Introduction: Theorising Violence

The proposed research entitled Politics of Violence: Revisiting the Select Novels of J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer examines the problematics of violence, its ideological underpinnings and cultural specificities through a reading of the select texts of J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. The research analyzes violence as a critical and historicized category and explores its operations in the novels of J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. The research locates violence within the historical realities of colonization, racial hatred and apartheid in South Africa.

Violence has contoured the structures of domination, apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa continues to exhibit violence as an ideology of counter-domination and reverse colonization. It focuses on violence as socially contoured and conditioned category, thereby historicizing it. Study of violence as a critical category has become an instinctual need. This is not a mere critical fashion. Colonial domination, colonial resistance, process of Othering and racial hatred are some of the significant factors that influence it. The realities of colonization, development and destruction, the two world wars, racial violence, communal violence and ethnic violence make violence the condition of modernity.

Violence is a metaphysical category, a state of mind though its expression is inevitably material and physical and in aid of hierarchising, subjugating and dominating the Other. The proposed research examines violence in conjunction with race relations and issue of apartheid. Violence is the instrument of race ideology. Violence instrumentalizes race or in other words race hierarchies and structures are predicated on violence. There is always a struggle for dominance and this struggle leads to conflicts and violence. Violence is a manifestation of hierarchy and oppression. It makes racial structures possible. Race is a discourse which sets the rules of inclusion and exclusion. It is a discourse of colour which considers whiteness as perfect and blackness as imperfect.
The present and past co-exist in South Africa uneasily today. Racism and colonization have left its deep scars. The interface between pre and post-*apartheid* is eloquent in the novels of J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. Frantz Fanon’s understanding of the relationship between colonizer and colonized helps understand post-*apartheid* South African problematics.

Fanon explicates violence in relation to race and racial hierarchies. According to Fanon, colonial exercise is predicated on violence. It is exercised by the colonizer on the colonized. It is both something that is materially visited and that operates on a discursive level. It is directed towards the ‘other’ and issues from the idea of racial fear. Fanon avers that the colonizer is “the bringer of violence into the home and into the native” (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 29). Race and Colonization have generated violence.

Violence begets violence. To justify violence, the colonizer embarks on a mission of constructing the ‘other.’ The colonized according to the colonizer is the ‘Other’ because he is different in many ways from him. He is all that the colonizer is not. The native is told that “he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values … he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that he has to do with beauty or morality; he is the depository of maleficent powers…” (Fanon 32). The natives were treated as inferior subjects who lacked the capacity racially and culturally to live a decent life. The white man speaks “of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn of gesticulation” (Fanon 33). The whites used violence to negate the natives. Fanon argues:

> Violence in the colonies does not have for its aim the keeping of these enslaved men at arm’s length; it seeks to dehumanize them. Everything will be done to wipe out their traditions, to substitute our language for theirs and to destroy their culture without giving them ours. (13)

Thus, by resorting to violence the colonizer attempts to even wipe out the traditions of the native.
The native tries to recreate himself through violence desiring to kill the white man, “to shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time …” (Fanon 19). Finally, the white man realizes the bare truth that violence can lead him towards decolonization. Fanon states that “decolonization is always a violent phenomenon” (27). By using violence, decolonization brings a change in the existing state of affairs in the colonial world. Fanon reiterates that “decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain ‘species’ of men by another ‘species’ of men” (27). Thus, decolonization creates a situation where the colonizer becomes the colonized and vice-versa.

There is a reversal of roles and the violence perpetrated by the colonizers is now perpetrated by the colonized on their oppressors. Fanon states that “The violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity” (69). The native tries to find his freedom in and through violence. It acts as a unifying force for the natives and helps them to build solidarity among themselves in order to destroy the social and political institutions of the colonial regime. As Fanon states:

The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upwards in reaction to settler’s violence in the beginning. The groups recognize each other and future nation is already indivisible. The armed struggle mobilizes the people; that is to say, it throws them in one way and in one direction. (73)

Thus, violence has the role of uniting the natives. They shed their differences, they get ready to die for a cause and stand united.

Violence also serves the role of purgation for the natives. Fanon states that “At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from
his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect” (74). Thus, by resorting to violence which is aimed at the colonizer, the native asserts himself and tries to regain his lost sense of self-respect. It is by means of violence that the native tries to find a space for himself.

Fanon’s emphasis on the need of violence to restore freedom in colonized countries is supported by Jean Paul Sartre. Sartre criticizes Europe by saying that it has stifled the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called “spiritual adventure” (WE xlv). According to Sartre, Europe has maintained the position of power by weakening and traumatizing the colonized through physical torture and psychological control. It has exercised control through stratification of colonized societies by creating divisions and conflicts, forging classes and encouraging racism among the colonized. Sartre, in tune with Fanon, states that “murderous rampage” by the natives is the only way to tackle colonial oppression (WE lii). For Sartre, torture is the most dehumanizing form of violence that human beings inflict on one another and any means must be employed to bring an end to it. Sartre, in general, believes that violence is the destruction of both humanity and human organizations. Thus, Sartre and Fanon have propagated the notion that violence is the only way to gain freedom from the alienation and powerlessness imposed on the individuals by colonialism and racism. Both advocate violence as the only solution to decolonization because a colonizer’s power is built on brute power so resistance to this power must also be of a violent nature because violence is the only ‘language’ the colonizer speaks and understands. Moreover, colonial brutality and aggression are internalized as terror by the native. Hence violence is the only language that the native ‘understands’ and responds to accordingly. As Fanon, while theorizing colonialism, asserts, “colonized man liberates himself from the power wielded by the colonizers only in and through violence” (44).

Gandhi, who fought for freedom from the colonialists in India, believed that violence could be outdone by non-violence. Gandhi in Hind Swaraj opines, “Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms ... Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely
superior to sacrifice of others” (79). Gandhi states that passive resistance is not merely a weapon of the weak. Bikhu Parekh argues that Gandhi “was convinced that the reign of violence could not be ended by adding to it and that non-violent struggle was the only answer” (117). The violence of the whites was a result of intense selfishness. But the violence adopted by the blacks was born out of the need to preserve self-respect and dignity. As Parekh points out:

Gandhi argued that although non-violence was far superior to violence, the latter was ‘infinitely’ better than cowardice. A coward lacked ‘manliness’ and was committed to nothing more elevated than sheer survival. By contrast, a man prepared to use violence had pride and self-respect and was prepared to die rather than surrender what he held dear. (135)

Gandhi also knew that one could not always abide by non-violence. Violence many a time was necessary and unavoidable as Parekh reiterates, “when used in the pursuit of such values as individual and social life, justice, and the assertion of human dignity and the development of courage or when provoked by unbearable oppression” (137). The whites in South Africa indulged in violence that was malevolent that is, ill will towards or hatred of others, a wish to harm them even when they posed no threat to one’s interests. Apartheid, a policy of racial segregation, was in itself a manifestation of the ill will of the whites towards the blacks for their own selfish motives.³ For Gandhi, Parekh states, “the thought of harming another itself was violence” (118). Gandhi, argues Parekh, also believed “that all life was equally sacred … he argued that since men were self conscious, rational and moral beings they had a greater moral worth. This did not give them an ‘absolute’ superiority over animals and a right to do with them what they like, for animals too were legitimate members of the cosmos” (118).

Gandhi’s views on untouchability and racial violence were first vented in South Africa. He claimed equality for the Indians with the whites. Gandhi organized a struggle against the whites through peaceful means. The Indians in South Africa took a pledge under the leadership of Gandhi that they would offer
Satyagraha against the injustice perpetuated against them by the South African government. The non-violent struggle started by Gandhi in South Africa created a new way of handling violence. This was continued by Nelson Mandela. The Gandhian philosophy of truth (Satyagraha) and non-violence was one of the driving forces behind Nelson Mandela’s lifelong anti-apartheid movement. In response to apartheid, the ANC (African National Congress) led by Mandela launched a campaign of Gandhi-inspired acts of civil resistance and nonviolent cooperation. Mandela’s political and apolitical pursuits to secure peace and justice for the black South Africans were greatly influenced by Gandhi’s philosophy of Satyagraha (truth) and non-violence.

Hannah Arendt’s theorization of violence in “On Violence” is in response to the rise of rhetoric that glorifies violence in the global student movement of the late 1960s and especially in the Black Power movement in America that was thought to glorify violence. Arendt’s “On Violence,” “was a response to the events in the universities in 1968 but also to increasing violence both for and against civil rights for black people, and to rising levels of terrorism in Europe and the US” (Frazer and Kimberly 98). Arendt does not believe that violence and power are natural phenomenon; the manifestation of the life process. She states that “Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it” (Arendt, “On Violence” 56). Arendt argues that “violence is not a legitimate tool to achieve political ends because of its inherent unpredictability, and because it is just as likely to engender a more violent world as to achieve the ends Fanon envisioned” (Frazer and Kimberly 100). However, Arendt cannot help but acknowledge that violence can sometimes be justified. Violence is, according to Arendt, the common denominator of the twentieth century which she describes as a “century of wars and revolution” (83). In her view, violence highlights the role of military forces that are controlled and initiated by political parties in power in every country. In fact, most political theorists claim that politics is primarily a struggle for power and also that violence is the ultimate kind of power. Arendt focuses on the relation of violence to politics and aims to undermine what she sees as a dominant conception in modern political thought that identifies power as the essence of
politics and power as consisting of violence. This common view consists of the “equation of violence with power” that “rests on governments being understood as domination of man over man by means of violence” (Arendt 52). This view is represented in the various claims from Carl von Clausewitz’s idea that “war is the continuation of politics by other means,” and MaoTse Tung’s famous saying that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun;” to C. Wright Mill’s claim that “All politics is a struggle for power; the ultimate kind of power is violence;” echoing Max Weber’s definition of the state as “the rule of men over men based on the means of legitimate, that is allegedly legitimate, violence” (Arendt 9-10, 11, 35). Power, Arendt agrees, is the essence of politics but it is distinct from and opposed to violence. What is common to all the above claims is an understanding of power as ruling over others and political relations as consisting of domination, command and obedience.

The main distinction that Arendt draws between power and violence concerns instrumentality. Power is different from violence, since violence (physical violence) which Arendt focuses on, rests on tools or instruments that can enhance natural strength and not on the presence and collaboration of actors. Government and other forms of political organization are the institutionalization of power, while violence is an instrument used by government or non-state entities. Violence is instrumental and it can be chosen as an effective means, while power is the condition of possibility for a government or political community to execute instrumental rationality. Violence as instrumental cannot be an essence of government as the equation of power and violence suggests, “Violence is by nature instrumental; like all means, it always stands in need of guidance and justification though the end it pursues. And what needs justification by something else cannot be the essence of anything” (Arendt 51). Power, on the other hand, is “an end in itself” and it “springs up whenever people get together and act in concert” (Arendt 52).

This distinction between the instrumentality of violence and power as an end in itself reveals different temporalities. Violence as an instrument is directed
towards the future, to the achievement of the end to which it serves as a means. Power refers to the coming together of the group as a source of legitimation. Arendt links violence with justification that rests on future realization of the end and power with legitimation that stems from the inaugurated act of foundation, even if it requires continuous reaffirmation whether tacitly or explicitly at times of crisis. This distinction is the basis for her claim that “Violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate.” It needs an end to justify it. “Its justification loses in plausibility the farther its intended end recedes into the future. No one questions the use of violence in self-defense, because the danger is not only clear but also present, and the end justifying the means is immediate” (Arendt 52). In this context violence remains rational if it is justified by a short-term goal and the further the end recedes to the future, the justification weakens, “Violence, being instrumental by nature, is rational to the extent that it is effective in reaching the end that must justify it. And since when we act we never know with any certainty the eventual consequences of what we are doing, violence can remain rational only if it pursues short-term goals” (Arendt 79).

Yet, despite the distinction between power and violence, Arendt admits that they “usually appear together” (52). Arendt claims that violence and power are opposites by analyzing the relation between them. She argues against the idea that violence is creative. Violence can disintegrate power, but it cannot create power, “Violence can always destroy power; out of the barrel of a gun grows the most effective command, resulting in the most instant and perfect obedience. What never can grow out of it is power” (Arendt 53). Although power has ascendancy over violence in the perspective that it is the essence of government and violence is instrumental in the clash between power and violence, violence that rests on implements is more likely to triumph. Arendt brings the historical case of “head-on-clash between Russian tanks and the entirely non-violent resistance of the Czechoslovak people” as “a textbook case of a confrontation between violence and power in their pure states” (52-53) and a hypothetical case that can appear as a response to Gandhi’s call for the Jews to practice non-violent resistance against the Nazis in his open letter to the Jews in his journal Harijan, “In a head-on-clash
between violence and power, the outcome is hardly in doubt. If Gandhi’s enormously powerful and successful strategy of non violent resistance had met with a different enemy - Stalin’s Russia, Hitler’s Germany, even pre-war Japan, instead of England - the outcome would not have been decolonization, but massacre and submission” (Arendt 53). Contrary to Gandhi’s call for non violent resistance, Arendt calls for the establishment of a Jewish army to fight against the Nazis and as a basis for political community in the 1940s.

Thus, Arendt does not reject the use of violence for a political cause. Her main concern is the substitution of violence for political power. Violence may be used under certain circumstances for short-term goals. It can indeed be rational as long as the goal can be achieved. She argues against the traditional conception of power in political philosophy and theory that equates power with violence. She argues that power is the essence of government but claims that it is distinct from violence. The recourse to violence may happen when power is in jeopardy, when power slips from the ones who hold it, “be they the government or be they the governed” (Arendt 87). Violence is a form of action and as any action its consequences are unpredictable and can be destructive rather than creative. “The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world,” Arendt writes, “but the most probable change is to a more violent world” (Arendt 80).

Sartre’s justification of the use of violence to thwart oppression is indirectly explicated by Walter Benjamin’s essay entitled “Critique of Violence.” Benjamin terms the use of violence in oppressive situations as belonging to the thesis of “natural law” (269). In his view, natural law justifies the use of violence when deployed for the sake of arriving at just ends. The natural law tradition, in fact, considers violence to be a natural fact of life which can never be interpreted in terms of justice, legitimacy and legality. Positive law is, on the other hand, predicated on the understanding that violence is a “product of history” (Benjamin 278). This view is based on the assumption that there is a natural or given good accessible to man. Hence it makes violence unjustifiable with reference to just ends and forces the law to look towards just means in order to prove the legitimacy of
human action. However, Benjamin’s bent is towards positive law tradition which focuses on the distinction between sanctioned and unsanctioned laws to some extent. He argues that law is founded on the basis of violence and justice inevitably requires violence to legitimate it. Benjamin also makes a distinction between lawmaking and law-preserving violence. Law-making violence emerges during the declaration of independence and the inauguration of a new constitution. This kind of violence acquires legitimacy in the future implementation of a not-yet-realized legal order on behalf of which it claims to speak. Law-preserving violence, on the other hand, is the violence carried out by an already-founded state; it is conservative and protective, designed to preserve or reinforce a pre-existing legal order. It is violence deployed against an uprising or a potentially lawmaking insurrection and it is also simply the basic form of the day-to-day functioning of the legal system. The definitive description of these two forms of violence exhibits that law can never be fully constituted or legitimized, for legitimacy depends on the foundation of historically determined and potentially contestable power structures, which ensures the possibility of a big or small eruption of lawmaking violence against the legal order. Every act of law-preserving violence thus encloses within itself a defensive moment of lawmaking violence which forces the legitimated regime to re-posit itself. Hence, law is never able to divest itself of the original founding violence. According to Benjamin, the line that separates the lawmaking (legislative) from the law-preserving (executive) power has blurred, thereby causing the decline of the absolute sovereign. Moreover, the modern police force has itself become a beacon of brutality for it has crossed the boundaries between lawmaking and law-preserving violence thus exemplifying the decay of law in modern times.

Benjamin also talks about capital punishment or the death penalty. Benjamin labels it as the most brutal form of mythical violence, that is, “bloody power over mere life for its own sake” (283). Mythical violence is, in his view, an archetypal form of violence that is manifested in immediate violence and that is identical to legal violence for it threatens, sets boundaries, spills blood and brings in guilt and retribution. In fact, mythical violence signifies the hold law has over
the life of an individual and his complete subjection to it. Against mythical violence and its inherent cycle of lawmaking and law-preserving violence Benjamin searches for a non-violent and pure violence that can suspend the application of law to bare life. His name for this violence is “divine violence” which is law-annihilating and lethal without spilling blood. The machinations employed by mythical violence, Benjamin argues, are disrupted by the expiatory powers of the “law-destroying” divine violence. According to Benjamin, Divine violence purifies individuals not of guilt but of law that binds them to the state-sanctioned violence. Benjamin terms divine violence as the “doctrine of the sanctity of life” which involves the divine judgement of the multitude on a criminal (285).

The purpose of the essay “Critique of Violence” is, according to Benjamin, to comprehend the distinction between legitimate violence and illegitimate violence. In his view, the law considers the application of violence by individuals as a threat to the legal system. Today, apart from the state only legal subjects are endowed with the right to exercise violence and that too in a mild form, such as strikes carried out by organized labour. Moreover, strike is an indirect escape from the violence that an employer unleashes on the workers. The State, however, sanctions and reserves many forms of violence such as militarism, death penalty etc. which it considers to be instrumental in the lawmaking function. Giorgio Agamben in State of Exception terms this as the “state of exception” where the State suspends the legal order to safeguard the “existence of norm and its applicability to the normal situation” (31).  

In Agamben’s view, the “state of exception” - where the law employs the suspension of the law - is the state power’s most immediate response to the internal conflicts, such as civil wars, insurrection and resistance. The state of exception has, however, become the “dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics” and has, consequently, marred the distinction between democracy and absolutism (Agamben 2). This situation calls for the suspension of the constitution and the negation of the legal rights of those individuals who are in detention or
surveillance. The state of exception thus opens a no-man’s-land between the political and the judicial.

In *Political Theology*, Carl Schmitt describes the state of exception as a kind of legal vacuum, where legal order is suspended in its totality. This situation introduces a kind of anomy (a situation where the society is either devoid of the norms or too inflexible to be followed) into law thereby presenting a doctrine of sovereignty. The sovereign has the privilege to proclaim the state of emergency, remain exterior to the valid legal norms, and yet remain anchored in the legal order. Agamben’s book *State of Exception* is, however, an attempt to sever this artificial and violent link between the sovereign power and the legal order. He seeks to uncover the essential “fiction” that underlies the emphasis on global civil war and expose the lawlessness that lies at the heart of law. For this purpose, Agamben offers his analysis of a lecture given by Jacques Derrida in the year 1990 entitled, “Force of Law: the Mystical Foundation of Authority” which comprises of Derrida’s views on Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence.” In *Acts of religion* the term “force of law,” according to Derrida, authorizes the indestructible character of the law that the sovereign himself can neither repeal nor revise. (241).

For Agamben the confusion between law (legislative power) and the force of law (executive power) characterizes the state of exception. Here the force of law can exist without law. The state of exception establishes a regime of law within which the norm is valid but cannot be applied (since it has no force), and where acts that do not have the value of law acquire the force of law. This lends an indeterminate element to the force of law making it accessible both to the authority of the state and to a revolutionary organization. In Agamben’s view, the force of law possesses a mystical element or is a “fiction” that disconnects reality and invites “anomy” to be a part of law itself. Agamben makes another point against Schmitt in his analysis of the Roman republican convention of the *iustitium*. Agamben seeks to correct Schmitt’s notion that the state of exception is akin to dictatorship. The *iustitium*, just as the modern state of exception, does not imply the creation of a zone of anomy in which all legal determinations find themselves
deactivated. In his view, Hitler and Mussolini cannot be called dictators. The legal appointment of Hitler by the president, according to Agamben, allowed the Weimar constitution to remain valid, though after transforming it into a secondary and legally non-formalized structure that could exist only by the virtue of a generalized state of exception. Hence the existence of lawlessness or spaces devoid of law is, according to Agamben, essential to the legal order which is guaranteed through the authorized organization’s maintenance of relationship with anomy.

In *State of Exception*, Agamben places Schmitt’s idea of inclusion of all violence in law with Benjamin’s pure and revolutionary “law-destroying” violence to highlight the indecision that plagues the authority of the state. An important aspect of the state of exception is, according to Benjamin, the sovereign’s aversion of making and effectively carrying out decisions. This fracture between the sovereign power and the inability to act results not in the restoration of the legal order but in a generalized catastrophe that causes the annihilation of sovereignty. Agamben too considers the state of exception to be a “catastrophe” for it violates the rights of people on legal as well as humanitarian grounds (56-57). Agamben cites the example of the indecision of the Bush government in 2001 to authorize the “indefinite detention and trial by military commissions of non-citizens suspected of involvement in terrorist activities” (3). This is, according to Agamben, the employment of a drastic and violent measure by the government as it radically erases any legal status of the individual and produces a “legally unnameable and unclassifiable being” simply labelled as an “alien” or a “detainee” (3). He equates the treatment meted out to the Taliban captured in Afghanistan by the American government with the continued state of exception that lasted in Germany under Hitler’s rule. The only distinction here, according to Agamben, is that despite the agony and brutality of the concentration camps the Jews were allowed to retain their identity unlike the Talibans.

Slavoj Zizek conceptualizes and analyzes violence as a phenomenon rather than presuming a moral condemnation of it. Turning to violence, Zizek constructs
his intervention as a conceptual one, which according to him should avoid an exaggerated empathy with the victims:

My underlying premise is there is something inherently mystifying in a direct confrontation with it: the overpowering horror of violent acts and empathy with the victims inexorably function as a lure, which prevents us from thinking. A dispassionate conceptual development of the typology of violence must by definition ignore its traumatic impact. (Zizek, Violence 3)

Therefore, Zizek wants one to understand violence as a phenomenon rather than drawing a moral condemnation of it.

According to him, when we think about violence we tend to think about criminal acts, acts of terror, civil unrest and war. On his account, if we wish to understand violence, we must step back from the fascinating lure of this type of subjective violence and we must look at the background that generates subjective violence. Zizek distinguishes three types of violence: subjective, objective and systemic. Subjective violence is the form of violence that is immediately evident and visible because it results in bodily harm. This includes assault and killing, as well as the casualty outcomes of terror and war. Objective violence is largely characterized as symbolic violence. It is embedded in language and other symbolic systems of meaning. Hate speech and the various hierarchies inscribed in our language use; such as gender and race terms are examples of objective violence that is embedded in daily language. Systemic violence is, on the other hand, inherent in the system that includes physical violence as well as other subtle forms of coercion that operate through dominance and exploitation. Moreover, systemic violence is the ideology implicit in those rules and beliefs that guide and control every human being. Zizek states that society’s preoccupation with subjective violence blinds it to the objective reality of violence that it commits on a daily basis. In other words, an individual’s subjective outrage at the brutal acts of violence, such as murders, wars, terrorist attacks, genocide, assassination of political leaders, bombings, etc. conceals the objective violence which includes
symbolic as well as systemic violence perpetrated on human beings. In Zizek’s view, this kind of violence tends to be invisible because it is the normal state of affairs, the background against which we perceive subjective violence as disturbing.

In Zizek’s view, violence might be appropriate in the case of self-defense, or in the defense of other people, against persons who intentionally engage in, or pose a credible and immediate threat of, wrongful violence and are not fully excused in having the intention to inflict harm due to such factors as extreme duress or mental illness. Justified counter-violence must be necessary violence, for when a threat can be met in a nonviolent way a violent response would be inappropriate and, therefore, wrong. In other words, those who to some degree are morally responsible for wrongful or non-defensive violence lose their immunity to being subjected to violence. We may meet violence then with counter-violence. Roughly speaking, this ethics of self-defense is the same in meeting wrongful individual subjective violence (violent crime) and wrongful collective subjective violence (wars of aggression).

Zizek holds this justification of violence as counter-violence or reactive violence as not applicable to systemic violence.¹³ Zizek argues that in modern capitalism “it is the self-propelling metaphysical dance of capital that runs the show that provides the key to real-life developments and catastrophes” (12). Zizek states that “Therein resides the fundamental systemic violence of capitalism, much more uncanny than any direct pre-capitalist socio-ideological violence: this violence is no longer attributable to concrete individuals and their ‘evil’ intentions, but is purely ‘objective,’ systemic, anonymous” (V 13). Since systemic violence is not attributable to specific individuals, the common justification of counter-violence is not relevant here since it concerns agents who have made themselves liable to counter-violence. However, it is obviously the case that unjust social structures are kept in place by individuals who fulfil, in varying degrees, indispensable roles in the continuation of the structures. These individuals sustain or execute systemic violence, profit from it, and can be held in varying degrees
morally responsible for it. Thus, these individuals are appropriate targets for counter-violence.

Zizek argues that the perpetrators of systemic violence are appropriate targets of revolutionary violence, just as the perpetrators of wrongful subjective violence are liable to defensive violence. Many people are in various degrees responsible for upholding systemic violence, and so applying the common understanding of justified counter-violence as defensive violence, we end up with a very broad justification of revolutionary violence. To call the harms of the normal functioning of global capitalism the result of systemic violence has a certain appeal. All too often such harms are overlooked, and putting them under the heading of systemic violence adds to their gravity and may make them more difficult to ignore. Certainly, it is, for example, disconcerting that cases of public shootings in the United States make headlines and that violent crime is central to such broadcasting, While huge harms caused by immoral social and economic institutional practices, such as the global human cost of raised food prices partly as a result of commodity speculation on Wall Street, receive hardly any attention. Accordingly, it is understandable that those who seek to overcome social injustice designate it as systemic violence, and so seek to question the morality of those who set or uphold unjust institutional rules with an air of innocence. This emancipatory purpose of the concept of systemic violence is more convincing as a rationale for adopting the concept than claims to the effect that the concept is important in order to bring attention to the fact that social injustice is sustained by the use of physical force or may cause people to commit acts of subjective violence.

For Zizek, some revolutionary violence is divine violence, characterized as violence that seemingly comes out of nowhere and constitutes a rupture of the status quo; it is violence that is destructive of law rather than violence that confirms law; it is not the violence of an angry God against a sinning humanity in general, but rather it is the people’s violence. Even though Zizek also describes divine violence as “violent popular self-defense,” (Zizek, In Defense of Lost Causes 478) he places most emphasis on the retributive component of this
violence. Referring to Walter Benjamin’s angel of history who is propelled with his back into the future by a storm blowing from paradise and who witnesses the “pile of debris before him growing skyward,” Zizek maintains that divine violence may be seen as “the wild intervention of this angel,” who “strikes back to restore the balance of justice, to enact a revenge for the destructive impact of progress.” Zizek adds “Somewhere, in the sphere of the ‘divine,’ perhaps these injustices are not forgotten. They are accumulated, the wrongs are registered, the tension grows more and more unbearable, till divine violence explodes in a retaliatory destructive rage” (V 179). In short, according to Zizek divine violence is “Judgement Day for the long history of oppression, exploitation, suffering” (DLC 162).

From the perspective that violence is justified as counter-violence only, divine violence as retribution is indiscriminate since it is aimed at culpable persons irrespective of whether they pose a threat. Only those who seek to uphold the old regime through the use of force are appropriate targets of revolutionary violence. But when this limit is taken into account, revolution as retribution is subject to dangers similar to fighting war as retribution to aggression: excessive or disproportionate force might be used, the rules of surrender might be ignored, and prisoners may be poorly treated or summarily executed. In both war and revolution, punishment should take place by legal instruments after the end of the conflict, allowing for the establishment of individual guilt. Once these guidelines are set aside, the injustice might be carried over into the future, and so the justice of the post-war or post-revolutionary society is put into question. But even if we were to accept violence as just retribution, divine violence as a sudden burst of retaliatory anger of oppressed people is inevitably harming both to the guilty and the innocent. What adds to the problem is that rage has historical roots extending beyond the injustice that is inflicted on the presently living. Divine violence should remain within the divine realm; for only in this imaginary realm is there a being capable of establishing the moral guilt of all.

Zizek, like Sorel, describes revolutionary violence as “shock therapy.” Violence is now described as the necessary force to disrupt entrenched social
structures, and the deeper the systemic violence the more violence is needed to change it. This force may but need not involve subjective violence. This “shock therapy” includes accepting the new order. These aspects of violence as “shock therapy” comes together in Zizek’s claim that “it is difficult to be really violent, to perform an act that violently disturbs the basic parameters of social life” (DLC 169-70). The difficulty includes that not all people have the “toughness” to shock society into real change. Thus, Zizek maintains that “Hitler was not violent enough” (DLC 151), Zizek states that “Hitler did not have ‘the balls’ really to change things” (V 209). Zizek connects having the guts to seek real change with having the guts to use “shock therapy” as including physical violence as terror. Most significantly, he describes those leftists in our time who don’t embrace revolution as terror as “sensitive liberals who want … a decaffeinated revolution which doesn’t smell of a revolution” (DLC 158). According to Zizek those who seek real change, to the contrary, and, so, are really violent that is, they have learned “to love with hatred” (V 204), must support violence as terror because only such violence when the time of revolution arrives can fully negate the present and bring about real new social structures and individuals. What is disconcerting is that violence is now justified without limit and discrimination. It further receives an approval when violence as “shock therapy” is also in some instances called “divine violence” (DLC 162). In the aspect of this violence, the violence that Zizek advocates in the concluding sentence of his book Violence is preferable “Sometimes doing nothing is the most violent thing to do” (V 183).

The above mentioned theorists have focused on different aspects of violence, which has been a part of recent history.

The two world wars were violent manifestations of colonization. As far as violence in relation to war is concerned, the First World War and the Second World War were the most deadly and destructive wars in which several million people lost their lives, with millions wounded and millions left homeless. Sexual violence was also committed by combatants during wars which came to be known as wartime sexual violence. Women were abducted, imprisoned and raped by the
occupying forces. Many girls and women were also forced into prostitution. During war and armed conflict, women are targeted by the use of sexual violence to humiliate, dominate and instill fear in and forcibly dislocate the members of opponent armed groups, communities, ethnic groups or nations.

The terrorist attack on the United States by al-Qaeda in September 2001 and the retaliatory war on Afghanistan by US is reflective of violence in relation to ‘War on Terror.’\(^{18}\) The September 11 attacks, also referred to as 9/11, were a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda on the United States in September 2011. The attacks consisted of suicide attacks used to target symbolic US landmarks. The attacks claimed the lives of thousands of people and caused a huge loss of property and infrastructure. The United States responded to the attacks by launching the ‘War on Terror’ and invading Afghanistan to dismantle al-Qaeda, the Islamic terrorist organization. ‘The War on Terror’ launched by the US on Afghanistan has also resulted in the loss of several lives and damage to the property. The war between the US and Afghanistan is still going on even after the killing of Osama Bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda.

Holocaust was another manifestation of race based genocide in which millions of Jews were killed by Nazis during Second World War. This genocide had two main areas of implementation: Ghettos and Concentration Camps. The ghettos were open-air prisons where Jews were confined by Nazis. The concentration camps were first established as places where Jews were kept as slaves and later on were systematically exterminated in these camps. The concentration camps were turned into extermination camps in order to exterminate all Jews living in territory controlled by the Nazis. The extermination camps were established specifically for mass killing of Jews. The process of transporting the Jews to the camps reveals the cruelty that the Nazis inflicted. The prisoners were rounded up from their homes or the ghettos at gunpoint, with blows and abuses, and crammed into wagons to carry them to their killers. Small children, elderly men, barely able to walk, and pregnant women were all ruthlessly dragged about, kicked, at gun point and even threatened with whips. In the Nazi camps, the worst
savagery was carried out. In other words the extermination camps became factories producing corpses, effectively and efficiently, at minimal physical and psychological cost to German personnel. In some of the extermination camps, the Nazis built permanent gas chambers linked to crematoria where bodies were burnt. Zyklon-B, an especially lethal killing agent, was employed in some of the camps. Even today the Holocaust is viewed as the emblematic manifestation of absolute evil. During the Holocaust, the Jewish women were also raped by the Nazi collaborators in the ghettos as well as in the concentration camps. In the ghettos, the Jewish women were also vulnerable to murder, including the murder of their children, as well as forced abortions and a number of other sex-based violations. Women were also sexually assaulted while they were being transported from the ghettos to the extermination camps. Their gender combined with their race, as Jews (race) made the Jewish women vulnerable to sexual violence during the Holocaust.

Violence due to differences in perception of human race manifests itself in violence of upper classes over the lower classes. As far as violence in relation to caste is concerned, Arundhati Roy’s novel *The God of Small Things* exposes social and political forces within Indian society that generate violence against marginalized and defenceless classes of people. Ammu, a Syrian Christian and Velutha, an untouchable, are drawn to each other and they start an affair. Mammachi, the mother of Ammu, is against the relationship of her daughter with an untouchable. Ammu’s maternal aunt lodges a complaint against Velutha for having raped her niece. The police officials find Velutha lying asleep at his home and all of them start kicking and trampling upon his flat body with heavy boots. His badly bruised shattered body, in a state of unconsciousness, is brought to the police station.

The plight of Velutha in police custody indicates social injustice and cruelty of the police. The police goes to Velutha’s house and wakes him up with their boots. There is a heart-rending description of how butually the police tortures Velutha, “Boot on bone. One teeth. The muffled grunt when a stomach is kicked in. The muted crunch of skull on cement. The gurgle of blood on a man’s breath
When his lung is torn by the jagged end of a broken rib” (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 308).

The semi-unconscious Velutha lies still:

His skull was fractured in three places. His nose and both his cheekbones were smashed, leaving his face pulpy, undefined. The blow to his mouth had split open his upper lip and broken six teeth. Four of his ribs were splintered, one hand pierced his left lung, which was what made him bleed from his mouth. (Roy 310)

Still the police officials have brought out the handcuffs. Since he cannot walk, they drag him. In the lock-up Velutha is beaten black and blue. He is in a miserable condition, dying, the extent of torture inflicted on him is quite obvious:

Velutha appeared on the scrunny slippery floor. A mangled genie invoked by a modern lamp. He was naked, his soiled mundu had come undone. Blood spilled from his skull like a secret. His face was swollen and his head look like a pumpkin too large and heavy. (Roy 319-20)

Thus, an untouchable man dies in police custody because he has none to protect him. Velutha’s death in police custody depicts the violence inflicted on a low caste people.

Violence preserves the extant system to maintain traditional social systems. The world is witnessing this violence. In India, gender and caste are two major reasons for violence. The movie NH 10 directed by Navdeep Singh focuses on gender violence. As a thriller, this movie depicts the monstrous gender inequalities that engender gruesome crimes such as honour killing. It portrays how women have to undergo gender discrimination as per the norms of the society. It is an overwhelming portrayal for combating evil of honour killing and gender discrimination. It is a much needed eye-opener for patriarchal India as it reveals the roots of patriarchy and gender based crimes. It also depicts lawlessness,
criminality and police apathy. The movie tells the story of a young couple Meera and Arjun and their encounter with a group of criminals. The couple finds a gang severely beating a young boy and a girl. They try to intervene and follow the gang who have dragged the young boy and the girl into their vehicle. On a deserted area near the highway, the couple witnesses the brutal honour killing of the young boy and the girl. A fight ensues and Arjun shoots one of the gang members and he too gets injured. The gang is enraged and the couple run for their lives.

They stop near a railway bridge and Meera tells Arjun to wait there till she gets some help. She is thrown out of the police station by a policeman to whom she tells about the incident of brutal honour killing witnessed by her. After being chased by the gang she finds a hut in which she is protected by a labourer and his wife. They advise her to go to the chief of nearby village. She tells her story to the village chief but in return the chief locks her in a room and calls the gang. They drag her out and beat her. She rushes to the railway bridge and finds her husband being murdered by the gang. She then avenges the murder of her husband by killing all the members of the gang. She uses an iron rod in order to kill the perpetrators who murdered her husband. An iron rod, the chosen weapon of violence is used in the act of vengeance and justice is served when the weapon is turned on those who wield it to establish their masculinity. Thus, the movie establishes gender violence and punishes it through the female protagonist.

There is also state violence and ideological violence. A violent agitation led by the Patel Community in 2015 in support of their demand for inclusion of the community in the OBC category for reservation and the violence that engulfed Gujarat as a result of this agitation depicts communal violence. After a massive rally was organized by Gujarat’s Patel Community demanding reservation in government jobs and education, the police cracked down on the protestors and detained Hardik Patel, the spearhead of the agitation, while severely beating up his supporters. The arrest of Hardik Patel sparked violence in the city. The violent protestors went on a rampage and attacked police posts and public buses. Several government and private vehicles were burnt down by the protestors. There were
several incidents of group clashes and stone pelting across the city. Seven people were killed in widespread violence triggered by a snowballing movement for reservations for the Patel Community.

The racial discrimination that Gandhi experienced happened when he arrived in Durban, South Africa to serve as a legal counsel to the merchant Dada Abdulla. On his journey to Pretoria, Gandhi was seated in the first class train compartment as recorded by him in *The Story of My Experiments with Truth: An Autobiography* since he had purchased a first class ticket. A white man entered the compartment and hastened to summon railway officials, who ordered Gandhi to shift himself to the van compartment, since non-whites were not permitted in the first class compartment. Gandhi protested and produced his ticket, but was warned that he would be forcibly removed if he did not make a gracious exit. As Gandhi refused to comply with the order, he was pushed out of the train and his luggage was tossed out on to the platform. This incident is reflective of the racial violence meted out to Gandhi:

> He saw that I was a ‘coloured’ man. This disturbed him. Out he went and came in. Again with one or two officials. They all kept quiet, when another official came to me and said, ‘Come along, you must go to van compartment.’ ‘But I have a first class ticket,’ said I. ‘That doesn’t matter,’ rejoined the other. ‘I tell you, you must go to the van compartment.’ ‘I tell you, I was permitted to travel in this compartment at Durban, and I insist on going on in it.’ ‘No, you won’t,’ said the official. ‘You must leave this compartment, or else I shall have to call a police constable to push you out.’ ‘Yes, you may. I refuse to get out voluntarily.’ The constable came. He took me by hand and pushed me out. My luggage was also taken out …

Thus, hierarchies of caste, gender, community and race are always maintained by violence.
Violence is manifest in many situations due to several factors. There is offensive violence for gain- colonization, and for “regain”- revolution. George Sorel in *Reflections on Violence* defines violence as a revolutionary denial of the existing social order; and force as the state’s power of coercion. The violence that Sorel focuses on is a specific manifestation of political violence, the violence that workers administer against bourgeoisie in strikes and militant labour actions. Sorel’s central claim holds that this kind of ‘proletarian violence’ - an absolutely indispensable element of class struggle in his view is the most effective method for establishing socialism. In Sorel’s view, proletarian violence facilitates the bourgeoisie’s pursuit of profit and thus contributes to and hastens the creation of socialism by dissuading capitalists from making concessions to the workers. According to Sorel, proletarian violence promotes the optimal development of capitalism, thereby helping to establish the material preconditions for, and accelerating society’s advance toward socialism. It is precisely for this reason that proletarian violence in Sorel’s view may “save the world from barbarism” (85). Sorel’s concept of proletarian violence refers to acts of violence flowing from the resistance that forms a part of strikes and other labour struggles involving intransigent opposition on the part of the workers. For Sorel, moreover, such acts of violence, and strikes in particular, are “acts of war” (279), the war in question being the class war.

Sorel defends proletarian violence not only on account of its role in the consummation of capitalism, but also because of its beneficial effect on the workers. Strikes help the workers in acquiring political independence and gaining greater class consciousness. And to that extent the acts of proletarian violence achieve one of their primary purposes, namely to “make the separation of the classes” (Sorel 105-106). The greatest benefit of all from acts of violence has to do with their role in preparing workers for a revolutionary (syndicalist) general strike, an idea which in Sorel’s view, “contains within itself the whole of proletarian socialism” (150). A proletarian strike does not produce a mere change of government, but the destruction of the state. As Sorel asserts this in one of the Appendices (‘Apology for Violence’) of *Reflections on Violence*, the revolutionary
or proletarian general strike involves, “an overthrow in the course of which both employers and the state will be removed by the organized producers” (279-280). Besides being the event that puts an end to capitalism, the general strike is important insofar as it functions as a myth for revolutionary workers. For Sorel, myths are, “expressions of a will to act” (28), compelling images and conceptions of collective enterprise that serve to inspire, motivate and mobilize the actors who will be engaged in this very enterprise. Sorel states that only those who embrace some such myth will prove capable of great endeavours and it is the ‘myth’ of the general strike, the very idea of which “produces an entirely epic state of mind “ (250), which serves as an indispensable inspiration and motivation for the revolutionary worker. Sorel advocates that the goal of the general strike, and hence the ultimate end of proletarian violence, is nothing other than the suppression or destruction of the state, as Sorel asserts, “the elimination of both employers and the state” (279).

Violence is, therefore, a many-headed hydra: force, power, instrument. Colonization, capitalism and race are three important factors that have led to a politics of violence in the modern period. Racial domination and oppression in South Africa began with the advent of colonization. Colonization was an important factor that paved the way to Apartheid. Colonization itself is violence and it engenders violence. It is not only a process of economic and political domination but a psychological visitation of violence.

South Africa is a nation at the historic cross roads of colonialism and post-colonialism. In addition to colonization, another dimension added to exploitation by the colonizers in South Africa was the initiation of the policy of racial segregation called Apartheid. Apartheid was a policy of racial segregation and discrimination and it such segregation was maintained by violence.

In South Africa, Colonization, Race relations and Apartheid are the prevalent forms of violence. The prevalence of violence is an informing component in contemporary South Africa. Violence in South Africa is a direct consequence of apartheid which was a policy of racial segregation. It has the
ideological underpinnings of racial politics related to colour. Still, persons and
groups continue to be identified, and to identify themselves, as particular races
and/or ethnic groups. While theorizing race and racism, Les Back and John
Solomos in *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader* remark:

One of the more reliable, if depressing predictions about the
twentieth century was made by the American scholar W. E. B. Du
Bois back in 1903 when he asserted that ‘the problem of the
twentieth century is the problem of the colour line - the relation of
the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America
and in the islands of the sea.’ (3)

As Du Bois predicted, what he characterized as “the problem of colour line” - the
problematic relations involving persons distinguished, initially, by skin colour as
constituting or belonging to distinct races has been a major problem during the
twentieth century. According to him, the ‘colour line’ is an everyday reality based
on institutional patterns of racial domination. Violence is an encoded state policy
because that is what legitimizes *apartheid*. *Apartheid* happens to be only one
manifestation of violence in South Africa,\(^1\) where, violence is manifest because
violence has been done to the consciousness of the blacks. During the *apartheid*
era, whites have dominated, ruled and shattered the identity of South African
blacks.

Many laws were passed to legalize and institutionalize *apartheid*. These
laws classified every South African by race, prohibited interracial marriage,
removed blacks and coloureds from the common voters’ rolls, and divided all cities
and towns into segregated residential and business zones called Group Areas. The
blacks were removed from areas classified for white occupation. Thus, white
domination could be seen in all aspects such as land ownership, legal system,
distribution of wealth and in the social relations. Aside from politics, segregation
also became a distinctive feature of the social and economic life of South Africa.
New laws reserved certain jobs for white workers and restricted blacks’ access to
cities. Almost nine-tenths of South Africa including the best land for agriculture and the bulk of the mineral deposits was reserved exclusively for the whites.

Later on the government made some reforms. It repealed the ban on interracial marriage as well as on the pass laws. The struggle against *Apartheid* intensified and the government declared a nationwide emergency and set out to eliminate all opposition, destroying black squatter camps and detaining, abusing and killing thousands of blacks. As these events unfolded, Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress leader was imprisoned. Later, the Parliament repealed the basic apartheid laws, lifted the state of emergency, freed many political prisoners including Nelson Mandela, and allowed exiles to return to South Africa.

Nelson Mandela was elected president of the African National Congress in 1991. The country’s first election by universal suffrage was held and it was won by the African National Congress with Nelson Mandela sworn in as president of the new South Africa. This signalled the beginning of a transition to democracy and *Apartheid* was abolished. A new constitution was adopted which emphasized equality and human rights. After the *Apartheid* was abolished, there was a need for reconciliation between the conflicting parties and social and economic values of human rights were required to be established.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, under the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was established in 1995 as an official Commission of Inquiry into public violence in South Africa during the *Apartheid*. It attempted to reconstruct what happened under *Apartheid*. The Commission was a compromise between the National Party and the ANC. It functioned from 1996 to 1998, when its final report was presented to the country’s President, Nelson Mandela. The hearings held by the TRC were broadcast throughout the nation and around the world. The victims were invited to tell their stories and openly discuss their sufferings. Considering that the TRC wished to make a clean break from the past and establish a common future, its aim “was not simply to establish a relation between the individual and the state but between individuals in order to promote national unity” (Ross 332). As the country attempted to create a collective memory
of its history of apartheid, it was willing “to attribute blame to all parties engaging in the struggle over apartheid” (Gibson 417). In this particular context, one’s individual responsibility appears to be replaced by collective guilt. Accordingly, individual suffering seems to be regarded as collective suffering. Obviously, change was necessary to bring about national reconciliation. As Jen Laakso points out that the commission needed “to go hand in hand with institutional changes, including judicial, political and military reform, in order to promote reparation and reconciliation” (53).

The TRC was presided over by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and comprised of a variety of commissioners: a group of seventeen men and women of different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds served on the Commission. The TRC was divided into three committees; the Human Rights Violation Committee, the Amnesty Committee and the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. The Human Rights Violation Committee focused on generating a detailed record of the causes, nature and extent of the human rights violations committed both in the name of Apartheid and the struggle against it. Hence, it sought to establish the hidden truths of state violence as well as underground and armed resistance by the liberation movement, and encouraged everyone to come to terms with these truths. The Amnesty Committee was empowered to grant amnesty to perpetrators of political violence. When perpetrators testified before the Amnesty Committee, it was not about pleading guilty, but about revealing the facts about one’s crime. They were encouraged to show contrition and apologise. Yet, as amnesty was granted in exchange for information about political crimes, perpetrators did not necessarily show remorse. Kossew states that “It was not considered part of the TRC process, as it was deemed too difficult to measure its sincerity” (159). The Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee attempted to promote reparation for the violence and damage inflicted on victims. Therefore, it made recommendations for reparations for victims. When the work had been carried out through these three committees, the TRC produced a report of its findings in 1998. This report provided the country with a historical record of past misdeeds. As Colin Bundy
points out that “the archive becomes the official repository of memory, but is simultaneously a crucial site in the process of forgetting” (193).

Violence has contoured the structures of domination and apartheid, the post-apartheid South Africa continues to exhibit violence as an ideology of counter domination and reverse colonization. Politics is the structure through which power functions, violence on the other hand is an extreme manifestation of power. Violence and Politics are discourses in themselves, in the sense that both have power operating as its motivating force. Although South Africa’s transition from apartheid to democracy reduced political violence, the latter still occurred, especially in the countryside. Although the country wished to reinstate justice in order to create a common future for black, white and coloured South Africans, retribution nonetheless took place. Nevertheless, “violence persists in post-apartheid South Africa, because it has been built on the legacy of its violent past” (Hamber 118). As Brandon Hamber points out “In 1997, the Human Rights Committee reported that more than 300 people in KwaZulu-Natal and 151 people in the rural Eastern Cape had been killed in political violence” (115). Moreover, regardless of the Truth Commission’s efforts to expunge former structures, race relations have still proved problematic (Laakso 51). For instance, victims of past violence who desired to take vengeance on perpetrators, almost certainly constituted different ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, white South Africans are occasionally assaulted because of substantial discrepancies in living standards. More specifically, “standards of living improved only marginally for black South Africans” in the post-apartheid era (Moller 31), because whites still possess most of the lands. Although there was a consensus that equal opportunities and living conditions had to be established, many blacks still experience hardship both in townships and rural areas. Whites seem to believe that the violence that was carried out against them had everything to do with their economic status “there is a popular perception (largely held by white South Africans) that the wealthy are more affected by crime than the poor” (Hamber 117). However, post-apartheid human rights violations are not necessarily race-related. Blacks are committing crimes against blacks; they often behave aggressively within domestic contexts.
Moreover, “there is no other country in the world that has higher incidences of rape of women and children” (Moffett 129).

The blacks in post-

apartheid era react with violence seeking revenge but there is a growing consciousness which promises to let go off past hurt and trauma. It is the TRC that provides a setting for national reconciliation. Laakso claims that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission provided “a way of dealing with the South African past by seeking to alleviate nightmares, thus providing a therapeutic cure, as well as fostering a sense of community, common identity and hope for a better future” (50). Hence, it strove to reconcile the entire population with South Africa’s past and insisted on peace and reconciliation in order to prevent further violence.

With regard to justice, the TRC sought to achieve restorative justice instead of retributive justice. Thus, it wished to restore the balance within South African communities and prevent future violence. In its attempt at undoing violence, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission embraced the concept of Ubuntu; something which the final clause of the new Constitution describes as “the African philosophy of humanism” (Krog vii). It can be stated that the essence of Ubuntu is captured in the mutual interdependence of people. As Nkonko Kamwangamalu argues, it embodies “the core values of African ontologies: respect for any human being, for human dignity and for human life, collective sharedness, obedience, humility, solidarity, caring, hospitality, interdependence, communalism” (26). It can therefore be stated that Ubuntu holds that humans should treat one another with respect because they belong to the same community. Perpetrators were often forgiven in the spirit of Ubuntu, because many South Africans believed that their community would have no future without forgiveness.

Nonetheless, claims have been made that TRC was not successful in bringing about reconciliation. Considering that violence still persists within post-
apartheid South Africa, some critics suggest that it merely initiated reconciliation. As Nagy suggests that the process of TRC established some truths but has merely started reconciliation “but these minimal ‘truths’ have, at best, initiated rather than
fulfilled the goals of national reconciliation” (719). The TRC has received a huge deal of criticism since it began its public hearings. For instance, some critics suggest that the TRC underestimated the harm that had been caused by the country’s former apartheid laws. Hence, Mahmood Madani argues that “the TRC focused on torture, murder and rape, all outside the law, ignoring everything that was distinctive about apartheid and its machinery of violence” (181). Besides, “some black South Africans appear to regard the TRC as a waste of money which could have been used to compensate victims” (Vora and Vora 312). Moreover, a number of Afrikaners claimed that the country’s process of truth and reconciliation negatively influenced South African politics because they “feared political instability and felt disenfranchised” (Vora and Vora 319). In addition to this, the TRC’s uniform denunciation of white and black violence has often been criticised because the latter “should be judged by different standards, it is argued, because it was based on different motives and in a different context” (Buikema 188).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been criticized for the way in which it strove to establish truth. Truth was regarded as a confusing and problematic aspect of the TRC hearings. Hence many South Africans feared that disclosing this truth would revive old wounds. They were concerned that “individuals with TRC relevant experience would simply be re-traumatized by participation in the process” (Williams et al. 462). Furthermore, opponents of the TRC did not consider the Commission’s pursuit of truth viable. While the TRC strove to expose the truth and unite politically polarised South African society, these opponents instead believed that the TRC process divided the nation. The hearings helped victims to remember and deal with the past but it remained questionable whether these testimonies would actually bring one closer to the truth. The process was further complicated because the TRC could not easily decide whose truth counted when a victim’s truth clashed with a perpetrator’s truth. Apparently shame prevented many victims from revealing what had happened to them. Especially women refused to acknowledge their status of victim and remained silent about the sexual abuse they suffered. Instead, they were more likely to convey what had been inflicted upon their sons or husbands (Minow 343).
Antije Krog suggests that these women were afraid “to lose something again—privacy, may be respect” (277). Moreover, perpetrators were believed to tell lies because they either refused to confront their misdeeds or could not actually do so because their memory had been erased. The people reconstructed their memory and this made ‘their truth’ a socially constructed history. As Krog points out, “it was very difficult to “distinguish between lies and memory loss” (117), because “as narrators we all give ourselves permission to believe our own versions” (133).

In addition to this, objections have been made that the TRC was not a court of law and therefore not a legitimate setting to conduct public hearings. Some South Africans believed that its Amnesty Committee should therefore not have the power to grant amnesty from prosecution to perpetrators of gross human rights violations. More specifically, as Pumla GobodoMadikizela points out, “critics of the amnesty clause argue that the TRC has sacrificed justice for reconciliation” (271). As it is highly difficult to achieve justice and reconciliation at the same time, therefore, Jeremy Sarkin claims that “the pursuit of justice does not always promote reconciliation” (34). The TRC also had a religious character. The hearings of the TRC were conducted in a religious manner, because they “were framed by a Christian ethos of forgiveness, personified by the chairperson of the TRC, Archbishop Desmond Tutu” (Posel 136). Yet, Tutu’s religious explanation of reconciliation appears to be controversial because some South Africans considered it instead a political ambition.

The TRC has, however, also been criticized for denying justice to the victims of human rights violations because a moral compromise was reached, which irrevocably undermined the position of victims. The Commission found that its terms of reference restricted its focus primarily to take into consideration gross violations of human rights and thus it was unable to focus more widely on the whole extent of the effects of Apartheid. Nevertheless, the measures which were recommended to the president for reparation and the ongoing transformation taking place could go a long way to promote reconciliation. But then the question of reparation remains unresolved. This issue is fundamental to the validation of the
whole TRC process. Despite these criticisms, it can be stated that the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission took groundbreaking steps towards a better future.

The thesis is employing a theoretical framework of Postcolonial Studies, with particular reference to theorists of violence. The study uses the concepts and theories given by theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Hannah Arendt, Michael Foucault and Derrida to situate the texts in the context of colonial violence and its aftermath. The introduction also focuses on theories of violence given by theorists such as Zizek and Sorel. The present study will analyze violence with particular reference to post-apartheid South Africa. It takes into consideration the Truth and Reconciliation Document. Apart from representing violence in conjunction with race relations and issue of apartheid in the selected texts of Coetzee and Gordimer, the present study is an attempt to examine a way out for violence by comparing the position of writers with reference to their texts and the findings of the TRC. The study area of the proposed research is Race Studies in the context of political situation of Apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa with reference to the selected novels of J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. The selected texts are: J. M. Coetzee’s Waiting for the Barbarians, In the Heart of the Country and Disgrace, and Nadine Gordimer’s Burger’s Daughter, July’s People and The House Gun.

The present research focuses on Postcolonial Theory with reference to Race Studies in the context of South African Literature. It analyzes social, political, economic and cultural productions of power, hierarchies and inequalities as they relate to whiteness and white privilege. It critically engages the ways that race, as a system of domination, is inherently related to issues of gender, class, indigeneity and sexuality. It also interrogates historical and contemporary manifestations of white supremacy and racial hierarchy. The social construction of race is at the centre of this study area. Both white as well as black writers belonging to different nations have focused on the impact of racism on the psyche of individuals. J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer make a subtle exploration of violence and focus on
the white-black dialectics in their novels. They take the readers through the vagaries of violence as it affects both the whites as well as the blacks. It is within this framework of the relationship between them that they set their novels depicting violence. The present study will focus on the theories related to power, race, violence and forgiveness of Michael Foucault, Sartre, Frantz Fanon, Hannah Arendt and Derrida to analyze the selected novels of J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. The present study will examine the alternative strategies of ending violence, such as \textit{Ubuntu}, Reconciliation and Forgiveness.


Various other issues have also been taken up by some critics in Coetzee’s works. Stephen Watson in an article “Colonialism and the Novels of J. M. Coetzee” published in the journal \textit{Research in African Literatures} (1986) explores the influence of colonialism in the novels of Coetzee. Roman Silvani in the book \textit{Political Bodies and the Body Politic in J. M. Coetzee’s Novels} (2011) argues that Coetzee’s novels can be considered as continued enterprise in figuring and varying the otherness of the human body and in his fiction, body is a site upon which


The previous critical studies of the works of J. M. Coetzee and that of Nadine Gordimer have focused on the representation of colonial violence, racial oppression, dehumanizing impact of apartheid, torture, humiliation, suffering, cruelty, alterity, trauma of apartheid and body politics within the context of the historical reality of colonization and Apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid Literature has focused on the theme of race and apartheid. Post-apartheid literature has shifted the focus from racial issues to social problems faced by South Africans in contemporary South Africa. It focuses on themes of forgiveness, reconciliation and guilt.

The thesis is divided into Introduction, Four Chapters and Conclusion.

**Introduction:** Theorising Violence

**Chapter 1:** Representation of Violence in J. M. Coetzee’s Waiting for the Barbarians, In the Heart of the Country and Disgrace, and Nadine Gordimer’s Burger’s Daughter, July’s People and The House Gun

**Chapter 2:** Violence in situations of Power-Reversal in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Study of Nadine Gordimer’s July’s People and J. M. Coetzee’s Disgrace

**Chapter 3:** Reading J. M. Coetzee’s Disgrace and Nadine Gordimer’s The House Gun in the light of Truth and Reconciliation Document

**Chapter 4:** Theme of Forgiveness and Ubuntu in J. M. Coetzee’s Age of Iron, Disgrace, Waiting for the Barbarians and Nadine Gordimer’s The House Gun

**Conclusion**
Notes

1. Ashis Nandy in *Intimate Enemy and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* states that “colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities one for all” (Nandy xi). The colonizer in fact colonizes the minds of the natives i.e. the colonized are made to believe many things about themselves by the colonizer’s attitude towards them. In such a relationship between the colonizer and the colonized which is torn apart by the dialectics of violence, the colonized are not simple or naïve people. They are not the stereotype victimized people or as Nandy posits, “simple hearted victims of Colonialism; they become participants in a moral and cognitive venture against oppression” (Nandy xv). In the process of subjugating the native and exercising violence over him the colonizer becomes a “self-destructive co-victim” (Nandy xv). Nandy speaks of a world view which believes in the superiority of the human over non-human, the masculine over the feminine, the adult over the child, the historical over the ahistorical and the modern or progressive over the tradition or savage” (Nandy x). Thus, oppressive behavior, savage acts by the dominant or dominating classes are justified by creating binary opposites. This gives the colonizers moral justification for their acts of violence and cruelty. They could accentuate their acts of violence on grounds of being superior. Hence, initially the marginalized accept their position of subservience, daring not to rebel.

2. According to Fanon, Decolonization is the encounter between two antagonistic forces - the colonizer and the colonized. It implies the urgent need to challenge the colonial situation and thus becomes an, “agenda for total disorder” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 2). This idea of employment of violence against the colonizers has no surprise value for the natives as they have been prepared for it since time immemorial. The colonized, according to Fanon, exists in a state of anxiety due to poor economic, social and political status allowed to them by the colonizers. The anxiety is released in a self-directed and self-destructive violence and aggression but is later transformed into a quest for liberation. For him, this form of violence is invested with positive and formative
characteristics as it forces every individual to respond aggressively to the violence inflicted by the colonizer. The violence of the colonized thus unifies them.

3. *Apartheid* is an Afrikaner word meaning “separateness.” *Apartheid* as a practice in South Africa was a discourse which segregated the blacks from the whites. The whites were considered as superior to the blacks on the basis of race and colour. The discourse of *apartheid* led to the empowerment of the whites and disempowerment of the blacks. The blacks were excluded from the areas classified for the whites. The blacks were discriminated against by the whites and were denied all the privileges. It was a policy of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by South African National Party in 1948. South African National Party was the governing party in South Africa from 1911 to 1924. In 1948 The National Party used the word *apartheid* to describe a policy of racial segregation and discrimination. The new, all-white government passed many laws to legalize and institutionalize *apartheid*. These laws classified every South African by race, prohibited interracial marriage, removed blacks and coloureds from the common voters’ rolls, and divided all cities and towns into segregated residential and business zones called Group Areas. The blacks were removed from areas classified for white occupation. Thus, white domination could be seen in all aspects such as land ownership, legal system, distribution of wealth and in the social relations. Aside from politics, segregation also became a distinctive feature of the social and economic life of South Africa. New laws reserved certain jobs for white workers and restricted black’s access to cities. Almost nine-tenths of South Africa - including the best land for agriculture and the bulk of the mineral deposits was reserved exclusively for whites. Few blacks received education, and black workers received only a fraction of the wages paid to whites.

4. Satyagraha is a portmanteau of the Sanskrit word “Satya” (meaning truth) and “Agraha” (which means to insist). According to Gandhi, truth (“Satya”) implies love and firmness (“Agraha”) engenders and serves as a synonym for force. Hence, Satyagraha is the force born out of truth and love for non-
violence. Satyagraha is, in fact, the direct corollary of non-violence. He conceptualizes non-violence to be a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. Gandhi considers meekness as the primary virtue in the practice of non-violence. According to Gandhi, the infusion of meekness with courage always leads to the achievement of freedom. All these virtues combine to form Gandhi’s concept of “satyagraha.”

5. Law-making violence concerns the constitutive act of establishing power through violence i.e. terror and war on terror.

6. Law-preserving violence is embedded in state institutions.

7. The ‘state of exception’ is not a particular kind of law; rather, in so far as it is a suspension of the juridical order itself, it defines the threshold or limit concept of law. Agamben explores how the ‘state of exception’ produces and is indeed predicated on the blurring of or the indistinction between legal and illegal, public and private, state and law, war and peace, law and violence, and the political and the juridical. He is trying to theorize how the ‘state of exception’ can be both in and out of the juridical order. A ‘state of exception’ is a state in which the normal rule of law has been suspended in the name of a national emergency or security situation. ‘State of exception’ is a situation or state in which the exception becomes the rule and the law becomes permanently suspended. This phrase ‘state of exception’ can be used to describe Apartheid South Africa. In the South African apartheid state, the political theology of sovereignty was tied to the life, labour and body of the blacks. These all were managed by Apartheid. During apartheid era South Africa was in the midst of a state of political emergency. Apartheid South Africa can be considered as one of the most significant ‘states of exception’ of the twentieth century. Even after South Africa’s new national sovereignty which aims to situate itself after the ‘state of exception’ is declared, Apartheid’s ‘state of exception’ produces only more ‘state of exception.’ Historical violence of apartheid cannot be wiped out overnight by a law-making decision in order to establish a new peaceful and prosperous South Africa.
The term “anomy” was coined by Emile Durkheim and refers to the situation where the society is either devoid of the norms or too inflexible to be followed. In the zone of anomy, the lives of individuals are essentially plagued by alienation, helplessness and chaos. Agamben defines “anomy” as the creation of a zone where all legal determinants are deactivated.

Technically, however, the term “force of law” refers not to the law itself, but to the decrees that the executive power is designated to give. It defines a demarcation between the efficacy of the law and its formal essence, by which the acts that do not have the value of the law are able to acquire the “force of law.”

The *iustitium* was an ancient precedent for the state of exception. It involved not a suspension of the framework of justice but the suspension of law itself.

Subjective violence is a process of physical force often suddenly and unexpectedly aimed at its victims. Subjective violence in its most basic form involves that its agents generate physical force through their own body (stabbing, hitting, etc.), or an immediate extension of their bodies (shooting), and this physical force then strikes the victim.

Systemic violence is a matter of being subject to harmful institutional rules as part of everyday life functioning.

Zizek uses the concept of systemic violence to indicate that certain social structures or institutional practices, such as political domination or capitalist exploitation, cause people to engage in subjective violence, both individually (e.g., rape and murder) and collectively (e.g., riots and war). In other words, social arrangements that cause subjective violence are called “systematically violent.” Zizek uses the notion of systemic violence to refer to the fact that unjust social structures or institutions are sustained by threats of violence.

The recent revolution in Libya illustrates this point. The worry that the new regime might not be committed to full human rights protection was widely expressed after the apparent summary execution of Muammar Gaddafi. Not surprisingly, other war crimes committed by the revolutionaries against Gaddafi forces were reported around at the same time. On the positive side, the
National Transitional Council has at least recognized the need to respond to the criticisms.

15. In *Defense of Lost Causes*, Zizek describes the willingness to die as part of this “toughness” and praises revolutionaries such as Che Guevara for their preparedness to face their own death, similar to the attitude of Japanese soldiers in Second World War who held their own Funerals prior to leaving for the battlefield. He adds that Che praised the Cuban people willing to risk their annihilation in the Cuban missile crisis. Thus, Zizek fails to note the rux of the moral problem of revolutionary sacrifice: the Cuban people had no choice in the matter (169-70).

16. Since “violence” is not always “violence” in Zizek’s work, one might think that “terror” is also not necessarily “terror” in his work. So when Zizek says that “our task today is precisely to reinvent terror” (*In Defense of Lost Causes* 174), it may not mean that what it seems to say. Indeed some, Zizek commentators hold that he does not support terror. For example, Terry Eagleton in “The Phenomenal Slavoj Zizek,” The Times Literary Supplement, April 23, 2008, says that in his view, it would be an error to hold that Zizek is in favour of terror at the margins, but he seems to argue that terrorism is acceptable as part of a broader popular left movement.

17. Zizek declares in *In Defense of Lost Causes* that “divine violence = inhuman terror = dictatorship of the proletariat” (162).

18. The War on Terror also known as the Global war on Terrorism refers to a global military, political and legal struggle against organizations accused of supporting terrorism. It is used with a particular focus on Muslim countries associated with Islamic terrorist organizations including al-Qaeda and like minded organizations. It has also been used specifically to refer to the ongoing military campaign led by U.S., U.K. and their allies against organizations and regimes identified by them as terrorist organizations.

19. Myths, are to borrow Lichtheim’s apt description, ‘the product of a collective will-to-believe’ and ‘a prophetic anticipation of that which is to come.’