guilt in which it becomes clear he does not truly account for his actions and their consequences for the student in question. Boehmer (2002: 343) echoes this sentiment by saying that Lurie refuses to say that he is sorry for his abuse of power. This has also been discussed by Saunders (2005:100), who contends that Lurie's apology does not "meet the demands of ethical responsibility, ostensibly both because it is not sufficiently visceral and because it does not provide the spectacle of deliberation that warrants the production of reasonable truth".

Lurie solidifies his stance on this through his admission that he cannot and will not change: "I am being asked to issue an apology about which I may not be sincere?" (Coetzee, 1999:58). However, after his daughter Lucy is raped and he is attacked, he is in the unique position of being both a perpetrator and a victim. During this time, we see Lurie press Petrus for an admission:

"*Violation*: that is the word he would like to force out of Petrus" (Coetzee, 1999:199). This very closely resembles the committee he once answered to, in which, much like Petrus, he did not assume responsibility. McChoppin (2011:53) believes that, in grappling with Lucy's refusal to seek justice, Lurie is forced to deal with the issue of accountability for his own acts. This is validated through Lurie's introspection later in the novel: "Do I have to change, he thinks?" (Coetzee, 1999:126). This is remarkably different to the Lurie introduced at the beginning to the novel: "His temperament is not going to change, he is too old for that" (Coetzee, 1999:4).

The hearing in the beginning of the novel is very different from Lucy's approach to the crime committed against her. While Lucy is innocent, she accepts the burden that she believes comes with being a white female in Africa. Lucy begins to explore the idea of reparations by hinting that perhaps the violence she is subjected to is the price she should pay for being able to live on the land, "What if…what if *that* is the price one has to pay for staying on?" (Coetzee, 1999:158). This sentiment is echoed by Hornell (2001:16) who puts forth that Lucy's rape may represent reparation for not only Lurie's personal guilt, but also the sins of the white population. Furthermore, Lucy's refusal to report the rape is indicative of the acceptance that her rights may have been diminished as a white South African, which is proven when she says that, "…in another place it may be held to be a public matter. But in this place, at this time, it is not…This place being South Africa" (Coetzee, 1999:112). Lucy's words here seem to sustain earlier assertions that some white South Africans believe they have limited rights and have to accept certain injustices as punishment for the colonial and apartheid past.

5.2.1 Positioning of the African character in *Disgrace*

An African, as defined in this study, is inclusive of native people of the land as well as people who might not be of native origin but inhabit the land, and – more importantly – identify as African. Based on this definition, it can be said that David Lurie is not an African, for although he lives on the continent, he sees himself as a Westerner – "*We Westerners*" (Coetzee, 1999:202). Lucy on the other hand, is aware of the realities of South Africa, chooses to stay, and acts in a way which will not only benefit herself, but other Africans. It can thus be said that Lucy is well aware of her whiteness but identifies as an African. In this section, Lucy will be discussed as an illustration of a young white African, as well as black Africans that are presented in the text.

5.2.1.1 Lucy's positioning as a white African character

As a young white African, Lucy is positive and hopeful of the future which is proven with her father's observation of her as "A solid woman, embedded in her new life" (Coetzee, 1999:62). This optimistic representation of Lucy is supported by the meaning of the name Lucy, which

generally means “light”. Lucy lives up to this name since she is a positive representation of the new South Africa and makes a genuine attempt to live up to the expectations of a “rainbow nation[3]”. Her character is also portrayed as determined, with her mind set on partnership with other Africans: “Petrus is my new assistant. In fact, since March, co-proprietor. Quite a fellow” (Coetzee, 1999:62). This characteristic sets Lucy apart from her father and his generation who have reservations about black South Africans. Lurie realises this when he remarks that, “Between Lucy’s generation and mine a curtain seems to have fallen” (Coetzee, 1999:210). This portrayal of Lucy is well aligned with the aspirations of peace and equality in the new South Africa, which promised that all races would be able to live together in harmony:

> We enter into a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans, black and white, will be able to walk tall without fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world.
>
> (Nelson Mandela, 1994)

Furthermore, Lucy’s positioning of herself as a young progressive farmer puts her in good standing with white South Africans and black South Africans. This is illustrated through the support she receives from white South Africans: “Many of Lucy’s customers know her by name: middle-aged women, most of them, with a touch of proprietary in their attitude to her, as though her success were theirs too” (Coetzee, 1999:72), and Petrus’s view of her as “a forward-looking lady” (Coetzee, 1999:136). However, despite Lucy’s best efforts, she is manacled by a colonial ancestry which makes her stand out as one who does not belong on the farm: “I think I am on their territory” (Coetzee, 1999:158) and seemingly has to pay for past iniquities: “It was history speaking through them…A history of wrong…It may seem personal, but it wasn’t. It came down from the ancestors” (Coetzee, 1999:156). Smit-Marais and Wenzel (2006:25) assert that the novel explores the “anxieties about the rights of (white) ownership, but within a post-apartheid context”. The exploration of this issue is especially relevant against the backdrop of the Eastern Cape which historically has been a site of conflict between black people and colonisers (Smit-Marais & Wenzel, 2006:26). Ross (2003:117) states that the conflict concerning land, which is known as the Eastern Frontier, was the longest running war in the history of Africa’s colonisation. Through Lucy’s character, there is an apparent dilemma of young white South Africans who, although they desire to move forward, are burdened with the task of *atoning for the sins of their fathers*. This is confirmed when her father asks Lucy, “Do you hope you can expire the crimes of the past by suffering in the future?” (Coetzee, 1999:112). This is further justified by the other meaning which could be assigned to Lucy’s name, being that of St. Lucy, a Christian martyr who was persecuted

[3] A name given to South Africa after the first democratic election which represents a diverse country that is unified.

for her religious convictions. In *Disgrace*, Lucy is portrayed as a character who has to pay for whiteness and the past. Furthermore, Lucy is in a difficult position, as she is different from her ancestors, yet not part of the black community, which Coetzee portrays through Lucy's isolation on the farm.

5.2.1.2 How Black African characters are positioned in the text

The most significant black character in the novel is Petrus. Petrus, in many ways, is a positive depiction of a black person in the new South Africa. This is because his character defies the colonial views of the African as subservient by portraying him as an individual who is hard working and takes initiative: "If there is such a thing as honest toil, then Petrus bears its marks" (Coetzee, 1999:117). Smit-Marais and Wenzel (2006:29) point out that the name Petrus has positive biblical connotations: strength, dependability and progressiveness. While the depiction of Petrus is positive on many levels, his characterisation is limited. Although Lurie asserts that he would like to hear Petrus's story: "He would not mind hearing Petrus's story one day" (Coetzee, 1999:117), not much is known about Petrus's character, as most of the information about his character is offered by Lucy and based on assumptions made by Lurie. This is significant as Petrus's character is often limited because David Lurie's point of view dominates the story. As a result, the reader becomes aware of Lurie's desires, passions, and the discourse that portray his detachment from the reality of Africa and its people. Through Lurie's accounts, Petrus is characterised as someone who is deceptive: "a plotter, a schemer, and no doubt a liar too" (Coetzee, 1999:117). This is somewhat justified owing to the fact that he claims not to know anything about the attack despite being related to one of the attackers. The limitations of Petrus's character are also marked by the fact that he has no last name, only a first name; despite its apparent positive symbolism it is not an African name. The names of the black characters, Petrus and Pollux, reflect a long-standing history of assigning English names to black Africans, a practice influenced by British colonial rule and missionary schools (Dlakavu, 2015). This practice was continued by the apartheid regime and its significance is encapsulated in a poem, *My Name*, by South African poet, Magoleng wa Selepe. *My Name* tells the story of how a woman with the name "Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa" becomes "Maria" to suit the Afrikaner bureaucrat who cannot pronounce her name. Petrus's name therefore points to the influence of colonisation, further reflected in his home that contains some random western artefacts: "Shaded lamps and pictures on the walls (Van Gogh's sunflowers, a Tretchikoff lady in blue, Jane Fonda in her Barbarella outfit, Doctor Khumalo scoring a goal) soften the bleakness." (Coetzee, 1999:128) These aspects portray Petrus's displacement as an African man due to colonialism. The way in which Petrus is characterised is heavily critiqued by Chris van Wyk, a famous South African writer, who argues that white characters are "fleshed out" while the black characters are not (as cited by Mattos, 2012:13). While van Wyk sees this as

a point of criticism, the limitation of the characterisation of black characters versus the more detailed characterisation of white characters, is effective in illustrating the protagonist's views as well as the inequalities that still existed during the time the novel was written. This is proven by the fact that Petrus's wife is never referred to by a name, nor is the rest of Petrus's family aside from Pollux, whose name is ironically the same as the son of the Greek mythological god Zeus. In Greek mythology, Zeus's son Pollux was born after Zeus raped Leda. Thus, the connection to rape with the involvement of Pollux is made.

Regardless of Lurie's praise for Petrus's productivity: "In a matter of hours he (Petrus) has ploughed the whole of his land. All very swift and business-like; all very unlike Africa" (Coetzee, 1999:151), the narrative of his story is dominated by the accusation that he is cunning and involved in the attack on Lucy in order to forward his agenda: "Petrus would like to take over Lucy's land" (Coetzee, 1999:117); "Petrus is with *them*" (Coetzee, 1999:133); "the darkest reading would be that Petrus engaged three men to teach Lucy a lesson" (Coetzee, 1999:118). This shows that, through Lurie's depiction of Petrus, his character is limited to a stereotypical view of black South Africans. It has been argued that the characterisation of black characters in the novel is racist (Glen, 2009:90). One of the reasons for this is the portrayal of black people as vengeful; wishing to humiliate or harm white people as a way to compensate for the injustice of apartheid (Makhaya, 2004). Another reason why the characterisation of black people is challenged is the depiction of black men as thieves and rapists. Makhaya (2004) argues that *Disgrace* explores one of the apartheid system's myths, which is that "once the savages are in power, chaos reigns and under the cover of lawlessness they exact revenge, stealing white property and raping white women". Through this, Makhaya (2004) makes a point of how the protagonist's view of crime through a racial lens is representative of how many white people in South Africa view crime. Glen (2009:87) states these as some of the reasons the novel was labelled racist and reported to South Africa's Human Rights Commission.

In addition to this, Petrus's character also functions to show the change in power, which is one of the dominant themes of *Disgrace*. Assefa and Chernet (2018:2) explain that the change of power is illustrated through the depiction of Lurie as a character who loses his place in society, reinforcing the idea that white superiority has lost its power. Lurie's fate is juxtaposed with the development of Petrus, whose ascent from caretaker to land owner works to illustrate the new power dynamics in South Africa. According to Koul (2016:181), Petrus's changing position in the text makes him "a prime example of a black man who acquires power and property". Petrus's acquisition of the land, that once belonged to Lucy, highlights the larger issue of land ownership in South Africa. As mentioned before, the setting of the farm is especially significant, since it had been the site of land disputes between colonisers and native people. Modise and Mtshiselwa

(2013) explain that the Natives Land Act of 1913, imposed by colonialism and later reinforced by apartheid, ensured that black people were stripped of their land, ensuring inferior positions with no link to land and thus wealth. In relation to this, Petrus's acquisition suggests some sort of reparation for the past. However, Petrus's possible incitement of the brutal attack resulting in Lucy signing her land over to him also works to reinforce the claims that the novel portrays black people as vengeful and wishing to make white people suffer for past injustices.

5.3 Whose interests are served by this positioning?

Since South Africa is depicted as a changing society, people who are willing to adapt, and redefine their position in the new dispensation are favoured. This is made clear through the ultimatum Lurie is given following his intimate involvement with one of his students: "He (the Rector) is prepared not to take extreme measures… on the condition that you issue a statement…" (Coetzee, 1999:57). The importance of compromise and adaptation in the new dispensation is also illustrated in the case of Lucy, who is willing to give up her land to Petrus and become his wife in exchange for protection and to remain on the farm. This is also reinforced by Lurie's claim that, in the new South Africa, action is required: "Real actions were demanded instead of symbolism" (Coetzee, 1999:91). Through this, the idea is also created that the interests of those willing to take accountability for their actions are served in the new dispensation. This is proven as Lurie's inability to own up to his actions, "There is a difference between pleading guilty to a charge and admitting you were wrong, and you know that" (Coetzee, 1999:54), ultimately leads to his dismissal from the university. Lurie's inability to take accountability for his actions is further proven with the insincere apologies he makes to the Isaacs family for his inappropriate relationship he had with the daughter Melanie, "With careful ceremony he gets to his knees and touches his forehead to the floor. Is that enough? he thinks. Will that do? If not, what more?" (Coetzee, 1999: 171). Here we see that Lurie seems to realise his wrongdoing but is still unable to deter from his lustful nature which is proven when he lusts after Melanie's younger sister whilst at the Isaacs' home, "He meets the mother's eyes, then the daughter's, and again the current leaps, the current of desire" (Coetzee, 1999:173)

In addition to people who are willing to adapt and account for their actions, the novel also depicts that the interests of males, particularly black males, are served in the new dispensation. This is demonstrated through Petrus's success in the novel. Petrus's evolution is noted as progressive – from former servant to landowner and farmer: "Once he was a boy, now he is no longer" (Coetzee, 1999:152); "Petrus arrived as the dig-man, the carry-man, the water-man. Now he is too busy for that kind of thing" (Coetzee, 1999:152). The juxtaposition of Petrus's elevation with Lurie's descent emphasises the new positioning of the black male in South Africa: "A dog man, Petrus

once called himself. Well, now he (Lurie) has become a dog-man…" (Coetzee, 1999:146). It should be noted that there is a significant difference in what Petrus does as the dog-man versus what Lurie does. Petrus's role as the dog-man involves him feeding the dogs on the farm and cleaning their cages while Lurie is depicted as a dog undertaker, *"*he has become a dog-man: a dog undertaker, a dog psychopomp; a harijan… Curious that a man as selfish as he should be offering himself to the service of dead dogs... (H)e saves the honour of corpses because there is no one else stupid enough to do it*"* (Coetzee, 1999:146). Lurie's work with the dogs not only gives him a sense of purpose, but allows him to attain some measure of grace.

Although it can be argued that the novel aims to show the change of power dynamics in the new democracy, which places Petrus in a position of power, the novel also shows Lurie's sense of entitlement and superiority. According to Kalkman (2015:9), Lurie is the most privileged character in the novel: he lives a comfortable, middle-class life in Cape Town and abuses his position as a white male and lecturer to seduce women, particularly, women of colour. Lurie's sense of superiority is also displayed in his view of women as objects designed for the pleasure of men, "…a woman's beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of her bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it" (Coetzee, 1999:16). Lurie's sense of entitlement is further reinforced through the narration of the story, which primarily focuses on him. Although the novel is written from a third person perspective, Lurie's point of view dominates. Through narrative techniques such as third person limited and free indirect discourse, the reader is given access to Lurie's thoughts and feelings, as well as his spoken words, which is not afforded to other characters in the novel. An example of these narrative techniques can be seen in the following extract:

> He has toyed with the idea of asking her to see him in her own time. He would like to spend an evening with her, perhaps even a whole night. But not the morning after. He knows too much about himself to subject her to a morning after, when he will be cold, surly, impatient to be alone (Coetzee, 1999:2).

This is an example of how Lurie's thoughts and feelings are communicated in the text. These techniques allow the reader access to Lurie's story. This allows the reader to see Lurie's inability to adapt and, finally, his attempt to move from disgrace to some attainment of grace through his work with the dogs. None of the other characters enjoys these advantages. Much less of Lucy's story is shared and Petrus's story is omitted entirely. The reader does not have access to Petrus's thoughts or feelings about white people in the way Lurie's thoughts and feelings about black people are revealed. While Lurie is able to express his struggles in postcolonial South Africa, the reader has no access to the struggles Petrus experiences in postcolonial South Africa.

5.4 What are the consequences of this positioning?

The previous section discussed the positioning of the text, focusing on the position of the African context and the African characters according to the research objectives of this study – to explore how African contexts and characters are portrayed/interpreted in literary texts. This section aims to explore the consequences of this positioning of the African context and African characters in *Disgrace.*

In the above analysis of the positioning of the context of the text, it is observed that the South African context is positioned as one that reflects a regressive dispensation with an apparent racial divide motivated by obstinate prejudices and plagued by issues such as fear, guilt and violence. The consequence of this positioning is a bleak depiction of a South Africa rife with racial tension and a society that is not able to live up to the anticipation of a democracy in which all citizens are equal. This is reiterated by Smit-Marais and Wenzel (2006:25), who note that "The novel offers a rather bleak apocalyptic vision of gender roles, racial relationships and family relations in post-apartheid South Africa."

When looking at the positioning of African characters in the text, particularly Lucy and Petrus, it is evident that the consequence of their positioning in the text is either the re-establishment or the misrepresentation of identity.

Lucy's identity as a white woman in Africa is not established. This is because she does not seem to have a place in white or black South Africa, resulting in her alienation, marked by her isolation: "…I feel anxious about my daughter all alone here. It is very isolated" (Coetzee, 1999:64). Here, a physical isolation is referred to, although she feels both physically and ideologically isolated. The idea that Lucy does not have a place in South Africa is reiterated by her father's desire for her to leave for Europe: "Go overseas. Go to Holland" (Coetzee, 1999:157). This is supported by Ahmeduddin (2017:2), who contends that Lucy is in search of a new identity as she clearly rejects the values of the old dispensation, also in terms of gender, and wants to live an independent life within the new dispensation. Ahmeduddin (2017:2) further asserts that Lucy's new identity does not come without a price; she acts as a scapegoat, atoning for the sins of the colonisers and compromising by becoming Petrus's wife in order to remain on the land.

While Lucy is represented as a character that is redefining her identity, Petrus is represented as a character with no identity. By linking Petrus to the attackers, "He is with them" (Coetzee,1999:133), Petrus – and all the black men in the text – are completely defined by Coetzee, who writes from a white perspective (Mattos, 2012:12). This is also illustrated by the fact that Petrus is often described by Lurie, who identifies himself as a *Westerner*. At no point are

Petrus's thoughts and aspirations communicated by Petrus himself; Lurie really has no way of accurately representing Petrus as a black African. Mahaya (2004) suggests that Lurie's depiction of Petrus highlights a larger issue with the representation of black people in literature. Makhaya (2004) argues that Coetzee and other white writers such as Alan Paton and Nadine Gordimer do not have first-hand experience of black South Africa, yet their stories are the main sources of literary representations of South Africa. Earlier assertions made in Chapter 2 of this study made a case for how white writers have been able to eloquently articulate African stories and that these narratives should not be disregarded. Makhaya's (2004) point is however, also a relevant one and makes an important argument for the development and inclusion of black authors in local and international spaces. Makhaya's (2004) view is especially relevant when looking at the presentation of Petrus, which could arguably be seen as limited and predominantly negative. It should, however, also be noted that these views of Petrus are those of Lurie, and since the novel depicts the struggles of a white man attempting to adjust in the new South Africa, Coetzee could be illustrating that these are the views held by white South Africans who are unwilling to change their perceptions of black people. Petrus's character lacks authenticity and seems a mere representation of stereotypical views of black people – from his non-African name to his scheming nature – whose main agenda is to overthrow or harm white South Africans. This notion is reinforced by Coetzee's creation of Pollux, whose only dialogue in the text is "I will kill you!...We will kill you all!" (Coetzee, 1999:207). Here, Pollux is speaking to Lucy and Lurie and it is suggested that the character not only voices his own hatred of white people, but also the hatred and motive black people hold toward white people: "We will kill you all". The consequence of Petrus's positioning in the text is therefore limited and may be a misrepresentation of black South Africans.

5.5 Whose interests are negated in this positioning?

Through the novel's depiction of South Africa as a country that is undergoing transformation, it is suggested that the interests of white South Africans are negated. This is achieved by having significant conflict revolve around a brutal crime that goes unpunished. Lurie and Lucy are the victims of a brutal attack for which no justice is sought, nor is it prioritised by the new dispensation: "...we are not hopeful, the police are overstretched…" (Coetzee, 1999:115). This suggests not only that white South Africans are no longer in positions of power, but that their safety is under threat in the new South Africa. This is further illustrated through Lurie's assumption that black people such as Petrus believe that there is no place for a white South African in the new dispensation: "Petrus has a vision of the future in which people like Lucy have no place" (Coetzee, 1999:118). This idea is reinforced by Lurie's belief that people like Ettinger will soon succumb to a similar fate: "Even the days of Ettinger, with his guns and barbed wire and alarm systems, are

numbered" (Coetzee, 1999:134). Lurie's cynical view of the safety and place of white people in South Africa is also illustrated through his desire for Lucy to emigrate, and his disappointment by her decision to stay in what he believes is an inferior role: "How humiliating...Such high hopes, and to end like this" (Coetzee, 1999:205). This shows that David believes Lucy's new position on the farm is a degrading one. It could be as result of Lucy accepting the position as a tenant on land she once owned, or because she now has to be married, and possibly subservient to Petrus, who is a not only a black man but was once her helper.

In addition to this, the interests of women are severely negated in the novel. Women are degraded and subjected to abuse throughout the novel and often without real ramifications. This is first illustrated by Lurie's proclamation that he is a womaniser (Coetzee, 1999:7), and intensified by his refusal to account for his abuse of power whilst indulging in an affair with his student, Melanie. The notion of crimes against women going unpunished is also exemplified by Lucy's refusal to take action against the rapists. Coetzee portrays women in this society as voiceless, as there is no narrative of either Melanie or Lucy's experiences. In addition to this, Petrus's wife has no name and does not play any role in the novel. The silence and limited role women play in the novel is indicative of the colonial era in Africa when white men played a dominant role. According to Lusane (2004) (as cited by Mushonga, 2013:2), colonial societies were organised according to a hierarchy where white men were at the top and could exert sexual dominance over white and black women, and racial dominance over black men. This hierarchy was followed by white women who could exert racial dominance over black men, followed by black men who could exert sexual dominance over black women. Aspects of this are clearly seen in the limited role of women in *Disgrace*. There is, however, a significant difference in the role of black men in this hierarchy, as it is evident that black men exert sexual dominance over Lucy, who is a white woman. This shows the change in power dynamics. Gane (2002:104) believes that rape is almost always political, since it is used to exert power over women and further argues that, when rape crosses racial lines as in *Disgrace*, the act is even more politically charged. Furthermore, the silence of women is exemplified in the novel as Melanie's side of the story is told without inclusion of the reader: "Ms Isaacs appeared before the committee yesterday" (Coetzee, 1999:48), while Lucy's violation occurs away from the reader. These absent narratives give the idea that women are silenced and marginalised in this society, which is confirmed by Lurie's observation that, "…over the body of a woman silence is being drawn like a blanket" (Coetzee, 1999:110). It should, however, be noted that the ordeal Lucy suffers could be withheld from the reader as a narrative technique to portray Lurie's utter helplessness during the attack, as he is locked up during the rape. Nonetheless, the details of Lucy's assault are not disclosed to the reader or any of the other characters in the novel. Gane (2002:104) offers that "It is an experience that remains unspoken and unknown — an absence within the text." Gane (2002:111) also notes that Lucy's silence yet again brings into

focus Coetzee's selection of Lucy's name: "Lucy offers herself as had her namesake, the Sicilian virgin martyr, St Lucy, one of whose attributes was a silencing wound in the throat". In the context of the novel, this could be symbolic for how rape and patriarchy silences women in society. Furthermore, in the text, the function of women is limited to that of pleasuring men. This is supported by Lurie's use of prostitutes such as Soraya and the unnamed woman who appears later in the text. It is further illustrated when Lurie tells Melanie that she has no option but to share herself with men: "A woman's beauty does not belong to her alone" (Coetzee, 1999:16). The degradation of women in the text is reiterated in the description of women as objects whose course in life is determined by men: "she does not own herself" (Coetzee, 1999:18). This idea is echoed when Lurie alludes to the fact that, in the country, women form part of the possessions that are a risk to own: "Cars, shoes, women too" (Coetzee, 1999:98). Coetzee reinforces the positioning of women as objects by elaborately describing women's physical appearance throughout the text, "He strokes her honey-brown body…" (Coetzee, 1999:1); "Soraya is tall and slim, with long black hair and dark, liquid eyes" (Coetzee, 1999:1); "She is small and thin, with close-cropped black hair, wide, almost Chinese cheekbones, large, dark eyes" (Coetzee, 1999:11). There is nothing in essence wrong with such descriptions, but as far as Lurie is concerned, these border on sexual fantasies. The portrayal of women also speaks to the role of women in this society, who are confined to gender roles explicitly shown with the character of Petrus's wife, who fulfils the role of housewife and mother. In the character of Lucy, Coetzee shows that stepping outside of these roles has great consequences. Lucy is portrayed as ambitious and liberal; this extends to her sexuality, which does not seem accepted in this society. This is alluded to by hinting that Lucy's rape could have also had something to do with the fact that she is homosexual: "How they put her in her place, how they showed her what a woman was for" (Coetzee, 1999:115). Through all of the above, Coetzee shows that the interests of women are negated in this society by portraying that being a woman in South Africa equates to strife and abuse. This is highlighted when Lurie reflects on what happens to Lucy and notes that, while he can imagine what it is like to be the man committing the act, he cannot imagine what it is like to the woman in that situation: "...he does understand; he can, if he concentrates, if he loses himself, be there, be the men, inhabit them, fill them with the ghost of himself. The question is, does he have it in him to be the woman?" (Coetzee, 1999:160). Through this, Lurie admits that he cannot begin to understand the violation women are subjected to and that for him it would be easier to see himself the perpetrator of the horrific crime that takes place but he could not imagine being the victim. These are the first inklings of a suggestion of change in Lurie as far as his perception of 'the other' is concerned.

5.6 The role of language with the application of Fairclough's dimensions of CDA

In *Disgrace*, language is used to great effect for various purposes. The following discussion focuses on how language is used to create the "other", to show the apparent racial divide and prejudices in this society, and to reveal or avoid certain realities. This is done by analysing certain extracts according to Fairclough's dimensions of analysis (as cited in Janks, 1997:329). These dimensions of analysis are:

- text analysis (description);
- processing analysis (interpretation);
- social analysis (explanation).

In the novel, language creates a barrier between Lurie and Petrus, which is noted in Lurie's acknowledgement that he would like to hear Petrus's story, but not in English: "He would not mind hearing Petrus's story one day. But preferably not reduced to English" (Coetzee, 1999:117). Petrus and Lurie seem to have difficulty communicating, which is in large part owed to Petrus's limited command of English, Lurie's inability to speak an African language, and Petrus's language and opinions not being to Lurie's liking: "He is irritated by Petrus's habit of letting words hang in the air" (Coetzee, 1999:153). In the case of these two characters, language is used to indicate their difference, which – if judged by language – automatically places David above Petrus. This contributes to the "othering" of Petrus and other black characters, such as the students who, in the new dispensation, might be predominantly black and who Lurie views as not being interested in the communications or literature courses. This creation of the "other" can be traced by the use of the pronoun "them" which is often used to describe the "other": "Petrus is with *them*" (Coetzee, 1999:133). The "othering" of African characters is also made apparent through the limited descriptions of these characters in comparison with the detailed descriptions of other characters. Examples of this is Petrus and Pollux who only have first names, the attackers' description in terms of their blackness – "the dark trio" (Coetzee, 1999:122), and Petrus's wife – who does not have a name, although Bill Shaw has a first and last name despite his role not being any more significant than hers.

The "othering" of Petrus as a black character can also be seen in the rigidity of the relationship between Lurie and Petrus. In light of this, certain extracts are analysed to show how Lurie views Petrus and how Lucy's opinion of Petrus differs from that of Lurie.

(Lucy)"She gets taken out every day for exercise. By me or by Petrus. It's part of the package."

(Lurie)"Petrus?

(Lucy) "You will meet him. Petrus is my new assistant. In fact, since March, co-proprietor. Quite a fellow."

(Coetzee, 1999:62)

Text analysis:	In this extract, Lucy and Lurie are talking about one of the dogs on the farm. If one zooms in on the language used by Lucy, one sees that she values Petrus as her assistant and she calls him her co-owner of her property. She does not refer to Petrus as her worker. Lucy's admiration of Petrus is evident when she refers to him as "quite a fellow".
Processing analysis:	Lucy first notes that Petrus is her assistant and then, as if correcting herself, says that Petrus is a co-proprietor. The word co-proprietor here suggests that Petrus and Lucy are on equal footing and that Petrus is a business partner as opposed to a servant. This is supported by her statement that he is "quite a fellow". Although "fellow" could be taken to mean "man" or "boy", in a more formal sense it means someone of the same standing.
Social analysis:	The correction of assistant to co-proprietor fits into the era the novel was written in, as it illustrates transformation. It also shows a change in the perception white people have of black people.

"A man is standing in the doorway, a tall man in blue overalls and rubber boots and a woollen cap. 'Petrus, come in, meet my father', says Lucy".

(Coetzee, 1999:63-64)

Text analysis:	This is Lurie's first encounter with Petrus. By his attire, Petrus is immediately identified as a farmworker.
Processing analysis:	The description of Petrus, although brief, is vivid and reduces Petrus to farmworker status, in contrast with his previous description of co-proprietor of the farm. It should also be noted that Lucy mentions Petrus's name first, as opposed to saying "David, meet Petrus", which draws attention to his importance to her.
Social analysis:	In this extract there is evidence of two old worlds or old South African realities: on the one hand is Petrus in overalls, representing the farmworker, gardener, mineworker – typically the jobs black South Africans were limited to in the old dispensation. This is juxtaposed with Lurie, a white intellectual. Lucy could represent the new South Africa that attempts to change the old order of things. This attempt to change the old order of things is also seen in Lucy inviting Petrus into the farmhouse to come and meet her father – something that would not happen in the old dispensation.

'A lined, weathered face; shrewd eyes. Forty? Forty-five?'

(Coetzee, 1999:64)

Text analysis:	In this extract, Coetzee describes Petrus through the eyes of Lurie.
Processing analysis:	There is an immediate negative connotation. Since “shrewd” has a negative connotation, it is usually used to describe someone who is sharp and intelligent, but potentially underhanded at the same time. The lined and weathered face also potentially points to Petrus’s experience and possible hardships as an older black man in South Africa. Here, the reader is already led towards a particular perception of Petrus through words.
Social analysis:	After Lurie’s initial positive depiction of Petrus, this representation of Petrus serves as a reminder of a country that is haunted by its past and is slow to change. It should furthermore be noted that, in the old dispensation, the age of black labourers would not necessarily interest or concern the landowner; what was important was the level of labour.

Petrus turns to Lucy. ‘The spray,’ he says: ‘I have come for the spray.’

(Lucy) ‘It’s in the kombi. Wait here, I’ll fetch it.’

(Lurie) ‘You look after the dogs.’

(Petrus) ‘I look after the dogs and I work in the garden. Yes.’… “I am the gardener and the dog-man.’

(Coetzee, 1999:64)

Text analysis:	Lucy offers to fetch the spray instead of ordering Petrus to bring it. This is further evidence that she does not see him as her servant. However, Lurie’s first questions establishes Petrus’s position as servant. Petrus responds by confirming Lurie’s perception of him.
Processing analysis:	Lurie makes a declarative sentence with seemingly authoritative truth claims, in other words, it seems that he is telling Petrus what his role is instead of asking him. Petrus’s response to this is unclear; it could be genuine or subtly sarcastic.
Social analysis:	The exchange between Petrus and Lurie could point to Lurie’s discomfort with Petrus’s position and an immediate effort to put Petrus in his place.

(Lurie) 'Give Petrus a hand. I like that. I like the historical piquancy. 'Will he pay me a wage for my labour, do you think?'

(Coetzee, 1999:77)

Text analysis:	At some point in the novel, Lucy suggests that Lurie may help Petrus with the dogs. This extract shows Lurie's reaction to this suggestion. Lurie appears to ridicule the suggestion.
Processing analysis:	He reacts in a way that suggests he finds it humorous, as if to say, how can he, a white man, help Petrus, a black man. The word "piquancy" suggests that Lurie finds this arrangement ironic, especially considering the history of South Africa.
Social analysis:	Within the historical social context of South Africa, black people are usually the hired help of white people. Lurie's reaction to Lucy's statement points to the changes occurring in South Africa as well as Lurie's incredulity at the situation which is seen through his mocking tone.

"In a matter of hours he (Petrus) has ploughed the whole of his land. All very swift and business-like; all very unlike Africa."

(Coetzee, 1999:151)

Text analysis:	This extract is Lurie's reaction to Petrus ploughing the land. Petrus has hired a tractor to plough the land and Lurie seems surprised by Petrus's efficiency.
Processing analysis:	His observation of the impressive work Petrus has done seems to be condescending, flowing from the implication that efficiency is not characteristic of being African. David's comment seems to imply that when one is effective in what is traditionally seen as white terrain, then one is not acting like an African.
Social analysis:	In the historical social context of South Africa, black people were usually hired in the capacity of a garden boy whose job required significant manual labour. This extract shows yet again the changes that are happening in South Africa, which the protagonist meets with cynicism.

In addition to emphasising the difference between Petrus and Lurie and contributing towards the creation of the "other", language also serves to discriminate against black African characters as can be seen in the use of the derogatory words "boy" and "kaffir". These words serve as a stark reminder of the black man's place in history: a servant without rights. Furthermore, Lurie's sophisticated use of language compared to the limited language of an African character such as Petrus points toward a subtle suggestion of the sophisticated white male versus the

unsophisticated black character. Lurie's discourse is academic – it is the language of a learned man. He is well read in Romantic literature. However, this obsession with Lord Byron and Romanticism is somewhat out of place in South Africa. Lurie is, however, aware of this inability of English to express the African experience when he says: "More and more he is convinced that English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa…Like a dinosaur expiring and settling in the mud, the language has stiffened. Pressed into the mould of English, Petrus's story would come out arthritic, bygone" (Coetzee, 1999:117).

Similarly, language is used in the "othering" of women in the text. De Beauvoir (1949) first commented on the characterisation of women as "other" by explaining that, in a male-dominated society, women are not depicted as being independent, but as beings that are relative to man. She further notes that, to men, women represent nothing more than sexual beings. De Beauvoir states:

> She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.
>
> (de Beauvoir, 1949:3)

This notion of women as "other" is explicitly seen in the depiction of women in *Disgrace* and is especially noted in the language used to describe women as well as the role of women in the novel. An example of this is seen in the way Lurie explains that women are created to serve men (Coetzee, 1999:16). The notion of women as the "other" is also seen in the roles that Lurie believes are assigned to women, which is inextricably linked to sex and is vividly described when he notes: "Menstruation, childbirth, violation and its aftermath: blood-matters, a woman's burden, women's preserve" (Coetzee, 1999:104). This also shows that Lurie is not interested in being part of a woman's normal life. The moment that he is confronted with Soraya's real life, he loses interest. Likewise, if he dates a woman and she speaks of her children, he loses interest. These matters which are exclusively linked to women support the assertion made by De Beauvoir (1949) that women are seen as the "other" because of being opposite to men. The othering of women also points to specific challenges within the African context. On one hand, Lurie's relationship with Melanie reflects the history of sexual orientation women of colour suffered during colonialism. Mushonga (2013:2) argues that, historically, black women were used to fulfil the sexual desires of white men who believed they had the right to these women's bodies that were often overly sexualised. This is suggested in the novel by the comment Farida Rasool makes:

> Yes, he says, he is guilty; but when we try to get specificity, all of a sudden it is not abuse of a young woman he is confessing to, just an impulse he could not resist, with no mention

> of the pain he has caused, no mention of the long history of exploitation of which this is part (Coetzee; 1999:53).

Rasool is a woman who is part of the committee investigating Lurie's affair with his student. When she makes this comment, she may be suggesting that Lurie's actions form part of the history of sexual abuse women of colour suffered at the hands of white men. Another issue this reveals is white Africans' fear of black men, who have also been overly sexualised and seen as bestial. The other issue relevant to the African context is the place of women as imposed by colonialism: a hierarchy of beings according to race and class. According to Lusane (2004) (as cited by Mushonga, 2013:2) this placed white men at the top of the hierarchy, free to exercise sexual dominance over white and black women.

One other aspect to be considered when looking at the role of language is that language is used to either confront or conceal certain realities in the novel. For a long time, Lucy avoids communicating what happened to her: "You tell what happened to you, I tell what happened to me" (Coetzee, 1999:99). She only later explains what happened and explicitly uses the word rape: "I think they *do* rape" (Coetzee, 1999:158). Lurie also uses language to skirt around issues pertaining to his indiscretions: "Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core" (Coetzee, 1999:25). Instead of acknowledging his affair with Melanie as abuse, he labels it as "impulse" (Coetzee, 1999:52) or "instinct" (Coetzee, 1999:90): "I was not myself…I became a servant of Eros" (Coetzee, 1999:52). This by implication makes him exempt from the act as he is suffering an infliction, which he indirectly calls an inability to escape the temptations of Eros. He is however confronted with the truth when Farodia Rasool uses the word abuse to describe his relationship with Melanie: "*Abuse*: he was waiting for the word."

The above arguments show that language is a key element to understanding the positioning of the texts and reveals much about important issues pertaining to prejudice and the notion of the "other'.

5.7 The role of African philosophy

The employment of African philosophy, particularly political philosophy, could be applied when reading *Disgrace*. This is because this strand of African philosophy is concerned with the ideologies born from liberation movements (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2013:47). Since *Disgrace* is situated in South Africa's new dispensation, there is evidence of these political ideologies, which are expressed in the first chapter of the book in Lurie's denoting of the changes occurring due to transformation: "Languages were closed down as part of the great rationalization…" (Coetzee, 1999:3). Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2013:47) asserts that the role of political philosophy is to

redress the colonial past through the liberation of Africa and Africans. To some extent, this is evident in *Disgrace*, since it is suggested that South Africa is in turmoil due to past injustices (colonialism and apartheid) and is on a path of redress. This is supported by Gorra (1999) who states that although the novel has many grim moments, it is not completely depressing and makes hopeful allowances for characters and the country. An example of transformation is illuminated through the disciplinary action Lurie faces, which creates the idea of accountability and reconciliation. It is also noted through the apparent evolution of Petrus that represents the South African government's attempt to reposition previously disadvantaged groups. The issue of redistribution of land subtly comes into play, an issue that is pressing and a source of conflict in present-day South Africa.

Another aspect of the novel which can be analysed from the perspective of African political philosophy is the decolonisation of education. In the beginning of the novel, Lurie begrudgingly reflects on his role as an adjunct professor of communications. It is evident that he would rather teach romantic literature and poetry:

> Once a professor of modern languages, he has been, since Classics and Modern Languages were closed down as part of the great rationalization, adjunct professor of communications. Like all rationalized personnel, he is allowed to offer one special-field course a year, irrespective of enrolment, because that is good for morale. This year he is offering a course in the Romantic poets.
>
> (Coetzee, 1999:3)

Lurie notes that his students are not interested in the romantics and goes as far as suggesting that his students are stupid:

> He has long ceased to be surprised at the range of ignorance of his students. Post-Christian, posthistorical, postliterate, they might as well have been hatched from eggs yesterday. So he does not expect them to know about fallen angels or where Byron might have read of them.
>
> (Coetzee, 1999:32)

In Chapter 2 of this study, scholars such Webbstock (2017), Letsekha (2013), and Botha (2007) were cited as observing an apparent disconnect between the students and the western knowledge that is taught in HE institutions. This problem is clearly reflected in the above extract, as the content is not relatable, useful knowledge in the current context. The aforementioned scholars also recognise the importance of universities in restructuring current models to reaffirm African knowledge and address the needs of the current student population. In *Disgrace*, it is evident that there is an intention to restructure models as Lurie speaks of the "great rationalization". However, his desire to hold onto bygone years and rather teach Byron reflects the view of Heleta (2016),

who argues that the Eurocentric curriculum is slow to change and continues to support European/Western supremacy and privilege.

Approaching the novel from an African political philosophy perspective can be worthwhile, especially since the novel brings into focus issues that South Africa are faced with. These include race relations, reconciliation, land redistribution, farm attacks, rape, and gender violence. A defining characteristic of African political philosophy is that is looks at how Africa has been shaped by its past but most importantly calls for action to redress these issues. This philosophy also calls on leadership to be proactive about redressing these issues. I believe that it is necessary for Africans to understand how the past has influenced the current political, economic and educational context but that it is also important for action to be taken that will rebuild and restore and deal with current problems. The application of this philosophy could also be valuable since it can promote discourse about the accountability of current leadership to address past and present injustices. While not much is known about any black character other than Petrus, there are some traces of ethnophilosophy, which focuses on belief systems and the way in which Africans make sense of the world (Hapanyenqwi-Chemhuru, 2013:42). African philosophy is unique to Africa and different from western philosophy. This accounts for the way in which Petrus and his family's way of life is often observed for being different in the novel. The first evidence of this is the mentioning of Petrus's polygamous lifestyle: "He and his wife have the old stable. I've put in electricity. It's quite comfortable. He has another wife in Adelaide, and children, some of them grown up. He goes off and spends time there occasionally". Lucy is to become a part of this polygamous arrangement in exchange for Petrus's protection, which Lurie strongly disapproves of by noting the differences in cultural beliefs:

> You will marry Lucy,' he says carefully. 'Explain to me what you mean. No, wait, rather don't explain`.' We: he is on the point of saying, We Westerners. 'Yes, I can see, I can see,' says Petrus. He is positively chuckling. 'But I tell you, then you tell Lucy. Then it is over, all this badness.'
>
> (Coetzee, 1999:202)

In this Petrus is expressing that by Lucy marrying him there is an opportunity for her to be protected on the farm and in the larger context of South Africa. Another aspect that provides some insight into African belief systems and customs in the novel is the slaughtering of the sheep. In Xhosa culture, the slaughtering of sheep is done to mark special occasions. Bongela (2001) notes that these occasions could include the introduction of a new baby to its ancestors, marriage ceremonies, and the celebration of a young man's initiation into manhood. In *Disgrace*, Petrus buys two sheep which he slaughters to celebrate his acquisition of land. This practice is however, criticised by Lurie: "I'm not sure I like the way he (Petrus) does things – bringing the slaughter

beasts home to acquaint them with the people who are going to eat them" (Coetzee, 1999:124). Here it is evident that Lurie does not understand the significance of the slaughtering of the sheep which is seen in the following exchange between him and Petrus;

He [Lurie] strolls over to Petrus, who has his bicycle upside down and is working on it. 'Those sheep', he says – 'don't you think we could tie them where they can graze?' 'They are for the party,' says Petrus. 'On Saturday I will slaughter them for the party. You and Lucy must come.'

Through this it is clear that Lurie and Petrus do not understand each other both from a cultural and linguistic aspect. Lurie's views on the matter are met with harsh criticism by Lucy who reminds him that they are in Africa, as a way to tell him that in Africa things are done in a certain way, and this includes the slaughtering of sheep.

There is not much made available about the black characters' way of life and experiences, but the little details that are provided, show some aspects that can be analysed from an ethnophilosophical perspective. It is also important to note that cultural practices related to black characters are always discussed in opposition to the views of Lurie, who identifies as a Westerner.

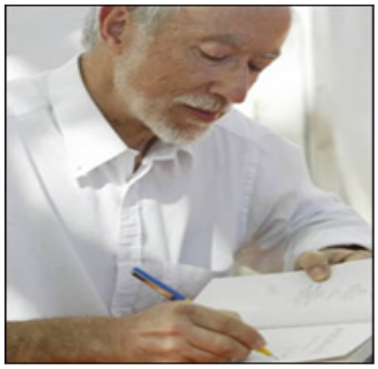
5.8 Analysis of supplementary material

To gain insight into the interpretation of this text, the corresponding supplementary material was analysed. The supplementary material for this particular text is in the form of a student workbook that contains questions and activities for critical engagement. It should be noted that this text is done at third-year level for Education students at the North-West University. The workbooks for 2010-2017 were compiled by Dr Reyneke (Reyneke, 2017), while the workbooks for 2018 and 2019 were compiled by Dr Romylos (Romylos, 2019).

The workbooks for the years 2010-2019 contain mostly the same questions and activities. However, if a particular workbook had a different assignment, it was noted and discussed. The following section is a summary and critical evaluation of the interpretation of *Disgrace* as illuminated in these workbooks.

The workbooks on *Disgrace* commence with an assignment in which students have to do research on the background of the author.

Extract 5.7.a:



- ✓ **Pair up (2 students per group)**
- ✓ **Conduct research on J.M. Coetzee.**
- ✓ **Create a Powerpoint Presentation (8 slides, including Bibliography) on his background (including biographical information) and career as a writer.**
- ✓ **Focus on RELEVANT information.**
- ✓ ***Present* the slides to your group members during the next contact session – this will be a joint presentation (*partners take turns to present*)**
- ✓ **Remember to bring a laptop to class.**

Thereafter, the students are required to engage in critical analysis of the text by completing questions that focus on each chapter in the novel:

Extract 5.7.b:

Chapter 1

- What do we learn about Lurie in the opening of the novel?
- What is the significance of his current professional status?
- What is the significance of his previous scholarly activity?
- Describe his relationship with Soraya. What eventually happens?

Chapter 2

- Why does Lurie have an affair with Melanie?
- Why does Melanie have an affair with Lurie?
- What is the significance of the quotation from Shakespeare? (page 16)

Chapter 3

- What is the significance of the Wordsworth lecture (both its subject matter and his presentation)?
- How are their sexual encounters characterized?

Chapter 4

- What role does Byron play in this chapter?
- Discuss the quotations from "Lara," Byron in general, and Lurie's attitude toward his students.
- Comment on Lurie's conversation with Melanie in his office.

Chapter 5

- What is the significance of the phrase "J'accuse"?
- Describe the initial meeting before the committee. Does Lurie appear in any way sympathetic? Do you agree with the attitudes of the committee?
- What does Rosalind say to Lurie? How does he respond?
- How are we supposed to interpret the Wordsworth quotation at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 6

- Discuss the hearing. Do you agree with any of the arguments or positions offered (Lurie's, Rassool's, etc.)?
- Why do you think Lurie reacts the way he does?
- Comment on Lurie's assertion that repentance belongs to another world of discourse.

Chapter 7

- Describe Lucy and the life she is leading here in the Eastern Cape.
- How, initially, does Lurie appear to feel about his daughter?
- Comment on Petrus's statement that "Everything is dangerous today" (64).
- How does Lurie explain his behavior to his daughter?

Chapter 8

- Describe Lucy and Lurie's conversation at the beginning of the chapter.
- Why does he quote from Blake?
- What is Lurie's initial response to Bev Shaw?
- How does he feel about animals (and "animal lovers")?
- What does Lucy mean when she says, "This is the only life there is" (74)?
- How does Lurie respond to this?

Chapter 9

- To what degree is Lurie "settling in" to life on the farm, with his daughter?
- For what does Lurie want forgiveness?

Chapter 10

- What is Bev Shaw's initial reaction to Lurie?
- Describe Lurie's characterization of Bev Shaw and of the work she does.
- How does Lurie refer to his own predicament? Do you think he really feels this way?
- How does Lurie comment on father-daughter relationships toward the end of the chapter?
- How does the reading of Byron's letters serve as an effective conclusion to this chapter?

Chapter 11

- What do you notice about the way this key chapter is structured and sequenced?
- How does he explain his "case" to Lucy? What analogy does he use?
- How does Lurie react during the assault?
- Why do the men kill the dogs, in your view?
- How does Lurie characterize and rationalize what has happened to them?

Chapter 12

- Discuss Lurie's reflection on the word "friend."
- What is the significance of Lurie's dream?
- How does Lucy respond to her father's concerns at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 13

- What is Lurie's emotional, psychological response to what has happened? (see 107-8)
- What does Lurie do when they return to the farm? What significance does he see in it?
- Discuss Lucy and her father's conversation about her rape.
  How does Lucy's discussion of public and private compare with the one found on page 66?

Chapter 14

- Discuss the episode between Petrus and Lurie. How does Lurie feel about Petrus? What does he want from him? How does Petrus respond?
- Why does Lurie feel that English is an inappropriate language?
- Comment on Lurie's question to Petrus, "Am I wrong to want justice?" What is "justice" for him? Is he wrong in any sense?

Chapter 15

- Why does Lurie react the way he does to the plight of the sheep?
- How do Lurie and Lucy respond to the presence of one of the attackers at the party?
- What happens when Lurie returns to Petrus's at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 16

- How does Petrus respond when Lurie engages him about the presence of the boy at the party?
- Why does Lurie feel outraged at the thought that "You weren't there. You don't know what happened"?
- Discuss Lurie's reflections on the euthanasia they perform at the clinic.
- What new task has Lurie taken on and how does he feel about it?

Chapter 17

- What happens between Bev and Lurie? How does he describe it?
- What realizations does he come to at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 18

- How has Lurie come to feel about Petrus?

- When Lucy finally discusses what has happened to her, what bothers in particular about her rape? How does her father respond to this?
- Why does Lucy not want to leave?
- Comment on Lucy's conjecture: "what if that is the price one has to pay for staying on?"
- Why does the discussion of rape lead Lurie to reflect on art and Byron?
- What does Lurie realize on page 160? What does he wonder whether he is capable of doing?
- How does Lucy respond to his letter?
- How does Lurie characterize his career on page 162?

Chapter 19

- Why does Lurie visit Isaacs? How does Mr. Isaacs respond?
- What final gesture does Lurie make? Is this authentic?

Chapter 20

- What happens upon Lurie's return to Cape Town?
- What new approach does Lurie decide take for his Byron/Teresa opera (both thematically and musically)?
- Comment on the following: "and from the occasion a passion was born that kept Teresa howling to the moon for the rest of her natural life in a fever that has set him howling too, after his manner" (186).

Chapter 21

- What does Rosalind say about the nature of trials? How might this apply to 1990s South Africa?
- How does Lurie reflect upon his affair with Melanie?
- What happens when he goes to see Melanie perform, and what does he do afterward?
- What judgment does he pass on himself at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 22

- Comment on Lucy's claim that, "You [Lurie] behave as if everything I do is part of the story of your life" (198).
- How does Lurie respond to this conversation, why does he respond this way?
- What might be the significance of the boy's name (Pollux)?
- What arrangement do Petrus and Lurie discuss, and how does Lucy respond?
- Comment on the closing of the chapter: "Like a dog." How does this closing comment on the events of the next chapter?

Chapter 23

- Describe Lurie's attack of Pollux.
- After his conversation with Lucy, how does Lurie feel about what he has done? Why must he "listen to Teresa"?
- What is the significance of the quotation from Dante?
- What is Bev's advice to him?
- Comment on the following: "How can he ever explain, to them, to their parents, to D village, what Teresa and her lover have done to deserve being brought back to this world?" (212).

Chapter 24

- What has become of Lurie's work on the opera?

- Comment on the following: "Poor Teresa! Poor aching girl! He has brought her back from the grave, promised her another life, and now he is failing her. He hopes she will find it in her heart to forgive him" (214).
- What does Bev suggest that he try to do, and how does Lurie respond?
- Discuss Lurie's reflections on seeing his daughter on pages 217-8.
- Discuss the significance of the novel's final line, "Yes, I am giving him up."

Extract 5.7.c:

- Discuss David Lurie as a Byronic hero. Also refer to the significance of Lurie's Byron/Teresa opera, including the changes it undergoes?
- Discuss the significance of animals in the novel.
- Discuss how the novel defines or represents the following ideas: Disgrace, Guilt, Responsibility, Vengeance, Retribution, Justice, Redemption and Grace.
- Critically discuss *Disgrace* as a post-colonial novel, referring to the characters of David, Lucy and Petrus as well as instances of hybridity and the issue of diaspora.

Some of the workbooks require students to critically comment on the language in *Disgrace* and focus on linguistic exercises, with extracts from the novel as a means to show and teach language in context.

The workbooks of 2017 by Dr Reyneke (Reyneke, 2017), and 2018-2019 by Romylos (Romylos, 2019) replace the essay assignment with a newspaper assignment as shown below:

Extract 5.7.d:

Salem setting in the post-apartheid era (also address the symbolism attached to the name of the place).

3. **A NEWS article on what transpired on Lucy Lurie's smallholding and how the victims were affected by this followed by an in-depth analysis of Lucy's character.**

4. **An article on the character of the protagonist, David Lurie. You can only write this after you have analysed him as a character and as a Byronic hero, tracing his metamorphosis throughout the novel.**

5. **An entire section on animals including a philosophical in-depth article on the value of animals, based on the portrayal and significance of animals in Coetzee's novel.**

6. **An in-depth article focusing on the important role played by dogs in David Lurie's metamorphosis.**

7. **A critical discussion of the significance of Lurie's opera project and the changes to this opera on Byron and Theresa which are paralleled by David Lurie's metamorphosis.**

8. **An in-depth reflective article on the establishment and development of at least 3 prominent themes and symbols as they are integrated with the development of plot and character.**

9. **Group effort: A reflective article that includes each groups member's perspective on the move for the decolonisation of the curriculum. Ideas are to be merged with the group's view.**

10. **Group effort: Advertisements, cartoon(s), etc. that you wish to add that can be closely linked to the novel. *These need to be originally created by the group; not copied.***

Questions are somewhat different in the 2019 workbook by Romylos (2019). See, e.g. the group discussion:

Group effort: A reflective article that includes each group member's perspective on how far our country has progressed/not progressed in terms of dealing with issues such as rape and racial integration and harmony, and land redistribution since the release of the novel. Please note that this is not a platform for racial slurs and derogatory remarks.

Another notable difference is seen in the 2019 workbook that places emphasis on philosophies such as existentialism as well as the concept of the "other".

Extract 5.7.e:

Do research on the following philosophies: existentialism and the whole concept of 'the Other'. The ideas of Emmanuel Levinas concerning 'the Other' may be helpful in this regard. You need to write a one-pager on each of these philosophies/concepts. Relate these to the characters in the novel and substantiate your views.

In addition to this, the 2019 includes a mock trial assignment and a World Café assignment:

Extract 5.7.f:

2.6 Mock trial:

In your groups of 8 students prepare for a mock trial. This activity will count substantially towards your participation mark. You need to be familiar with the plot of the novel in order to conduct a proper trial. Thorough preparation and research need to be done prior to the trial date. General information is given below with regards to the roles, procedures and terminology. Melanie Isaacs is accusing David Lurie of rape. The rubric below will be used to assess your performance.

Total = 40	**Good (4-5)**	**Average (2-3)**	**Poor (0-1)**
Judge	Very familiar with facts of the case and manages the trial effectively; able to maintain authoritative presence.	Fairly familiar with the facts of the case and manages the trial to satisfaction; able to maintain authoritative presence most of the time.	Not entirely familiar with the facts of the case and fails at times to manage the trial effectively; not always able to maintain authoritative presence.
Counsel for the Prosecution	Confident presentation showing evidence of fact learning; clear and concise questioning; accurate summing up of the case; weaknesses in the opposition's evidence highlighted; confident presentation (without reading from a script).	Mostly confident presentation showing evidence of fact learning; mostly clear and concise questioning; mostly accurate summing up of the case; fairly successful in highlighting weaknesses in the opposition's evidence; mostly confident presentation (at times reading from script).	Not very confident, showing signs of hesitation due to a lack of fact knowledge; questioning is haphazardly done; summing up not accurate; not successful in highlighting weaknesses in the opposition's evidence; presentation not confident (constantly reading from script).

Counsel for the Defence	Confident presentation showing evidence of fact learning; clear and concise questioning; accurate summing up of the case; weaknesses in the opposition's evidence highlighted; confident presentation (without reading from a script).	Mostly confident presentation showing evidence of fact learning; mostly clear and concise questioning; mostly accurate summing up of the case; fairly successful in highlighting weaknesses in the opposition's evidence; mostly confident presentation (at times reading from script).	Not very confident, showing signs of hesitation due to a lack of fact knowledge; questioning is haphazardly done; summing up not accurate; not successful in highlighting weaknesses in the opposition's evidence; presentation not confident (constantly reading from script).
1st witnesses	Spontaneous responses; convincing testimony; believable characteristics.	Mostly spontaneous responses; testimony mostly convincing; mostly believable characteristics.	Forced responses; testimony not convincing; appears to be an unreliable witness.
2nd witnesses	Spontaneous responses; convincing testimony; believable characteristics.	Mostly spontaneous responses; testimony mostly convincing; mostly believable characteristics.	Forced responses; testimony not convincing; appears to be an unreliable witness.
Clerk and usher	Efficient: All witnesses sworn in correctly using affirmation; identifies defendant and reads indictment correctly; court asked to rise at appropriate times.	Mostly efficient when conducting duties and executing proceedings.	Inefficient when conducting duties; making procedural errors.
Use of language	Correct terminology used at all times; convincing rhetoric	Mostly correct terminology used, mostly convincing rhetoric.	Incorrect terminology used repeatedly, rhetoric not convincing.
Over-all teamwork	Members work well as a team; makes an excellent overall impression that they know what they are doing and the trial flows exceptionally well.	Team work satisfactory; makes a good impression and trial flows well.	Team shows signs of a lack of cohesion; members at times uncertain due to a lack of rehearsal and trial is not flowing well,

Extract 5.7.g:

World Café. Divide into four groups and choose a host for each. Each host will pose the question to the group attending his/her station. Discuss the question and record the ideas given. For practical reasons the hosts should rather rotate than the groups. After all the groups had an opportunity to discuss the question, the hosts will give feedback (summary) to the whole group. (Add on efundi)

Answer the following questions in your group:

David Lurie: (1)

1. What are your first impressions of David Lurie?
2. Do you change your perceptions during the reading of the novel?
3. What is your opinion of the explanation David Lurie gives for his conduct in terms of women and then Melanie in general?
4. Does Lurie redeem himself in the end?

Lucy Lurie: (2)

1. What are your first impressions of Lucy?
2. Can you reconcile yourself with her decisions in the novel?
3. Explain her decisions from her point of view.
4. Suggest how life will continue after the novel.

Petrus: (3)

1. How do you perceive him as a character?
2. Do you think he cares about Lucy?
3. Explain his decision not to report Pollux to the authorities.

Melanie: (4)

1. What are your perceptions of her as a character?
2. Do you consider what happened to her as rape?
3. To which extent is she responsible/nor responsible for what happened to her?
4. Comment on how Melanie handled the situation with Lurie.

Commentary on the questions and assignments

The assignment on the background information of the author is pertinent to the analysis of *Disgrace*, since it provides information about the perspective the novel is written from and could guide the reading and interpretation of the text.

In addition to this, the questions are heavily focused on the South African context and challenges related to postcolonial South Africa. These questions are well aligned with CDA as it speaks to the positioning of the text.

Other questions are also important for the interpretation of the novel and provide opportunity for critical engagement with many important themes and issues in the novel, such as:

- Lurie's development and his relationship with other characters such as Lucy, Melanie and Bev Shaw.
- Transformation within the context of the novel
- The treatment of women and rape
- Violence, forgiveness and reconciliation

It should be noted that the majority of these questions are open ended, and thus open to interpretation, which could lead to the exploration of further issues in the text. However, not many of the questions are focused on the character of Petrus except for questions about him in relation to Lurie.

This illuminates the claim in the analysis of the text that Petrus is mostly described by Lurie, whose view of him is predominantly negative. Also, there are no questions on the possibly limited portrayal of black characters in the text. This is because there is a dominant focus on the protagonist of the story and his depiction as a Byronic hero. This is further illustrated in the essay question which is based on this topic.

However, other essay questions point to exploration of important issues, such as, "Disgrace, Guilt, Responsibility, Vengeance, Retribution, Justice, Redemption and Grace" as well as the postcolonial positioning of the text with reference to David, Lucy and Petrus. These topics require engaging with historical aspects and could warrant a discussion about the positioning of the black characters such as Petrus and Pollux as well as Lucy as a white African character. Also, the research assignment in the 2019 study guide that is based on the concept of the "other" could also lead to discussions about how Petrus is characterised in *Disgrace*.

The workbooks also focus on the role of language by looking specifically at Coetzee's writing style. This is significant to CDA which is concerned with how language is used to expose social issues and issues pertaining to dominance and resistance (Van Dijk, 1997:17), something that is explored in *Disgrace.*

The 2017-2020 workbook involves a newspaper assignment which is effective since it warrants an in-depth analysis of the novel. A particular point of interest in this activity is the exploration of any three themes and symbols that affect character development. Because this is open to interpretation, the students are allowed to think critically about the themes and characters they want to focus on, which could possibly lead to the analysis of characters other than David Lurie.

On a PowerPoint presentation about J.M. Coetzee, the following is stated: In 1999, the African National Congress made a submission to the South African Human Rights Commission for an investigation into racism in the media in the form of a novel named *Disgrace* as depicting racist stereotypes. The following question is then asked of students: What do you think? This question was designed to stimulate critical discourse on the positioning of characters in the novel.

Another positive aspect in the 2019 workbook is the mock trial, which allows students to explore the case from Melanie's perspective, something that is not done in *Disgrace*. This speaks to the concern this study has about the positioning of African characters in the text, and highlights an observation made in the analysis of the text that women's voices are silenced in this context. Allowing students to hold a mock trial creates an opportunity for this issue to be thrashed out, and could lead to important discussions about the portrayal of women in the text.

5.9 Concluding remarks

The analysis of *Disgrace* results in an impression of postcolonial and post-apartheid South Africa as a country that faces many challenges such as tense race relations, violence, crimes, reparations and reconciliation. The novel takes a close look at the struggles of a white man who identifies as a Westerner and battles to adjust to the many changes in the new democracy, including a change in the racial power dynamics. His character is portrayed in sharp contrast to that of his daughter, Lucy, who is a white African woman determined to participate in the new democracy as someone equal to black people and not superior to them. This is seen in the relationship she has with Petrus, her former helper turned co-proprietor of the land she lives on. Lucy is also positioned as a white character who it seems has to bear the brunt of a history of violence and injustices caused by colonial and apartheid systems. As discussed earlier, this portrayal of the new South Africa in which whites are victimised for the past has been met with harsh criticism for being a negative and false depiction of South African democracy. The analysis

of the text also shows that women are not seen as equal to men and are subject to abuse at the hands of men. This was seen in Lurie's sexualisation of the female body and his abuse of power when he sexually harasses one of his students, and with Lucy's rape. This chapter also looked at the depiction of black African characters and particularly focused on the depiction of Petrus. This shows that Petrus is positioned as a black man who works hard and benefits from the changes occurring in the new South Africa as he is able to own and farm on his own piece of land. The depiction of Petrus through Lurie's perspective reveals stereotypical descriptions of black people. This is mainly due to Petrus's possible involvement in the rape that occurs on the farm.

The CDA analysis of this text was productive, since it provided insight into how the African context and characters are positioned. It also afforded the opportunity to explore how language is used to position the African context and characters.

The corresponding study guides revealed that there are many opportunities for students to engage with the text and look at important issues surrounding the positioning of South African society in a postcolonial and post-apartheid context. It also allows students to critically look at the thoughts and actions of the main character. The study guides also called for an exploration of the theory of the "other" and its manifestation in the text. This could lead to important discussions about the black characters and women in the text. The PowerPoint presentation that was made available also showed a focus on the possible racist depiction of black characters in the novel. The female characters and the injustices they suffer in this text were also investigated. However, the black characters in the novel are not sufficiently explored, with no particular attention to the portrayal of Petrus, other black characters or African ways of living and ideologies. Hence, there is room for an African philosophical analysis of these characters.

The next chapter entails the literary analysis of *Othello* by William Shakespeare. The chapter focuses on how Othello is positioned in the text and how alternative interpretations of his character can lead to the inclusion of African perspectives.

CHAPTER 6 LITERARY ANALYSIS OF *OTHELLO* BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

6.1 Introduction

Othello was first performed to Elizabethan audiences in 1604. The play documents the life of a black protagonist – at the height of his career as a general in the Venetian army – who marries a Venetian, Desdemona. The play shows the destruction of Othello as a tragic hero who kills his wife and himself after being convinced that his wife has been disloyal. Unlike *Disgrace* and *Things fall apart, Othello* is not set in Africa and, instead, shows the struggles of a black man outside of his native land. The analysis of *Othello* was guided by two of the questions inspired by CDA as posed by Janks (1997:329): how is the text positioned/positioning, and what are the consequences of this positioning? Only two of the questions were relevant to the character of Othello, hence the exclusion of the other questions. The answers to the other two questions about whose interests are served and negated became explicitly clear when answering the question of how the text is positioned/positioning and what the consequences are of this positioning. It was therefore not necessary to include these questions in the analysis. The positioning of Othello as an African male in Venetian society is the focus of this chapter, since the study is predominantly concerned with the interpretations of either the African context and/or African characters, and Othello is the only African character. Furthermore, the analysis of *Othello* was focused on how Othello's race and religion shape his character and affect his positioning in Venetian society. This was based on the premise that it is pertinent to understand these aspects of the character in order to form a better perception of him and ultimately come to a better understanding of the play as a whole. In addition to this, Fairclough's dimensions of CDA were also applied in order to analyse the role of language in this text.

6.2 How is the text positioned or positioning?

The play commences in Venice and later moves to Cyprus, where most of the action takes place. Three dominant elements greatly affect the African character in this play. The society in the play is portrayed as strictly Christian, it is driven by power and position or status, and it is prejudiced. These three aspects are discussed with the purpose of explaining how society is positioned as well as how this affects Othello's positioning in the text.

Firstly, Christianity plays a central role in the play. This religious underpinning of the play is a reflection of the era in which the text was written. Baker (2007) states that Shakespeare wrote to a Christian audience and was reared as a Christian, while Hubler (1958:295) notes that most of

Shakespeare's works are deeply rooted in Christianity. This is reinforced by Clunie (2020) who argues that, "Shakespeare often referenced religion and its effects on culture and politics in his plays" and further notes that Shakespeare's work gives a "clear picture of the religious climate in Elizabethan England and its effect on daily life". The importance of Christianity is reflected in *Othello* through Othello's apparent conversion to Christianity: "My parts, my title and my perfect soul" (i.ii.30). The implication of his conversion is that Othello would not be accepted in this society were he not a Christian. This is supported by Britton (2014:113), who argues that Othello's Christian identity accounts for his incorporation into Venetian society. This implies that the social climate of Venetian society was intolerant of Islam at the time and thus accounts for Othello's conversion to Christianity. Simply stated, Othello would not be accepted into society had he not been converted. The significance of Christianity within this society is also illuminated through society's upholding of Christian values and practices, which is made explicit through the character of Desdemona, who upholds her Christian duties throughout the play. This is also noted by Seigel (1953:1068), who describes Desdemona as a Christ-like figure who consummately represents qualities such as "forgiveness and perfect love, a love requited by death", which are reminiscent of Christ. The significance of the Christian qualities Desdemona possesses is also made apparent through other characters' appraisal of these qualities: "An inviting eye, and yet methinks right modest" (II.iii.21); "I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest/Lay down my soul at stake." (IV.ii.13-14); "If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!"(III.iii.278) Finally, the significance of Christianity is shown through the biblical references made throughout the play. Gray (2018:2) argues that Shakespeare often uses biblical references in order to provide deeper meanings as well as moral and emotional implications for audiences. *Othello* possesses a number of biblical references, of which Shaheen (1988:49) wishes to consider the story of how Othello wooed Desdemona. The author believes this tale resembles the biblical story of Mary and Martha who, although tied up with household duties, wanted to listen to stories at the feet of Christ. He further notes that the following passage exemplifies this:

> This to hear
> Would Desdemona seriously incline,
> But still the house duties would draw her thence,
> Which ever she could with haste dispatch
> She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
> Devour up my discourse…
> (I.iii.145-151)

Another connection Shaheen (1988:49) makes is that Othello's arrest at night "by a band of torches and armed with swords" resembles the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane. The similarities

of these events are shown in a comparison below of John 18:3-11 with the scene where Brabantio confronts Othello:

Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops,* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons… Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it…So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath... (Bible, 1611)

Enter Brabantio, Roderigo and Offices with torches and weapons
Othello: Holla! Stand there!
Roderigo: Down with him, thief!
Casio, Iago, Roderigo an Officers draw their swords
Iago: You, Roderigo, come sir, I am for you.
Othello: Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust 'em.
(I.ii.54-58)

To add to this, Saunders (2006:13) argues that, in the act of killing Desdemona, Othello resembles Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus with a kiss, by kissing Desdemona before killing her. Saunders (2006:13) further explains the comparison of Othello to Judas by noting that Othello compares himself to Judas after realising his mistake: "Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away" (V.ii.351).

This comparison is finalised when Othello ultimately commits suicide as Judas does, which Matthew 27:3-5 relates as follows:

> *Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,*
>
> *Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.*
>
> *And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself*
>
> (Bible,1611)

These examples prove the influence of Christianity on Shakespeare's writing and also point to the Christian overtones of the play and its implications for the protagonist of this story, which are discussed later.

In addition to being portrayed as a strict Christian society, Venice is also depicted as a hierarchical society that is preoccupied with position, status and power. This is explicitly seen in Iago's fury over Cassio being appointed as Othello's lieutenant instead of him: "This counter-caster/He is in good time must his lieutenant be/And I – God bless the mark! – his Moorship's ancient" (I.i.31-33). As a result, Iago goes to extreme lengths to discredit Othello and Cassio: "I follow him to serve my turn upon him" (I.i.42) and "He holds me well/The better shall my purpose work on him" (II.i.78-79). The importance of status and power is also made apparent through the character of Brabantio, who is painted as a powerful character: "My wrath and my position have the power/ To make you suffer bitterly for this" (I.i.107-108). Othello respects him for his age and position: "Good signior, you shall more command with years/Than with your weapons" (I.ii.59-60). The importance of status is further underlined when Brabantio expresses his disappointment in his daughter's decision to marry Othello, a black man, with the implication that she is ruining her reputation by doing so: "And she, in spite of nature, Of years, of country, credit, everything – / To fall in love with what she feared to look on! / It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect / That will confess perfection so could err" (I.ii. 99-102). It should be noted that Desdemona never mentions ever being repulsed by Othello, and that these assertions are the creation of Brabantio which he projects onto Desdemona. Similarly, the importance of status and power is apparent when Cassio expresses his despair at being demoted and mourns the idea of his reputation being ruined: "Reputation, reputation, reputation! Oh, I have lost my / reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and / what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!" (II.iii.150-152).

Finally, the significance of reputation in Venetian society is illuminated when Othello appeals to Lodovico, a nobleman from Venice, to tell his story for the sake of his reputation:

> Then must you speak
> Of one that loved not wisely, but too well.
> Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
> Perplexed in the extreme. Of one whose hand,
> Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
> Richer than all his tribe. Of one whose subdued eyes,
> Albeit unused to the melting mood,
> Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
> Their medicinal gum. Set you down this,
> And say besides that in Aleppo once,
> Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcisèd dog,
> And smote him, thus.

(V.ii.348-360)

In this, Othello wishes to communicate that he has been led astray by his trusting nature, but – more importantly – that he has remained a good servant of the state by killing himself, whom he describes as a turbaned Turk and an enemy to the Venetian state: "I took by th' throat the circumcised dog, / And smote him – thus" (V.ii.355-56). Berry (1990:329) concurs and contends that, by killing himself, Othello once again becomes a Venetian hero in service to his state.

Lastly, Venetian society is described as deeply prejudiced, which is clearly shown in the obvious racism and Islamophobia displayed toward Othello in the opening scene. Xiaojing (1998:341) explains that characters such as Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio refer to Othello only in terms of his blackness, “black lips”, “old black ram”, “sooty bosom”, “black devil”. Xiaojing (1998:341) further notes that these attacks on Othello are rooted in their racial prejudice. The same author (1998:336) argues that the racial prejudice that is evident in *Othello* reflects a similar prejudice that emerged in England after Africans began to appear in the country as a result of trade with Africa and the slave trade. Bartels (1990:434) explains that the portrayal of Othello has much to do with the early stereotypes of blackness and Islam as evil. Xiaojing (1998:336) agrees with this by stating that, from the onset, the English actively defined their culture and civilisation as opposite to that of Africans in an attempt to exert their superiority. The impact of this racism on the protagonist of the play is elaborated on in the following section.

6.2.1 Othello’s positioning in the text

From the onset, Othello is described as the “other” in Venetian society. This is seen through the racial slurs in the opening act of the play with references like “thick lips”, “barbary horse”, “black

ram", and "sooty bosom". These labels function to portray Othello as a black outsider and degrading him right from the start of the play. The first time Othello is called by his name is only in scene three of act one, "Valiant Othello", after having being referred to as the Moor eleven times and described as "the black", "a lascivious Moor", and a "thing". It is apparent that Othello is an outsider in this society, and that he is only acknowledged by Venetian society as a courtesy for serving the state as a fierce soldier. The animal imagery used to depict Othello, "barbary horse", "black ram" also function in humiliating him as a lower being not equal to Venetians and play on the longstanding perception of the sexual prowess of black men. According to Stesienko (2011:80-81) Iago's derisive claims: "an old black ram is tupping your white ewe" (1.1.90), "you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you" (1.1.113-115), and "your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs" (1.1.118-120), work to distort Othello's character and alienate him from the Venetian society. Stesienko (2011:81) further suggests that by emphasising Othello's strength, origin and appearance into negative animal imagery, a vulgar, racial stereotype is achieved early in in the play. Othello's portrayal as a black Islamite significantly contributes to his depiction as an outsider, since he finds himself in a western and Christian society, which is expanded on in the following section.

Othello's religious standing can be approached in two ways. The first is that Othello is sketched as one who struggles with his converted Christian status, and reverts to Islam. An alternative view is that Othello is in fact fully converted to Christianity, but Venetian society refuses to embrace his Christian status and actively participate in maintaining his outsider status. This possibility is supported by the character of Iago plotting against Othello in the hope that Othello will denounce his Christian faith. The first argument contends that, although Othello is self-assured and stands strong in his religious beliefs in the beginning of the play, he develops doubts about his Muslim past and his new Christian status after learning that his wife may have been unfaithful. This is reinforced by Johanyak (2019:3), who observes that Othello "shifts back and forth between Christian and Muslim identities". This Muslim identity contributes to Othello being treated as the "other" in the play, since Muslims were "visualized with negative qualities as being cruel, greedy, inferior, impulsive, aggressive, pagan and devilish" (Ghanim, 2018:151). This accounts for the numerous times Othello is compared to a devil who practises witchcraft: "Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her" (I.i.62); "an abuser of the world/a practiser/Of arts inhibited and out of warrant" (I.ii.76-77); "She is abused, stolen from me and corrupted/By spells and medicines brought of mountebanks" (I.iii.64-65).

However, Othello's possible Islamic status lends itself to a different interpretation of his character. This is especially relevant to this study since it is concerned with how African characters are

represented and what other interpretations could possibly be included in an attempt to include African perspectives. When looking at his character through the lens of Islam, it might be easier to understand why he easily falls victim to Iago's treachery instead of just believing that his character is gullible. In Islam, brotherhood is considered a "strong bond that unites the believers irrespective of tribe, race or origin" (El Shabazz, 2019). This could explain why Othello believes Iago, whom he often describes as trustworthy: "my ancient/ A man he is of honesty and trust" (I.iii.85-86) and "Honest Iago" (I.iii.296; V.ii.77). Clegg (2009:230) supports this notion by recommending that Othello be read from an Islamic perspective and reinforces this view by explaining the influence of Islamic law when Othello kills Desdemona and then himself. Clegg (2009:230) explains that Islamic culture has strict penalties for women who commit adultery, which Othello seems to enforce by slapping Desdemona in public, (IV.i.256) and later killing her: "Twas I that killed her" (V.ii.134). Clegg (2009:230) also notes that, in Islam, there are severe consequences for husbands who falsely accuse their wives of adultery. "A "jealous husband" had to swear "four times" to the truth of his accusation; but if the claim were incorrect, he had to "curse himself" (Clegg, 2009:230). This execution of Islamic law is apparent when Othello curses himself and commits suicide after learning of Desdemona's innocence: "I took by th'throat the circumcised dog. / And smote him – thus!" (V.ii.359-360). By referring to himself as a "circumcised dog", Othello further reinforces his Islamic identity, as circumcision is an important religious practice in Islam (Urban, 2020).

In contrast to the view that Othello reverts to Islam, it could be argued that Othello remains true to his Christian conversion throughout the play. It is however apparent that Othello is never accepted as a true Christian. This is seen in the use of the word Moor, commonly used to refer to Muslims (Ghanim, 2018:151; Hall, 2015:68), as his defining characteristic. Almost all the characters in the play refer to him as the Moor, which automatically identifies him as other than Christian and "other" in Venetian society. However, Othello's commitment to Christianity is apparent throughout the play, as can be seen when he condemns a fight between Cassio and Roderigo: "Are we turned Turks? / For Christian shame put by this barbarous brawl!" (II.iii.159). Othello clearly condemns their actions because he believes that it does not reflect Christian values. It is, however, apparent that it is members of the Venetian society who wish to characterise Othello as Islamic as a means of casting him as "other". This is illustrated when Iago plots Othello's downfall, hoping that it would result in the latter's denial of his Christian faith. This is because Iago believes that Othello's conversion to Christianity is not genuine but merely done to win Desdemona: "And then for her / To win the Moor, were't to renounce his baptism,' All seals and symbols of redeemed sin, / His soul so enfettered to her love" (II.iii.308-311). However, this is not the case, as it could be argued that Othello upholds these values even in the act of killing Desdemona. Just as with Islam, Christianity has strict consequences for adultery, as seen in

Leviticus 20:10: “And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death” (Bible, 1611). It could then be argued that Othello exercises a literal interpretation of this law by killing Desdemona and ordering Cassio’s death: “Within these three days let me hear thee say/ That Cassio’s not alive” (III.iv.473-474). In addition to this, Othello expresses his concern of killing an “unprepared spirit” and appeals to Desdemona to repent of her sins before she is killed: “If you bethink yourself of any crime/ Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace, / Solicit for it straight” (V.ii. 26-28). This very much reflects the Christian faith, which emphasises repentance. Another indication that Othello upholds his Christianity can be seen when he compares himself to Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus. In this, Othello identifies as Christian; not a good one, but Christian nonetheless.

In addition to Othello’s religious background contributing to his “othering”, Othello’s race also significantly contributes to his status as the “other” in Venetian society. Race and racism are major themes in *Othello*. This is echoed by Rose (2002:25), who maintains that, “race and racism are an inescapable part of the play and have much to do with its tragic outcome”. This is reinforced by Orkin (1987:170), who states that *Othello* is only meaningful within the context of race. This means that Othello’s race and the explicit racism shown towards him by the Venetian society cannot be ignored, as it informs the play and contributes to understanding the character and the play in general. This is proven, as it appears that racism is at the core of Iago’s hatred of Othello, which subsequently causes him to plot against Othello. Weissbourd (2013:542) contends that the “play explicitly informs us that he (Othello) is black and that he has been a slave” and this blackness is what becomes Othello’s defining characteristic. This is because most of the characters in the play primarily see Othello in terms of his blackness, which influences their attitudes toward him. Iago and Roderigo, for instance, give the audience their first impression of Othello. During their exchange, Othello is described as “a lascivious Moor” and “wheeling stranger”, which paints the picture of an exotic, overtly sexual and vulgar foreigner. Later in the scene, these characters reveal more about their perceptions of Othello by making animalistic references: “black ram”, “beast”, and “barbary horse”. Rose (2002:26) asserts that these descriptions reveal deep-seated prejudices toward black people as the audience is prepared for a monstrous, non-human character. Furthermore, the contrast of the black ram and white ewe also reveals Othello’s unfavourable position in this society. Orkin (1987:170) argues that these opposites – with Desdemona described as a “pearl” – portrays her as an angelic being while Othello is portrayed as evil. Orkin (1987:170) further notes that Othello is portrayed as one that is “horrible, treacherous, illogical, bestial and demonic”, which seems to be almost justified as Shakespeare has Othello confess to being a fool and deserving of hell for killing Desdemona:

O cursed, cursed slave! Whip me, ye devils!
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! Roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
(V.ii.83-86)

Shaw and Shaw (1995:86) note that descriptions of Othello as a devil or evil encapsulate European fears of the "new world" in which they began to see more Africans due to the slave trade and trade with Africa in general. Furthermore, Othello's black identity and other characters' reaction to this very much resembles what was happening in England at the time. Shaw and Shaw (1995:85) argue that the play represents the Elizabethan's view of the new world, which fascinated them, but also made them fearful of Africans. This is directly reflected in *Othello*, since Brabantio and Desdemona are initially very interested in Othello and his story:

Her father loved me, oft invited me,
Still questioned me the story of my life
From year to year- the battles, sieges, fortunes?
That I have passed
(I.iii.129-132)

This shows that Brabantio often invites Othello to his home, and is captivated by his stories – as is Desdemona. However, it is clear that, while Brabantio invites Othello into his home, it is not because he considers him a fellow Venetian; he constantly points to Othello's blackness as justification for why Desdemona should not marry him: "Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom/ Of a thing such as thou" (I.ii.69-70). Othello is described as a "thing" that is undesirable and his bosom is seen as dirty because of its black colour.

In contrast to the above representations of Othello, it should also be noted that, while much is done to discredit Othello in the opening act of the play, he is also represented positively. The audience's first encounter with Othello contradicts the images that are created by Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio in the beginning of the play. Othello's first appearance sees him as a man who is confident and takes control in a situation of conflict: "Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust 'em" (I.ii.58). Othello is presented as someone who is self-assured of his status in Venetian society: "Let him do his spite; the services I've done / The state will out-voice his complaints" (I.ii.18-19). His confidence in his role in Venetian society is validated by the respect shown to him by this society, who describes him as valiant, brave and noble. Othello's service as a general also illustrates his loyalty to the Venetian state. In addition to this, Othello is presented as someone who is kind and loving, which is noted by Iago, who admits that Othello is "of a free and open

nature" (II.i.386). Iago reinforces this idea by stating that, "The Moor… / Is of a constant, loving and noble nature" (II.iii.271-272). However, Iago's words could also be read to show a patronising attitude as he plots Othello's downfall despite his belief in the character's apparent good nature. It should be noted that Othello's confidence is greatly affected in Cyprus, which could be the result of the change from a familiar setting to an unknown one. Cantor (1990) explains that Cyprus was halfway between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, and was flanked by Christian civilisation on one end, and what Christians saw as "pagan barbarism" on the other end. Cantor (1990) further notes that the geographical setting of Cyprus is significant to the development of Othello, who is tragically torn between these two worlds once he is in Cyprus. Being removed from the familiar setting of Venice, Cyprus becomes the ideal location for Othello's displacement in the text.

Othello is presented as a multifaceted human being who is confident and takes charge, but in a lapse of judgement, trusts Iago instead of trusting his wife. Shaw and Shaw (1995:90) assert that this emphasis on Othello's humanity was important for the time in which the play was performed, as black people were seen as non-human. Despite this shared condition of humanity, the discussion above proves that Othello is positioned as "other" due to his race and religious background contrasting so starkly with the society he finds himself in. Understanding this racial and religious background can be instrumental in understanding his decisions and actions, and how he is portrayed by society.

6.3 What are the consequences of this positioning?

In this section, the consequences of the aforementioned positioning of the text and of Othello within Venetian society, are discussed. The first argument put forth is that Venetian society is depicted as a strict Christian society. A noticeable consequence of this positioning is that Islam is represented as the opposite of Christianity. When looking at the main representatives of these religions in the play – Desdemona representing Christianity and Othello representing Islam – it can be said that Islam is portrayed negatively. According to Ghanim (2018:150), it was common for Muslims namely; Turks, Moors, Arabs and Persians to be "represented as outsiders, infidels, lustful, violent people and barbarian". The negative depiction of Muslims is further noted through the difference between Desdemona who is portrayed as pure, humble and forgiving, while Othello, born a Muslim, is portrayed as treacherous, irrational and demonic (Orkin, 1987:170). This is especially evident when, in the beginning of the play, Christian Othello is confident, calm and measured; when he murders Desdemona, he identifies as a Turk, "where a malignant Turk / Beat a Venetian and traduced the state" (V.ii.357-358). More evidence of the negative portrayal of Islam is that Turks, who are Islamites, are portrayed as barbaric enemies of the Venetian state. This is proven when Othello condemns Cassio and Roderigo for fighting: "Are we turned Turks

and to ourselves do that / Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites? / For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl" (II.iii.47-49). Here Othello condemns the fight by accusing those involved in the fight of behaving like barbaric Turks, and appeals to their Christian parts to end the fight. In so doing, it is implied that reasoning is a quality that belongs to Christians and not Turks who are presumably Muslim. Thus, the implication is made that barbaric behaviour is characteristic of Muslims and not Christians. It is important to understand the historical background of the Turk and Cyprus in order to understand the significance of these references in the play. Byles (2000:140) argues that it is important to understand the historical significance that Venice, Cyprus and the Ottoman Empire have in the play. Historically, Cyprus was important to Venice as its richest territorial possession (Byles, 2000:140). In 1510, the Turks invaded Cyprus and managed to maintain possession of the land for thirty years. Due to its geographical location between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, Cyprus also symbolically represented a "bastion" between Islam and Christendom (Byles, 2000:140). In the context of the play, Cyprus's proximity to the Turks accounts for the importance of Venice to maintain possession of the land. The Turks posed a great threat to Venice, which accounts for the prejudice the play demonstrates towards the Turks. In addition to this, the representation of Turks is mirrored after the actual views about Turkish people in England at the time. Barin (2010:37) explains that the Ottoman Empire posed a political, economic and religious threat to England, and natives of the region were often seen as "immoral barbarians". Barin (2010:39) further notes that this depiction of the Turk in *Othello* is a product of the cultural context of the time, as it consists of multiple disparaging representations of the Turks as a "religious threat and racial other".

One could also argue the opposite: there are so many instances of Christian characters like Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio displaying negative characteristics, that a hidden meaning could very well exist that Islam is not as vile as apparently portrayed. This discourse is compatible with CDA, since Denscombe (2010: 287) recognises that an important aspect of this method of analysis is the inference of hidden meanings. Some Christian characters in the play are exposed as intolerant and prejudiced, as is seen in the racism and hatred Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio demonstrate toward Othello. Another case in point is that Iago is the mastermind behind the destruction of Othello, which sees him commit serious offences that are condemnable by Venetian and Christian standards. He lies, lusts after Desdemona – who is a married woman "Now, I do love her too" (II.i.74), kills Roderigo (V.i) and his wife, Emilia (V.ii), and is unable to repent or show remorse for his actions: "Demand me nothing. What you know, you know. / From this time forth I never will speak word" (V.ii.307-308). It is also interesting that Othello is characterised as someone who practices magic: "an abuser of the world / a practiser / Of arts inhibited and out of warrant" (I.ii.76-77), as Iago is the one to proclaim: "The Moor already changes with my poison" III.iii.327); "Work on, / My medicine work!" (IV.i.44-45).

Another aspect of Venetian society is that it is prejudiced. This has serious consequences for Othello, especially since the prejudice is against the “other”, who is Othello. One consequence is that the racism in Venetian society affects Othello’s confidence and identity. Xiaojng (1998:345) affirms that Othello’s self-assurance is affected by Iago’s attacks on Othello, which are aimed at Othello's racial "otherness". Xiaojing (1998:345) reinforces his view by stating that Iago implies that Othello’s racial otherness renders him inferior and undeserving of Desdemona. Iago proceeds to plot against Othello by preying on these differences, which begin to affect the way Othello sees himself. Xiaojing (1998:342-345) notes that the change in Othello’s self-confidence and identity can be seen in the following passages:

Let him do his spite.
My services, which I have done the signiory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints; 'tis yet to know
……..
I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege, and my demerits
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
As this that I have reach'd; for know, Iago,
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
I would not my unhoused free condition
Put into circumscription and confine
For the sea's worth.
(I.ii.17-26)

Haply, for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declin'd
Into the vale of years-
(III.iii.64-67)

The first passage reflects Othello’s attitude in the beginning of the play where he is self-assured of his position in Venetian society. Moreover, the passage reveals that Othello is unashamed of his background as it is suggested that he comes from royalty. This is remarkably different to the second passage where Othello is acutely aware of the differences between the Venetians and himself in the setting of Cyprus, and sees these differences as a weakness. This proves that his character deteriorates as a result of Iago’s scheming, which is racially motivated. He is made to doubt himself. The consequence of Othello’s “othering” because of his race and religion is his downfall. This is reinforced by Berry (1990:318) who states that Othello's "Africanness" is a key element in his downfall, “not because of what he is, innately or culturally, but because of how he is perceived, by others and by himself”. This understanding of Othello is also related to CDA,

since this method of discourse analysis is aimed at uncovering issues related to discrimination and power relations (van Dijk, 2001:96). Not only is Othello severely discriminated against because he is black, but he is also constantly cast as "other" – inferior due to his blackness. This issue is one that can be traced back to the Elizabethan society of the time which, according to Shaw and Shaw (1995:87), was intolerant of other races.

6.4 Role of language with the application of Fairclough's dimensions of CDA

As previously discussed, Othello, the black character of this text and the subject of analysis, is presented as "other" in Venetian society. The major role of critical discourse analysis is to understand the role of language in social practice. In the play, one role of language is to alienate Othello. This is achieved through the way in which Othello is described by other characters and, eventually, the way in which he describes himself. Extracts from the text, which are examples of Othello as "other", have been selected and analysed in subsequent sections. Othello is the focus of this section since the study is concerned with the interpretation of Africa and/or African characters. In order to show Othello's alienation/"othering" and the Venetian society's deliberate superiority over the "other", Fairclough's dimensions of analysis (as cited in Janks, 1997:329) are applied to the selected extracts from the text. These dimensions of analysis are:

- text analysis (description);
- processing analysis (interpretation);
- social analysis (explanation).

Moor

Text analysis:	Multiple dictionary definitions of the word offer that it is a term that refers to a person of Northwestern African Muslim descent.
Processing analysis:	In the text, the word is used nine times and is used by Iago who has a clear vendetta that is racially motivated, but is also used by characters who regard Othello kindly such as the first senator: "Here comes Brabantio and the Valiant moor" (I.iii. 49). This implies that within the society, "Moor" is not regarded as a derogatory term.

Social analysis:	The word is used as a label that signifies Othello as “other” in Venetian society. Although the term is also used by members of society who regard Othello kindly, it works to characterise him as African and an Islamite, which is the direct opposite of a Venetian and a Christian. It should be noted that no other character is referred to by race and religion as Othello is. Characters are simply Cassio, Brabantio, Roderigo; not “white Roderigo” or “Christian Cassio”. This proves the deliberate use of the word “Moor” to draw attention to Othello’s race and religion as defining characteristics.

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise!
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.
Arise, I say!

(1.1.97-101)

Text analysis:	Animal imagery is used to draw attention to the consummation of Othello and Desdemona’s marriage. The use of the opposite “black” and “white” not only refers to literal racial differences between Othello and Desdemona, but also the figurative reference to Othello as evil and Desdemona as pure. This is exemplified by the word “devil”. In this context, Othello is seen as sinful and an outsider who does not belong in the city based on his colour. In addition to this, repetition is also used to draw attention to the urgency that Brabantio needs to deal with the matter, “now, now, very now” and “Arise! Arise!”
Process analysis:	This animal imagery creates a vulgar image of Othello in which he is dehumanised. By her association with him, Desdemona is also dehumanised. The use of the animal references also implies that their union is unnatural and immoral. By linking Othello to sin and characterising him as a devil, Othello is made into an evil being. The word “tupping” is significant, as it is a term used for animals when ewes are covered by rams. Animal sexual relations are without emotional attachment. In effect, the suggestion is that their relationship is purely based on lust. This also ties in with the stereotypical notion some people have of the sexual prowess of African men, as mentioned earlier.
Social analysis:	The implication of these words is that the union of Desdemona and Othello is frowned upon by Venetian society. It is also implied that it would be shameful for Othello to consummate the marriage, and children from this marriage would be an abomination: “the devil will make a grandsire of you”.

Because we come to
do you service and you think we are ruffians, you'll
have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse,

you'll have your nephews neigh to you, you'll have coursers for cousins and jennets for germans.

(I.i. 110-113)

Text analysis:	The metaphor of Barbary horse is used to refer to Othello. According to multiple dictionary definitions, a jennet is a small type of Spanish horse, while the barbary horse is a North African horse that is similar to an Arab horse. In addition to this, Barbary is a term used by Europeans to refer to the coastal region of North Africa; another reference to Othello's race.
Processing analysis:	In this quote, Othello's blackness is tied to an animal, which implies that his race disqualifies him as human. By referring to him as the less attractive "Barbary horse", Othello is characterised as inferior. The reference to jennets implies that Othello and Desdemona will have mixed-race children that will resemble their father's non-human qualities. Also, because the barbary horse is known for its strength and stamina, the sexual prowess is once again referenced.
Social analysis:	The idea of Othello and Desdemona's children being abominations is reinforced here. Hadfield (2003) asserts that this reflects Elizabethan fears about the abomination of mixed-raced children.

O cursed, cursed slave!
Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulfur,
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
(V.ii.283-286)

O thou Othello, thou was once so good,
Fall'n in the practice of a cursèd slave,
What shall be said to thee?
(V.ii.297-299)

Text analysis:	The first passage are the words spoken by Othello after he realises that he had killed Desdemona based on false information. The second passage are words spoken by Lodovico, a nobleman in Venice. “Cursed” and “damned” are words that can be used interchangeably. To be “cursed” or “damned” in the Christian sense is to be condemned or punished by God. Othello also creates the imagery of hell by referring to “sulfur” and “liquid fire”. In both cases, “cursed” or “damned” are followed by “slave”.
Processing analysis:	Othello’s words clearly show that he believes he has sinned and is worthy of eternal punishment. It is also clear that his identity has been greatly affected, since he now subscribes to earlier depictions of himself as evil and a practitioner of black magic. By placing “cursed”/”damned” next to “slave”, Othello’s damnation is tied to his black identity. Weissbourd (2013:545) suggests that it may refer to the biblical curse of Ham, in which Ham and all his descendants were convicted to slavery.
Social analysis:	These quotes show that Othello now sees himself as certain members of Venetian society such as Brabantio, Roderigo and Iago have seen him. It is evident that he is remorseful of his actions but also that he believes his background has something to do with his actions which is why he later refers to himself as a “cursed slave” and “Turbaned Turk”. Lodovico also notes that Othello has fallen into the practice of a cursed slave, which again highlights the prejudice the society has toward the black character.

6.5 African Philosophy

When analysing *Othello*, it is evident that there are political undercurrents that could inform the understanding of the play. Politics is clearly part of the fictional context of the play and reflects the politics of the time in which it was written. A particular theme that emerges is Othello’s second-class citizenship in Venetian society. Cantor (1990:300) makes a strong argument for this by explaining that Othello’s extraordinary abilities in war are what simultaneously cast him as an outsider in Venetian society and a trusted insider in times of war. Cantor (1990:300) notes that Othello is identified as barbaric, and not worthy of the hand of a “supersubtle Venetian”; but it is his very barbaric nature that serves this society well during times of war. Cantor (1990:300) encapsulates this notion by stating that, “The peaceful Christian merchants of Venice see their commercial empire threatened by the Turks, and evidently feel they must hire their own barbarian to lead the fight against the barbarians”. The implication is that Othello’s place and merit in Venetian society rests solely on his service to the Venetian state, a fact that Othello is well aware of: “My services, which I have done the signiory, / Shall out-tongue his complaints; 'tis yet to know” (I.ii.18-19). Outside of his service as “warlike Othello”, Othello is a “wheeling stranger” who is

insulted with racial and Islamophobic slurs to emphasise his outsider status. The political position represented in the play is a reflection of the long-standing practice of exploiting black labour in western societies. Jones (as cited by Weissbourd, 2013:6) notes that Africans had been present in England – primarily in the role of slaves – since 1554. While Africans were of service in these times, their presence was unwelcome and Queen Elizabeth called for the expulsion of black people in 1591 and again in 1601 (Weissbourd, 2013:6).

The political standing in *Othello* is worthy of exploration from an African philosophical perspective, since this philosophy is centered on the liberation of Africans. This liberation is not limited to Africans situated in Africa, but also Africans that were displaced due to slavery and are currently situated in western societies. Political philosophy is also important to restoring culture and identity (Wiredu, 1998) which, as seen in *Othello*, is important as identity is greatly affected in the process of assimilating another culture. Exploring this text from an African political perspective is especially relevant in the current global political climate where there is still an overwhelming sense of racism experienced by Africans in different parts of the world. Incorporating the African political philosophy perspective in the reading of *Othello* could be a valuable inclusion into the lecture hall and classrooms, since it could lead to discourse on these issues.

6.6 Analysis of supplementary material

To gain insight to the interpretation of this text, the corresponding supplementary material was analysed. The supplementary material for this particular text is in the form of a student workbook that contains questions and activities for critical engagement. It should be noted that this text is read at third-year level for students studying English at the Education faculty of the North-West University.

The workbooks that were made available and analysed were for 2014-2018. The workbooks for 2014-2017 were compiled by Reyneke (2014-2017), while the workbook for 2018 was compiled by Romylos (2018). The activities included in these workbooks can be summarised as follows:

- The work on *Othello* commences with a brief historical background of the play:

Extract 6.5.a

The historical background to Shakespeare's play

Othello was written by William Shakespeare in 1604. Only a year earlier, in 1603, James 1 became the first monarch of the House of Stuart. The last monarch from the House of Tudor was Elizabeth 1 (1558-1603). She was the fifth monarch of the House of Tudor after Henry V111 (1509-1547). In England and Ireland where James ruled from 1603 to 1625, he was known as James 1. He had already become the King of Scotland at the age of thirteen months in 1567 when his mother Mary, Queen of Scots, was compelled to abdicate in his favour. There he was known as James V1.

The period during which James 1 reigned in England, was known as the golden age. This "golden age" represented the apogee of the English Renaissance and saw the flowering of poetry, music and literature. The era is most famous for theatre, as William Shakespeare and many others composed plays that broke free of England's past style of theatre. It was an age of exploration and expansion abroad, while back at home, the Protestant Reformation became more acceptable to the people, most certainly after the Spanish Armada was repulsed. It was also the end of the period when England was a separate realm before its royal union with Scotland. Other famous writers from this period are John Donne, Ben Johnson and Sir Francis Bacon.

This aims to place the play within its historical context to inform the interpretation of the play. It is well aligned to the literary analyses of this study, which looked at the positioning of the texts within their historical backgrounds. This is also aligned with the CDA method employed in this study, which advocates analysing a text within its historical background in order to gain insight into how the time it was written in affects the text. However, not all aspects of the historical background are reflected in this account; for example, it does not speak to the wars between Cyprus and the Turks, which is the inspiration for the fictional setting of the play. It would be valuable for students to know how the arrival of Africans in England due to trade –possibly as slaves – could have

influenced the shaping of Othello's identity, and how the views of black and Islamic people in England at the time may have influenced the writing of the play

- The first assignment students are expected to complete is about evaluating the suitability of teaching Shakespeare in the South African context. Students are expected to either tabulate the reasons Shakespeare should/should not be taught, or take a stance on the matter by writing an essay. A noticeable difference in the 2018 workbook is that students are guided to consider the suitability of teaching Shakespeare by considering the calls for a decolonised curriculum;

Extract 6.5.b:

Assignment 1:

After you have studied different scholarly articles and have conducted additional research on whether or not to teach Shakespeare in the Senior and FET Phase:

- Complete the following table by stating at least five reasons why Shakespeare should not be taught and five reasons to teach Shakespeare.
- Against the background of cries going up for the *decolonisation of the curriculum,* write down your own *informed* view on the opposite blank page.
- Add your bibliography.
- Prepare to share and discuss your view during the next contact session.

This task highlights an important issue that was discussed in the literature review of this study about the place of the western canon in Africa. This is a valuable question for pre-service teachers to consider, since it was maintained that canonical works must be carefully considered, as these texts may not always reflect the values and realities of the African learner. Having students come up with their own ideas on the subject, different and valuable responses could be attained. For instance, a likely argument could be that Shakespeare should not be taught; instead, African writers who write African stories should be introduced. Another argument could be that, although the play is not set in Africa, it details the difficulties of an African protagonist outside of Africa and is thus worthy of exploration. It could be argued that this text deals with universal themes and issues that could be valuable to the African learner.

- After this, students are required to complete a research report on the historical background of the text:

Extract 6.5.c:

Assignment 2: Conduct research on the background of Shakespeare's play "*Othello*" and compile a report in which you address the following issues:

1. When did Shakespeare write this play?
2. Who reigned as king/queen? (indicate the link with the Early Renaissance period during which Henry V111 reigned)
3. What was the era called during which "Othello" was written?
4. What happened on the literary front?
5. Briefly discuss three poems written by three prominent poets of this era. Identify typical themes and characteristics. Record at least FIVE characteristics of Elizabethan Poetry.
6. What role was played by theatre during these times?
7. Which attitudes and values were portrayed by the people particularly with regard to women and people of a different race?

As previously mentioned, it is valuable to look at the historical background of a text. An aspect of this task especially valuable to this study is that students are to research the attitudes and values portrayed with regard to women and people of a different race (question 7). By having students focus on this, perspectives that underpin the shaping of Othello's character could be uncovered. This is because the attitudes and values portrayed with regard to African people in the play are linked to racial prejudice in England at the time. This question fosters critical engagement, since students are to assume autonomy by conducting research independently, which could greatly impact their understanding of the text and of Othello's character.

- Students are also expected to look at structural elements of the play such as the exposition, rising action, curtain lines, climax, falling action and resolution.
- This is important to the analysis of the play and aligns with CDA, since students are to specifically analyse language (curtain lines) and its role in developing the plot.

- There is also a focus on characterisation, particularly the characterisation and development of Othello.

Extract 6.5.d:

Assignment 4: Study group activity on Characterisation

The following short questions are to be discussed by your study group and answered in your journal in written form.

How do you think Othello sees himself

a. In the beginning of Act 3?

b. At the end of Act 3?

Extract 6.5.e:

Chat the main changes in Othello's character from the beginning to the end of the play

Othello used to be,,,	**He became…**
1.	
2.	

The character analysis of Othello is based on the deterioration of his character. As mentioned in the literary analysis of the play, which focuses on Othello's positioning in the play, Othello is self-assured in the beginning of the play and gradually becomes less confident and succumbs to jealousy. This is the premise the above question (question 4.1) is hinting at. It emerges that, in the beginning of Act III, Iago makes his first subtle suggestion that Cassio and Desdemona may be intimately involved, by which Othello seems relatively unmoved. This is because, in the beginning, Othello is still sure of himself, as he vows not to give in to jealously. At the end of the act however, Othello has fully surrendered to his jealously and is adamant about pursuing a course of action. This also reveals that the dominant interpretation of Othello, as it emerges in the workbook, is of a tragic hero who succumbs to his fatal flaw, jealousy. When looking at Othello from a western lens it is easy to categorise him as a tragic hero. There are however, different interpretations that may be considered. One approach would be to explore how Othello's racial and religious background affect his choices and actions. It should also be considered how Venetian society's inability to accept him as a true Venetian leads to his self-doubt and eventual demise.

- The workbook also focuses on the role Iago plays in Othello's undoing, and specifically focuses on how language is used as a tool to drive the plot.

Extract 6.5.f:

Assignment 7: Language used in the play. Notes to be added to your group's plot structure.

What the following video available at:

URL: https://wwww.youtube.com/watch?v=trhHBQRUcQ

- **This recording of extracts from Folger's 2011 production of *Othello* was shared by FolgerLibrary in 2012.**
- **It focuses on the importance of words spoken in the play and is entitled "Insider's Guide: Language in *Othello*"**
- **As you watch it again, start a graphic organiser on the opposite blank page of your Workbook and write down information on:**

- Words as power
- Words as character
- Words as conversation with the audience

The video students are shown is focused on the use of language in the play, and the following arguments are made:

- Language is a powerful tool that Shakespeare employs to great effect in *Othello*. The language used in the play is used to establish power, which can be positive and negative. An example of positive use of language is at the beginning of the play, when Othello tells the story that makes Desdemona fall in love with him.

  My story being done,
  She gave me for my pains a world of sighs
  She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing
  Strange,
  'Twas pitiful, 'twas wonderous pitiful.
  She wished that she had not heard it, yet she wished
  That heaven had made her such a man.
  (I.iii.182-188)

- In contrast, Iago's language is used to deceive and manipulate multiple characters in the play. This can be seen when Iago says: "Ha! I like not that" (III.iii.35) when he sees Cassio leaving Desdemona's room. With just a few words, Iago manages to plant a seed of doubt in Othello's mind. Language is also used to reveal and conceal the truth in the play. The ability of language to reveal the truth is especially seen when Emelia reveals the truth about the handkerchief and implicates her husband in the deception of Othello:

  'Twill out, 'twill out. I peace?
  No, I will speak as liberal as the north.
  Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,
  All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak
  (V.ii.260-263)

- Language can also be used to develop character and shape identity. This is specifically seen in the repeated use of the word "Moor" to label Othello and signify him as an outsider.

- Language is also used to communicate with the audience, which Iago does to great effect in his soliloquies. These soliloquies also play a significant role in revealing truth. For example, the extract below shows Iago's true thoughts about Roderigo, who he believes is a fool he can use for money. The extract also reveals one of the reasons behind Iago's hatred of Othello, which is that he believes Othello had an affair with his wife.

  Thus do I ever make my fool my purse.
  For I mine own gained knowledge should profane
  If I would time expend with such a snipe
  But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,
  And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
  He's done my office. I know not if 't be true,
  But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
  Will do as if for surety. He holds me well.
  The better shall my purpose work on him.
  (II.i.371-379)

The workbook's focus on language reflects the CDA method of this study, which emphasises the use of language in a text. This is a critical aspect that students should engage with in order to come to a better understanding of issues regarding social status, discrimination, and control, which are all evident in the text and revealed through language.

Finally, the workbook has activities that require students to critically engage with the themes, symbols and motifs in the play.

One of the themes students are required to focus on is prejudice, since it is directly related to the African protagonist of the play. It is important that students engage with this topic to gain understanding of how prejudice affects Othello's identity and causes his eventual downfall. Again, this is related to CDA, which aims to uncover issues related to discrimination.

6.7 Concluding remarks

The analysis of *Othello* shows that the Venice of Shakespeare's play is a strict Christian society. Its prejudices have significant consequences for the protagonist of the play, who is treated as an outsider due to his race and religious background. It should, however, also be noted that Venetian society is opportunistic and takes advantage of Othello's service to the state as successful general in the army. While much is done to discredit Othello in the opening scenes of the play, the

character is confident and assured of his place. This of course changes in Cyprus where Othello falls victim to Iago's schemes and begins doubting his wife. Eventually, he kills her and himself.

A critical look at the workbooks for this text reveals that the questions and activities foster critical engagement with important issues that inform the analysis of Othello's character as an African character. The workbook also encourages students to assume autonomy and develop their own interpretation of the play and Othello's character. However, there seems to be an absence of certain aspects of the literary analysis that could lead to alternative interpretations of Othello's character as an African. One of these is the political climate of the time, which saw a growing number of Africans in Europe because of trade or slavery. Also, there is no allusion to Othello's Islamic background and how it may influence his character or the perceptions of other characters about him.

The following chapter is the final chapter to this study and summarises the research problem, literature review and research design that was followed in this study. The chapter also communicates the findings that emanated from the literary analyses of the three texts used in this study. Finally, limitations of the study and recommendations for future studies will also be discussed.

CHAPTER 7 RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings that emanated from the literary analyses of the selected texts with specific reference to how this answered the research questions that were proposed in Chapter 1. This is followed by a brief discussion of the links between the literature review conducted in Chapter 2 and the findings from the literary analyses conducted in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Thereafter, the implications of this study are discussed by proposing recommendations for how the findings could be applied. Finally, the limitations of the study are shared, followed by concluding remarks.

The main purpose of this study was to explore the interpretations that are dominant when analysing English texts with an African context and/or African characters and to suggest plausible ways for such literature to be analysed to promote African perspectives. This was done by selecting and analysing texts with an African context and/or African characters and exploring the African perspectives that could likely be taken into consideration when studying these texts. The interpretation of these texts were compared to the interpretations as they appeared in student study guides with the purpose of discovering the dominant interpretations when analysing these texts and to ascertain whether more could be done to promote analyses of these texts from African perspectives. The objectives of this study were achieved by, firstly, elaborating on the research problem and communicating the research questions, aim and objectives in Chapter 1. This was followed by Chapter 2, which explored the existing literature related to the study's aim and elaborated on topics pertaining to Africanisation of HE, knowledge construction, African Renaissance, African indigenous knowledge systems, African philosophy, and the place of literature in society. In Chapter 3, a thorough account of the research design used in this study was provided, followed by an analysis of the selected literary texts and complimentary study guides in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

7.2 Discussion of findings based on literary analyses

This study had three secondary research questions which, once answered, provided insight into the main research question of the study. The first secondary research question was:

- How are African characters and/or African contexts portrayed in English literary texts?

This question was answered by applying CDA to analyse the positioning of the African context and/or African character/s in the chosen literary texts. It was found that African characters are portrayed differently, depending on the fictional context in which the character/s find themselves, the contextual background in which the text is written, and the writer's interpretation of Africa and Africans. In *Things fall apart,* for instance, African characters are portrayed as functional, diverse, logical, and a people who are rooted in their culture. This is especially relevant for the protagonist of the novel, Okonkwo, who is portrayed as a multifaceted character who upholds Ibo customs and traditions and is respected for the contributions he makes to society. He is also portrayed as a character whose fear of failing or appearing weak contributes to his questionable decisions, such as participating in the killing of Ikemefuna. Other characters such as Obirieka, Ezeudu and Uchendu are portrayed as wise for their ability to acknowledge questionable customs in Ibo society. As far as the African context is concerned, the novel plays a significant role in documenting the Ibo way of life prior to colonisation and showcases this society's strengths and weaknesses. On one hand, the novel showcases a functional society that operates as a collective and is rich in traditional, religious and cultural values as well as indigenous knowledge systems. Conversely, the novel also depicts a superstitious and patriarchal society that discards twin babies and is abusive of women. The portrayal of the African context and characters in this novel is a result of the actual social political climate of Nigeria, which – at the time the novel was written – had experienced colonisation and was still under colonial rule. In addition to this, the portrayal of the African context and characters can also be attributed to the author's interpretation of these. As a Nigerian man, who participated in Ibo customs and rituals and eventually attended a mission school (Innes, 1971) (as cited by Sadeghi, 2014:49), Chinua Achebe had valuable insight into the Ibo way of life and the effects of colonialism on Ibo culture, which are successfully portrayed in the novel.

In contrast to the portrayal of the African context and characters represented in *Things fall apart*, is the portrayal of the South African context and African characters in *Disgrace*. This novel cannot be separated from the socio-political history of South Africa. The novel is set in postcolonial and post-apartheid South Africa, and depicts the struggles of a white male adjusting to the climate of a new democracy. The literary analysis shows that some scholars such Mattos (2012) and Makhaya (2004) believe *Disgrace* offers a bleak depiction of a young democracy as the site of tense race relations, violent crimes and the abuse of women. However, the novel also explores the themes of grace and disgrace, restitution and reparations on a personal level and within the context of the new South Africa. The novel is said to represent the fears of white South Africans, who are no longer protected by the unjust apartheid system and have to come to grips with the change of power. In terms of the depiction of African characters, Lucy – a white South African woman – is depicted as a positive example of the younger white generation who sees black

people as equals and wishes to participate in democracy. Petrus, a black character in the novel, is mostly characterised through the eyes of David Lurie, who sees him as cunning. This is because he is believed to be behind a violent attack on Lucy and Lurie which results in Lucy signing over her land to him. The dominant narrative of black characters in the text is that they are violent criminals and rapists who wish to humiliate their white counterparts in order to make up for the injustices caused by colonisation and apartheid.

Unlike *Things fall apart* and *Disgrace, Othello* is not set in Africa and rather shows the struggles of an African character outside of his native land. Othello is portrayed as a character who is an outsider in Venetian society despite his success as a general in the Venetian army. The portrayal of Othello as an outsider is achieved through the derogatory manner in which he is described by other characters throughout the play. Eventually, this also becomes the way Othello sees himself. The literary analysis illustrates that Othello is seen as “other” – mainly due to his race and religious background. The portrayal of Othello as “other” reflects the social political climate of the time in which the play was written. During this time, it is believed that England saw an increase in the number of black and Islamic immigrants. Another aspect that may have influenced the portrayal of Othello as “other” is the political history of Cyprus, which was seen as a desirable commodity to both Venice and the Ottoman Empire. The site was a hotly contested area and also the setting of opposing religions, which becomes the ideal setting for the portrayal of Othello, who enters the island as a converted Christian who is torn between his Islamic background and new Christian status. The play employs the setting of Cyprus, which is located close to the Turks, who pose a threat to Christendom, to show Venetian prejudice toward the Turks.

The next, secondary research question was:

- What interpretations are dominant when analysing the supplementary texts (study guides) of prescribed English literary works featuring African characters and/or African contexts?

This question was answered by looking at the dominant interpretations when analysing the study guides of the prescribed English literary works featuring African characters and/or African contexts. This question was answered by analysing the study guides of the concerned texts which revealed the following:

With *Things fall apart*, an analysis of the study guides shows a focus on the positioning of Ibo society as well as certain cultural aspects, such as the use of symbols and folktales within this society. The guides also devote attention to the gender roles of men and women in this society, as well as the positioning of certain individuals such as Okonkwo and his son. These interpretations are mostly aligned with interpretations of the African context and characters, as is

apparent in the critical discourse analysis of the text. It can therefore be said that the dominant interpretation of the African context as it emerges from the study guides is that the context (Ibo society) is an environment that is unique and established in terms of culture, traditions and language. In terms of the portrayal of African characters, the study guides show significant attention given to defining Okonkwo as a tragic hero, which involves studying Greek mythological characters in order to see the similarities between these characters and Okonkwo. Therefore, the dominant interpretation of Okonkwo in these study guides is that he should be regarded as a tragic hero with a fatal flaw that ultimately leads to his demise.

The analysis of the study guides of *Disgrace* reveals significant focus on the positioning of the South African context as a postcolonial and post-apartheid state by zooming in on associated challenges. The questions in the study guides are predominantly about the challenges posed by a postcolonial South Africa, and are thus well aligned to CDA employed in this study. The spotlight falls on themes related to transformation, the treatment of women, rape, violence, forgiveness and reconciliation – all issues highlighted by CDA. As far as the interpretation of African characters in the text is concerned, it should be noted that not much effort is made to analyse Petrus's character; however, this is because his character does not develop much in the literary text. The employment of CDA allows students to probe questions like: Whose story is omitted? What are the consequences of such an omission?

Finally, since this study was concerned with the interpretation of Africa and Africans, specific attention was given to the interpretation of Othello as the representation of an African character, as the text is not set in Africa. It should, however, be noted that the study guides place emphasis on understanding the role of prejudice in the drama. This is important, since it directly impacts the African character of the story and is related to CDA, which aims to uncover issues pertaining to discrimination. The prejudices toward Othello are particularly highlighted. However, it was noted that themes and issues that stand out in terms of Othello as an African and his Islamic background, are not afforded attention. Themes and issues related to Othello's racial and religious background are not sufficiently explored, resulting in the opportunity to understand how his race and religion affect his character development, is lost. This also means that an opportunity to explore African perspectives and knowledge systems is lost. These themes and issues may be especially worthwhile to explore in the South African context, which is racially and religiously diverse.

The final secondary research question was:

- What suggestions can be made for the implementation of analyses to incorporate African perspectives and discourses related to African knowledge and values?

This question was answered by firstly looking at which interpretations are dominant, as with the second question, and then discussing possibilities for the inclusion of African knowledge and values. This was done in the literary analyses of the texts that explore how Africa and African characters are positioned in the texts, and then commenting on how the African identities of characters may inform alternative interpretations of their characters.

In *Things fall apart*, it was suggested that Okonkwo should not only be viewed as a tragic hero in the western sense, but rather as a character who values and upholds his African customs and traditions and, in so doing, remains true to his African identity. His observance of the African customs and traditions that shape him is exemplified in his unwillingness to yield to the western infiltration of his village. Okonkwo's suicide can be taken as a symbolic gesture that he would rather die than accept the western way of life. It was also noted that African philosophy could be effectively applied when analysing this text, and that the text has African indigenous knowledge that is worth exploring. An example of IKS that can be explored in the novel is the use of indigenous forms of communication that include the use of Ibo words, proverbs, idioms, and music to communicate. Another example of IKS that could be explored in the novel is indigenous legal regimes and, finally, indigenous food security practices are also evident in the novel. In *Disgrace*, it was noted that the dominant depiction of Africans in the novel is that they are thieves and rapists and that these depictions are worth challenging. It was also noted that the stories of African characters such as Petrus and Melanie are omitted, and that more attention could be focussed on understanding these characters in the analysis of the text. For instance, students may be requested to explore the historical and cultural background of Petrus and how this may have influenced his actions. It could be worthwhile to research the displacement of people in the Eastern Cape during the Frontier wars in South Africa in order to understand why the acquisition of land is important to Petrus. Focusing on these aspects could possibly lead to a greater understanding not only of Petrus but also some historical information of the South African context. With *Othello*, specific attention was given to understanding how Othello's possible African, Islamic background influences his character. It is thus suggested that these aspects be taken into consideration in order to come to an alternative analysis of his character. When looking at Othello through a western lens, he can be characterised as a tragic hero overcome by jealousy, which ultimately leads to his demise. However, when Othello's racial and religious background is considered, it provides an account for his decisions and actions. This adds depth to his character as he could be viewed as someone who is not only fatally flawed, but also as someone who is influenced by his cultural background.

These research questions contributed to answering the main research question of this study:

- How can literary texts that feature African characters and/or contexts be analysed to promote African knowledge and values?

This was achieved by conducting analyses of the chosen texts while focussing on the inclusion of African perspectives and African philosophy. The inclusion of Janks's (1997) CDA-related questions facilitated these analyses. These were: How is the text positioned or positioning? Whose interests are served by this positioning? Whose interests are negated? And What are the consequences of this positioning? By looking at how characters or the African context are positioned in these texts, valuable insights regarding the portrayal of Africa and Africans were attained. Janks's (1997) questions also led to an inquiry about how the position or positioning of texts serve or negate the interests of the characters and contexts. Janks's (1997) questions required a critical analysis of the consequences of a text's position or positioning. This question was also answered by looking at how language is used to portray characters and the African context. To achieve a critical analysis of the language of these texts, Fairclough's dimensions of CDA were implemented. These dimensions required a look at how language can be analysed on a textual (micro-) level, inferential (meso-) level, and social (macro-) level. Various extracts or quotes from all three texts were analysed using these levels to show how CDA may be implemented.

7.3 Discussion of the link between existing literature and findings

The first discussion in Chapter 2 revolves around what Africanisation of HE means and why it is important for African tertiary institutions to heed this call. This section emphasises that Africanisation is a process of founding African education systems on African knowledge and that it is important in order to uphold the "aspirations; descent; cultural heritage; ideas; rights; interests and ideals; self-concept and own rationality" of Africans (Botha, 2007:205). The literature review also explained that, while scholars such as Higgs (2016), Letsekha (2013) and Louw (2010) maintain that, while Africanisation of HE is important, western ideologies, rituals and cultures are still practised in African institutions (Lebakeng *et al.,* 2006:75). The influence of western ideologies is also evident in the analyses of the study guides of *Things fall apart*, *Disgrace* and *Othello*. In *Things fall apart* for instance, the study guide emphasises Okonkwo as a tragic hero and how Greek mythology influences the understanding of a tragic hero. While this analysis of Okonkwo may very well be applicable to his character, it also imposes limitations to understanding his character. When analysing his character from an African perspective, he can be seen as a character who upholds his culture and identity, and that his almost stubborn insistence on preserving the ways of his community is not a flaw as such, but should be admired. Therefore, African ideologies such as African philosophy may be a more suitable lens through which to view

Okonkwo. This is similar to the interpretations of *Othello,* which is a Shakespearean tragedy. Othello's character is interpreted as a tragic hero. Of course, this is how his character should be interpreted and it should not be discouraged. However, Othello's African, Islamic background could add depth to the western interpretation of his character. This echoes an assertion made by Letsekha (2013) in Chapter 2 that Africanisation of the education system does not mean opposing western learning. Also, Othello's African background is significant in the African context. This is because it is important and supports an argument made in Chapter 1 of this study – it is essential for the African child to see themselves in the stories they read and listen to. Considering the African background of the character might make Othello more relatable to the African learner.

The discussion of Africanisation and its importance is also linked to the discussion on knowledge construction in Chapter 2 of this study. An argument was made for the importance of knowledge and that different types of knowledge exist. One of the issues that emerged, and is related to the literary analyses conducted in this study, is that the knowledge conveyed in HE institutions in Africa is not African knowledge; hence, it does not relate to the students of these institutions. It emerged in the literature review that colonisation left the impression that Africans are unable to produce knowledge (Mangu, 2005). In response to this, HE institutions in Africa should foster the production of African knowledge (Lebakeng *et al.*, 2006:71). The idea that Africans are unable to produce knowledge is countered in the literary analyses (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) which show the wide range of knowledge available in Africa. This is particularly evident in *Things fall apart*, which showcases a society with their own legal regimes, food security practices, indigenous forms of communication, and values in terms of culture and traditions. It was furthermore indicated how African knowledge could be used to understand and analyse literary texts. This was made evident by the way in which African philosophy was used to come up with different interpretations of these literary texts.

In addition to this, Chapter 2 also explores the importance of indigenous knowledge systems and the crucial role it can play in the transformation of African HE institutions (Msila & Gumbo, 2016:20; Mkhize & Ndimane-Hlongwe, 2014:10). The literature review also shows that, while African indigenous knowledge is important, it has not been allowed to develop sufficiently – a partial consequence of colonisation (Mkhize & Ndimane-Hlongwe, 2014:14). The value of indigenous knowledge systems is reinforced in the literary analysis of *Things fall apart,* which illustrates that there are at least three forms of indigenous knowledge systems that are worth exploring in the text. These are indigenous forms of communication, indigenous legal regimes, and indigenous ways of ensuring food security. The knowledge systems align with the benefits of AIKS that are noted in Chapter 2 of this study. With the inclusion of AIKS, students may learn about their communities' values for a sustainable livelihood and students may engage with

culture, which could, in turn, develop a renewed appreciation and respect for this (Battiste, 2002) (as cited by Kaya & Seleti, 2013:34-35)

Another important topic that is addressed in the literature review was that of African philosophy. African philosophy was discussed by acknowledging its importance in offering a means to critically evaluate African realities. It was noted that African philosophy centres around "the understanding, attitude of mind, logic, and perception behind the manner in which African peoples think, act or speak in different situations of life" (Mbiti, 1970). In the literature review, it was also asserted that African philosophy is different from Western philosophy, since the former specifically looks at the history, culture and environment of Africans (Oruka, 1990:16). In light of this, African philosophy – particularly the trends of African philosophy as identified by Oruka – were defined in the literature review and were used as lens to interpret the African contexts and/or African characters in the literary analyses of this study. The trends of African philosophy were applied to the literary texts as follows:

- Ethnophilosophy, which can be understood as a philosophy concerned with Africans' way of life and the way in which they make sense of the world and their experiences. Ethnophilosophy proposes that this "way of life" be looked at holistically; in other words, that Africans have a shared culture. Aspects of ethnophilosophy were seen in the literary analysis of *Things fall apart*. This is because many Ibo people share the same cultural/traditional values. It was however noted that there are some differences among the different villages and that some Africans in this setting have different views regarding certain Ibo customs. In light of this, an opposing view of ethnophilosophy, offered by Hountondji (2018), is that one philosophy cannot be true for all people.

- Sage philosophy is based on the understanding that African communities have men and women in their societies who hold indigenous knowledge, are considered to be wise, are usually in positions of leadership or elderly and are often critical of their communities. Again, this philosophy was found to be applicable in *Things fall apart,* which has characters who stand out as sages within their community, and who specifically question certain customs.

- Political philosophy is specifically related to the importance of liberation movements in exposing ways Africa has been affected by colonisation and is focussed on the re-establishment of an African identity. African philosophy was applicable to all three of the literary texts analysed. Issues pertaining to colonisation and its effects were discussed as they relate to *Things fall apart, Disgrace* and *Othello*. It should also be noted that political philosophy is linked to the decolonisation of African philosophy and the decolonisation of education. This endeavour is also aligned with the aim of this study, which was to promote the inclusion of African knowledge and values in text analyses.

Another important factor that is discussed in the literature review of this study is the importance of literature, the selection of literature, and the place of English literature in African society. In this chapter, some of the views that emerged regarding literature were that texts are important as

distributors of knowledge, reflections of the interests of people, and depictions of power relations (Apple, 1993). It was also argued that learners learn about themselves and the world when they engage with literature. After looking at the importance of literature, it was necessary to discuss what type of literature should be prescribed. Two views were explored in this study: the first was that literature from the literary canon should be prescribed. Another view was that literature should be relatable to the identity and experiences of African students. A more balanced approach may, however, be to prescribe both kinds of literature. It would benefit students, especially preservice English teachers, to be exposed to literature from the canon as well as literature that reflects the African experience and allows for the development of African identities. As an English teacher, one should be widely read and can learn a lot about the nuances of the language by reading literature from the canon. However, it is also important to read books that may help learners develop their identity and a sense of pride in being African.

The texts that were selected and analysed in the literary analyses were good examples of the suggestion made above. This is because African students can learn about African ideologies, cultures and experiences through texts like *Things fall apart* and *Disgrace,* but could also benefit from reading *Othello,* which explores universal themes with an African character as its protagonist.

7.4 Recommendations

After conducting the literary analyses of the selected texts, I feel confident that there is a place for African perspectives when analysing literary texts with an African context and/or African characters. This ensures that a wider range of knowledge can be explored and accommodated when analysing these texts and also aligns to the calls for the Africanisation of HE in Africa. Incorporating an African perspective does not necessarily mean discarding the western lens, but the inclusion of African perspectives offers different points of discourse to apply to a text. This point is particularly important for teacher training since it is important for an English teacher to be widely read and to expose learners to various texts that explore different themes and issues to enable them to participate on local and international fronts. In addition to this, it is important for a teacher to foster critical thinking by applying different approaches and ways of thinking. Furthermore, it is important for a teacher in the African context to expose learners to literature in which they see themselves and learn about African knowledge and values. This makes the inclusion of the African texts and the analyses of texts from African perspectives important. Applying African perspectives to African characters in particular could lead to a better understanding of the characters and offer explanations as to the characters' actions. This is because the characters' cultural background is taken into consideration when analysing their

characters. This was especially seen in the cases of Okonkwo and Othello, who, through a western lens, appear to be tragic heroes who succumb to their tragic flaw; but when their cultural backgrounds are taken into consideration, more is offered about the motivations for their actions. It should also be noted that the purpose of applying African perspective is not to glorify the African context or characters, but to engage in critical discourse concerning the context and characters. Applying African perspectives when analysing literary texts also allows for opportunities to critically engage and even challenge the portrayal of Africa and Africans. The suggestion, therefore, is that aspects such as African philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems be applied when analysing these texts. The suggestion is also to take a critical look at the way in which Africa and Africans are portrayed and to challenge these depictions if and where necessary. A lesson plan was designed to illustrate one possible way of including African perspectives (Addendum B).

The analysis of *Things fall apart* makes a strong case for the importance of studying the work of African authors. While the aim of this study was not to make recommendations for authors to be studied in African teacher training programmes, it cannot be ignored that *Things fall apart* offered more material in terms of indigenous knowledge systems, African philosophies, and the African way of life than the other two texts. In the literature review of this study, many assertions are made about the importance of developing African knowledge and the Africanistion of HE. The literary analyses found that *Things fall apart* is most aligned to these objectives and is further supported by the assertion made by Msila and Gumbo (2016) that the advancement of knowledge in Africa is dependent on the implementation of written works that uncover African-centred approaches.

Finally, having applied CDA to the analyses of the literary texts, I can suggest that this method of analysis be used to explore the ways in which Africa and Africans are portrayed in literary texts. The application of this method, especially when using the questions posed by Janks (1997), allows for critical engagement and fair analysis of a text.

7.5 Limitations

There are three main limitations to this study:

- The literary analyses were based on the coursework of one institution.
- Only three texts and two genres were used in the literary analyses.
- No insight was offered into the views of students and lecturers.

The first limitation pertains to the selection of texts and the analyses of study guides that were used for this study. The prescribed texts of one institution were used, so the sample of texts was limited. Had the material of more than one institution been provided, a wider range of texts would have been available to choose from and show more interpretations of Africa and Africans. Different approaches of various institutions to prescribed texts with African characters and/or contexts could have been explored. Only two genres were used, namely novel and drama. The scope of this dissertation did not allow for an in-depth analyses of the genres of short stories, poetry, and film study as well. Inclusion of all the genres could provide deeper insight into the research problem.

The second limitation is related to the first; since only one institution was chosen, it automatically limited the range of texts that were selected. The reason is that, from the list of texts studied in this programme, I selected texts with an African character, an African context, or both. It could have been beneficial to select three additional texts similar to the three chosen, to juxtapose the analysis of Africa and Africans in these texts. It would have been interesting to compare similar texts to see whether the portrayal of Africa and/or Africans are similar or different. For example, to juxtapose *Things fall apart*, another text set in Africa and with African characters could have been selected; for *Disgrace* a text set in postcolonial/post-apartheid South Africa could have been selected; and for *Othello*, a western text with an African character could have been selected.

Finally, this study was concerned with how Africa and Africans are interpreted and suggesting alternative ways to analyse these texts with the purpose of promoting African knowledge and values. In light of this, only the literary texts and their study guides were analysed. It would have been beneficial to interview and observe students and lecturers, and through these observations and interviews gain insight into their perspectives and interpretations of texts with African characters and/or African contexts. I argued that the questions in study guides may elicit certain discussions in the classrooms. However, observations of and interviews with human participants, such as lecturers and students may have provided more weight to this argument. Such an endeavour may be undertaken in future studies.

7.6 Final reflections

In this study, entitled “Exploring African perspectives in the analysis of literary texts of pre-service teachers”, the aim was to explore the interpretations that are dominant when analysing English texts with an African context and/or African characters that form part of an initial teacher training programme at one higher education institution. To achieve this aim, I first looked at how Africa and Africans are presented in the literary texts by employing CDA as the method of analysis, as well as applying African philosophy as a lens through which to interpret texts. I then looked at how these texts are interpreted in the study guides by focusing specifically on how Africa and Africans are interpreted in these study guides to ascertain whether there are efforts to understand and/or promote African knowledge and values. Before I could do this, I needed to understand why conducting this study was important and, in response, articulated the research problem, questions, aim and objectives in Chapter 1. I then looked at existing literature to inform my understanding of the problem in the literature review of Chapter 2. In order to conduct the study successfully, I followed a research design, which I elaborated on in Chapter 3. I could then successfully conduct the literary analyses of *Things fall apart* in Chapter 4, *Disgrace* in Chapter 5, and *Othello* in Chapter 6. These chapters led me to the understanding that African knowledge and values could definitely be applied when studying literature, especially in texts with an African context and/or African characters. I also found that analysing literature from African perspectives has certain advantages, as it responds to the calls for the dissemination of African knowledge and for the Africanisation or decolonisation of African institutions. The analyses of the study guides that accompanied the texts selected for this study show that there are efforts to understand the African context and characters presented in these texts and that students are required to critically engage with various topics and themes related to these aspects. However, alternative approaches to the analysis of African characters with specific reference to the role of their African heritage in their decisions and actions, are not sufficiently explored.

In light of the findings, recommendations in the closing chapter of this study include that African perspectives should be considered when analysing literature with an African context and/or African characters. In addition to this, it is necessary to challenge the way in which Africa and Africans are portrayed in literary texts as well as the interpretation of these literary texts, as it often seems limited.

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ADDENDUM A: PROOF OF ETHICAL TRAINING

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Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC)

Faculty of Education

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15 October 2018

PROOF OF ATTENDANCE AND ASSESSMENT

Dear **Carmenita Bansen**

This letter certifies that the abovementioned individual attended a 1-day workshop (presented on 31 August 2018 in Potchefstroom) as well as online training and assessment on:

Research Ethics for Education

The workshop was presented by: *Prof Lukas Meyer*, Chairperson of the Education, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMHS-REC); *Prof Jako Olivier*, Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC) and *Prof Josef de Beer*, Deputy chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC).

This letter of attendance, as proof of ethics training and assessment, is valid for 3 years and expires on 15 October 2021.

Yours sincerely

Prof JAK Olivier

Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC)

ADDENDUM B: LESSON PLAN

Lesson plan- *Disgrace*

Topic- Characterisation (Petrus)

Aims and Objectives: The aim of this lesson is to explore *Disgrace* from an ethnophilosophy perspective with the intention of coming to a better understanding of Petrus as a Black African character of the text**.**

- Study historical aspects which led to the displacement and oppression of Black people.
- Look at value systems of people in the Eastern Cape, specifically Xhosa people.

SMART Task

(This is the end product which students submit for formal assessment. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Traceable. The product is intended to show that students have achieved the aims of the lesson. The SMART task should be a cognitively demanding task which is set on the higher levels of Barret's or Bloom's taxonomy.)

At the end of the lesson, my students should work in groups of 4-5 to write and perform a 20-minute play depicting Petrus's life. The drama should be a believable and relevant depiction of the character which gives an account of his life prior to, and leading up to the man we meet in *Disgrace*. The play should be informed by relevant information relating to the Frontier wars of the Eastern Cape, as well as the apartheid system and the role this played in the displacement of the Black population, specifically Xhosa people. The play should also reflect accurate information about the value systems and domestic life which could have influenced Petrus's character, but is not included in *Disgrace*. The play should also have all the important elements of a drama (exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, falling action and resolution). The play will be assessed with the use of a rubric.

Resources

(These are the resources that will be needed for the teaching and learning activities of this lesson as well as the performance of the SMART task)

Articles (information on Frontier wars, apartheid and Xhosa people in South Africa, specifically the Eastern Cape)

Disgrace by JM Coetzee Computer and projector for presentation Costumes and props	
Assessment (Informal assessment that will take place throughout the lesson, and formal assessment that will take place at the end of the lesson.)	
Informal Continuous assessment throughout the lesson in the form of observation, facilitation and verbal feedback	**Formal** Summative assessment of the SMART task with the use of a rubric
Teaching Activities (These are teaching moments and strategies that the lecturer employs to ensure that the students are prepared to meet the demands of the SMART task.)	**Learning Activities** (These are activities that the students should do prior to the SMART task to ensure that they meet the aims and objectives of the lesson and are able to successfully complete the SMART task.)
A lecture on the historical aspects informing farm life as depicted in *Disgrace*. A specific look at the Frontier wars as well as apartheid legislature that contributed to the displacement and oppression of Black people in South Africa. An interactive lecture focussing on the characterisation of Petrus in *Disgrace*. The focus here will be on stimulating discussion around Petrus's development and actions in the novel as well as possible reasons for Lurie's negative views of his character. A lecture on the reading of *Disgrace* from an ethnophilosophy perspective	Work in groups to conduct research on the Frontier wars and apartheid system and how it affected black South Africans. Create a character profile for Petrus by looking at what is available in *Disgrace,* as well as aspects which are not available in the texts, such as his background, cultural beliefs, family life. Students will follow lecture, participate in class discussion and conduct

by looking at the values and lived experience of Xhosa people. Explanation of the important elements of drama as well as tips on how to write and perform a drama.	research on values of Xhosa people and select aspects which could be applied to Petrus's character. Students will follow lecture and apply new knowledge in order to write and perform a drama on the life of Petrus.

- **Assessment**

- The activities leading up to the SMART task will be assessed through observation, facilitation and guidance offered by the lecturer.

- The SMART task will be assessed by the lecturer with a rubric.

Criteria	0-4	5-7	8-10
Performance	Performance does not adhere to the elements of a drama. Performance is a hodgepodge of speech, movements, etc. This is a poor performance	Performance reflects some to most of the elements of a drama. There is a fair effort to plan for speech, movements, gestures, etc. This was an average to good performance	Performance adheres to all the elements of a drama. There is a conscious effort to plan for speech, movements, gestures, etc. This was a fantastic performance.
Research	No to limited research into the lives of Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape before and after colonisation and apartheid. No to	Average to good research into the lives of Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape before and after colonisation and apartheid. Average	Evidence of substantial research into the lives of Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape before and after colonisation and

	limited interpretations of issues pertaining to identity and culture of Xhosa people, racial tension and land ownership and displacement.	to good interpretations of issues pertaining to identity and culture of Xhosa people, racial tension and land ownership and displacement.	apartheid. Nuanced interpretations of issues pertaining to identity and culture of Xhosa people, racial tension and land ownership and displacement.
Engagement with text	Limited engagement with the text lead to an inaccurate portrayal of Petrus's character.	Basic interpretation of the text led to somewhat/mostly accurate depiction of Petrus's character.	Thorough engagement with the text led to an accurate and authentic depiction of Petrus's character.

- **Pertinent Question/s**

  This can also be described as an essential question which is has the following features:

1. It is an open-ended question
2. It encourages critical thinking
3. It is a question that has relevance to everyday life in an attempt to link content in the classroom to the outside world.

- (The pertinent question/s can be asked at any point in the lesson but is usually asked at the beginning of the lesson and can work well as an introduction)

- How has racial stereotyping impacted the lives of all South Africans?
- How can you use literature to counter racial stereotyping in your capacity as a teacher?

• Why do you think Petrus's background story is significantly reduced when compared to characters such as Lucy and David?
• **Introduction** • (The introduction is an activity done at the beginning of the lesson which activates students' prior knowledge and introduces the content of the lesson in an interesting manner)
• Class discussion on the effects of racial stereotyping and how these stereotypes can be prevented with the use of literature.