**WEEK 11: Postcolonialism not finished**

**Critical**

1. What is postcolonial writing? Answer this question with reference to postcolonial narrative techniques used in *Disgrace*. Your answer must be supported with textual evidence from the reading, and it must include at least one academic reference.

...a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed.

1. Considering *Disgrace* is written from a privileged point of view, that is, the POV of a white, educated, middle-aged male living in post-apartheid South Africa, how—when considering the quote above—does the text function as a postcolonial novel? What narrative devices does Coetzee use to ‘shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed’? Make sure to include textual evidence from the reading, and at least one academic reference.

Postcolonial writing details the events following the decolonization of a country. Often, this is used to view how changes are made to a country or nation through the eyes of a story teller. This usually focuses on relations between the original and migrating/colonising populations, with emphasis on racism, politics and religious clashes. J.M Coetzee’s book “*Disgrace*” is written in the point-of-view of the educated white 52 year old professor, David Lurie, living in post-apartheid South Africa. While this isn’t actually a story occurring after colonisation, the story does detail many of the issues that would have been encountered in post-colonialism literature, particularly issues of race and power struggles. Following the apartheid, the position of power was shifting, causing friction between the black and non-black populations.

This is represented in *Disgrace* in several ways: allegory, symbolism and intertextuality. For example, dogs are used as symbols to represent status. Throughout the book David aligns himself more and more with a lowly dog, thus lowering his status. This is partially due his growing personal disgrace. In contrast, Lucy’s black assistant and neighbour, Petrus, begins at the lowly position being called “dog-man” (p.63) but ultimately rises in power to a position where he can joke that he is no longer this dog-man (p.129). This is just one subtle use of literacy devices used to highlight a shift in racial power.

Another example is conveyed through allegory. Ash (2012) describes allegory as an effective strategy to convey truths by establishing a fictional situation that draws parallels between the reader and the message. While the entire novel is an allegory in itself, subtle allegories occur throughout to highlight the main thesis of the story. Here, the relationship between Melanie and David is one example of a subplot with a hidden message. The university student, Melanie, submits to her superior, David, which is reflective of the relationship between the black and non-black population during the post-apartheid. Hereby, portraying racial issues in a less direct manner.

Together, these assist to highlight the power struggles and racial issues associated with the post-apartheid. These touch on many of the issues associated with post-colonialism and shift how the relationship between whites and blacks are observed in the western world. ([Ash 2012](#_ENREF_1))

Ash, G. A. (2012). "Talking about Terrible Things The Craft of Allegory in Children's Literature." Journal of Children's Literature **38**(2): 90-91.