Teaching Literature for Critical Thinking in a Secondary School

By

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DECLARATION

I, Nkosinathi Emmanuel Madondo, declare that

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III

ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes critical participatory action research study aimed at developing the capacity of learners to think critically in the context of a classroom in a South African Secondary school (and beyond). The data were qualitative in nature, and were generated through Govender's (2008) *1949* short story prescribed for grade 11 in 2010. Informal discussions, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, critical thinking tasks as well as learners' assignments were the instruments inductively used for data production, interpretation and analysis. This process was guided by critical questions regarding the tasks' characteristics, their position in the teaching sequence, the role of the learning environment, and the need to design activities which would effectively promote critical thinking. A reflexive critical paradigm to claims to knowledge particularly in terms of how knowledge emerges through the relationship between the knower and the known, how reality was explained in this study as well as in terms of the ways and means of producing evidence, was adopted. Orthodox Marxism, not approached from an economic deterministic and functionalist perspective was chosen as a theoretical frame for the study. This study was conceptualised in terms of literary works, ideology, historical materialism, dialectical materialism, critical thinking as well as practice. Constructivism as well as Reader Response theories emerged as being most likely to promote success in developing critical thinking skills. These theories were found to be relevant when evaluated against criteria of active engagement and interest by learners, attainability with effort, display of critical thinking traits, and compatibility with the South African curriculum. In these theories an interesting problem is posed at the start of a section, after which direct instruction and learner engagement with the problem run parallel to one another, linked by scaffolding tools which are engaged with both, individually and collaboratively.

Data analysis demonstrated that it is possible, employing particular strategies and tasks, to promote the capacity of learners to think critically, even beyond the classroom context, while meeting the curriculum outcomes, although the intense pressure of the curriculum made this a challenging task, it must be acknowledged. Nevertheless, there is still a need of research that would enable learners to realise that literature has no direct relation with reality and that literature cannot produce a utilitarian totalising perspective of reality. In order to write about

other things implies that a writer has to stop writing about others. Tasks design characteristics and positioning in the teaching sequence, and the conditions of the learning environment, were found to affect a tasks' effectiveness at promoting critical thinking. Various teaching strategies in line with tasks that have a potential to promote critical thinking and theories can improve attainability by wider range of learners.

PREFACE

The work described in this thesis was carried out in the School of Languages, Literacies, and Media Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, during 2010 and 2012 under the supervision of Dr. Emmanuel M. Mgqwashu. Ethical clearance was obtained for this study HSS/1325/2010M.

This study represents original work by author and has not otherwise been submitted in any form for any Degree or Diploma to any tertiary institution. Where use has been made of the work of others, it is duly acknowledged in the text.

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NOTES ON STYLISTIC CONVENTIONS

Steps were taken to protect anonymity of those involved in this study. Pseudonyms have been used in order to protect learners' privacy. Citation: the data source is given, enclosed in brackets, indicating the source, type of extract and date, for example, (Nobuhle: interview: 26 October 2010). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes and transcripts are speakers' exact words.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC : African National Congress

AS   : Assessment Standards

CO   : Critical Outcomes

DoE   : Department of Education

EAL   : English Additional Language

LO   : Learning Outcomes

NCS   : National Curriculum Statements

OBE   : Outcomes Based Education

RNCS: Revised National Curriculum Statements

SA   : South Africa(n)

ZPD   : Zone of Proximal Development

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I wish to thank the following people for helping me with this study.

Dr. Emmanuel M. Mgqwashu, my supervisor, for introducing me to the world of academia and his tireless efforts to want to help me and for putting up with a bombardment of e-mails, and for his patience, thoroughness, and skillful criticism and advice which have promoted more critical thought in me. Dr. Nyna Amin for exposing me to research methodologies and advising me that at least one should write 5 lines a day and that would amount to 25 lines in a week's time. Although, I must admit, I did not always lived up to that advice, but when I did, I could measure the value of it. I would also like to thank the learners with whom I conducted this study for their cooperation, enthusiasm and for teaching me so much. I appreciate the Deputy Principal, Mr. Nhlanhla Hlophe, of the school where the data was generated as well as the parents of the learners for allowing me to conduct this study. I, likewise, thank my family for their love and support through this long and lonely journey especially my wife Busisiwe (uMashozi) Madondo for always reminding me, "Do not sleep having not done some writing towards your Masters",

my mother, Nombuso (umaMthembu) Madondo for saying if you really want something and you set your mind, body and spirit to it, then you can achieve it.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the learners who participated so willingly in this study, and the future generation of teachers and learners for the advancement and quality of teaching and learning. It is furthermore, dedicated to my children, Siyabulela and Okuhle for giving the opportunity to be their father and to the Mighty God for benevolent opportunities I have been bestowed with in life.

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1. Background and Rationale

South African education has been undergoing radical changes during the phasing in of an Outcomes Based curriculum over the past 2 decades. This new curriculum calls for an emphasis on skills largely absent from previous curriculum documents (DoE, 1995). One of these is the skill of critical thinking. During my practice as a High School English teacher I developed a desire to inculcate such skills in learners using literary text by Govender (2008), *1949*. In this study the concepts literary art and literary works are used interchangeably. Inculcating the abovementioned skills in learners was starkly contrasted to the uncritical thought typical of many learners. Desiring to help learners to benefit from the advantages of critical thought I had observed in the new curriculum, I became interested in ways to promote critical thinking in all learners during everyday classroom practice. I looked forward to embracing the new curriculum in an endeavour to improve the uncritical nature of many learners at my school.

This study embraced Beaumont's (2010) understanding of critical thinking as higher order thinking process, including, but not limited to, reflection, inference, synthesizing information and enabling people to acquire the ability to transfer the skills to make reasoned judgements within the classroom to everyday life. For Beaumont, the question of how English language teachers include the development and practice of these important skills in the context of lessons remains a challenge. To begin to grapple with this question, Beaumont (2010) adopted a sequence of seven critical thinking tasks (developed by Numrich) through a flexible framework that acts as a practical tool for planning and development level, and appropriate classroom materials that encourage and advance critical thinking. These tasks apply whether English is taken as a home or English Additional Language (EAL). A detailed analysis of such tasks is provided in chapter 5.

Since I teach in Further Education and Training (FET) phase that is informed by the Outcomes Based Education (OBE), I had attended the workshops organised by the state to prepare teachers for this transition. These workshops drew clear lines between the old and

new systems. The old system was portrayed as involving the teacher lecturing to passive learners according to a rigid curriculum divorced from reality; this was to be viewed as bad education. Instead, teachers were now meant to allow learners to construct knowledge for themselves while working collaboratively in groups on authentic tasks. It was argued that this would promote critical thinking. This contributed to ideological orientation of the study in that learners could be given opportunities to construct knowledge for themselves, although this was not going to be an easy task to EAL speakers. Factors like these resulted in me adopting a reflexive, constructivist epistemological paradigm which was critical in nature. As a result I believed that under the new curriculum I would be able to concentrate on the promotion of critical thinking rather than having to merely race through a content-rich syllabus. I therefore, believed that I could embark on this research study. However, a study of South African (SA) literature on related topics revealed that most teachers lacked clarity on how to implement this curriculum (Mgqwashu, 2007; Stott, 2008; Mabunda, 2009). Accompanying this lack of clarity in implementing the abovementioned curriculum was a noticeable general dearth of understanding what is meant by critical thinking, and an apparent incapacity to teach for it. Again, a literature search showed this to be a general problem, not only in South Africa, but internationally. This indicated to me that there was a need for research into the characteristics and implementation of tasks, which are successful in promoting critical thinking within a real school setting. I reasoned that if this could be determined within the context of the SA EAL national curriculum, this may contribute to narrowing the gap between policy ideals and practice. In particular I intended to use literature in order to inculcate critical thinking skills to learners at a secondary school in grade 11. This reasoning inspired me to carry out this research study. Based on the above reasoning, the study chose to use Govender's *1949* short story as literary art or literary works in order to assist learners in developing critical thinking skills.

Using literature with an intention to inculcate critical thinking in learners required an interpretation(s) of how I conceptualised literature. Such an interpretation was drawn from various perspectives as to the interest of this study. This is because, for the purpose of this study, reality is a personal and social construct and therefore there is no exclusive or definitive answer to what is literature (McDonough & mcDonough, 1997). Nevertheless, different perspectives of literature provided here have some implications for this study in terms of why this study was done in the first instance. For example, the 19th century Marxist

literary criticism treats literature as reflections of an unfolding system. In that sense literature must reveal the underlying pattern of contradictions in a social order. Particularly, Lukacs (1937) insists on the material and historical nature of the structure of society. His realist view of the novel is that it reflects reality, not by rendering its surface appearance, but by giving a truer, more complete, more vivid and more dynamic reflection of reality. For him, to reflect is to frame a mental structure transposed into words. So, a novel may conduct a reader towards a more concrete insight into reality which transcends a merely common sense apprehension of things. A literary work reflects not individual phenomena in isolation, but the full process of life. However, the reader is always aware that the work is not itself reality but rather a special form of reflecting reality. For Lukacs images presented in the text possess an intensive totality which corresponds to the extensive totality of the world itself.

While Lukacs (1937) claims that literature has a direct contact with reality, Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) have a different view regarding literature and reality. In their view art is set apart from reality. It is that detachment which gives art its special significance and power. So, literary art has the power to criticise reality. According to Adorno (1977) art cannot simply reflect the social system, but acts within that reality as an irritant which produces an indirect sort of knowledge where in art is viewed as the negative knowledge of the actual world. Furthermore, literary form is not simply a unified and compressed reflection of the form of society, as it was for Lukacs, argues Ardono, but a special means of distancing reality and preventing the easy reabsorption of new insights into familiar and consumable packages. This however, does not suggest that this study favours formalist approaches to literary study. Art has the power to reveal the dehumanising human relationships which can be understood from a dialectical method of understanding the real processes of human history. That is the development which arises from the resolution of contradictions inherent in a particular aspect of reality.

Althusser (1971) rejects the idea of totality where this totality is expressed in literary works as reflection of social life. Althusser (1971) further maintains that there are various elements (or levels) within the social formation and these should not be treated as reflections of one essential level (the economic level for Marxists). Such levels possess a relative autonomy and are ultimately determined by the economic level only in the last instance. The various levels of the social formation exist in complex relations of inner contradiction and mutual conflict.

According to Althusser (1971) this structure of contradictions maybe dominated at any given stage by one or other of the levels, but which level it is to be itself determined ultimately by the economic level. Art therefore is not simply a form of ideology. Althusser (1971) insists that a great work of literature does not give us a proper conceptual understanding of reality but neither does it merely express the ideology of a particular class. Ideology is defined as a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to the real conditions of existence (Althusser, 1971). This imaginary consciousness, Althusser (1971) maintains helps us to make sense of the world but also masks or represses our real conditions of existence. For example, continues Althusser (1971), the ideology of freedom promotes the belief in the freedom of all, including labourers, but it masks the real relations of liberal capitalist economy. In that sense a dominant system of ideology is accepted as a common-sense view of things by the dominated classes and thus the interests of the dominant class are secured. However, art achieves a retreat, (a fictional distance driving from its formal composition) from the very ideology which feeds it. In this way a major literary work can transcend the ideology of the writer.

What we learn from an Althusserian discussion of art and ideology is that the text is not treated as a creation or a self-contained artefact, but is regarded as a production in which disparate materials are worked over and changed in the process. These materials are not free implements to be used consciously to create a controlled unified work of art. The text is never fully aware of what it is doing, irrespective of authorial intentions and prevailing aesthetic norms. Contrary to the realist writer who attempts to unify all the elements in the text, Althusserian model recognises that the work that goes in the textual process inevitably produces certain lapses and omissions which correspond to the incoherence of the ideological discourse it uses, for in order to say anything, there are other things which must not be said. It therefore, becomes possible to attend to the text's unconscious, to what is unspoken and inevitably repressed. The argument raised by Eagleton (1976) is somewhat different from the Althusserian views on texts, reality and ideology.

Eagleton (1976) argues that texts do not reflect historical reality but rather work upon ideology to produce an effect of the real. The text may appear to be free in its relation to reality, that is, it can invent characters and situations at will, but it is not free in its use of ideology. Eagleton (1976) points out that ideology refer not to formulated doctrines but to all

those systems of representation (aesthetic, religious, judicial and others) which shape the individual's mental picture of lived experience. Eagleton rejects Althusser's view that literature can distance itself from ideology, but text is a complex reworking of already existing ideological discourses. He maintains that the literary result is not merely a reflection of other ideological discourses but a special production of ideology. Therefore, the literary form is not just the concern here, but rather the production of ideological discourses as literature. Eagleton does not believe in fixed and absolute forms of knowledge.

All four (4) literary discussions above are important for this study. They represent insights pertinent to the understanding of how literary works could be interpreted. From such perceptions one can relate to some of the South African situations. Accordingly, this study does not subscribe to the idea of the text that reflects reality or the totality of the world itself. That is because a particular writer would choose to write about certain events and choose to ignore others which may be equally important for other readers. This study however, does refer to the contradictory nature of society. In other words, it maintains the dialectical view of history. That is to say, in every social organisation, the prevailing mode of production gives rise to inner contradictions which are expressed in class struggle (Lukacs, 1937). In a capitalist system the inherent contradiction is expressed in the conflict of interest between capitalists and workers. In a situation like that the capitalist claims that the working class owns the means of production, for example, machines which the capitalist use in order to increase production output and thus gain more profits. Media and computers can be seen as two major means of production and those who own them, or know well how to use them, get to hold power over those who do not. Accordingly, the relations of production, for example, between the capitalist class who in fact owns the means of production and the proletarian class whose labour-power the capitalist buys for profit is expressed in exploitation. This is the reason why Eagleton (1983) argues that it is the function of ideology to legitimate the power of the ruling class in society through how those class relations are experienced, legitimised and perpetuated. In that sense men are not free to choose their social relations but are constrained into them by material necessity. Such relations are exposed in the course of this study in terms of the characters in the short story. Furthermore, Adorno's (1977) criticism is used in this study in order to reveal the dehumanising aspect of human relationship from a dialectical method of understanding the real processes of human history.

For example, in Govender's (2008) short story there is mediation of issues of politics which affected life for the majority of South Africans. As a result certain ideologies that shaped South Africa were identified. The ability to identify such ideologies requires critical thinking skills. The phasing in of OBE meant that such a skill could be developed. This is because such a curriculum emphasises skills, and one of such skills is critical thinking (DoE, 2002). Furthermore, concepts like ideology, historical materialism, dialectical materialism, critical thinking, and practice were adopted for this study. Such concepts are discussed in chapter 3. Clearly, one may argue that the kind of knowledge that is produced in classrooms has a role to play to shape our communities for the better or for worse.

Knowledge, critical thinking about such knowledge, and its application to everyday life, has the power to transform individuals, families, communities, and ultimately, societies (Seepe, 1998). In Western societies like ours, formal education institutions assume a major responsibility for the transmission of knowledge. Within the South African context, education, until 1994, was used to perpetuate inhuman values such as racism, sexism, discrimination, and institutionalised segregation (Khuzwayo, 2002). This study sought to investigate the extent to which the teaching of literature, among other things, could expose such social ills, and then draw learners' attention to them in a manner that arm them with knowledge and skills to detect old, segregationist tendencies in our country. It is for this reason that the goal of this study is to investigate the extent to which social ills could be challenged through the teaching of literary art. Educational institutions, after all, are prime sites for transformation. This study also proposes that the teaching of literature should enhance learners' understanding of the socio-political realities that shape their country. This is important because learners form part of the wider future leadership and are viewed as potential contributors to the future development of society. The study of literature, this study argues, has potential to prepare learners for such a future.

Through the teaching, learning, and study of literature, teachers are presented with an opportunity to develop learners' critical engagement with the relationship between the past and the present. This is the reason the study explores the extent to which literary works could be used as tools to enhance critical literacy in the context of schooling. If taught and studied critically, literature can be a source of knowledge which will enable learners to make critical judgements about the society they live in. How literary art can be taught within the school

context is thus vital to this study. The study focussed on investigating the teaching of literary art in ways that have a potential to develop critical thinking in learners. The idea was for learners to understand the socio-political and economic realities that form the basis of SA. Literary art was used as a source of knowledge for that purpose. The teaching of literary art should be such that it "allows more exploration of the literary text by [learners] and invites [them] to develop their own responses and sensitivities" as future leaders (Carter & Long, 1991, pp. 24 – 25). This is the prime condition for developing skills for the construction of new knowledge.

1.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

Data collection and analysis in this study were guided by the following critical questions which were used to investigate the phenomenon under study:

1) What are possible strategies to develop learners' critical thinking skills?

2) How do learners understand the notion of critical thinking?

3) How have learners developed their understanding of critical thinking in relation literary works?

As indicated by the questions above, this study sought to investigate the teaching of literary art and its potential role in equipping learners with skills to engage critically with literary works in relation to socio-political realities of South Africa within the context of schooling. Data yielded by these critical questions assisted in the process of understanding the role of literature in education and society. Learners who find it difficult to critically engage with literary works are most likely to read stories for the sake of reading without understanding and negotiating meaning from texts (Barthes, 1968). The consequence under such circumstances is that learners are unable to "construct complex and persuasive arguments in writing and fail to engage critically with detail" (Mgqwashu, 2007, p. 315). Unfortunately, critical engagement is the demand of any academic study, at secondary or tertiary levels. Motivation for this study was that learners should be equipped with critical thinking skills so that they could engage critically with academic endeavour, such as analysing and critiquing texts. That is how I was influenced towards considering actions to improve my practice, and hence my choice of an action research design. A clear definition of action research is imperative at this point.

There are many definitions of action research but for the purpose of this study three definitions are chosen. Action research is a "systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical and undertaken by participants in the inquiry" (McCutcheon & Jung 1990, p. 148). It is "a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out" (Kemmis & McTaggert, 1990, p. 5). Also, "action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework" (Rapoport as cited in Mckernan, 1991, 4). Within all these definitions four basic arguments were captured in connection with this study: empowerment of participants; collaboration through participation; acquisition of knowledge; and social change. The process that I went through in accordance with the above definitions was a spiral of action research cycles consisting of 3 major phases: planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Zuber-Skerrit, 1991, p. 2). In chapter 4, the action research cycle(s) and/or phases are modified in order to suit this study. Subsequently, action research requires as its goals improvement of practice as well as the involvement of those affected by the practice (Grundy & Kemmis as cited in Grundy, 1988, p. 353). Participatory action research was therefore chosen for this study. A research design of this nature enabled me and the participants to understand the role of critical thinking in engaging with literary works.

No new knowledge can be arrived at if there is no problem to be investigated, Karl Popper (as cited in Hofstee, 2006) succinctly reminds us. Historically, especially in Western countries like Britain and England, the teaching of literary art served as means towards preserving, carrying and transmitting values and customs of dominant cultures. This role of literature in education and society is further identified by Culler (1997) by pointing out that literature serves as an activity of the cultural elite where teaching, learning and reading about one's culture is believed to be an alternative way of providing one with a stake in the culture being learned or read about. In addition Eagleton (1983) reveals that literature plays an important role in enhancing a deeper establishment of cultural and social values. He further points out that literature is an ideology in the sense that it has the most intimate relations to the question of social power. It was therefore, the purpose of this study to investigate the extent to which

learners make use of literary art, having been introduced to critical literacy, to understand the socio-political circumstances of South Africa. Learners did not have to read literature for the sake of reading, but should understand the role literature plays in society, in their lives, the way they read stories, and the ways in which such stories shape their identities so that they reconsider the role of literature in their lives and their communities. It has to be mentioned that conducting research is prone to the researcher's biases because the idea that prompts one to conduct research in the first place comes from the researcher. It was necessary and important to try and reduce the impact or biasness that might influence the research activity and findings. While one could not completely divorce oneself from such influences or biases, they should be as minimal as possible.

I was cautious about my own biases influencing my perceptions and interpretations. Consequently, I subjected these to rigorous scrutiny by myself, participants, and superiors. This was done in a manner guided by literature on validity and reliability in terms of qualitative research. The action-research inquiry strategy used in this study was consistent with taking a reflexive, critical approach to claims to knowledge. This was because action research is primarily concerned with a pragmatic improvement of practice; it aims at praxis, i.e., the integration of theory and practice, (Mc Niff & Whitehead, 2006; Zuber-Skerritt, 2001). During action research, observation and reflection were entered into during an implementation of what was understood to be best practice at the time. What emerged from that understanding was modified, moving the researcher into new directions, which formed the basis of the next cycle of implementation, observation and reflection. The process was repeated until practice was improved in the desired manner (Mc Niff & Whitehead, 2006). Action research is flexible and responsive. It is not bound by a particular methodology, but instead takes a pragmatic view of the research process. This flexibility and responsiveness makes action research suitable for researching complex situations (Swepson, 1995), such as those explored in this study.

Also appropriate for researching complexity was the focus on qualitative data collection and transformation used in this study. The researcher's powers of observation, analysis and interpretation were central to these processes, since only a human instrument is considered sensitive enough to detect the nuances and richness in such data (Merriam, 1988; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Qualitative reporting was used on in this dissertation. This was appropriate for

providing readers an opportunity to form alternative interpretations and to abstract principles relevant to their local conditions. In this way the value of this study could be extended (Stake, 1994; Cohen & Manion, 2000). Each targeted section of work was scheduled to take a period of six months. That was however, not the case in this study due to the fact that the ethical clearance was obtained during October 2010 and it was the time for the examinations. We then agreed with participants that we were going to do our activities during the times when they were not writing. These activities involved informal discussions, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, engaging in critical thinking tasks as well as writing of assignments.

The data collection took a period of six weeks including 2 weeks of January 2011. That is the reason why this action research was approached in 1 cycle of 3 steps including Planning and Observing phase, Action Phase and Reflection phase, reflection was also infused in all the other steps. This involved data collection and/or reflection throughout the six weeks research period. Initially I based my preparation and implemented teaching strategies and tasks on a literature based understanding of how to promote critical thinking. During the implementation (ACT phase) period I collected data, and analysed and reflected on it. Critical thinking tasks; semi-structured-interviews, and learners' assignments were used to collect such data. Guided by this and further literature examination, I altered the strategy taken in subsequent steps of the action research cycle. While this research was conducted over such a tight period, a variety of data from all the participants involved were collected. I ensured thoroughness and data saturation that allowed for triangulation (Merriam, 1988).

Other practices aimed at ensuring validity, in the sense used in qualitative research, included subjecting the study to scrutiny through a process of critical discourse (Zuber-Skerritt, 2001). This included engaging in discussions with critical friends and a validation group, the participants (Mc Niff & Whitehead, 2006). The participants of the study were the learners (Grade 11) I taught in 2010. This is consistent with the focus of action research on *in situ* practice (Mc Niff & Whitehead, 2006). These learners came from a wide variety of academic performance in English Literary Studies, with an approximate equal gender representation. Before data collection was commenced, learners and their parents were informed about the research to allow them to decide on whether or not to give consent to the learners' participation (See Appendix A).

1.3. STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

The focus and purpose of this study is provided in chapter 1. In this chapter I provide the background and the reasons why I had find myself interested in the study of developing critical thinking skills in learners using literary art. Chapter 2 provides the review of related literature. This study later draws on this review for its conceptual and theoretical referents. The theoretical framework from which the research was approached is outlined in Chapter 3. In the presentation of this framework, the South African curriculum, critical thinking, practice, dialectical materialism, and historical materialism are discussed in greater detail than has been done in this introduction. In the discussion on research methodology in Chapter 4, I justify the use of the research design utilized, describe how data were collected, analysed and interpreted, and discuss the study's validity and reliability and its limitations. Chapter 5 is a description of the development I underwent regarding the teaching strategies and tasks implemented during the period of this research. The dissertation ends, in Chapter 6, with a summary, a discussion of the suggestions and implications of this work.

1.4   CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 presented the concept 'literature' and also provided the rationale of the study in terms of why there was a need to promote critical thinking. The research approach was articulated as well as theoretical frames. The issues investigated in this study revolved around translating the definition(s) of critical thinking into manageable tasks in the classroom situation. Literature shows that teachers who wish to teach their students to think critically are unable to do so (Stott, 2008, Beaumont, 2010). The focus of this study then, was on the relationship between literary art, education and society, and literature's potential role in the promotion of critical thinking among learners. Singh's (2003) study, for example, investigates ways in which literary studies within schooling contexts can develop learners' skills to interrogate how social relations of power are expressed through textual representation. The interrogation of the discourses at work in the text regarding race, class, gender, and ethnicity, for example, are the focal points. The chapter argued that it is in this context that critical thinking skills would enable learners to make informed judgements and think critically about society so that the history of apartheid in South Africa was not repeated.

CHAPTER 2

Addressing Critical Thinking through Literature in the
Additional Language Classroom

2.1   Introduction

There are various reasons the study was interested in learning, teaching, and reading literary works. Some people read because they want to improve their writing skills since reading and writing are like 2 sides of the same coin. So, one might read because they are interested in seeing how writers construct sentences. Some people just have a passion for reading, rather than a confidence in one's ability as a critical reader. Learning, teaching, and reading of literary works were seen in this study as a strategy to develop and inculcate skills for learners so that they become critical readers of literary art, which in turn would make them more participatory citizens in a democratic society. Chapter 2 takes these issues further. It locates the study within the current understandings of critical thinking as reflected in literature, both internationally and locally. More specifically, this chapter engages critically with current literature on the promotion of critical thinking within South African English Additional Language (EAL) contexts. The chapter further engages with theoretical frameworks within which data are conceptualised, theorised analysed, interpreted and applied in these studies. It is in this context that curricular issues and debates were discussed to understand the place of critical thinking. How other scholars have theorised and conceptualised critical thinking through empirical studies, what instrumentation they have used, and to what effect, for example, were some of the issues this chapter addressed.

The chapter begins by presenting the historical development of the teaching of literature as part of formal education within the international and local contexts. It then engages with ways in which critical thinking is embedded in such a history. The chapter further indicates that, while critical thinking features prominently among the skills to be promoted through formal curriculum in South Africa (DoE 2006), there seems to be observable difficulties in realising this in practice. This, the chapter argues, warrants concerted efforts to investigate strategies to improve the teaching and learning of critical thinking. The chapter then engages with current literature on the promotion of critical thinking and it draws from the theoretical frames used for the study. This engagement focuses on the place of critical thinking in

English as an additional language (EAL) where curricular issues are debated, and argued for, as well as the promotion of critical thinking in the context of schooling. The chapter then moves from curricular issues to how other scholars have conceptualised critical thinking strategies and tasks that effectively promote critical reasoning. The next section turns to a discussion on historical development of the learning and teaching of literature, it then moves to a discussion on how critical thinking was conceptualised in this study.

2.2   Historical Development of Teaching and Learning of Literature

As far as the historical development of teaching and learning of literature is concerned there are different ideological positions (Reid, 1982; Eagleton, 1983; Culler, 1997). For Reid (1982) teaching of literary art began as a means of preserving and transmitting cultures to a wider community of readers. Eagleton (1983) extends this notion and contends that teaching of literary art served as an alternative way of providing one with a stake in the culture being learned. This was as a result of the failure of religion in Victorian England. Eagleton (1983, p. 22) writes that "like religion, literature works primarily by emotion and experience, and so was admirably well-fitted to carry through the ideological task which religion left off". It is in this context that both theorists agree that "early colonialist or English literature served to preserve and transmit values and customs of English culture in the British colonies" (Culler, 1997, p. 38). (Culler, 1997, p. 36) for example writes:

> [Literature] would encounter the selfishness and materialism fostered by the new capitalist economy, offering the middle class and the aristocrats alternative values and giving the workers a stake in the culture that, materially, relegated them to subordinate position. It would at once teach disinterested appreciation, provide a sense of national greatness, create fellow-feeling among the classes, and ultimately functions as a replacement for religion, which seemed no longer to be able to hold society together.

The idea here is not to blame religion, but to show that during that time literature was identical with the opposite of analytical thought and conceptual enquiry (Eagleton, 1983). It is important at this stage to interrogate the implications of the above postulations within the context of a multilingual-multicultural context like SA, since this country is a former British colony.

Culler (1997, p. 36) points out that English literature as a subject of instruction in the colonies of the British Empire, "was charged with giving the natives an appreciation of the greatness of England ... in a historic civilising enterprise". In Marxist terms, this conceptualisation of the role of literature is ideological, that is, England assumed the dominant class positioning and intended to 'interpellate', to use Althusser's (1984) term, the colonised nations.

Writing about the study of English literature, Horn (as cited in Mgqwashu, 2008, p. 302) argues that the knowledge sought for is "knowledge about ourselves, about our ways of thinking, about individual existence which is also and always a social existence". What is central in Horn's argument, Mgqwashu (2008) argues, is that literature, if taught well, forms part of,

> First, of our understanding and critical engagement with the knowledge ('about ourselves, about our ways of thinking and speaking…', secondly the construction of alternative knowledge(s) other than knowledge presented by mainstream cultures (through literary works) and, thirdly thinking about ways in which such knowledge may be disseminated (Mgqwashu, 2008, P. 302).

The abovementioned view is contrary to the view of the study of literature as presented by England to its colonies. It is a view that seems to promote what Morrow (2007) refers to as epistemological access into English literary works. Contrary to presenting literature in order to re-enforce the dominant class position, the above argument by Mgqwashu constructs pedagogy as having potential to represent literary works as instances of life as lived in different contexts. In this way, literature can be used to construct meanings about individual and group identities; constructing and contesting the different subject positions, identities, and knowledge, argued by Horn above. The use of literature in this way is in line with Kemmis & McTaggart's (2000) understanding that practices can be transformed by understanding that practices are the products of particular circumstances. Changing circumstances where practices occur might result in the change of practices. We as teachers and learners can change our practices by introducing critical thinking in our teaching and learning, this study argues.

In the context of democratic South Africa, literature should not be taught to transmit and preserve the culture of the dominant group. Failure to move to a new paradigm may mean that our learners would be unable to "generalise, to grasp relationships such as cause and effect, to predict the consequences of events, to grasp the essential message of speech, novel, a written text, and to evaluate situations through writing" (Mgqwashu, 2008, p. 303). This inability, however, can be transformed into ability if learners are equipped with critical thinking skills. If this inability is not transformed, knowledge(s) about other cultures would be suppressed. It is for this reason, as Balfour (2000, p. 78) puts it: "other scholars argued for less access to European culture, on the basis that it de-valued indigenous cultural forms". This study however, does not suggest that there should be no access to European cultures but such access should not trivialise other people's cultures as it was the case with Britain and its colonies.

Observing the relationship between traditional approaches to English and apartheid ideology, Mgqwashu (2009, p. 296) maintains that "… teachers seemed to be obsessed with completing the English language syllabus". When he writes about the teaching of English in Black South African schools after the introduction of Bantu Education, Balfour (2006, p. 46) correctly points out that, "… English teaching for Black South Africans also began to change, becoming vocationally orientated to prepare pupils for semi-skilled forms of labour that did not require anything more than basic literacy and communicative competence". According to Balfour (2000, p. 48) the abovementioned approach to teaching can be referred to as "the transmission mode of teaching with its emphasis on the authority of the teacher and passivity of learners". In a classroom context, the above view of teaching influenced the choice of texts to be studied. This selection of texts for study in learning institutions required an accompanying pedagogy that emphasised the authority of the text and teacher.

The abovementioned approach is contrary to the role of the reader as understood from a reader-response theory, as well as making available alternative knowledge(s). Young (1987, p. 11) provides an insight into the actual practical implications of the above view in classroom practice: "The teacher would become the explicator of the text's meanings or would offer a powerful role model to pupils ... learning the technique of unlocking textual meanings and internalising the canons of literary judgement and taste". As a result, a text is viewed as a source of authority. Similar sentiments are raised by Moon (1990, p. 34) when he

argues that "traditional reading practices assume literary texts to be 'perfectly' complete and unified". So, this understanding of the nature of English literature shared a utilitarian view of learners as empty pitchers into which knowledge was to be poured, and this made the study of English language in general and of literature in particular an intellectual exercise meant to produce knowledge as an end in itself. In relation to this point Balfour (2000, p. 47) asserts that "Black schooling during the apartheid era failed to focus on analytical competencies for second language speakers of English". This condition was ideologically driven so as to further the gap that existed between social classes.

Literature further served as the means of perpetuating and fostering the gap that existed between social classes. There was thus a deliberate attempt to preserve the status quo to strengthen the hierarchical arrangement of social strata in the English community through the teaching of literary art. While literature tasks transmitted cultural values on one hand, and perpetuated social inequality within the social system on the other, this study argues that literature can also be used as an instrument charged with the task for radically re-organizing the social system.

It was in accordance with the above sentiments that critical thinking was implemented as a teaching strategy that would enable learners realise that texts are ideologically embedded. The idea was to ensure that they read texts with an open mind and were able to identify the issues of bias, prejudice, sexism, as well as racial stereotyping in texts. Through the understanding of critical thinking presented by Chiu (2004) learners were taught to clarify problem points, support claims, recognise assumptions, and distinguish between facts from opinions, thereby showing cognitive flexibility. Chiu's (2009) understanding of critical thinking, which is fully discussed below in section 2.3, is relevant to this study because of its analytical and evaluative nature. These are some of characteristics of critical thinking that were inculcated in learners (Stott, 2008). For this study, arming learners with critical thinking skills enabled them to realise the ideologies embedded in texts and were able to self-reflect on their reading of literature. However, research shows that critical thinking skills are not taught in most public schools, both locally and internationally (Alazzi, 2008; Stott, 2008).

2.3   Critical Thinking Beyond and Within South African borders

Critical thinking was defined in section 1.2 above, what follows is further elaboration of such definition(s) in terms of relevance to this study. Alazzi (2008) conducted a study in Jordan among secondary school Social Studies teachers. These teachers were interviewed regarding their perceptions of teaching critical thinking in their classrooms. Data, including the translation of the audio, video tapes, the Ministry of Education guidelines, textbooks and teachers' manuals were qualitatively analysed. For example, Alazzi (2008) invited participants to freely express their definitions of critical thinking and their knowledge of the related skills. One participant claimed the following: "*Critical thinking is a kind of attitude or disposition. Regarding important issues, we need to have the ability to think critically. What I mean is our attitude that we are always sceptical, questioning, or even denying, followed by reedifying*" (Alazzi, 2008, p. 4). Based on this definition, the teacher contended that he taught critical thinking (Alazzi, 2008).

However, (Alazzi, 2008) argued that when this teacher and other study participants who claimed to teach critical thinking skills in their classrooms were repeatedly observed and video-recorded, it was evident that they did not use strategies in their instruction that support critical thinking. This point was consistent with findings in the earlier study conducted by Alazzi and Chiodo (2004). It revealed that nearly 80 % of the students surveyed indicated that they were not taught critical thinking. This was not surprising because "the Arabic culture in Jordan strives for harmony and security and as a result, questioning is viewed as opposing the accepted ways of doing things; thus, it is not promoted by the educational system" as (Alazzi, 2005, p. 8) pointed out. Inductive analysis was used to analyse documents (Ministry of Education's teaching guide lines and textbook teacher manuals) qualitatively (Mertler, 2009). In other words, data from documents was organised into important patterns and themes in order to construct some sort of framework for presenting the key findings (Johnson, 2008). It was then described as means of systematically organizing and presenting the findings in ways that facilitate the understanding of data (Parsons & Brown, 2002). Finally, it was interpreted, thus corroborated interviews since interviews might make generalisations or claims (Mgqwashu, 2007). These documents were translated and contrasted with teachers' comments regarding the provided assistance of teaching critical thinking. Most study participants were not familiar with the formal definitions of critical thinking and its strategies. This was summarised as follows: the teachers might have intended to teach critical-thinking

skills (their own concept of critical thinking), but when it came to actual instructional time, they did not do so (Allazi, 2008).

The study results indicated that Jordanian secondary school Social Studies teachers were not familiar with the definition and teaching strategies of critical thinking. Ministry guidelines and teacher manuals for the state-required textbooks did not require teachers to teach critical thinking. The latter only provided detailed content information, with minor references to teaching critical thinking. Alazzi's (2008) study in the same context, moreover, confirmed the findings that students did not acquire critical thinking in public schools' education in Jordan (Alazzi, 2008). In comparison to the Jordanian education, where the teaching of critical thinking is not a familiar practice, Chiu (2008) argued for the success of the use of critical thinking by Asian students.

The purpose of Chiu's (2008, p. 42) study was to illustrate how an approach based on culturally appropriate "shepherd metaphor" had helped Asian students studying in America to cross cultural boundaries and to engage in critical thinking online. Shepherd leadership involved knowing students individually, offering cognitive modelling, exercising leadership and calling on silent students' personalities to engage in the lesson. Although students were expected to discuss online, the interest of this (my) study was on how critical thinking was facilitated. Chiu's study was influenced by Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) imbued with shepherd metaphor. CHC influences Asian cultural practices, particularly in Taiwan, Hong-Kong, China, Singapore, Korea and Japan (Biggs, 1996; Wong, 1998; Ho, 2001; Watkins & Biggs, 2001; Wang, 2004). CHC cultivates social harmony, reverence for teachers' authority and silence to avoid confrontation (Chang, 2000; Williams, Watkins, Daly, & Courtney, 2001). The role of a CHC teacher is more than simply that of being a lecturer, but he or she has a moral role as a "parent" with students who have a "collectivist obligation to behave in socially acceptable ways" (Watkins & Biggs, 2001, p. 282). Chiu (2008) points out that CHC naturally leads to concern in an institution where verbalised critical thinking is expected and that is why in his study CHC was permeated with shepherd metaphor in order to cater for critical thinking.

Chiu (2008) found that the online discussion forum accompanied with shepherding served as a "security veil" to enable students to cross the affective cultural boundaries from the "harmony and silence" zone to critical participation (Chiu, 2008, p. 47). A shepherd leader understands her flock sufficiently to practice effective affective support for this progression, even before giving cognitive support. In establishing an affective teacher-student relationship, the researcher took the shepherd leader role and successfully deconstructed culture based-inhibitions regarding challenge and probing. To this end, students were led to a culture of interactive thinking and dialogue. By the end of the study, students had shown themselves able to clarify problem points, support claims, recognise assumptions, and distinguish between facts from opinions and show cognitive flexibility. Chiu (2004) used operational features of critical thinking suggested by Erwing (2000, p. 43) with regard to the following 8 steps based on analysis and evaluation:

- clarify the problem point of the issue;
- identify the background knowledge offered to support a claim;
- recognise unstated assumptions in a statement;
- distinguish facts from opinions and inference;
- check credibility and validity of evidence;
- compare and contrasting the stances of different sources of information; and
- reach a conclusion among diverse sources of information by logical reasoning.

In addition, Chiu (2008, p. 44) stated that, in view of the affective and cultural attributes of the CHC context, the eighth operational definition of critical thinking in the study was: "showing cognitive flexibility and full consideration of affective and cultural factors involved in an issue".

Chiu's (2008) understanding of critical thinking was relevant to my study because of its analytical and evaluative nature. The analytical and evaluative nature of this understanding enabled this study to assess the development of learners in terms of language and critical thinking. For that, learners produced a piece of writing in the form of assignments. Such work was done in order to realise their development in terms of their capacity to think critically. The ability to analyse and evaluate were some of the characteristics of critical thinking this study explored further in the context of schooling (Stott, 2008).

Beaumont's (2010) understanding of critical thinking was provided in chapter 1 above as well as an identification of tasks deemed relevant to promote critical thinking, it is also necessary to highlight that, while it is not the intention of this chapter to offer an exhaustive discussion on such tasks, it is important to note that they can assist teachers translate skills associated with critical thinking into manageable, flexible and usable framework or sequence (Beaumont, 2010). They can be used to decode definition(s) of critical thinking into lessons and classroom activities that promote their practice and development. In order to explore and apply such sequence, this study used *1949,* Govender's (2008) short story. Extensive engagement with this fictional text occurs in Chapter 5 of this thesis, where I used Beaumont's (2010) steps in translating critical thinking into manageable learning tasks. Such engagement was in line with Singh's (2003) assertion that critical thinking proposes literacy as socio-cultural process that allows learners to construct meanings in terms of their lived experiences. It was within that understanding that the classroom became a place where knowledge was constructed and specific intentions between participants were realised as the process of teaching and learning. Thus, critical thinking approach to literary practice and engagement was informed by a pedagogy that allowed for critical engagement with text.

Singh maintains that such textual engagement is conducive to an investigation of how social relations of power and privilege are conveyed through textual representation and through discourses at work in the text regarding race, class, ethnicity and patriarchy. It was within these dynamics that this study investigated pedagogic strategies to inculcate learners' awareness of the social constructedness nature of knowledge. As Gramsci (1971) reminds us, knowledge serves to legitimise the views of particular group(s) in society and make such views universal representation of 'truth(s)'. In relation to this point, Fontana (1993, p. 15) points out that, "in any society one finds that there is a group/class that is capable of forming belief systems, and thus transforms them into universally acceptable concepts of the world". Holloway (in Jansen 1991, p. 4), for example, claims that "most Blacks regard voluntary unemployment as one of life's blessings". What Holloway ignores, however, is that the Job Reservations Act of 1953 in South Africa caused most Black people not to find jobs (Khuzwayo, 2002). This was not because they did not want to work, but institutionalised and naturalised conditions forced them. Such conditions were as a result of a representational form which, by designating discrete human collectiveness, necessarily functioned as an ideology of inclusion and exclusion (Miles & Brown, 2003). In that sense there was a

construction of ideas which perpetuated unequal relations of power through inferiorisation. By inferiorisation I mean the "discourse supported by a specific power dynamic that excludes certain racialised groups as the inferior Other while maintaining the status quo of the Self" (Kubota & Lin, 2009, p. 5). By equipping learners with critical thinking skills they would be in a position to realise such social ills embedded in texts and that is why, within the critical thinking tradition, learners are made aware that texts are value laden. As a result of the above Mgqwashu (2008) cautions us that, teachers should explicate the text's meanings or offer a powerful role model for pupils so that they are in a position to earn the technique of unlocking textual meanings.

The capacity of learners to unlock textual meanings in the classroom context would enable them not to unquestionably assume that literary texts are perfect and complete units presenting universal truth (Moon, 1990). This is the reason Singh (2003) cogitates that learners must critically engage with texts so that they realise how social power and privilege are maintained and conveyed through textual representations. Gee (1999) and Singh (2003), furthermore, argue that critical theory develops affinity groups of readers who are able to identify ideological concerns in texts and their role in the production and circulation of power relations. Within the classroom context, it is the responsibilities of the teacher to assist learners develop this awareness by promoting critical thinking. Singh's (2003) work is relevant to this study because it demonstrates why learners must realise whose interests are dominant in texts, whose are marginalised and why; how particular subject positions attempt to create particular subjectivities; and how positions of (inequality) inequity become naturalised through the dominant discourses conveyed by texts (Gramsci, 1971).

Furthermore, within critical theory approach to learning and teaching of texts, language is viewed as a social process and the meanings conveyed by language are regarded as being socially and culturally situated (Singh, 2003). Such meanings are never neutral and they reinforce particular ideological positioning which produce and reproduce, for example, the racial categorisation of people thereby maintaining social arrangements of power relationships. This is what Miles & Brown (2003, p. 102) refer to as "a dialectical process by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings, as a result of which individuals may be assigned to a general category of persons that reproduces itself biologically. This signals the process by which ideas about race are constructed and come to

be regarded as meaningful, and are acted upon (Murji & Solomos, 2005). The racial categorisation signifies the dominant power relations. Such power relation saw South Africa subjected to apartheid regime and it is a relevant illustration used in this study. According to Jansen (1991, p. 20), that power is translated into a dialectical relationship between power and knowledge: "those who are in power have the ability to define appropriate knowledge through the various channels available to them (the control of research institutions and funding agencies, for example and the knowledge produced as a result legitimates the behaviour of those in power."

Jansen (1991, p. 24) further insists that "research institutes within the Afrikaner Universities have also played a prominent role in producing the kind of knowledge consonant with the interests of the apartheid state". This condition was manifest with the legitimised segregationist policy in education amongst House of Assembly (for Whites Education), House of Delegates (for Indian Education), House of Representative (for Coloured Education), as well as Bantu Education (for Black South Africans). That is the kind of education we do not need in South Africa. That is because Apartheid education produced relations of unequal identities among South African ethnic groups and such relations were naturalised as differences in 'ability' (Rose, 2005).

While the notion of ethnicity appears to be concrete and easy to conceptualise but it is as elusive as race (to be articulated later in chapter 5) given the tremendous variability within a group and similarity among groups (Kubota & Lin, 2009). Nonetheless, in Apartheid South Africa the notion of ethnicity was construed as a biologically determined construct that denote innate or inherent attributes of human beings. Equipped with the skills to think critically learners would be in a position to realise that notions like ethnicity and race are just relational concepts designed/constructed in order to set one group of people apart from another, a process of constructing differences (inferiorisation). This was true in South Africa regarding the Pegging Act (Govender, 2008). This Act was introduced in 1943 and its objective was to classify and/or categorise racial groups in terms of land ownership in SA (Maharaj, 1997). Institutionally, for example, White SA owned a significant portion of SA land while other social groups owned significantly less. Now, Taking the above argument into a classroom situation one finds a situation where some learners would view schooling as their pathway to the future, while others experience schooling as irrelevant, even alienating

(Rose, 2005). So, as the envisaged future leaders, learners should recognise the power knowledge bonding embedded in texts. Critical thinking skills were thus imagined to assist learners in becoming conscious of these social dynamics. Within the South African context, English skills would have to be improved in the classroom in order to achieve the project of promoting critical thinking skills, and research has already started moving in that direction.

Balfour's study (2000), for example, suggested an alternative curriculum which he saw as having potential to improve English skills in the classroom. The underlying assumption in his study was that integrating language and literary skills could have beneficial effects in pupils' progress at secondary level. Concerned about the separation of language studies and literary studies within the formal education, particularly in higher education, both in South Africa and abroad, Mgqwashu (2008, p. 315) asserts that, "The consequence under these circumstances is that students are left with an inability to construct complex and persuasive arguments in writing and fail to engage critically with detail". Implicit in Mgqwashu's concern is a suggestion that meaningful and successful progress requires the mastery of conceptual and linguistic knowledge, both of which get lost when language and literature are taught as separate entities (Clayton, 1994). English skills orientation, however, seems to suggest that grammatical competence is a necessary prerequisite for studying literature (Balfour, 1995). This is the reason Balfour's suggestion that using literary material is an effective method, for it develops students' rhetorical features awareness as used within the context of literary works. For him, students can have the opportunity to think critically if language teaching is accorded the same status as the study of literature (Balfour, 2000). As teachers, we need to educate students to be creative and critical in their engagement with broader societal changes and the accompanying challenges. After all, such issues are embedded in literary texts (Mgqwashu, 2008).

Mgqwashu (2008) further argues that English studies need to raise students' awareness of how complex discourse works within a discursive, cultural, and social critique, not simply in literary texts. He insists that:

> ... language used in literary texts is often a product of a 'slavish' observation
> of specific 'imposed' literary conventions alien to ways in which we use
> language under ordinary circumstances and/or when producing texts

(spoken and written) within the scope of different academic genres valued

within the university (Mgqwashu, 2008 p. 319).

If this awareness is raised, Mgqwashu continues, students are presented with an opportunity to construct complex and persuasive arguments in writing and engage critically with detail (Mgqwashu, 2008). Such engagement with detail requires critical thinking skills. Stott (2008) provides empirical data about tasks that have potential for promoting critical thinking in the classroom.

Stott (2008) points out that the context for such tasks must be authentic and meaningful. This is because research suggests that using real-life learning contexts improves the likelihood that learners will engage in critical thinking (Fraker, 1995; Sparapani, 1998; Alvarez, Burks, Sotoohi, King, Hulan & Grayam, 2000). Furthermore, McCarthy (1992) adds that critical thinking, using real-life contexts, can be achieved by intrinsic motivation, the purposefulness and interest inherent to real-life contexts to which a type of critical thinking applies. Such contexts need to be used to indicate the consequences of critical and uncritical thinking. This can be an effective strategy to enable the transfer of thinking between contexts and in developing a disposition to habitually think critically and developing a desire to want to think critically (Bailin, 2002). The degree of open-enedness of the task is another characteristic of the tasks that have a potential to promote critical thinking. Gott and Duggan (in Stott, 2008) classify investigative tasks according to whether they are open or closed in each of the aspects:

- defining the problem;
- choosing the method and;
- arriving at solutions.

If the task is open-ended, it engages and challenges learners to think critically ((Milton, 1993; Potts, 1994). Critical thinking is required to search for and formulate questions. So it is to be expected that tasks which are open in defining a problem may encourage critical thinking (Stott, 2008).

Resnick (1987) points out that higher order thinking is non-algorithmic in that the method chosen to solve a particular problem is not prescribed and, as a result, multiple solutions can be expected, each with costs and benefits. It is therefore, the ability of the learner to apply his or her critical thinking skills to determine the benefits of the method chosen. Length of time is another characteristic of tasks' potential for critical thinking. Critical thinking is complex, as Lipman (1991) adds, and it involves substantive and procedural thinking. That is thinking about concepts at the same time using heuristics and exerting metacognition, as well as imposing order on disorder. As a result, tasks which do not require use of multiple concepts and strategies maybe less effective in inducing critical thinking. To encourage critical thinking in my classroom, for example, ample time was a requisite. This was because learners I worked with speak EAL, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).

Issues of LoLT and home languages spoken by learners need to be taken into consideration when the intention is to promote critical thinking in the classroom. Most learners in the South African public schools, for example, do not speak English as a home language and since English is the language of learning and teaching, it has potential to limit learners' thinking capabilities (Stott, 2008). This is not because they are unable to think, but because the language they use does not allow them to. Adam (1999) and Mashike (2000) term this an 'inappropriate language' as a key feature of the failure of tasks to promote critical thinking in South African classrooms.

Such a condition is also true when considering the variety of resources required in order to support critical thinking such as the internet, library, computer, radio, and video (Stott, 2008). Most South African schools are poorly resourced (du Preez, 1998). At the school where the study was conducted, for example, none of the above mentioned resources were available. A situation like that makes it difficult to support tasks that promote critical thinking. It is therefore necessary to reflect on the context of the South African first additional language in relation to current understanding of critical thinking.

2.4   Context for South African English Additional Language

This section discusses literature that concerns itself with the nature of educational disadvantage that comes with speaking EAL. The current learning and teaching of English additional language lacks the quality that it requires because of the unavailability and/or

limited educational resources in most Black township schools, among other things. In relation to this condition, Mgqwashu (2007, p. 122) argues that such schools "still suffer from the scarcity of educational resources such as school-owned television sets and tape recorders; the absence or poor quality of school and community libraries, and home environments that are not conducive to learning". Mgqwashu (2009, p. 295) continues to point out that "educational resources are either limited or simply non-existent in Black township and rural schools". While Sparapani (1998) indicates that a variety of resources are required in order to support critical thinking, poorly resourced schools in South Africa remain a huge challenge (du Preez, 1998). Some of these resources have been mentioned above. It is only the photo stating facility that was available in the school I conducted the study, for example, and could not be used by anyone at any time. Mgqwashu (2009, p. 295) reveals, for example, that: "In 2003 the Gauteng Province Education Ministry expressed its concerns about a massive immigration of learners from South Western Township (SOWETO) schools to former Whites-only schools, a consequence of which, most township schools are still appallingly under-resourced".

Sparapani (1998) rightly concludes that a variety of resources may be needed to support critical thinking, and when these are not present, interest in thinking critically can easily wane. In addition, quality human resources in the form of qualified teachers are necessary so that they are able to comprehend and apply critical thinking discourse in the classroom, such a discourse is discussed in detail in chapter 3. Stott (2008) argues that teachers struggle to implement the new approach to a teaching strategy designed to promote critical thinking skills because they cannot understand what is meant by critical thinking, implying a lack of conceptual interpretation and understanding.

Furthermore, the observations by Bayat (2002) and Mgqwashu (2009) reveal that rural parents send learners to English multicultural schools and that is because English is given an elevated position as the primary LoLT in South Africa. The potential danger with this attitude, however, is that parents and learners do not understand that in any multicultural society, the values, meanings, and structures inherent in language are not shared by all members (Kress as cited in Bayat, 2002). In the context of this move to ex-model-C schools, learners are introduced to the dominant culture of the school and would be expected to conform to the expectations of the second culture. This inevitably results in the glossing over

of new and/or different ethnic identities in these schools as inequalities between mother tongue and non-mother tongue learners come together. Discursive practices that are owned and controlled by mother tongue speakers of English predominate. This means that not all students within such an environment possess the cultural capital to negotiate meanings successfully within the discipline of English. According to Mgqwashu (2008) some students are unable to choose grammatical structures according to the purpose for which they produce texts. In addition, Mgqwashu (2009, p. 295) reminds us that "most learners from Black township schools received very little exposure to English in environments conducive to effective learning". The learning and teaching process that had little exposure to English took place during apartheid period, but it may still be occurring in most Black township schools. Samuel (1995, p. 17) notes:

> The supposed medium in such schools is English. In reality the classroom is characterised by a mixture of both Zulu and English. Such a linguistic environment maybe said to promote the experimentation with the language acquisition process. However, with the emphasis on producing the accurate second language form that dominates within this environment, the classroom usually resorts to a process of grammar translation.

Tendencies like these ignore learners' general and individual needs. Learners cannot be confident enough to ask questions in the language of instruction where they do not understand because they lack the vocabulary with which to access the language of instruction. It is in this context that students end up not engaging in analytical exercises; one of the requirements of critical thinking (Mgqwashu, 1999, 2008; Balfour, 2000; Stott, 2008). English grammar lessons in most Black township schools during and after apartheid came to focus more on communicative as well as process writing than on analytical competences, which translated into exercises like articles, tenses, and parts of speech (Balfour, 2000; Bayat, 2002; Mgqwashu, 2009). Bayat (2002, p. 24) argues that "South African learners who belong to 'previously disadvantaged' groups are ignorant of such discursive rules because they are from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds". In order to promote critical thinking, learners, whether taking English as First language or Additional language , should be made aware of the linguistic choices made by writers that they are not innocent, natural or arbitrary (Bayat, 2002). This will enable learners to successfully interrogate the content presented before them (Stott, 2008).

Since critical thinking demands that learners come into the classroom with a "constellation of acquired abilities" library and internet facilities are a necessity (Mgqwashu, 2008, p. 321). Balfour (2000, p. 46) argues that "...English teaching for Black South Africans was vocationally oriented to prepare pupils for semi-skilled forms of labour that did not require anything more than basic literacy and communicative competence." Currently, the final draft of the English First Additional Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document is based on communicative competence in English language classrooms (DoE, 2010). In relation to this point, the document maintains that:

> The approaches to teaching language are text based, communicative, integrated and process oriented. A communicative approach suggests that when learning language, a learner should have a great deal of exposure to the target language and many opportunities to practise or produce the language by communicating for social or practical purpose. Language learning should be natural, informal process carried over into the classroom where literacy skills of reading/ viewing and writing/ presenting are learned in a 'natural' way – learners read by doing a great deal of reading and learn to write by doing much writing (DoE CAPS, 2010, P. 8)

While it is commendable that learners should be able to communicate with members from other language groups, it is not enough if the goal is to inculcate critical thinking skills. It is pointed out from CAPS (2010, p. 8) that in terms of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades 10–12, the aim is to produce learners who are able to: *"identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical thinking; collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information".* Nonetheless, CAPS (2010, PP. 8 & 10) is silent on how such skills are to be achieved, except mentioning that: "the language teaching approaches are text based and communicative ... approaches to teaching literature should focus on teaching for comprehension and will include the reading process strategies (pre-reading, reading and post/ after reading".

Some of the educators are not ready to implement the alternative approaches in EAL classrooms (Stott, 2008). Stott (2008) further argues that old strategies and practices which are grossly inadequate, unfair, and discriminatory are still in operation in some schools. Old and traditional teaching practices could not promote critical thinking because in some Black

township schools, where English is taken as an additional language more than a decade later, the emphasis is on the authority of the teacher and passivity of the learner (Mgqwashu, 2009). Balfour (2000, p. 48) refers to this condition as the "transmission mode of teaching". Claiming that the teachers should implement the ideals of the intended curriculum, some of which deal with the promotion of critical thinking, without clearly stating how that should be achieved could result into such official documents remaining unhelpful, political rhetoric.

2.5   Curriculum

The NCS grade 10-12 was designed to develop a high level of knowledge and skills in learners. The document indicates that social justice requires the empowerment of those sections of the population previously disempowered by a lack of knowledge and skill. This point was also shared by the Department of Education (DoE) that there is a need for the development of high knowledge and high skills in learners at school level where the NCS specifies the minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each grade and sets high, yet achievable standards in all subjects   (DoE, 2006). Further Education and Training National Curriculum Statements (FETNCS) (DoE, 2003a) also, unambiguously and unreservedly, mentions critical thinking as well as English Language National Curriculum Statements (2003a, 2006). Explicit mention of critical thinking is made in critical outcome 1 of the National Curriculum: *"identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking",* critical outcome 4: *"collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information",* and critical outcome 7: *"demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation"* (DoE, 2006, p. 2).

Inquiry problem solving, critical communication and evaluation are interpreted as involving critical thinking (Lipman, 1991; Hobden, 2002). Taking into account the third assessment standard (AS) of English Additional Language and Learning Outcome (LO), which is about reading and viewing, one can interpret this as implicitly referring to critical reasoning. LO 2, AS 3.1 and LO 2 AS 3.2, state that learners must: *"explain socio-cultural and political values, attitudes and believes such as attitudes towards gender, class, age, power relations, human rights, inclusivity and environmental issues; and "recognise the nature of bias, prejudice and discrimination"*, respectively (DoE, 2006, p. 27). Such LOs and ASs were

thrust to theoretical frames for this study as well as principle 3 of NCS, "*high knowledge and high skills*".

The above mentioned policy positions are the basis upon which the South African curriculum is founded. Critical thinking features importantly amongst the skills to be promoted. The CAPS Grade 10-12 document proclaims that the following objectives, among others, should be achieved in an additional language classroom:

> *learner must be able to express and justify their own ideas, views and emotions confidently in order to become independent and analytical thinkers; learners should be able to use language as a tool for critical and creative thinking and the objective to recognise that knowledge is socially constructed through language and anguage and thought are closely connected; learners are able to interact critically with a wide range of texts* so that they *will recognise and be able to challenge the perspectives, values and power relations that are embedded in texts* (CAPS, 2010, p. 3).

Critical paradigm teaches us that knowledge is socially constructed. In that sense, it tends to serve the interests of certain individuals (powerful groups) in society who happen to be at the forefront in the production of knowledge. Developing critical thinking skills is relevant in the context of the study because, as Moon (1990, p. 34) reveals: "traditional reading practices assume literary texts to be 'perfectly' complete and unified". In these conditions learners are not given an opportunity to actively interpret and meaningfully engage with the text and critical thinking is compromised.

Furthermore, in preparation for elections in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) stated: "Education shall be based upon the principles of cooperation, critical thinking and civic responsibility" (ANC, 1994, p. 4). This was followed by a White Paper on education under the new system of governance (DoE 1995, p. 17) and it stated: "The curriculum, teaching methods and text books at all levels and in all programs of education and training should encourage independent and critical thought". From these postulations, one can conclude that critical thinking is viewed as a necessary condition for effective learning and teaching and this would in turn lift all South Africans out of all types of segregationist attitude imposed by apartheid era by realising, among other things, the social construction of

knowledge as mentioned earlier (Habermas, 1972, 1984; Bester & Pienaar, 2002; Higgs, 2002). According to Habermas (1972), knowledge serves different interests. These interests are socially constructed and knowledge constitutive because they shape and determine what counts as the objects and type of knowledge.

For effective learning and teaching to take place, instruction should be informed by knowledge, skills, and attitudes learners bring into the classroom (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Unless instruction is sensitive to what learners bring, learning is unlikely to be effective. The teacher has to be sensitive to cultural differences related to class participation and to self-image with regards to learning aptitude (Bransford et al., 2000). The teacher should encourage attitudes conducive to effective learning through the choices made and through taking an interest in individual learners (Stott, 2008). This is so important because in our contemporary world racial difference has increasingly been replaced by the notion of cultural difference, a more benign and acceptable signifier than race, yet used as a means to exclude the experiences of certain racial/ethnic groups as Other and undesirable (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; May, 2001; Van Dijk, 1993). Sharing the same function with the idea of race, cultural difference is conveniently used to differentiate, exclude, or privilege certain groups of people (Kubota & Nil, 2009).

If the teacher is not sensitive to learners' needs and difficulties, critical thinking skills are unlikely to be promoted because they are not the consequence of coincidence, but the environment conducive for such skills to be promoted must be created. Else, learners are most likely to remain with unresolved questions about texts they read (Mgqwashu, 2009). The consequence of this is that when it comes to tests and/or examinations on what was read in a novel or taught from certain worksheets, learners "simply look for passages with words or phrases that appeared on the questions, and rewrite, either the whole paragraph or sentence from the set works" (Mgqwashu, 2009, p. 296). Contrary to this learning and teaching situation, critical thinking is "meant to allow learners to construct knowledge for themselves while working collaboratively on authentic tasks" (Stott, 2008, p. 2). Such tasks are enquiry based, analytical, must be open-ended and reflective (Langer, 1992; Pohl, 2005; Stott, 2008). It would be virtually impossible for learners to engage in such tasks in classrooms not conducive to promote critical thinking. The state of affairs indicated above regarding EAL demonstrated to me that there was a need for research into characteristics and implementation

of tasks, considered successful in promoting critical thinking for EAL within a real school setting; thereby provide an opportunity for teachers to narrow the gap between policy and ideals of practice (Stott, 2008). This study has a vital potential role to play in coming up with ways to ensure that the objectives of the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) (2002) and CAPS (2010) are achievable.

2.6   The Development of Critical Thinking

In this section I discuss studies in which empirical data was collected regarding the promotion of critical thinking. It was necessary to critically engage with the relevance of such data for this study in terms of developing and promoting critical thinking. The understanding found in these studies was used to develop a programme for teaching and learning of literature in order to improve critical thinking for learners. Research findings in Mabunda's (2008) study were used for such purpose, for example.

Mabunda investigated the extent to which the teaching of literary art in the Faculty of Education, School of Language, Literacies, Media and Drama Education to English student teachers of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, prepares students with knowledge and pedagogic practices to empower learners with skills for social transformation. Skills required for social transformation are critical thinking skills. Mabunda (2008, p. 33) points out that "the teaching of literature … serves as a tool for developing critical thinking in student teachers…engage critically with literary art independently as it would assist them in the classroom setting". In order for English student teachers to develop critical thinking so as to inculcate it into learners, the establishment of a new set of criteria in which formulating educational objectives, literary curricula and materials need to be relevant to students' lived experiences. In addition, Mabunda (2008, p. 36) suggests "interpretive strategies" which will provide student teachers with theoretical lenses that sharpen their vision and providing alternative ways of seeing the world they find themselves in. He argues that such strategies will assist student teachers to cultivate critical skills in learners, and make them realise their part in the struggle for power between different ideologies. So, interpreting literary works does not only lie in words in themselves but also in conceptual understanding. It is therefore acceptable that two people can have two different interpretation of the same text given their background and the knowledge of the world they bring into the text (Samuel, 1995).

Singh (2003) advocates the concept of Critical Literacy in the field of literature and its role towards achieving literary criticism. Both Research recommends that open-ended questions engage learners thinking critically (Milton, 1993; Potts, 1994). (Pudi, 1999) confirms the notion of open-ended questions when he states that closed-ended questioning limits critical thinking in South Africa's classes studied during the research he conducted. Singh (2003, p. 38) adds that "Critical Literacy is an approach to the teaching of literature in which learners and educators exist as co-investigators of messages, ideas, and meanings in textual studies". According to Singh (2003, p. 37), Critical Literacy is informed by "critical pedagogy" which views the system of education as socially constructed and rooted at the centre of power relations. In this way schools transmit the "universally reigning ideology" while simultaneously maintaining the image of being a "neutral environment purged of ideology" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). Such an ideology can be transmitted through literary works. I intended to demonstrate through literature that "schools are relatively autonomous institutions that can also provide spaces for oppositional behaviour and teaching…" (Giroux, 1983, p. 260).

In order to get insights into power relations embedded in texts Singh (2003) used poststructuralist's understanding for textual practices. Singh (2003, p. 67) used this understanding to realise that "texts serve particular interests and therefore attempts to involve particular subjectivities within readers". Singh (2003, pp. 70-71) also used insights from genre based approach in order to "interrogate the text in terms of relations of power conveyed through discourses at work in the text". Singh's (2003) insights are important for this study because, as Habermas (1972, 1984) notes with concern that such power relations in relation to the constructedness nature of knowledge must be interrogated so that learners and teachers can make informed judgements about their learning and teaching which is one of the intentions of this study. Critical Pedagogy notes that certain types of knowledge legitimates gender, class, and racial interests, and can therefore be disempowering. This point is also made by Reid (1982) when he asserts that:

> Critical literacy ... prepares ... [students] from all classes in such a way that they are able to receive education in its fullest sense and to the sense of their capacity to cope with themselves and the society they find themselves in, to gain a proper understanding of their environment, their culture and its systems (Reid, 1982, p. 6).

Critical Literacy as an approach to teaching literature, as suggested above, develops the potentialities of each individual in such a way that the educated individual is able to make informed judgements and think critically. Within the context of this study, one way of achieving these abilities was to design tasks that have potential for promoting critical thinking. Most importantly, pedagogic practices in the teaching of literature should encourage learners as future leaders to explore various sources of knowledge that would enable them to learn to reflect critically on the society in which they find themselves. Tasks needed to be designed to achieve the above mentioned scenario of encouraging critical thinking in the context of classroom.

According to Mehlinger (1995), the context in which learning is taking place must be meaningful to learners. This would encourage the transfer of learning to new contexts (Newman, Secada & Wehlange, 1995). Research suggests that using real-life learning contexts improves the likelihood that learners would engage in critical thinking (Fraker, 1995; Sparapani, 1998; Alvarez et al., 2000). Learners should be motivated regarding the purposefulness and interest inherent to real-life contexts to which a type of critical thinking applies, and using real-life contexts to indicate the consequences of critical and uncritical thinking. Such a situation can be effective in enabling the transfer of thinking between contexts in developing a disposition to habitually think critically (McCarthy, 1992) and in developing a desire to want to think critically (Bailin, 2002).

In terms of this study, establishing meaningful, real-life context in the classroom was important because learners should be able to transfer the skills they learned outside the classroom. It is for this reason that this study was driven by the need to teach learners' knowledge and skills, critical thinking and reasoning, so that they become sensitive to such phenomena as racism, sexism, discrimination, and a range of other social ills which dominated the apartheid education system. The study insists that the teaching of literary art must be seen as one of the critical means of ensuring that learners are able to understand the socio-political realities which shaped the country they find themselves in. Such an endeavour rendered them as potential contributors to the future development of our society. It was therefore important to understand how literary art as a social expression makes for an effective tool in establishing the socio-political realties that shaped South Africa.

The emphasis was on task performance and knowledge application and, most importantly, it was how tasks were designed in order to allow students to develop their own knowledge. The design of tasks in this manner resulted in effective learning where knowledge was internalised and the ability to apply such knowledge in a variety of situations strengthened (Greening, 1998). In other words, I had to look at the potential of the task to determine its success in critical thinking and promotion as it has been alluded to above. Once I understood what is meant by critical thinking, it was possible to design tasks as mentioned above.

2.7   Conclusion

Chapter 2 located the study within the current understandings of critical thinking as reflected in various studies, both locally and internationally. More specifically, the chapter engaged critically with the historical development of the teaching and learning of literature beyond and within South Africa's borders. Furthermore, the current literature on the promotion of critical thinking within the SA EAL contexts was critically discussed. The chapter further engaged with theoretical frameworks within which data were analysed, interpreted and approached in these studies. It was in this context that curricular issues and debates were discussed to understand the place of critical thinking in EAL classrooms within the South African context. How other scholars have theorised and conceptualised critical thinking through empirical studies, the instrumentation they have used, and to what effect, were some of the questions Chapter 2 addressed. The intention was to identify the available instrumentation that had proven validity and reliability in studies similar to this one (Mouton, 2001). How teaching strategies and tasks could be designed for effective teaching and learning of literary works in order to encourage critical thinking formed the concluding part of Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 3

Orthodox Marxism on real and concrete human and social conditions

3.1   Introduction

Chapter 3 discusses the concepts and theories used in the study by explaining why such concepts and theories are relevant to this study. Orthodox Marxism, away from the functionalist, economic determinist explanation of the relationship between schools and capitalist production (Au, 2006) for example, is one of the main theories discussed. This theory was chosen because it draws quite directly on real and concrete human and social conditions. Not approached from economic determinism, Marxism does take into account other pertinent issues (but not only limited to material conditions of the proletariat), for example, the relative autonomy of the superstructure to the economic base (Althusser, 1971). As a result, Marxism was incorporated to form the basis upon which different groups, including learners and teachers, could be encouraged to see the need to promote, instil, and encourage critical thinking in English classrooms so that the disempowered voices like women, consumers, immigrants, and the likes are given the space they deserve, thereby exposed and challenged through literary works.

Furthermore, the Chapter demonstrates that learners constructed their knowledge by employing Constructivism as a theory of learning. This was in terms of how they were assisted by the help of the teacher in creating alternative knowledge(s) in dealing with issues discussed above. Constructivism is a theory of learning which posits that students learn by actively constructing their knowledge, and that was relevant for this study (von Glasersfeld, 1996; Fosnot, 1996; Duffy and Cunningham, 1996). Nonetheless, constructivism had to be modified so as to fit within the environment the study was conducted, that is, English as an Additional Language context. This was the reason Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was used in conjunction with constructivism to initiate "scaffolding" (Vygotsky, 1978).

Reader-Response theory was also an ideal theory chosen because it painstakingly takes into account the learners' personal response to a text by allowing literature to be relevant to their lives and makes it possible for multiple interpretations to be accepted, rather than just one

correct interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1938; Iser, 1978). Nevertheless, because there was a real text involved in this process to which learners had to refer to justify or modify their responses, not all readings were acceptable and some were more so than others. So, as readers, learners had to map out possibilities and impossibilities of meaning. The number of concepts and theories used in this study are, consequently, described and explained in detail in this chapter.

3.2 Concepts and Theories to Engage with the Phenomenon

3.2.1   Literary Art

In this section I adopt Fredrick Jameson conceptualisation of literary criticism. Jameson (1981) develops a powerful argument about narrative and interpretation. He believes that narrative is not just a literary form or mode but an essential 'epistemological category' where reality presents itself to the human mind only in the form of stories, even science for that matter, is a form of a story. Furthermore, he contends that all stories require interpretation. Jameson (1971) proposes a critical method in the analysis of novels. This method includes three 'horizons' involving immanent analysis, social discourse analysis, and an epochal level of Historical reading. In that sense Jameson accepts Althusser's view of the social totality as a 'decentred structure' in which various levels develop in relative autonomy and work on different time-scales. For the purpose of this study however, I also incorporate (Geertsema, 2007) recasting of Fredric Jameson's famous characterization of narrative as "the imaginary resolution of real contradictions"[1] and understand fictional (and narrative) literature as the imaginary negotiation of identity. Geertsema (2007) maintains that this may be a particularly fruitful way in which to consider South African writing today since it captures the active process of identity formation implicit in all narrative writing, including texts marked explicitly as fictions. From this perspective one might then say that literature is a way of negotiating difference: it is a means of constructing a self and therefore necessarily a way of relating to others, which in terms of South Africa of course explicitly includes *racialised* others. Literature is tied up with the negotiation of identity and thereby difference concerns

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[1] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*: *Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981. 77. Also compare 118: the ideologeme can be grasped "as the imaginary resolution of the objective contradictions to which it thus constitutes an active response."

its relation to the past (Geertsema, 2007). But, of course, literature is not merely a mimetic reflection of some or other given reality; it is not merely a response to a given set of parameters "out there" in reality. Nor is it, on the other hand, just an imaginative engagement with that reality which necessarily elides contradiction and might thus be understood as a thoroughly ideological mystification of the real Geertsema (2007). Rather, literature is taken as a mediation of the social and thus an imaginative engagement with society that helps shape it. Seen in these terms, literature is closely tied up with *identity*. Thus, the pervious knowledge of the reader plays an important part here because it provides the reader with the power to give meaning to the text, interpreting the text based on his/her previous knowledge of the world (Samuel, 1993).

In Govender's *1949* (2008) for example, *(the short story chosen for the study)*, there is an imaginary negotiation of identity where the lives of the majority of South Africans were affected by such identity construction. In the short story there is portrayal of this mediation informed by the ideology of the time:

> It was the year 1949 and by then the Durban municipality had passed on the notorious Pegging Act, the forerunner of the Group Areas Act. The legislation was intended to 'peg the encroaching hordes of Indians and Blacks to their boundaries'. ... Looking at the Mahomedys move in, right next to the garage, Osborne was livid, 'Why, in God's name, don't these people go and live with the rest in their own areas? Why do they insist on living with us? ... 'Bloody bastards! Give them an inch and they take a yard. They should send them all back to India (Govender, 2008, p. 106).

The role of government in that was the creation and maintenance of the segregationist social as well as education policies (Khuzwayo, 2002). In that way people were made to believe that they had to live separately and thus received different benefits from the government. Readers' attention in this passage was thus drawn to the experiences of apartheid South Africa and such attention could be relevant to the present 'new' South Africa. Certain ideologies that shaped South Africa then could be identified in this context. However, in order for learners to be able to identify such ideologies in texts, they need to be equipped with a particular skill, and in the context of this study, critical thinking.

The phasing in of the new curriculum in the FET phase in 2006 in South Africa meant that such a skill could be realised. This is because such a curriculum emphasises skills to be achieved by learners in the classroom context, and one of such skills is critical thinking and is named 3 times in the cross-curricular outcomes (DoE, 2003a, 2006, 2007). Drawing from examples of Beaumont (2010) in terms of tasks sequencing, I demonstrate how such a skill was developed in chapter 5. What follows is the conceptualisation of ideology as applicable to this study.

3.2.2 Ideology

(Ashley, 1989) points out that ideology can be understood as referring to any comprehensive and mutually consistent set of ideas by which a social group makes sense of the world. While this definition offers a general interpretation of the concept, it is important to mention that the connotations of this term have differed widely for scholars and critics. For Marxists, for example, ideology is generally used to describe the world-view of the dominant class, and is used to perpetuate and maintain unequal power relations in society (Ashley, 1989). The view of the dominant class gets institutionalised. In South Africa, for example, the separation of different racial groups was meant to be seen as 'true', fact of life and how it should be, thereby maintaining unequal power relations in society. In Govender's *1949*, Mr. Osborne, a White South African, for example, was made to believe that the land belonged to White people of South Africa, and that South Africa was for White people only. If anyone other than a White person was given land that was simply White peoples' mercy towards non-whites. This is evident when he asks: "*Why, in God's name, don't these people go and live with the rest in their own areas? Why do they insist on living with us? ... 'Bloody bastards! Give them an inch and they take a yard"* (Govender, 1008, p. 106). Ironically, "*their own areas*" were the areas which were allocated to them by the government of the time through the Group Areas Act of 1953 (Khuzwayo, 2002). Writing about the social construction of whiteness (identity) and white privilege (McIntosh, 1997) argues that whiteness exerts its power as an invisible and unmarked norm against which all Others are racially and culturally defined, marked, and made inferior and therefore not suitable to share a living space with White South Africans, for example.

In such conditions as mentioned above learners' perception of the world is filtered through the cultural artefacts of the dominant social group. Learners and other social groups would be

satisfied with their humble positions and subjectivities rather than challenging such positions since they are conventionally and socially constructed to serve particular social groups (Mgqwashu, 2008). How I envisaged this challenge could be addressed is discussed further in Chapter 5. Within the context of this study, the term ideology is used in line with Marxist's interpretation to offer an awareness of the representation and preservation of the *status quo* in literary works, the dominant class perceptions of the South African society during and after apartheid, as well as the dominant readings embedded in texts ((Montgomery, Durant, Nigel, Furniss, & Mills, 2007). Such issues and their resultant effects on the current affairs of South Africa are discussed below within the Marxist interpretation.

Althusser (1971) asserts that ideology is a matter of the representation of imaginary versions of the real social relations in which people live. He further cogently maintains that ideology imposes itself through systems and structures like churches and schools, and this is what he refers to as the "ideological state apparatus" (Althusser, 1971, p. 153). For him, it is inscribed in the representations (the signs) and the practices (the ritual) of everyday life. It is through ideology that individuals are constituted as "subjects". This is what Althusser calls the "interpellation" of the subject where individuals are (mis) recognising themselves as free and autonomous beings with unique subjectivities. In relation to this view, Habermas (1987b,1996) argues that the state or an organisation cannot be autonomous and self-regulating in any sense but, on the contrary, "subjects" (to use Althusser's understanding) are "interpellated" into an array of established practices, structures, systems of influence, bargaining, and coercive powers.

Furthermore, within the context of this study, the term ideology is used in line with Althusser's interpretation to offer an in-depth understanding of the historical processes which gave rise to the previous as well as current social conditions of South Africa. For example, it would be interesting to comprehend how peoples' identities were constructed in South Africa like 'kaffirs'; 'coolies' and so on in order to serve what purpose and for whose interests.

3.2.3   Historical Materialism

Historical materialism is understood as the methodological approach to the study of society, economics, and history or "the materialist conception of history", (Engels, 1986d, p. 692). The materialist conception of history looks for the causes of the development and changes in

human societies in the way in which humans collectively make means to survive. This methodological approach, in other words, provides an economic analysis in relation to such things as social classes, political structures, ideologies which co-exist with the economic base of the society. In the context of this study, a reflection on how the current state of affairs in South Africa, that is, present social reality, was understood by analysing the historical conditions that gave rise to it, that was provided by using the concept/term of historical materialism. Through this methodology research participants came to understand that-and how-their social and educational practices are located in, and are the products of, particular material, social and historical circumstances that produced them and by which they are reproduced in everyday social interaction in a particular setting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Dialectical materialism was adopted to elucidate such a reflection.

3.3.4   Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical Materialism is a Marxist interpretation of social reality that views social processes as having their own internal dynamic, their own inner contradictions and between two opposites arising from the internal contractions inherent in all events, ideas, and movements (Sayers, 1990). Its interpretation includes the idea that each class in the social system contains seeds of its own destruction (Marx, 1976). It is these conflicts which eventually lead to historical change (Sayers, 1990). Within dialectical materialism, it is maintained that each class in the system comprises internal tensions and contractions. In relation to the context of the study, dialectical materialism was used in line with the above school of thought and sought to present insights into how South Africa's current social reality has come into being by looking at the relationship between history and class struggle. We learn from history that the then dominated classes were able to establish a democratic political process in South Africa. This suggests the possibility of a change even in the most odd of situations. It is also from this understanding that the aim of education should not be just to fill the minds of learners, but also help them take their place in a democratic society by ceaselessly reconstructing and transforming the world through action for the better (Kemmis et al., 2000). In other words, to ensure that the ills that were experienced in South Africa for the past 400 years or so are not repeated again, learners should be endowed with critical thinking skills. That was the key enterprise of this study.

3.2.5 Critical Thinking

Critical thinking rightly remains at the forefront of education today (Beaumont, 2010). School systems demand that it should be incorporated into curricula (DoE, 2006). Teachers attempt to integrate critical thinking practices into their lessons (Beaumont 2010). However, research shows that teachers lack a concise definition of critical thinking, both locally and internationally. This is because critical thinking is not a single entity but an umbrella term that comprises many complex processes (Stott, 2008; Alazzi, 2009; Beaumont, 2010). According to Scriven & Paul (in Beaumont, 2010, p. 3) critical thinking may be defined as: "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action". Scriven and Paul put into one carefully crafted sentence the various processes that constitute the core skills most teachers would agree are involved in critical thinking (Beaumont, 2010). The larger challenge, of course, remains to translate these skills into lessons and classroom activities that promote their practice and development. The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies to do just that.

For the purpose of this study, critical thinking is defined as the practice and development of an active, conscience, purposeful awareness of what one encounters, both in the classroom and in the outside world (Beaumont, 2010). It is a kind of thinking and learning that demands an investment in personal and communal learning on the part of the learner and the teacher. I, as a researcher, intended to achieve such an investment through the processes of action research. Relative to this view, Kemmis *et al*. (2000, p. 563) posit that "The subjects of participatory action research undertake their research as a social practice. Moreover, the object of participatory action research is social; participatory action research is directed towards studying, reframing, and reconstructing social practices." For that reason, if practices are constituted in social interaction between people, changing practices is a social process (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). Furthermore, critical thinking does not discount the emotional or gut response that everyone has (Ali, 1993; Beaumont, 2010). Rather, it compliments and enters into dialogue with them so that reasoned judgements are possible. The kind of learning and teaching practice that would benefit or suffer people involved was best conceptualised through action research practice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

3.2.6 Practice

In a nut-shell, practice is about how things are done, either to benefit or suffer from such practices (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). In this study, practice involved how literature was taught in order to benefit the learners in terms of equipping them with the skills to think critically. This study was based on the assumption that people could understand that - and how - their social and educational practices were located in, and were the products of, particular material, social, and historical circumstances that produced them and by which they were reproduced in everyday social interaction in a particular setting (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). While the notion of social practice discussed above relate to critical thinking as well as the methodology chosen for this study, here it refers to social practice as it shapes and is shaped by people involved in such practices. Furthermore, in the context of this study, understanding practice was viewed in the context of how participants (researchers) are perceived:

> By understanding their practices as the product of particular circumstances, participatory action researchers become alert to clues about how it may be possible to *transform* the practices they are producing and reproducing through their current ways of working. If their current practices are the product of one particular set of intentions, conditions, and circumstances, other (or transformed) practices may be produced and reproduced under other (or transformed) intentions, conditions, and circumstances (Kemmis *et al*., 2000, p. 565).

Furthermore, in the context of this study, I intended to focus on practices in a concrete and specific way by making them accessible for reflection, discussion, and reconstruction as products of past circumstances that are capable of being modified in and for present and future circumstances. That was achieved by creating a "communicative space" in which "communicative action" was fostered among participants and in which problems and issues were thematized for critical exploration aimed at overcoming felt dissatisfactions regarding irrationality and injustices (Fay, 1987; Kemmis *et al*., 2000, p. 578) . In that way, the concrete contradictions between established or current ways of doing things, on one hand, and alternative ways that are developed through investigations, on the other, were created. In this study, the nature and consequences of existing ways of doing things were read and contrasted with these alternative ways, aiming to show that irrationalities, injustices, and dissatisfactions associated with the former could be overcome in practice by the latter.

It has to be mentioned though that the aim of the study was not to overthrow established authority or structures, but to suggest ways for them to transform their ways (Kemmis *et al.*, 2000). Baynes (in Kemmis *et al.*, 2000) observes that the aim is to besiege authorities with reasons and not to destroy them. It was argued in Chapter 2 that, while it is the intention of the intended curriculum to promote critical thinking in the context of English classrooms, such curriculum has omissions and silences as to how such skills are to be translated and developed into manageable lessons and classroom activities that promote such skills (Beaumont, 2010), and that teachers find it difficult to implement such skills in the classroom context since they cannot even define what is critical thinking (Stott, 2008; Beaumont, 2010). As a result, the approach that was taken to identify problems or crisis mentioned above was to conduct research as a basis for informing myself and others about the problems or crisis and to explore ways in which the problems or crisis might be overcome. In relation to the above mentioned point, Kemmis *et al.* (2000) maintain that:

> ... participatory action researchers may want to become especially sensitive to the ways in which their particular practices are *social practices* of material, symbolic, and social communication, production, and social organisation, which shape and are shaped by *social structures* in the cultural/ symbolic realm, the economic realm, and the socio-political realm, which shape and are shaped by the *social media* of language/discourses, work, and power, which largely shape, but also can be shaped by, participants' *knowledge* expressed in their understandings, skills, and values, which, in turn, shape and are shaped by their *social practices* of material, symbolic, and social communication, production, and social organisation, and so on (Kemmis *et al.*, 2000, p. 565).

These relationships are represented diagrammatically in Figure 3.1 below. What is diagrammatically presented is the consideration, for example, of how participatory action researchers might consider their acts of communication, production, and social organisation are intertwined and interrelated in the real and particular practices that connect them to others in the real situations in which they find themselves [e.g., communities, neighbourhoods, families, schools, hospitals, other workplaces] (Kemmis *et al.*, 2000). These researchers consider how, by collaboratively changing the ways in which they participate with others in these practices, they can change the practices themselves, their understandings of these practices, and the situations in which they live and work. The historical development of the

teaching of literature discussed in Chapter 2 was used in order to understand the above-mentioned practices.

Figure 3.1
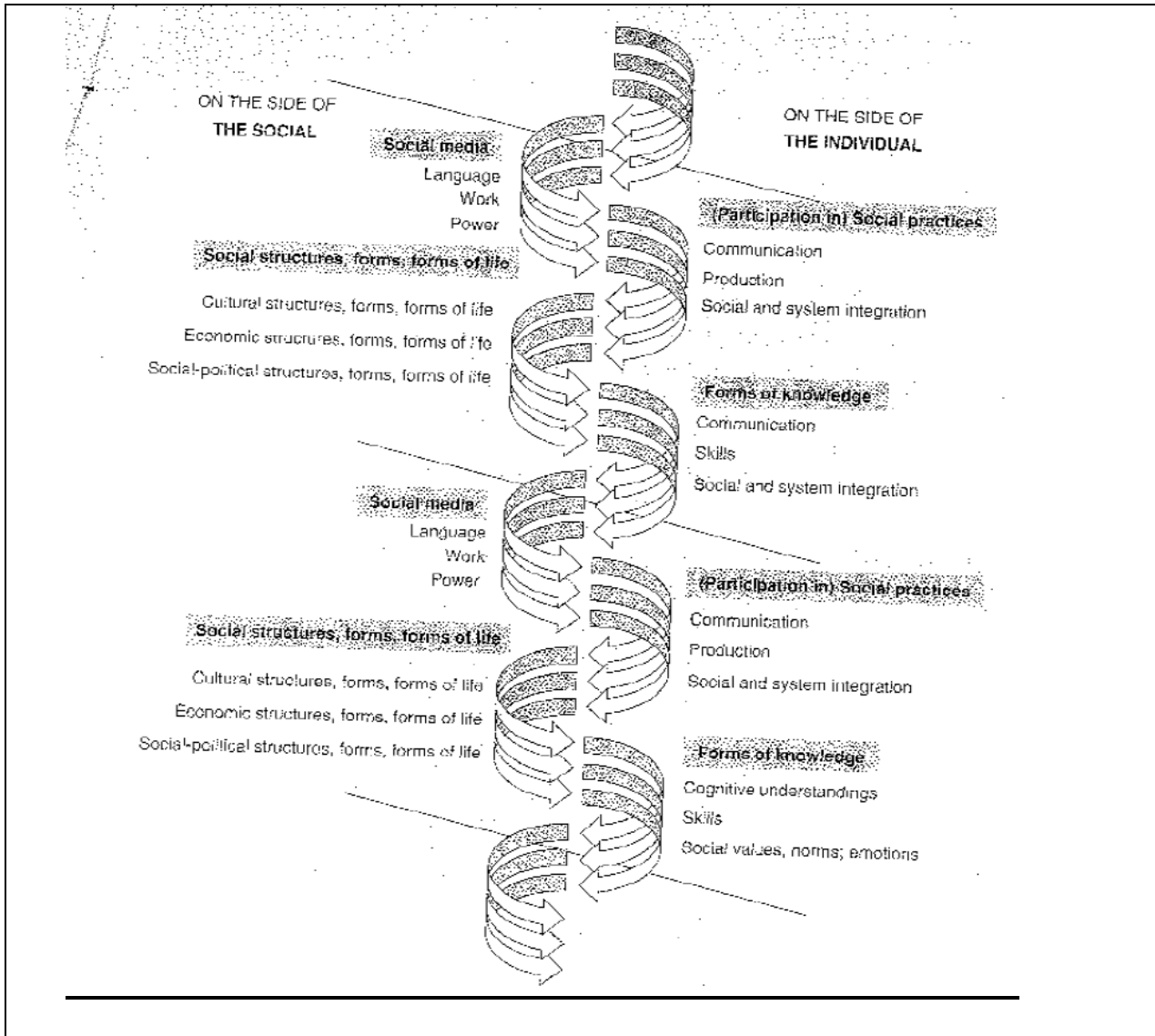
Recursive Relationships of Social Mediation that Action Research Aims to Transform (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

In relation to the research design adopted for this study, Kemmis *et al*. (2000, p. 567) assert that "participatory action research is reflexive (e.g., recursive, dialectical)". In this way, a research design of this nature aims to help people to investigate reality in order to change it or to change reality in order to investigate it (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). This situation is depicted in

Figure 3.1 above where the recursive relationships of social mediation are depicted. Figure 3.1 depicts a deliberate social process designed to help collaborating groups of people to transform their world so as to learn more about the nature of the recursive relationships among the following:

- Their (individual and social) *practices* (the work)
- Their *knowledge of their practices* (the workers)
- The *social structure* that shape and constrain their practices (the work place)
- The social media in which their practices are expressed (the discourses in which their work is represented and misrepresented) (Kemmis *eta l*., 2000, pp. 567-568).

In the above view, this is what theorising practice means, that is, a process of learning, with others by doing – changing the ways in which we interact in a shared social world (Kemmis *et al*., 2000).

While Figure 3.1 demonstrates the recursive relationship of social mediation, Marxist theory shows us how we can conceive the interconnections between things within an organic, interrelated totality (Au, 2006). Sayers (1990) provides a glimpse of such a conception:

> Social processes have their own internal dynamic, their own inner contradictions. The different aspects of society – forces and relations of production, base and superstructure – are aspects of a single whole, internally and organically interrelated, in dialectical interaction and conflict. It is these interactions, these conflicts, these contradictions – which are internal in society – that lead to historical change. In the process, none of these aspects is inert or passive: the forces and relations of production and also the superstructure are all transformed and developed (Sayers, 1990, p. 164).

Au (2006) posits that these relationships function in ways that can be interrogated, understood, and ultimately, changed. That is what this study intended to do, that is, to transform the ways of working so that problems and crises could be overcome (Kemmis et al., 2000). Apple (1995) gets at the roots of the contradictory relationship between schools and social reproduction when he observes that:

On the one hand, the school must assist in accumulation by producing both agents for a hierarchical labor market and the cultural capital of technical/administrative knowledge. On the other hand, our educational institutions must legitimate ideologies of equality and class mobility, and make themselves be seen as positively by as many classes and class segments as possible. In a time fiscal crisis, the structural contradiction is exacerbated. The need for economic and ideological efficiency and stable production tends to be in conflict with other political needs. What we see is the school attempting to resolve what may be the inherently contradictory roles it must play (Apple, (1995, p. 53).

What is evident from this observation is that schools, on behalf of the State-superstructure, have to simultaneously accomplish the fundamentally contradictory goals of reproducing the social material relations of capitalist production while hegemonically working to win the "spontaneous consent" of the students/workers through appeals to individual equality within the educational and social meritocracy. This contradiction presents a dialectical relationship between the production of capitalist social relations and the maintenance of bourgeois hegemony in relation to education.

In relation to the above, Marx (1968b, p. 97) asserts that "[Humans] make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past". Furthermore, Engels (1968e, p. 622) maintains that "In the history of society ... the actors are all endowed with consciousness, are [humans] acting with deliberation or passion, working towards definite goals; nothing happens without a conscious purposes, without an intended aim". In relation to the above aspects humans, as subjects, as agents, as individuals, and as individual classes, develop consciousness of the imposition of structures on their lives and, based on that consciousness, take action to change it (Au, 2006). In the context of the study, I intended to inculcate critical thinking to learners so that they are aware of the contradictions and social construction of such contradictions that might be found in literary works.

It has to be mentioned, however that, some advocate that the base/superstructure metaphor within Marxist critical educational analysis be completely rejected (see, e.g., Rikowinski, 1997). Nevertheless, the problem is not with the metaphor itself (as the analysis above has shown), but when that analysis is conducted; it tends to slip into the linear, mechanical logics

associated with the rationalist tradition (Sayers, 1990; Benton & Craib, 2001). The relationship between schools and capitalist production can be established if that relationship is analysed from Marxist dialectics. In relation to the above argument, Sayers (1990, p. 143), one of the tenets of Marxist dialectics reminds us that, in order for us to understand something as it concretely exists as part of material reality, "[I] t is vital to see them in the context of their interconnections with other things within a wider whole".

Additionally, and more specifically Beaumont's (2010) interpretation of critical thinking as higher order thinking process, including, but not limited to, reflection, inference, and synthesizing information; was believed, it would enable participants to make reasoned judgements, not only in the classroom, but in everyday life. Nonetheless, for Beaumont, there remains the question of how English language teachers include the development and practice of these important skills in their lessons. For this study, a sequence of seven critical thinking tasks was developed through a flexible framework that acted as a practical tool for planning and development level, as well as appropriate classroom materials that encouraged and advanced critical thinking (Beaumont, 2010). These tasks apply whether English is taken as a home or an Additional Language.

Such tasks assisted me to translate skills associated with critical thinking into manageable, flexible and usable framework or sequence (Beaumont, 2010). In other words, I used them to decode definition(s) of critical thinking into lessons and classroom activities that promoted their practice and development. In order to explore and apply such sequence the study used *1949* Govender's (2008) short story as a primary text, and this is discussed in Chapter 5. These are steps of promoting critical thinking adopted from (Beaumont, 2010) in translating critical thinking into manageable learning tasks. Such steps had to suit the unique circumstances of the environment from which the study was conducted.

Gee (2001) contends that critical theory develops affinity groups of readers who are able to identify ideological concerns in texts and their role in the production and circulation of power relations. It is the responsibilities of the teacher to assist learners develop this awareness by promoting critical thinking. Singh's (2003) ideas are relevant for this study as well, because learners must realise whose interest are dominant in texts, who is marginalised and why; how particular subject positions attempt to create particular subjectivities; and how positions of

(inequality) inequity becomes naturalised through the dominant discourses conveyed by the text (Gramsci, 1971; Rose, 2005; Montgomery et al., 2007) as it was demonstrated above.

Within critical thinking approach to learning and teaching of texts, "language is viewed as a social process and the meanings conveyed by language are regarded as being socially and culturally situated" (Singh, 2003, p. 76). Such meanings are never neutral and attempts particular ideological positioning, which produce, reproduce or maintain arrangements of power. I have used Orthodox Marxism in order to understand the production and reproduction of the arrangements of power which systematically exclude and/or include other members of society from participating fully in the realms of society.

3.3 Understanding Social Problems through Orthodox Marxism

I begin the discussion about comprehending social problems (inherent contradictions) by referring to Marx's critique of political economy when he writes:

> In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness (Marx, 1968b, p. 183).

This is what is commonly referred to as base/superstructure model in Marxism, where the "legal and the political superstructure" rises out of the "relations of production" that make up the base "economic structure of society" (Au, 2006). The critique of capitalism and the production of social inequality provide a valuable tool to interrogate how and even explain why schools seem to reproduce dominant social relations. According to Au (2006, p. 2), "it has been common place to critique Marx's conception for being economist; that is, for placing too much emphasis on the economy as the sole determinant of society, social relations, and socio-political institutions". Under such conditions, in the field of education, Marxism was criticised for asserting that, in essence, there is a direct, linear, mechanical, or

functionalist correspondence between the needs of the capitalist economy and the structures of schooling (Au, 2006).

On the contrary, Au (2006) argues that Marx and Engels conception of the relationship between society and capitalist production is non-deterministic, non-functionalist as is normally critiqued. This study incorporated Au's (2006) conception of Marxism in understanding the relationship between schooling and capitalist society of which our schooling system is part, but with less restrictive analysis of deterministic understanding of Marxism, by allowing human agency and consciousness. In their texts, Marx and Engels' offer a conception of the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure that is dynamic and non-functionalist. Marx & Engels (1978) state:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force ... the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; ... The individuals composing the ruling class ... rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of the epoch, it is self-evident they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas on their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch ... (Marx & Engels, 1978, pp. 172-173).

They go on to add that:

> For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones ... Every new class, therefore, achieves its hegemony only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously (Marx & Engels, 1978, p. 174).

From the above analysis of hegemony, several things are identified. First, it begins to interrogate the relationship between ideology and power in society in a way that recognises how those in control have the power and the capacity to produce and distribute their ideas,

and that this power and capacity rests on their relative control over material production. In the context of the study, the intention of the set work (literary work) was used to expose that those in power have the ability to define appropriate knowledge through the various channels available to them. Taking into account the context of the text it was possible to realise such power relationship. The title of the text used in this study is *1949*, the title signifies the Durban (South Africa) riots where there was interracial conflict between Zulu people and Indians which was in fact the culmination of the dissatisfaction over social and economic divisions in the area. White people occupied dominant positions in South Africa at the time. They owned most of the factories so; they provided employment to many Black and Indian people. A character of Mr Osborne who owned a garage, at Cato Manor in the text, occupied similar positions to White South Africans during 1949. It was unthinkable to argue against a White man given his status and social position and that is why it was possible for Mr Osborne, for example, as a result of his position in society [a White man] to convince Black workers that they should target Indians. Govender (2008, p. 108) reveals that when he writes: "*... Simon and Johannes, who were about his age, agreed with him but the others told him bluntly that the Baas was right*". 'Baas' refers to White males in South Africa during apartheid, and he was right in saying that "*the Indians deserve what they are getting*". Further, Marx and Engels' analysis includes the concept of ideological universality, where the interests of the ruling elite are presented as the common interests of the whole society.

Marx and Engels also provide a nuanced and complex analysis of the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure. Engels (1968d) critiques economistic interpretations of Marxism. He argues:

> According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure – political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions, ... judicial forms, ... political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas – also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their

> *form* there is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the
> endless host of accidents, the economic movement finally asserts itself as
> necessary ... (Engels, (1968d, p. 692)

The clarification of the conception of the base/superstructure relationship is made above. It is clarified as pointing out that economics is not the sole determining factor, and there is recognition that the superstructure does play a role in shaping history. Engels adds that the superstructure "in many cases preponderate in determining [the] *form*" of class struggle (Au, 2006, p. 11). Au (2006) continues to assert that the above point in particular speaks to issues of resistance, human agency, and mediation of bourgeois hegemony within the superstructure, including schools. In the context of this study, it means that, as part of the superstructure, schools can be relatively autonomous to the base, that is to say, they can "exercise their influence upon the course of historical struggles ... ," even as the "economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary" (Engels, 1968d, p. 692; see also Engels, 1968e).

Besides, Engels (1968c, pp. 704-705), in addressing the role of capitalist economic necessity in relation to superstructure, asserts:

> Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc.,
> development is based on economic development. But all these react upon
> one another and also upon the economic basis. It is not that the economic
> situation is cause, solely active, while everything else is only passive effect.
> There is, rather, interaction on the basis of economic necessity, which
> ultimately always asserts itself ... So it is not, as people try here and there
> conveniently try to imagine, that the economic situation produces an
> automatic effect. No [Humans] make their history themselves, only they do
> so in a given environment, which conditions it, and on the basis of actual
> relations already existing, among which the economic relations ... are still
> ultimately the decisive ones (Engels, 1968c, pp. 704-705).

From the above assertion, it I argue that the economic base is the driving force for the superstructure, and therefore "ultimately always asserts itself". However, it is worth highlighting that in the above quotation, Engels also posits that "It is not that the economic situation is the cause, solely active ... There is, rather interaction ..." In this way, the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure is explained in terms of

relational interaction, not in terms of economic functionalism (Au, 2006). The above expression is the dialectical materialism which is the core philosophical perspective of Marxist theory, and as such, it becomes a logical impossibility to equate a Marxist account (at least in the sense of Marx and Engels' original, "orthodox" dialectical material conception) with a functionalist, economic determinist account of social reproduction in education (Sayers, 1990).

Dialectical relationships are dynamic, interactional, fluid, and relational, and therefore do not allow for linear, mechanical, one-to-one chains of causality or correspondence (Engels, (1940; Sayers, 1990; Allman, 1999; Woods & Grant, 2002; Ollman, 2003). So, "the functionalist, deterministic, one-to-one correspondence between schools and capitalist production is anti-dialectical, or "undialectical" in Engels' words, and arguably does not fall within the tradition of Marxist analysis" (Au, 2006, p. 14). For the purpose of this study, it was necessary for me to establish the relationship that exists between the schools and the reproduction of capitalist social relations with an understanding that there is no direct, automatic cause and effect relationship between the economy and society (Au, 2006). If schools are part of the superstructure, which is relatively autonomous from the economic base, then schools can transform their practices so that learners are able to critically handle the ideologically embedded information presented before them in the form of literary texts. This understanding clarified the inequalities that exist and the role of critical thinking in addressing or effectively dealing with such inequalities, injustices, as well as irrationalities since critical thinking is arguably in a position to enable learners to think beyond their humble positions in the social stratification.

While schools play a key role in reproducing social inequality, their contradictory role in legitimating ideologies of equality also allows room for resistance to this reproduction. It was therefore crucial for this study to recognize this room for resistance because "students do resist the inculcations of schooling on many levels including teachers, as labourers within the political economy of education" (Apple, 1986, 1995), they can also resist the reproduction of inequitable capitalist socialist relations in their classrooms and schools (Freire, 1974; Shor, 1987, 1992; Carlson, 1988; Allman, 1999; Allman, McLaren & Rikowinski, 2000). In ensuring that participants were able to recognise the above assumptions in literary works, with my assistance, it was important for this study to ensure that learners were actively

involved in the construction of alternative knowledge other than the knowledge of the mainstream cultures. It was envisaged that this would improve their confidence in dealing with literary works.

In the intervention phase of this research learners were presented with the pictures of Mahatma Ghandi and the Indian people protesting against apartheid regime in South Africa. In terms of the Reader-Response theory, the sequence of critical thinking tasks revealed how participants constructed knowledge around thematic issues discussed in this study in Chapter 5. In relation to this view Samuel (1993, p. 5) reminds us that "... the process of reading is thus an interrogation of the appropriate schema triggered by the written word, and meaning is achieved when the incoming data is able to match the already stored schemata". The pictures that were initially provided served as the basis to arouse discussions around the issues of racial attitudes in the old South Africa. The emphasis here was on continuous focus on meaning, legitimizing of risk taking and continuous involvement of learners (Goodman, 1979). Learners need not be afraid to take risks by asking questions for example, in the classroom context. The teacher should create such an environment. In addition, Rumelhart & Ortney (1977) reveals that this is the process of interrogation of stored schemata/previous knowledge. In the context of this study this was achieved by actively engaging the readers' cognitive mental structures in relation to the printed word as Samuel (1993) puts it. The responses given by the participants indicated that they have referred to their stored schemata. A detailed discussion for this is presented in chapter 5.

It must be noted that the printed word merely acts as a trigger to activate appropriate schemata in relation to the concept being presented (Samuel, 1993). For example, while it is necessary to recognise the words themselves (linguistic decoding) but in order to arrive at the interpretation the reader has to activate the previously stored knowledge concerning his or her prior experiences with such concepts as activities of people relating to irrationality, injustices, among other ills of our society. This irrationality, injustices were presented through some of the questions asked from the sequence of critical thinking tasks, for example.

3.10   Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for this study. Concepts relevant in this study have been clarified and it was indicated how they are relevant. Orthodox Marxism was argued for and it was discussed that it is not approached from a functionalist, deterministic, and economistic analysis as this would suggest a linear, one-to-one correspondence between schools and capitalist reproduction. Furthermore, Constructivism was chosen as a theory of learning since it allows learners to learn by actively constructing their knowledge. In the process of knowledge making, learners are actively involved by asking questions, hypothesizing, and reflecting on their previous knowledge in relation to the knowledge that is being learned. Reader-Response theory was also an ideal theory since it allows learners interpretation of the text and thereby allowing for multiple interpretations. However, such interpretations were based on the text, so not any interpretation was allowed but it had to be supported with evidence from the text.

CHAPTER 4

Research Design and Methodological Considerations

4.1   Introduction

Chapter 3 offered a discussion of the concepts and theories adopted in this study. Concepts discussed were literary art, ideology, critical thinking, dialectical materialism, and historical materialism. Such concepts were deemed relevant for the study because they represent insights pertinent to the understanding of South Africa's social realities represented in literary art in terms of how literature reveals a variety of socio-political ideologies that govern the entire arrangements of the social system. The chapter further argued for the significance of Orthodox Marxism as the espoused theoretical frame for the study. It demonstrated that Orthodox Marxism draws quite directly on real and concrete human and social conditions from its dialectical analysis of social conditions, but not from the common understanding of its functional, deterministic, and economistic relationship between schools and capitalist production, for example, under capitalist production schools occupy a contradictory role of producing unequal social relations while speaking of equality at the same time.

In its dialectical sense, the understanding of Marxism can enable schools (and/or individuals within such schools) as part of a relative superstructure from the economic base, to realize how they can transform their practice. The Chapter also showed, by employing Constructivism as a theory of learning, how learners were assisted by the help of the teacher in creating alternative knowledge(s) by dealing with issues raised from the Marxist analysis of literary works. It was argued that Constructivism is a theory of learning which posits that students learn by actively constructing their knowledge (Duffy and Cunningham, 1996; Fosnot, 1996; von Glasersfeld, 1996). Constructivism needed to be modified in this study so as to fit within the environment the study was conducted, that is, English as an additional language context. In that context learners were able to engage with the text because I could not leave them entirely on their own to construct their own knowledge, they had to be assisted hence, Vygotsky's (1978) scaffolding. A detailed discussion of this engagement is dealt with in chapter 5

Chapter 4 discusses the research activities carried out during the course of the study. The knowledge claim position taken in this study is one of critical stance (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The design followed was one of critical participatory action research (Kemmis et al., 2000), with the intention of a mixed approach to data collection and analysis. In this chapter, the context where the research study took place and the manner in which the participants were accessed and selected are described. The instruments used in the research process included interviews, classroom observation, critical thinking tasks, as well as learners' assignments. Govender's short story, *1949* was used as a text through which data were accessed and analysed. Chapter 4 also explains why quantitative data were not collected. The following questions guided the collection and analysis of data:

1) What can be done in order to develop the capacity of learners to think critically?

2) How do learners understand the notion of critical thinking?

3) How learners have developed their understanding of critical thinking in relation to the tasks designed in order to engage with literary works?

The chapter begins by discussing the sampling of the study participants after which paradigmatic knowing of the study is elaborated upon, then the research method is argued for. Chapter 4 then moves to motivating for the relevance of the research design in engaging with the research questions above, the research instruments for the study which are informed by qualitative method to ensure trustworthiness as well as reliability are also discussed. Lastly, the ethical considerations and limitations of the study are deliberated. The chapter ends with an explanation why there is no quantitative data collected as this was the original ideal position in this study, that is, to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, hence the reference to Table 4.1 hereunder in section 4.4.

4.2   Sampling Technique and Study Participants

In order to establish the interrelations between the purpose, topic, and the critical questions of the study, study participants were purposefully selected from a Grade 11 population studying English as an Additional Language. Such a sample was chosen on the following criteria:

learners who were labelled as 'outstanding'; 'substantial'; 'moderate'; as well as 'elementary' in their achievement regarding literature classroom exercises. This data was obtained through accessing participants' mark sheets though they were not used for data analysis. The aim was to find out if learners still fell in the same group after they were introduced to critical thinking and assisted through scaffolding. Although the impact on academic performance, as the above criteria suggests, was not the intention of this study but that has potential for further research. It was important for this study to establish how learners responded to tasks that have potential for developing critical thinking. Furthermore, Grade 11 is closer to the exit point from secondary schools and that these learners were likely to be matured at secondary level. Critical thinking skills are necessary at tertiary level so introducing them before then was seen as an advantage for the learners. Gender was another criterion because the school is a mixed gender school, and the fact that such learners were enrolled in English as one of their subjects.

The reason for selecting the above-mentioned category of learners and the text that was chosen for the purpose (discussed in chapter 1) of developing learners' critical thinking skills was that Govender's (2008) *1949* was a prescribed text for Grade 11 in 2010. The participants were supposed to read the whole story. The reason for choosing this text was its potential to represent the socio-political complexities of the apartheid regime and simultaneously allowing readers to imagine the narrative as occurring in the post-apartheid South Africa. A short story by Govender (2008) was used for the purpose of reflecting on South Africa's reality and political practices that were pervasive during the apartheid era. The above deduction was possible because, from the short story, one learns that a riot took place in 1949 just after the National Party was elected to power. This riot resulted in a war between the Indians and the Zulus in Durban. The story further demonstrates the culmination of the dissatisfaction over the social and economic divisions in the area. It is possible to learn from the short story about the then South Africa and the 'new' South Africa. Teaching literature for critical thinking has the potential of bringing about transformation that was envisaged to enable learners make sense of the historical basis of the current social formation, of which one is part. The role of literature not only in Great Britain and its colonies, but within the South African context as well, is presented by the process of establishing the relationship between literature and society in this study. What follows is a schematic criterion for the selection of participants provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 List and criteria used in the selection of research participants.[2]

Grade	Code name	Race	Sex	Achievement	Level
11	Siyabulela	Black	Female	Substantial	60-69%
11	Njabulo	Black	Male	Moderate	40-49%
11	Okuhle	Black	Male	Substantial	60-69%
11	Nobuhle	Black	Female	Not achieved	0-29%
11	Siyabonga	Black	Male	Outstanding	80-100%
11	Nkululeko	Black	Male	Elementary	30-39%

It has to be mentioned that two of the female participants decided to discontinue with the study since they were advised that should they wish to do so they were free and no questions would be asked. That is why there are only 6 participants instead of 8 originally selected.

4.3 Paradigmatic Knowing

According to Amin (2008) paradigmatic knowing refers to the notion that knowledge produced is linked, limited, expanded, and moulded by a framework or paradigm. Paradigms, according to Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Amin, 2008, p. 32) "are a set of beliefs or meta-organisers that shape our view of the world. They do not exist, but are social constructions to make sense of claims to knowing, knowledge, and interpretations". Amin (2008) further notes that four concepts characterise paradigmatic orientations, namely: ethics (moral imperatives shaping how one comes to know), epistemology (how knowledge emerges, particularly through the relationship between the knower and the known), ontology (how one explains reality) and methodology (the ways and means of producing evidence). These concepts are not monolithic within a single paradigm and are often expressed in discursive ways with a number of transpositions from one paradigm to another (Lincoln & Guba 2000). Consequently, this section discusses the choices made in this study concerning questions about what it means to know a practice (the epistemological choice) and about what a practice is, and thus how it manifests itself in reality (the ontological choice) (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). These epistemological and ontological choices in turn underpinned the choice of the method for the study. This is because, as ways of "seeing" practice, research methods must

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[2] The names used in this study are pseudonyms, and are in line with the agreement between the researcher and participants. See Neuman (2006). The level of rating scores is adopted from the NCS document.

illuminate what the research and the researcher can see (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). In other words seeing practice in this study was largely approached from subjective understanding of participants in order to show an understanding of practice when it was transformed through critical thinking. Such choices also depicted the kinds of relationships that existed between me, the research site and the research participants. That relationship viewed the participants as co-researchers where they were not viewed as subjects/objects to be researched, but played a significant role in the research process.

In discussing how knowledge emerges, particularly through the relationship between the knower and the known, how one explains reality as well as the ways and means of producing evidence I drew from the reflexive dialectical perspective of critical social science (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). This perspective tends to see practice from the perspective of the insider group, whose members' interconnected activities constitute and reconstitute their own social practices in the first person (plural) (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). From this perspective, this research intended to approach the study of practice in a sufficiently rich and multi-faceted way, that is, in terms that recognise the different aspects of practice and do justice to its social, historical, and discursive construction. The justice mentioned above would have been adequately achieved if the study was approached from both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Nevertheless, the study was able to collect data from multiple sources.

The relationships between social and educational theory and practice were important for the study. In relation to this view, Au (2006, p. 2) asserts that "in critical educational theory, Marxism's trenchant critique of capitalism and the production of social inequality provides a valuable tool for theorists to interrogate how and even explain why schools seem to reproduce dominant social relations". It was therefore necessary at this stage to decide what kinds of things "practice" and "theory" are, and that also helped in deciding on appropriate research method(s) as well as the kinds of data or evidence that would have been relevant to describe practice and the kinds of analysis relevant in interpreting and evaluating peoples' real practices in the real situations in which they work. The manner in which practices were understood "in the field" so that they became available for more systematic theorising constituted an important aspect of the study (See Figure 3.1).

The representation of practice was theorised as portrayed in Figure 3.1. This Figure takes a view of what theorizing a practice might look like. Here the practice is located within the frameworks of participants' knowledge in relation to social structures, and in terms of social media. In the context of this study, the knowledge of such social structures in terms of shaping and being shaped by human agency was important. As far as that understanding is concerned, (Kemmis *et al*., 2006, p. 566) observes that "participatory action research is a social process which deliberately explores the relationship between the realms of the individual and the social". According to Habermas (1992a, p. 26), participatory action research recognises that "no individuation is possible without socialisation, and no socialization is possible without individuation". In this context, the processes of individuation and socialisation continue to shape individuals and social relationships in all the settings in which we find ourselves.

In this study then, action research was seen as the main driver as it offered an opportunity for reflective practice, and thus professional development with regards to the development of an understanding of, and practice of critical thinking skills in the context of the classroom. The critical nature of action research and its ability to promote critical thinking in a way that is empowering to both learners and teachers are highlighted in chapter 5. It was mentioned in Chapter 2 that, while the intended curriculum aims to entrench critical skills in the classroom, they are hardly realised because teachers sometimes cannot translate critical thinking definition(s) into manageable learning tasks (Stott, 2008). The search for answers in relation to the above is driven by the question rather than by antecedent conditions. In this way, there was value of a flexible methodology which allowed responsiveness to the action research processes of observation, reflection, action, evaluation, and consequent modifications in direction (Mc Niff & Whitehead, 2006). That methodology is action research.

Lewin (1946); Nunan (1992, p. 17) define action research as a spiral of steps in "which the educator reflects on, returns to, and extends the initial inquiry". While only one cycle was adopted for this study with 3 steps depicted above, there can be more than one cycle for action research. The above-mentioned steps are central to the action research process. It must be pointed out that these steps involve "fact finding and general ideas about an existing problem, planning for intervention, action, feedback of information, monitoring and reflection – in a continuous and repeatable process" (Evans 1995, p. 20). Furthermore, action

research as it is practiced by educators is part of their own social process. As such, it tends to be "informal and practice-based rather than formalistic and highly theoretical" (Kemmis, 1988, p. 46-47).

 (Habermas, 1987b, p. 42) describes action research as follows:

> Action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of a) their social or educational practices, b) their understanding of these practices, and c) the situations in which the practices are carried out. It is most rationally empowering when undertaken by participants collaboratively, though it is often undertaken by individuals, and sometimes in co-operation with 'outsiders' (Habermas, 1987b, p. 42).

Action research encourages teachers to be reflective of their own practice in order to improve learning and teaching. It has the advantage that it is flexible and adaptable to any classroom situation. The action research allows experimentation, decision-making, and assessments on whether or not lessons are successful. As such, it offered me an opportunity to improve own practice whilst simultaneously documented and learned about the practices/backgrounds of the participants and the impact of these on their critical understanding of literary works. In that sense, it was seen as "emancipatory" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). It was thus empowering to individuals, and participants also learned to be self-critical in their reflection on the process in which they were involved.

Nevertheless, there were concerns on the subject of the use of action research which were also acknowledged. The foremost worry was that "action research is always biased because it involves the researcher analysing his or her own practice" (Carr & Kemmis 1986, p. 192). Conspicuously, however, "interpretations are subjective by nature because they are based on values and interests as the objects of inquiry, rather than merely on observed behaviours" (Evans 1995, p. 92). An additional concern was that action research is very expensive and time consuming. Time, energy, and financial resources are invested in a few people who may affect very small changes on an individual level without effecting change on a broader level. Also, Mc Niff (2002) is of the view that action research can be prescriptive because the process has very little flexibility and may restrict independent action. In this study, however,

it is argued that there was sufficient scope for individual interpretation and adaptation within action research design. Emphasis can be placed on different aspects of the action research process, depending on the objectives of practitioners. Therefore, freedom of action is not necessarily inhibited. Throughout the study, the above concerns on action research were borne in mind and ways to address them were put in place. What follows is a discussion of the representation of the design, instruments, and data generation in this study.

It has been mentioned above that there is no individuation without socialisation and no socialisation without individuation. It is from this line of argument that this study adopted the dialectical materialism of Marxism because it does not place too much emphasis on the economy as the sole determinant of society, social relations, and socio-political institutions (Au, 2006). People, individually and collectively can, as a result, understand how they are formed and reformed as individuals, and in relation to one another in a variety of settings. When teachers work together (or with students) to improve processes of teaching and learning in the classroom, for example, they can reshape their situations for the better (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). From dialectical materialism we learn that there are internal contradictions inherent in all events, ideas, and movements (Ollman, 2003). According to Sayers (1990, p. 164) "Social processes have their own internal dynamic, their own inner contradictions". As far as the internal contradictions that take place in schools, Apple (1995, p.53) observes that "...our educational institutions must legitimate ideologies of equality and class mobility, and make themselves be seen as positively by as many classes and class segments as possible". As a consequent of this, schools, on behalf of the State-superstructure, have to simultaneously accomplish the fundamentally contradictory goals of reproducing the social and material relations of capitalist production, while hegemonically working to win the "spontaneous consent" of the students/workers through appeals to individual equality within the educational and social meritocracy (Apple, 1995, p. 53). Understanding the ideology behind this (ideology that favours the dominant group) requires a development of critical thinking skills.

 In this study, developing the skill to think critically was achieved through the teaching of a short story used as one of the research instruments, Govender's (2008) *1949*. The research intention was to develop critical thinking in order for learners to be able to "produce logical thinking based on facts, to explain their thought processes and logic, and to respond to the

intellectual challenge of an opposing argument whether this comes from within or outside their ranks, as Nyerere (cited in Mgqwashu, 2007, p. 90) puts it. Therefore, an encompassing view of practice enabled the study to understand and theorise the practice more richly, and in more complex ways. Because of this, powerful social dynamics (for example, the tensions and interconnections between system and life world) were construed and reconstituted through participatory research (Habermas, 1984, 1987b). In order to come to an understanding of such powerful social dynamics, the study used the research instruments already discussed. How participants understood practice in participatory action research determined the method chosen for the study.

The epistemological assumption of action research is that through critical self-reflection and negotiation with participants, the researcher can create answers useful to effecting self-improvement (Mc Niff & Whitehead, 2006). These answers were not definitive, but were useful in the conclusions of the study. Under such an epistemological assumption, there is no single mind-independent reality. In other words, the study assumed that reality is constructed. In relation to this view, Horn (1999) asserts that we should allow for the construction of alternative knowledge(s) other than knowledge presented by mainstream cultures (through literary works), a point that has already been mentioned in chapter 2. In this instance, qualitative research does not automatically reject the belief in a single reality (Bergman, 2008). As a result, from a methodological perspective, it does not make sense to declare one approach more or less valid or valuable, or scientific (Bergman, 2008). But what is important is the consistency formed between how to understand data in conjunction with the specific research question, rationale, aims, etc. While this study acknowledge the points made above but it was not viable for it to collect quantitative data.

Accordingly, an understanding that would bring about a level of awareness with regard to the nature of thinking skills that could be inculcated in learners' engagement with literary works was important for this study. This awareness and inculcation of critical thinking skills enabled learners to realise how literature could be used to construct meanings about individual and group identities. From the point of knowledge claims, a critical orientation to research views truth as positioning social groups to relative powerlessness, or indeed power where this is legitimised. In relation to the abovementioned point, Eagleton (1983, P. 71) observes that the aim of the study is to identify the "false" or "fragmented" consciousness

that has brought individual or social group to relative powerlessness, or indeed power where the legitimacy of this is questioned. In relation to this view I and the participants examined and interrogated the relationship between school and society.

The above knowledge claims were rendered in this study by showing how power and control were exercised over racialised groups of people through the modes of inscription. Through its potential to represent the socio-political complexities of the apartheid regime, (although the study acknowledges that there is no direct relationship between the text and reality) the short story chosen for this study provided the possibility of enabling learners to imagine the narrative as occurred during the Apartheid South Africa.

4.4   Research Method

This section discusses the method chosen in this study as it reflects the epistemological choices, that is, what and how knowledge is produced when making particular methodological choices (Dhunpath & Samuel, 2009). In this study knowledge was produced through dialogue between me and the participants during the interviews. Although the key research questions were designed by me, participants played a significant role in this project in initiating the programme that was to bring change in the way teaching and learning was approached in order to develop critical thinking skills. Ontological choices made in this study, that is, a process of constructing reality, a reality that was constructed in this study was that learners have the capacity to develop critical thinking skills provided that teachers are able to translate the definitions of critical thinking skills into manageable classroom activities. This reality was constructed in the action phase of this study. It was mentioned earlier that the researcher's view of practice was that of reflexive dialectical perspective. This perspective is represented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Methods and Techniques Characteristics of Different Approaches to the study of Practice

Perspective	The individual	The social	Both: Reflective-dialectical view of individual-social relations and connections
Subjective	1.Practice as individual behaviour, seen in terms of performances, events and effects: Behaviourist and most cognitivist approaches in psychology	(2).Practice as social interaction (e.g., ritual system-structured): Structure-functionalist and social systems approaches	
Objective	(3).Practice as intentional action shaped by meaning and values: Psychological verstehen (empathetic understanding) and most constructivist approaches	4.Practice as socially structured, shaped by discourses, tradition: Interpretive, aesthetic-historical verstehen (empathetic understanding), and post structural approaches	
Both: Reflective-dialectical view of subjective-objective relations and connections			(5).practice as socially and historically constituted and as reconstituted by human agency and social action: Critical methods, dialectical analysis of multiple methods

The above table depicts a choice made in terms of the qualitative method of data generation. This study approached practice as socially and historically constituted and reconstituted by human agency as social action. In other words, our practice is historically situated and is shaped by us (human beings), either for better or for worse. Now in understanding the above-mentioned scenarios multiple sources of data generation were used and this is discussed in chapter 5. The choice of research method(s) was therefore, motivated by a desire to provide multiple sources of data. This meant that this study could not exclude consideration of participants' subjective intentions, meanings, values, and interpretive categories from understanding of practice and for this the study relied on semi-structured interviews (See Appendix F) as well as on informal discussions with participants for the study, and also the frameworks of language, discourse, and tradition by which people in different groups

construe their practices. Also critical thinking tasks were used for that purpose (See Appendix G) and written assignments (See Appendix K). This, however, does not suggest that a quantitative approach is not relevant for this study. However, quantitative data was not collected due to time frames. While the tasks contained a clear structure, sequence and focus, the format was open-ended, enabling participants to reply in their own terms. So the nature of the response was not presupposed (Cohen *et al*., 2007). While the research method(s) and techniques that could provide multiple resources for the task were based on one sided qualitative approach which asserts that action can be understood only from a qualitative perspective multiple sources of data were used in order to approach the study of practice in a sufficiently rich and multifaceted way.

4.5   Motivating for the Applicability of Research Design

Participatory action research design is generally thought to involve a spiral of self-reflective cycles of the following:

- Planning a change;
- Acting and observing the process and consequences of the change;
- Reflecting on these processes and consequences;
- Replanning;
- Acting and observing again and;
- Reflecting again, and so on ... (Kemmis *et a*l., 2000, p. 563).

Figure 4.1 below represents the spiral of self-reflection in a diagrammatic form. It must be noted that in reality, however, the process might not be as neat as this spiral of self-contained cycles of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting (Kemmis *et al*., 2000) notes. Nevertheless, the spiral of action research is repeated for as long as it is necessary.

Figure 4.1. The Action Research Spiral (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000)
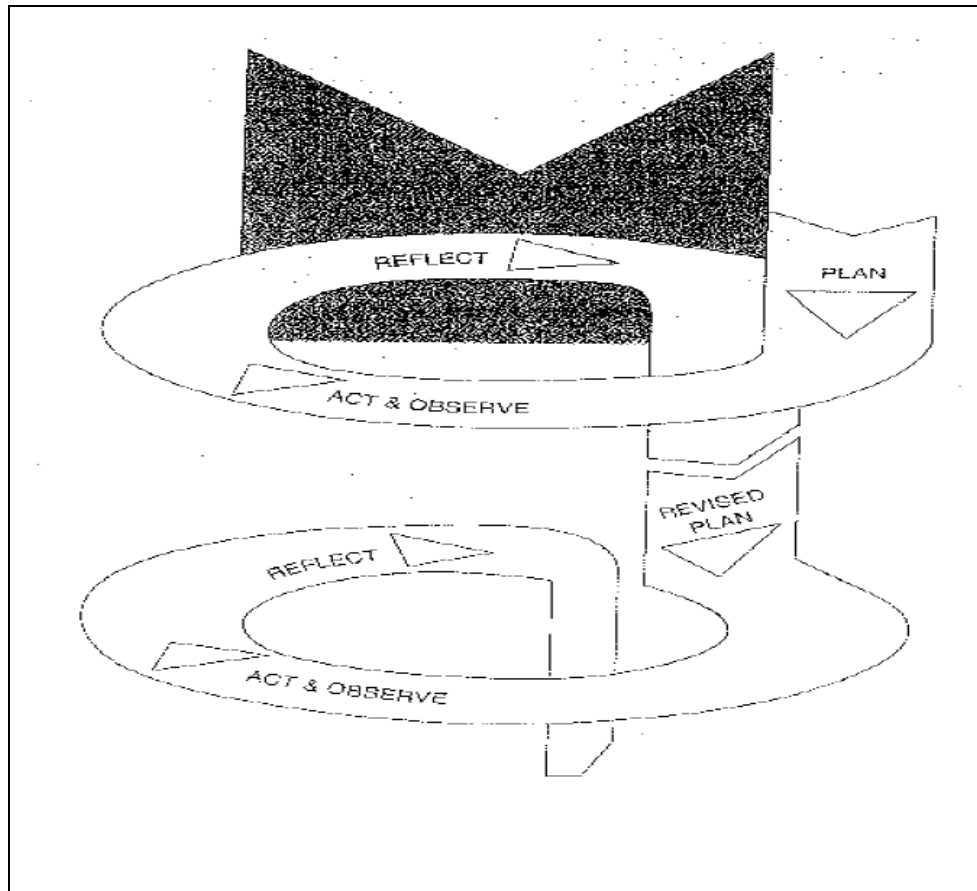
For the purpose of this study, participatory action research was implemented in 1 cycle which involved 3 steps of planning and observing, acting, as well as reflecting, slightly different from the one demonstrated in figure 4.1 above (Kemmis *et al*., 2000). Kemmis *et al*. (2000) mentions that the spiral steps of action research are not fixed but can be adopted to fit with the context where the research is undertaken. What follows is a schematic representation, Figure 4.2, of the approach, instruments and data creation of the study. Such a representation aims to provide an overview of the different phases of action research as well as various data generation methods deployed in each phase. In each phase there was a reflection of what transpired in the previous phase so that the phase was either re-done or improved upon.

A Schematic Representation of the Approach, Instruments, Data Creation of the Study:

Figure 4.2

PHASE		AIM OF PHASE	SAMPLE	RESERACH INSTRUMENTS
R E F L E C T I O N S	**PLAN & OBSERVE** Information Gathering Phase	Familiarising and introducing the participants to the aims and outcomes of the study and then establishing their understanding of critical thinking based on engagement with literary works and to answer the 1st and partly answer the 2nd questions: *1. What can be done in order to develop the capacity of learners to think critically?* *2. How do learners understand the notion of critical thinking?*	6	• Informal discussions • Classroom observations
	ACT Intervention Strategy	To answer the 2nd and the 3rd questions: *2. How do learners understand the notion of critical thinking?* *3. How learners have developed their understanding of critical thinking in relation to the tasks designed in order to engage with literary works?*	6	• Sequence of critical thinking tasks • Semi-structured interviews • Learners' Assignments
	REFLECTIONS Making sense of Critical thinking after implementing it.	Were the objectives of the study achieved	6	• Reflect on whether the research questions were rigorously answered using the abovementioned tools

In terms of the above representation, the first cycle is indicated in the beginning with the PLAN & OBESERVE Phase. In the context of this study, this phase had to do with a situational analysis, and the collection of facts leading to the development of a strategic intervention. My role during the planning phase of the action research cycle was that of establishing, in terms of the 1st critical question, *what could be done in order to develop the learners' capacity to think critically*. Moreover, the planning phase was aimed at familiarising and introducing participants to the aims of the study. After selecting participants (see a discussion on sampling technique), a brief discussion took place between myself and them outside the classroom. We discussed Beaumont's (2010) definition of critical thinking and that I intended to equip them with such skills. They were also told that we were going to use Govender's (2008) *1949* texts for that purpose. In order to make sense of what could be done to develop learners' capacity to think critically it was necessary to observe how they respond to the question that was posed for such purpose, in terms of what they say and how they say it (See Chapter 5). The 1st critical question was partially answered by data collected from the 1st step of the cycle. Informal discussions and classroom observations (involving only the participants) were used for data collection in the first step of action research cycle.

As a researcher I was positioned as a 'participant observer'. According to Cohen *et al*., (2007) the participant observer has less contact with participants than the complete participant. As the participant observer one is said to be part of the situation being observed but with minimal interference, whereas as the complete participant the researcher becomes more involved in the event being observed. In this way the researcher becomes inseparable from the participants. The role of the participant observer allowed me a more informed view of the situation under observation.

The purpose of the 2nd phase, ACT phase was aimed at establishing and demonstrating how *do learners understand the notion of critical thinking*? Learners had to constructively demonstrate that understanding having been introduced to critical thinking. Their responses were weighed against the short story chosen for the study. The data collection instruments used to capture data in the 2nd phase regarding the 2nd critical question were critical thinking tasks; semi-structured interviews; and learners' written assignments. It must be mentioned that observations did not take place in this phase. This was the implementation of the strategic plan referred in this study as ACT PHASE of the cycle.

Finally, the entire process was reflected on in the REFLECT phase. The reflections of the first step of the cycle led to the identification of new problems, learners' inability to intentionally employ critical thinking skills when engaging with literary works. This problem was addressed in the ACT phase and by ensuring that learners apply critical thinking skills intentionally. This process continued for as long as it proved to be necessary. The final step, the reflection step of the action research cycle involved participants comprehension and the ability to apply critical thinking skills in literary works. This phase of the action research cycle reflected on how project(s) (assignments and critical thinking tasks) participants produced incorporated principles of critical thinking. This last phase was, as a result, used to establish the learners understanding and practice of critical thinking after the PLAN & OBSERVE phase, and ACT phase. This analysis of participants' understanding and practice of critical thinking served to identify how, and if, learners had developed from their initial understandings and practices of critical thinking. The data collected from the PLAN & OBSERVE as well as the ACT phases collectively served to answer the 1st and $2^{nd\ and\ 3rd}$ questions in full. This data also served as a critical reflection in the 3rd phase.

What is important in the spiral of action research is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully, rather, whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their practices, understandings of their practices, and the situations in which they practice (Kemmis *et al.*, 2000). It becomes clear from this understanding why the linear steps of action research were not followed as depicted in Figure 4.1. According to Elliot (1991) this is a seemingly over-simplistic model. He felt that one could not simply see such a process as linear and a mere reflection on each step. For him, this may result in the redefinition of the results to be attained and the process values within. Understanding one's practice and the situations in which it occurs enables a reflection on the process and outcome, and this was predicted to equip the participants with critical and analytical tools that they would use in their engagement with literary works.

For the purpose of this study, actual practices were investigated, that is, in this study the intention was to learn about real, material, concrete, and particular practices of specific people in a particular place. Action research enabled me and participants the opportunity to critically reflect and thereby construct own skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in relation

to the practice, and therefore develop professionally and academically (Sarsar, 2008). To that extent, Gould and Baldwin (2004, p. 102) describe teachers as "reflective practitioners [who] build on their experiences and are actively engaged in developing theories that they can use in practice". In this way, I was directly involved in designing ways to develop my practice professionally.

4.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The abovementioned critical thinking tasks were always an intrusion into the lives of participants in terms of time taken to complete them since they were outside of the learning programme of the learners, the level of sensitivity of the questions, as well as the possible invasion of privacy (Cohen *et al*., 2007). As a consequence, participants were advised of their right to withdraw at any stage if they wanted to and were guaranteed confidentiality, anonymity as well as non-traceability in the research hence, the use of pseudonyms. To improve the probability of accurate and trustworthy findings, written consent forms (See Appendix A) were issued for participants to fill in. These forms stipulated that an individual was free to withdraw and discontinue participating in the project at any time without being prejudiced.

Based on the interviews, it became vital to establish working relations with participants so that the research project was undertaken under trust conditions (Cohen *et al*., 2007). Formal letters (See Appendixes C, D and E) were therefore written to the senior executive managers of the district of Pinetown, the Principal, the school governing body, as well as parents of learners, as most of them were minors when the study was conducted. These stakeholders were assured of confidentiality and trust. This trust enabled me to gain access to data.

4.7   LIMITATIONS

The first limitation to this study was its reference to race. South Africa is a society which is multiracial and the sample in this study fell short of the sample that ensured racial representativity that would reflect the multiracial and multicultural nature of the society being studied. It was possible to deal with this limitation because action research design aims to improve the practice no matter whether the sample is representative or not, because of that reason the sample of this study comprised learners from a single racial group (black South

Africans). These learners might have had some experience as far as different treatment of the South African population based on race.

Another limitation was about the teaching of critical thinking skills. Since the activity of teaching such skills is a process, it requires that teachers incorporate it in their planning for the whole academic year. This study, however, was confined within the period of six weeks. That is why I decided to begin with defining the concept of critical thinking to learners and then the tasks that were chosen enabled the study to translate such a definition to meaningful classroom exercises.

In terms of participant observations the limit expressed was that of subjectivity (Cohen *et al*., 2007). Babbie and Mouton (2001) explain that the researcher may find him/herself facing a difficult situation of trying to balance their participation with their observation as one may affect one another. Another limitation regarded the use of classroom observations as a data collection tool since the data was more likely affected by the presence of the observer ((Babie & Mouton, 2001). The knowledge that someone is watching might cause participants to act in ways that may not have under natural conditions or normal circumstances. As a result of these limitations when adopting the role of participant observer, I employed other more distanced forms of data collection, such as critical thinking tasks, learners' assignments and semi-structured interviews.

4.8   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have outlined the decisions for, considerations of and debates on paradigmatic knowing for the study. I have pointed out that the epistemological, ontological, as well as axiological stances reflected the choice of a reflexive-dialectical perspective of the insider group. That was so because the study intended to consider multiple resources for the task. Furthermore, the study is qualitative in its approach to data generation but it was demonstrated for further research, from a methodological perspective, that not one approach should be more or less valid or valuable, and/or scientific than another.

Chapter 4 also motivated for the applicability of participatory action research as a methodology and a strategy for data production. This methodology was chosen because it is in line with the researcher's idea of collaboratively working with the participants in order to

transform practice within a shared social world (the classroom). This chapter identified the purposeful selection of participants based on their achievement in tasks related to literary writing. The reason for that selection was not to discover if the participants would demonstrate the same level of academic achievement, but was to establish how participants answered literary works' questions after they were introduced to critical thinking. Lastly, the chapter elaborated on ethical considerations as well as limitations regarding the activities the researcher engaged in whilst generating data.

Chapter 5

Qualitatively Analysing Data

5.1   Introduction

Chapter 4 has described in details the research activities carried out in this study. It indicated that a participatory action research design was chosen with a qualitative approach to data generation. Chapter 5 reports, interprets and explores the data. This chapter analyses the data collected from 6 selected participants, as opposed to 8 originally chosen, regarding learners' notion of critical thinking skills (as applied in literary works) as well as the strategy I used to develop their critical thinking skills. The analysis took place in the PLAN & OBSERVE phase, ACT phase as well as REFLECT phase as demonstrated in Figure 4.1 above. I however, need to mention that I did not follow the steps of action research as leniently as they are depicted in Figure 4.1

In the PLAN & OBSERVE phase participants' values and considerations regarding critical thinking in relation to literary works were obtained using informal discussions as well as classroom observations. This data provided insights into what steps could be taken to develop learners' critical thinking skills as well as their notion of critical thinking. All this was done in the 1st step of the cycle. It therefore informed the 2nd step, ACT phase of the cycle. This step involved the consideration of how learners developed their understanding of critical thinking in relation to the tasks designed in order to engage with literary works. Critical thinking tasks; semi-structured-interviews, and learners' assignments were used for that purpose. The final step in Chapter 5 served to highlight the main findings across six learners with regards to their understanding, development and practice of critical thinking during the steps of action research cycle. This was done in the RFLECT step of the cycle. The analysis is explained hereunder.

5.2   The PLAN & OBSERVE Phase: What could be done to develop the capacity of learners to think critically?

During this phase informal discussions took place where learners were re-told about the nature of the study, that is, to use literature in order to develop their capacity to think critically. This was explained in terms of what it means, for example, reading with an open mind and reflect about what one reads rather than reading for the sake of reading. But at this stage the definition of critical thinking adopted for the study was not yet introduced because I wanted to find out the extent to which learners apply critical thinking to their reading before being introduced to such definition(s). Participants were then asked to read the short story *1949* by Govender (2008). They were asked to individually and silently read the story in the classroom for about 30 minutes. Reading was informed by top-down and bottom-up approaches to reading (Rumelhart, 1980). In other words participants were made familiar with the concepts embedded in a text for example, the activities of protesting people and why they did so especially in South Africa, as well as the linguistic data driven processing. This is because skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984). In relation to this point Kant (1963) reminds us that new information, new concepts, new ideas can have meaning only when they can be related to something the individual already knows.

After the participants had read the story informal discussions came about. From those discussions I received an indication of critical thinking. That indication was obtained by asking participants about their understanding of the story so that I was able to determine the extent to which they demonstrate critical engagement with literary works. Although the question which was asked regarding participants' understanding of the short story was not linked to critical thinking, but it referred to it. One (1) broad question was asked where all participants had to answer it. The question was framed as follows:

- *After reading the story what was your understanding of it*?

Answers from this question were also used to establish the themes, namely, gender; racism; as well as history, which the study eventually addressed. An attempt not to lead the person being interviewed in any particular direction was made. As a result, answers were not pre-

determined, hence "*After reading the story what was your understanding of it?*" Although this question might seem predetermined and since all participants were asked the same question the intention, however, was to allow them to express themselves as freely as possible, for about 10 to 15 minutes. While such expressions might have provided more information to be interpreted, the question and answers presented were helpful in defining the next step of the cycle, ACT phase, to be discussed later in this chapter.

In this study, informal discussions generated qualitative data in order to understand a subjective world of learners' experiences regarding literary works. This was because I intended to find out how learners had experienced the teaching of literature as a means to develop critical thinking skills. As a result, efforts were made to understand what learners say for themselves so that their views were directly reflected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This meant that I intended to view learners as contributors and players in their social reality of interpreting the text. Based on shared experiences it was possible to ascertain the experiences of participants and therefore I was able to understand the individuals' interpretations of the world around them, which were the world of schooling and the world outside school.

The following analysis served to reveal the main understanding expressed by *Siyabonga* in response to the question "*After reading the story what was your understanding of it?*"

1. *Siyabonga's* understanding was captured in the following response to the posed question:

> During 1949 Durban riots, there was interracial conflict between Zulus and Indians. The conflict began after a black teenager was killed by an Indian shop keeper because the boy was stealing and the black people began to come angry and they start killing Indians or injured, they burnt down the houses of Indian. There is apartheid whereby there is a discrimination about the colour of the skin, they use names that are not good e.g.: [kula's] and the Indians they don't want black people to be with them on the same school (Informal discussion, 19 October 2010).

This understanding was revealed in the form of words and sentences he used because I wanted to keep the flavour of the original data and so be faithful to his words. The above words revealed the extent of *Siyabonga's* critical thinking capacity. An informal discussion was to determine *Siyabonga's* understanding of a short story. It has been mentioned that the question posed in the informal discussion was not directly linked to critical thinking but implied it. Based on the definition of critical thinking provided in chapter 3 of this study (skills like conceptualising, analysing, reflecting, translated into what one encounters in the classroom and the outside world), this understanding was established from the response above. *Siyabonga's* ability to identify apartheid, discrimination and the unwillingness of the Indians to accept Black learners in their schools indicated the ideological representation of society. That is how racialised identities were constructed in South Africa. The question offered an opportunity to show critical thinking for *Siyabonga*. The ideological representation of society from a Marxist point of view posits that it is the view of the dominant class through which society views itself and that view is used to perpetuate unequal power relations (Ashley, 1989). This situation was naturalised in South Africa through the policy of segregated education, for example, (Khuzwayo, 2002). However, *Siyabonga* did not articulate that such discrimination and interracial attitudes were socially constructed and in this case were a product of apartheid policies. Surely, such policies were not naturally given. He omitted that interpretation. Also, it was possible to establish his level or capacity to think critically. Something was missing that needed to be nurtured.

2. *Nkululeko* also identified discrimination from the short story and violence which took place among characters. He stated the following about Govender's (2008) text:

> Dumisani works as a bouzer boy in Model garage. His job was to sell petrol.
> There is lots of discrimination in terms of race. Dumisani was a very good
> singer. There was violence between blacks and Indian (Informal discussion,
> 19 October, 2010).

Apart from discrimination which had already been mentioned by *Siyabonga, Nkululeko* mentioned violence between Indians and Blacks depicted by the short story. *Nkululeko* was able to conceptualise violence between racial groups and that indicated some capacity to think critically. Nevertheless, his answer showed that this skill still needed to be developed in terms of realizing the socially constructed nature of violence. We learn from a short story for

example, that Mr Osborne had something to do with the perpetuation of violence between Blacks and Indians. So, it did not just happen incidentally, someone ensured that it took place.

3. *Nobuhle* went on to mention that there was in fact more than one group involved in the short story, in her understanding of the story by Govender (2008) she mentioned that:

> The story is about racism. The Indians are being assaulted. The White people are encouraging the Black people to burn down the houses of the Indians; they are even giving them lot of paraffin free of charge. The Indians are also being raped and killed. Dumi tried to stop and talk them out of this assaulting thing but they didn't listen (informal discussion, 19 October, 2010).

The responses of the above three participants indicated the process which involved one of the core skills of critical thinking and that is conceptualisation of concepts like discrimination, violence, assault and racism. Although participants did not discuss these concepts in detail, they demonstrated how they worked in real life situations. For example, *Siyabonga* indicated that "there is a discrimination about the colour of the skin, they use names that are not good e.g. [kula's] and the Indians they don't want Black people to be with them in the same school". That answer point towards his understanding of how a concept like discrimination works in practice. Furthermore, that was so because such concepts are not used in the story but the participants were able to identify them based on the actions of the characters. So, these learners were able to grasp some of the issues raised in the story, the challenge which was still evident was for learners to acknowledge that even though a short story raised issues which were experienced by South African citizen but, it did not mean that the story was a direct reflection of social experiences because it was fictional for one and was subjective to the writer's perspective of such issues, and that not all South African experiences were raised by the story or in the story.

Furthermore, in answering the informal discussion question: "*After reading the story, what understanding did you make*?'

4. *Siyabulela* referred to interracial conflict, discrimination, and the role of police. Her understanding of the story was captured as follows:

> Investigating forms of prejudice 1949
> The story is about interracial conflict where by different cultural groups fight each other.
> Understanding the story
> Long time ago there was discrimination between Indians and Black people. They killed father, all family, mothers, children, father there was no pity. Indians were killed, teenagers burned houses, shops, the police they didn't help, they watched while people were fighting.
> Dumisani as main character
> Dumi worked in Garage the one attendant the customer. He had family. He was very concerned about war (informal interview, 20 October 2010).

Siyabulela was able to make a reasoned judgement by pointing that *Dumi* was concerned about the war, meaning that he did not approve of the war between the Zulus and Indians. This information assisted myself into introducing *Siyabulela* and other learners into applying critical thinking skills in order to explore if the war was necessary or not and what could be done so that something of this nature does not happen again. These answers were crucial in shaping the next, ACT phase. The extract below from *1949* is an example from the text that *Siyabulela* interpreted as *Dumi's* concern about the war:

> *Osborne* was chatting to some of the staff in Zulu. *Dumi* could hardly believe his ears. He was joking with them about burning down the houses of the Indians, perhaps he didn't realise these people were serious...*Dumi* was aghast (Govender, 2008, p. 107).

5. *Okuhle*, in relation to the question posed during the informal discussion asserted that the role of Government, the powerful group in society, perpetuated the social ills which took place. He reasoned that:

This story is based on apartheid, I found that there are some things which Black people were not allowed to do back then e.g. school that Black children were not allowed to study at, as they say in the story. "Dumi passes near Indian school. How nice if he could have sent his children there, but the Government didn't allow that"

White people treated Blacks like slaves, look: noisy children thrown wrapping chocolate on Mr Osborne's Garage but he did not ask a thing, just shouted at Dumi "It is your Job, I'm paying you for it. I want my Garage to be spotless, no matter how busy you are"

Dumi is a good singer 'they say' but if he was white he would have sang on the radio & on beach front. Those are signs of discrimination. They even pushed him in the pool but if he was white they wouldn't have made fun of him.

White people have jealousy of each other. Look Osborne's jealousy of Mohamed because they have bought a brand new double story house. Now this is where the event starts because of a black boy who steals and be punished. Since then all blacks and white were fighting (informal discussion, 21 October 2010).

Okuhle depicted some perceptiveness and observation as far as the role of different characters in the story which he associated with real life stories or experiences, and being perceptive could be said to be one of the aspects of critical thinking. He was able to perceive the role of Government in institutionalising the segregationist policy of education which was based on group areas Act of 1950, Section 41 (Khuzwayo, 2002). He also mentioned that life opportunities were reserved for some people in society in line with the job's reservation Act of 1927. Given this perceptive and observation attitude shown by *Okuhle*, what he needed was to be able to practice those skills not only in the classroom but also in the outside world. Inferiorisation of the Other by Self has already been mentioned.

6. *Nobuhle* indicated the involvement of the 'third force' in the violent fighting between the Zulus and the Indians in that the Zulus were in fact influenced to act the way they did. However, that should not suggest that the Zulus were innocent. One might have reasoned that it was probable that the result of the violence would have been different if there were no influences from Mr. Osborne. *Nobuhle* stated that:

This story talks about the racism, we saw Dumi because is Zulu, is forced to sing for the White. White man Osborne told his Zulu workers to fight with Indian who came in this country for making money only. This White man Osborne providing Zulu paraffin free of charge. Dumi pleased his friends in hushed times. Told them that 'they are Christians. These people are our friends; he said only few are rich. The rest are poor, like them. Told them that this is wrong (informal discussion, 22 October 2010).

In summary the informal discussions indicated that participants showed some aspects of critical thinking that have been highlighted above. For example, there was unanimity in the responses around the issues of apartheid, discrimination, racial conflict, violence among others. Nonetheless, critical thinking skills needed further development in order to apply them into meaningful classroom exercises. That is why I designed tasks that were perceived to have potential to develop critical thinking skills. This was in line with the methodological considerations of this study. I had to translate my plans into action, from the PLAN & OBSERVE phase, in order to determine the efficacy of such tasks to improve and promote critical thinking skills. While informal discussions were going on I was observing how participants demonstrated critical thinking skills in their behaviour so as to corroborate what they presented during those discussions and, what they did. This was also going to serve as triangulation from this experience. Introducing learners to critical thinking before they read the text could assist teachers in establishing the extent to which they apply these skills and to realize what the teacher needs to do so that such skills are used beyond the classroom situation and become learner' life skills.

Classroom observations were also chosen as a data production technique for the first step of action research, hence PLAN & OBSERVE phase in an attempt to partly answer the 1st critical question: *What can be done in order to develop learners' capacity to think critically?* It is important to note that through observations, the intention was to determine whether such observed behaviours might resurface or change as the study progressed. Conversely, I was not able to pick this up at a later stage because no observations took place during the ACT phase. These observations were supplemented with field notes. Such notes recorded each learner's talk and behaviour. The challenge here was that the talk flowed rapidly given that those were informal discussions. Even so, jotting down field notes was possible because I was not (simultaneously) taking a leading part in the discussion, although I was present when

the talking took place. This was also possible because I was not observing the whole class. After this encounter with participants, having jotted down observations and brief comments, I separated observations from commentary. The following Table 2 provides detailed field notes made during the PLAN & OBSERVE phase of the action research cycle. Such observations provided information on how analytical, observant as well as reflective participants were in relation to their engagement with the short story. These were taken as indicators of critical thinking during observations.

Table 2

TIME PERIOD	< Observations >	< Observer's Comments (OC) >
Obs. # 1 19 October 2010 09:00-09:30	Learners not concentrating and the level of noise were high when discussing in isiZulu but when asked to discuss in English the noise was reduced.	Under the observed circumstances it was going to be difficult if not impossible for learners to engage in analytical, observatory, or reflective attitude as these critical thinking skills require some level of concentration.
Obs. # 2 19 October 2010 09:00– 09:30	The participants were asked to read silently, a skill required so as to engage with text at a personal level so that one would be able to reflect on the text. Some learners were sleeping while in the process of reading.	Sleeping while reading was an indication that learners were not familiar with reading. They only read in the classroom but not out of school. There was no reading programme at school which would enable them to read even outside school. This is a disadvantage in terms of applying skills to do with critical reasoning. This is because in order to read critically one must want to read.
Obs. # 3 19 October 2010 09:00– 09:30	*Nkululeko* hesitated for some minutes to address the group on his reflections regarding the text. Then he pointed out that Dumisani worked as a bouzer boy and this indicate discrimination in terms of race.	*Nkululeko* lacked confidence to express himself at this stage. But he eventually did. According to him people did not just happen to do manual jobs but social conditions put then in such positions like racial discrimination. Racial discrimination was institutionalised in South Africa. Nkululeko was able to analyse the then South African social conditions of racial discrimination. That was an aspect of critical thinking. Nkululeko did not however, clearly state how *Dumi's work* as a bouzer boy relates to racial discrimination. He did not analyse that situation but was

		able to observe and reflect on it.
Obs. # 4 21 October 2010 09:00 – 09:15	I observed very little verbal interaction between participants. Initially most of what I heard came from *Okuhle*. He made several comments in relation to the text such as "Government did not allow Black people to go there" and "Dumi, if he was White he would have sang in the radio"	It is the role of critical thinking that was shown by *Okuhle* in terms of analysing the role of Government in entrenching discriminatory policies in South African education system. During the ACT phase learners should realize that these are things not worth repeating for the betterment and advancement of society. Participants should be made aware that these attitudes are not naturally given but are socially constructed to serve particular group's interests, so they need to be deconstructed through critical reasoning by questioning and challenging the taken for granted assumptions. So, he analysed, observed and reflected on the issues raised by the text.
Obs. # 5 21 October 2010 09:00 – 09:15	Most learners did not arrive on time. Participants showed hesitation to participate in the discussion. I did not interfere. But then I heard them mentioning words like 'conflict', 'discrimination', 'koolies', 'kaffirs', 'can't be in the same school, Blacks and Indians'.	I sensed that the project was starting to be heavy for some participants, although I did not ask anything to that effect. It was not easy for me to hear exactly what they were saying because I was not very close to them at that point in time. I did not want to interfere with their discussion. But I did pick some words which Indicated to me that they still see the unequal treatment of people in the text as well as derogatory names which were given to people then, sometimes by people themselves and by authorities, respectively. The reflection made was in relation to the derogatory names and segregated educational arrangement.
Obs. # 6 22 October 2010 09:00-9:30	*Siyabulela* mentioned that Osborne did not really liked Dumi. He made him do funny things because Dumi was not White, and that is racism.	*Siyabulela* also observed racial prejudice in the novel, although there is not much she mentioned to count for critical thinking she was able to conceptualise racial prejudice. Much needed to be done so that participants could apply critical thinking skills with the purpose by being able to read between the lines for example, since not everything is overtly stated in literary works.

Obs. 1-6 indicate the number of observations that took place as well as the dates. In other words I happened to observe more than 1 event in a single date and time, for example, on the 19th of October 2010 more than 1 behaviour and talk was observed and that is why it is indicated as Obs. #1, #2 and #3.

In summarizing the data from informal discussions and observations, few participants indicated the capacity to apply critical thinking when reading literary works. I say this because they seemed to have applied these skills unintentionally, it was therefore necessary that I introduced them to tasks where they could apply them intentionally in the next phase of action research. I say this because some responses learners gave indicated some element of critical thinking but they were not aware that they have applied them because they were not introduced to them yet. For example, if you look at observation #3 and #4 above some aspect of critical thinking were shown because learners realised something beyond the written words and that is 'racial discrimination. So, the strategy I used in order to develop critical thinking skills was first to introduce learners to ideas of critical thinking, ask them to read the text in relation to the skills, then ask them to respond to a broad question about the text that implied critical thinking skills. Now in partly responding to the 1st question, one can say that these strategies assisted me to establish the extent to which participants were able to apply critical thinking skills when engaging with literary works. Participants showed some use of these skills as they responded to the posed question and observed behaviour. So, their notion of critical thinking at this stage was minimal. It was also found that most learners were not familiar with reading, especially when they had to read silently on their own. Depending on the nature of learners in terms of their ability to engage with literary works it is imperative to have a strategy to use before developing learners' capacity to think critically.

5.3   The ACT Phase: Development and Practice of Critical Thinking

The experiences from the PLAN & OBSERVE phase prompted me to design tasks that have potential to develop critical thinking skills. It was at this phase of the action research cycle where participants were introduced to the definition(s) of critical thinking provided in chapter 3. We scheduled to meet during Saturdays with learners since October was a busy month for them preparing for the year end examinations, however, we met during the week when they were not occupied because no lessons were taking place then. I made copies of the definition(s) of critical thinking for the learners to refer to. I highlighted that our focus was going to be on the definition by (Beaumont, 2010). I explained the significance of the definition in relation to the study. It was not unusual to have Saturday classes at this school especially for grades 11 and 12. While this was not a normal classroom setting in terms of the number of learners, but it was indeed a familiar environment for the participants.

The ability to read and write had to form part of the skills to be developed otherwise it would have been extremely difficult to pursue a study of this nature. That is one of the reasons the Reader Response theory and Constructivism were theories adopted for this study. Participants needed skills to help them read the text and make sense of it for themselves. Subsequently, all that is mentioned above was a consequence of pointing learners to directions they might not immediately see on their own as was evident from the PLAN & OBSRVE phase. From the observations I surmised that learners were primarily unintentionally not engaging and unintentionally engaging in critical thinking activities in terms of critical thinking definition adopted in this study. These observations also formed the basis of discussion in the semi-structured interviews in the ACT phase. Through these interviews I was able to probe if the response did address some aspect of critical thinking mentioned above. So, the second stage of action research, the ACT phase, highlights the concepts, tools, and summary of activities dealt with in the study in order to promote critical thinking. The challenge was to inspire them in the direction of intentionally applying these skills through conceptualisation, analysing, self-reflection and evaluating with an awareness of how messages from the short story are value laden and that there is no one to one correspondence between the short story and real life experiences. This is because even though the story raises some factual issues like the Group Areas Act but, it does not signify that narratives raised by characters are the exact words of real people (not characters in the story) who experienced such social ills. Also, the names of characters used in the story are fictitious.

5.4   Tasks which have a Potential to Develop Critical Thinking Skills

In this section a number of aspects were considered regarding the tasks that have potential to develop critical thinking in order to answer the 1st question (Beaumont, 2010): *What can be done in order to develop the capacity of learners to think critically?* As well as the 2nd question "*Which type of tasks can enable learners develop their capacity to think critically?* Each of these aspects was then supported by referring to the study's data as far as the tasks were concerned. It is important to note that these aspects refer to what emerged from this study from the data in the PLAN & OBSERVE phase, which is no doubt only one manner in which critical thinking could be promoted. Furthermore, these aspects were made in relation to the tasks that support critical thinking development. These tasks were grouped into three categories (Beaumont, 2010): those typically done before presenting the main text, those done while focusing on the text, and those done after focusing on the text.

5.4.1 **_Aspect 1_: _Observing task_** is the basic starting point of the sequence of critical thinking tasks because it involves a fundamental level of analysis.

The observing task

It is a pre-text activity that simply asks learners to look at or listen to a stimulus related to the main text and to identify, or name, what they see. The skills involved in observing are looking, noticing, and naming. This task is important, firstly, because it brings to the fore the lexical items (vocabulary) and language structures (grammar) needed for learners to explore the topic actively in English. Secondly, conceptually, students are introduced to the topic and have a chance to discover what they already know about it. So, it is part of activating learners' prior knowledge in terms of both language and content. This task also begins to level the playing field for learners in a classroom where there may be disparate backgrounds in terms of knowledge of the topic at hand. Laying this foundation will make later, higher order language and critical thinking tasks more viable and potentially more fruitful because there will be a baseline for both language and content. Observing activities that were done before reading Govender's (2008) _1949_ are offered in Table 3 below along with the language foci that might be treated with the tasks.

Table 3 Observing Tasks

Prompt	Language Focus
Look at the picture(s) of people. What do you see?	_There is/ are_
Look at the picture with many people. What do you see?	_Has/ have_
Draw a picture in your mind and imagine what it was like to be in that situation for the people in the picture. Describe it.	Nouns and adjectives

The pictures seen in the first observing task (See Appendix G) depict some of the problems that are mentioned in _1949_ such as social and economic divisions in the area. Participants were able to generate these associations with the picture. Also, they were able to name and describe, in a very basic way, some other problems faced by characters in the short story, for example, _Njabulo_ had this to say regarding observing task:

1. There is people who are striking both race Indian and African black people
2. The picture has people with posters which says fight for freedom

3. It was like two races working together for their freedom and right that is
   what they wanted for so long.

Njabulo said there is people instead of saying there are people. This was an indication of language difficulty faced by EAL learners. This exercise was going to helped *Njabulo* realise syntactically correct/incorrect sentences. Also, in engaging with the abovementioned pre-text task (as a strategy I used to promote critical thinking) *Nkululeko* had the following to say:

1. I see people striking for freedom right that government is denied to give
   them.
2. People are board that suggest that we must get freedom, right of get
   everything we wants
3. It feels very bad to be in that situation because some people can get
   killed, some they don't get what they have protested for.

Okuhle shared the same sentiments as the other two learners above. He had this to say:

1. There are people who are protesting for their rights
2. The picture have people who are caring posters that have their demands
3. These were one of the hardest periods of their lives

From the above responses I could see how the observing task focused on the learners' world. It began to draw out their prior knowledge on the topic and was supposed to provide them with the language resources to be better prepared for the text and to go deeper. It was clear from these responses that learners knew something about freedom, rights, race issues as well as the government's role in denying people their rights, especially in a country like South Africa, then. But clearly learners had some difficulty in expressing themselves in written language. *Okuhle* for example wrote that, "The picture have...", and *Nkululeko's* response, "...that the government is denied to give them", as well as *Njabulo's,* "There is people who are..." it was neither the purpose of this study nor of this chapter to engage with language or to analyse it, however, it was necessary for the learners to be able to read the text and be able to learn from reading such a text so that they were able to engage with it critically since the study was about applying critical thinking skills when engaging with literary works. So, the ability to read and write became part and parcel of the study and as a result out of this data it was incumbent upon me to come up with ways to help learners in that regard so as to improve

the authenticity of the data. As a result, the observing task along with the next, were designed to give learners a secure, potentially rich linguistic and conceptual platform from which to begin their exploration of the text.

5.4.2 *Aspect 2*: **an *Identifying*** *task* is relevant as that which promotes critical thinking because it gives learners a chance to share their backgrounds from their own realms of experience.

The Identifying task

Ideally, this task was expected to later prompt learners to return to the ideas raised during this task and then update their thinking about the actual story as they discover more. As a result, there were many opportunities to work on identifying assumptions in the short story, a few which are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Identifying assumption Tasks

Prompt	Language Focus
1. Look at the two pictures. Which picture do you prefer? Why?	Expressing likes and dislikes
2. Have you seen any situation like the one in the second picture? How was the mood like? Why?	Describing a situation using simple past
3. What do you know about protesting? [or] Do you think people should protest?	Giving reasons with because

The prompts in Table 4 asked for a reaction. The first item asked learners to look at the picture(s) they saw during the observation task and then express opinions about what they saw (not just describe it). The other items allowed learners to share their ideas and provided opportunities for me to build on the lexical and linguistic instruction begun in the observing task, thus allowing for more exposure to the target language and more opportunities to use it actively. The data suggested that participants gained (but not as much as was expected in terms of language) in terms of conceptual foundation to engage with the main text. That is witnessed by the following responses from participants. Responding to the questions from Table 3 above *Nkululeko* identified the following assumptions:

> 1.   The one that have many people protested for freedom and right.

2. Yes, the mood was high they were fighting for what they willing to get, some they even killed the police, injured the journalist and some even killed the teacher Andrias Tatane.

3. Protesting means to against what you don't like. Yes people can protest for increase of salary and wages.

While only *Nkululeko's* response is shown above, I should mention that most learners had similar responses in terms of identifying the picture of people protesting for freedom and what they believed in, except *Siyabonga* who also mentioned that he preferred Mahatma Ghandi's Picture because he was rich. This did not make connections in the context of the study. Nevertheless, *Nkululeko* was able to conceptualise freedom and rights and the ability to conceptualise is part of critical thinking. He was also able to share his background experiences in relation to the pictures, an experience which was vital in terms of issues raised in the Govender's (2008) *1949*, and the right of people to live anywhere they want to in South Africa. Yet, looking closely to *Nkululeko's* expression, it needed more refining for example, I think he lacked relevant vocabulary when he said the mood was "high" and he did not use 'because' in giving the reason(s) why people should protest.

5.4.3 *Aspect* **3**: *Understanding and organising task* takes the focus away from the learners' world and shifts it into the text thereby allowing learners to demonstrate their comprehension of the text. The argument is made here that being able to understand and manage content is fundamental to the practice and development of critical thinking skills.

The Understanding and Organising Task

For this task, learners were first asked to identify the main ideas and details. Those types of responses were pulled literally from the text. Learners were also asked to take what they have read and put information in order by classifying or categorizing for example, two roomed shanty house and mansion house and/or comparing and contrasting for example, describe the house where Mr Osborne, Mahomedy's lived and where Dumi lived. Another key skill that was introduced and practiced at this literal level was summarising. Summarising, or retelling, is a key skill in most academic disciplines (Beaumont, 2010). It involves restating the idea in the student's own words. All this is represented in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Understanding and Organising Tasks

Prompt	Language Focus
Consider what you have said about whether people can protest or not and the reasons you gave. How did the house 'Dumi' lived in looked like and where Mr. Osborne lived?	Descriptive adjectives, sequence words
Why were they living in such different locations?	Retelling the story in the simple present/past
Tell your partner what you remember from the story in relation to question 2 above.	Giving reasons with because, indirect speech

Findings show that participants were able to demonstrate their comprehension of the text on a literal level. With the first activity, learners used their understanding of the text to report on the physical appearance and conditions of the houses, a form of summarization. The second prompt asked learners to give an informal summary of what they understood. The third had those categorizing details they found in the text. All this was evidenced not only by the participants' responses but also by the development of the story which showed the culmination of the dissatisfaction over the social and economic divisions in the area. So, the story was not only about the Indians and the Zulus. In terms of the dissatisfaction that was felt by characters, Govender (2008) described the dissatisfaction through the character of *Dumi*:

> Dumi felt slighted, but you couldn't easily find such good accommodation.
> The alternative was to live in Umkumbaan, the sprawling shanty town,
> where there was no water and no toilets. Yet you paid six pounds a month to
> Mr. Mohamed whose family also owned a shop in Booth Road (Govender,
> 2008, p. 102).

Earlier in chapter 2 I discussed a racialised construction of identity in South Africa and the quotation above clearly depicts that in the form of residential dwellings. There is in that sense an inferiorisation of the Other by Self. In relation to the above quotation Geerstema (2007) writes about the active process of identity formation implicit in all narrative writing, including texts marked explicitly as fictions. Geertsema (2007) continues to assert that from this perspective one might then say that literature is a way of negotiating difference: it is a means of constructing a self and therefore necessarily a way of relating to others, which in terms of South Africa of course explicitly includes *racialised* others. So, here we see how identities were discursively constructed with regards to racial discourses.

Responding to the sequence of critical thinking tasks on the aspect of 'understanding and organising tasks' *Siyabonga* pointed out that:

1. Dumi lived in a two roomed house and Mr Osborne lived in a family mansion in a sprawling kloof estate and it had a pool.
2. I think they were living in such different locations because of the apartheid laws which separated racial groups from living together and Mr Osborne owned a better house because he was white and the whites were dominant than blacks at that time.

Nobuhle shared similar thoughts by noting that:

1. He lived on a house which was not well developed with no enough of his needs where as Mr Osborne lived on a well-developed house with everything he needed. This was all about discriminating.
2. It because they were not equal according to the situation they were in. Dumi was black and Mr Osborne was white so there was apartheid against one another.
3. I remember that black people were treated like dogs in such way that the white people were the one who were supposed to rule everyone.

In showing his understanding *Okuhle* responded by writing that:

1. Dumi lived in two roomed house which he rented from Mr Maniram. Osborne family lived in a Mansion on their sprawling kloof estate.
2. It because of that period there was what was called group areas acts.
3. What I remember is when Mr Osborne asked why the Mahomedys insist on living with them.

Furthermore, *Nkululeko* depicted an awareness of the existence of the effect of class as well as racial conflict. I have used a Marxist perspective in analysing social problems, but Marxism was not approached from economic determinism, in analysing what was mentioned by *Nkululeko*. The Marxist analysis adopted in this study meant that other pertinent issues could be taken into account for example, racism, gender stereotypes, and the historical development of people's lives. This shows the relative autonomy of the superstructure to the economic base (Althusser, 1971). Marxism was incorporated in this study to form the basis

upon which different groups, including learners and teachers, could be encouraged to see the need to promote, instil, and encourage critical thinking in English classrooms so that the disempowered voices like women, children, immigrants, and the likes are given the space they deserve, and also to expose and challenge the ills of society through literary works. According to *Nkululeko*:

1. Dumi was living in a house similar with a shack and he was trying with all his best to live in a decent house. Osborne was living in a world class house with everything because he was rich. The black people in 1949 were fighting with Indians. Dumi was poor working in garage service the petrol to the users of cars. Forced physical separation between races by creating different residential for different races.

Siyabulela supported this view by pointing out that:

1. Dumi lived in a two roomed house. Mr. Osborne lived in a big surburb house.
2. Dumi was poor and Mr. Osborne was rich.
3. Dumi did not have enough money and because of that he couldn't afford to live in a surburb house. Mr Osborne was wealthy because he owned a petrol garage.

From what *Siyabulela* and *Nkululeko* expressed above it became obvious that this was a class society where you had the rich and the poor. So, one was not poor because they chose to be but their subjectivities were institutionally and socially constructed through the segregationist policies mentioned earlier in chapter 4, for example *Dumi* could not live in the suburbs not because he did not want to but he could not afford to live there.

From these responses, it was interesting to note that participants were now aware of racial laws which governed South Africa in the past, the nature of discrimination as well as the role of Group Areas Act. These circumstances might seem to belong to the old South Africa but some of the learners are currently experiencing these divisions. As a result, most learners could identify with '*Dumi*', since the school from where the data was collected is situated in a rural area where job opportunities are very scarce and therefore not easy for parents to provide for their families as adequately as they would want to. The point of argument is that

such divisions should not be understood as if they are naturally given but socially constructed to include and exclude other members of society from the mainstream economies. According to Rose (2005) students learn by being actively involved in creating alternative knowledge by realizing that the subjective positions in society are shaped by members of the society and this is line with conceptualisation made in Figure 3.1, chapter 3.

Clearly, as the learners looked closely at the text the potential for going even more deeply, was greater. Having a firm foundation in the text enabled learners to then move toward more authoritative judgements about the less literal levels of the text because of this solid understanding of the content. That illustrated the importance of the observing, identifying and understanding and organising tasks described above. And that made the first three task types an essential part of critical thinking process. Without an awareness of what we bring to the topic and a firm grounding in the facts, sound critical thinking cannot happen (Beaumont, 2010). Both critical questions 1 and 2 of this study were partly answered here in terms of the development of the learners' capacity to think critically and the type of tasks which have potential for critical thinking skills.

5.4.4   *Aspect 4: Interpretation* allows learners to look below the literal surface of the text as they make inferences, interpret meaning, and hypothesize about what they have read and this requires them to think at a higher level.

The interpretation task

For this task it was important that learners stay focused on the text. That is, answers or insights had to be drawn only from the text. Learners used what they had in front of them, the evidence (the short story), to come up with a response, theory or judgement. The evidence they presented was reasonable, if not always convincing, to others. In other words, there was clear textual basis for inferences and hypothesis made. Table 6 below presents a number of tasks associated with interpreting. Learners were asked questions to interpret based on the text. Some of the prompts in table 6 were followed by the question, "How do you know?" Items such as these made the lesson more enjoyable and engaging. Not only that, more importantly, they challenged learners both linguistically and cognitively to use high-level academic skills and support their interpretations with textual evidence, an important skill related to all academic learning.

Table 6 Interpreting tasks

Prompt	Language features
What did Mr Osborne mean when he asked, "Why do they insist on living with us?" How do you know this?	Retelling in the present or past tense
Mr Osborne said, "The Indians deserve what they were getting". Do you agree or disagree with Mr Osborne? Why?	Giving reasons with insight using *because*
What do you think *Dumi* was thinking when Mr Osborne said the above words?	Giving a definition
What sense did you make of the statement that, "some of the workers agree volubly".	Giving reasons with insight on taken for granted assumptions/ knowledge
Poobal said, "Some white people are stirring up the trouble". Then *Dumi* asked, "But why never call the police?" Poobal responded that the police know, "They are just standing and watching". What sense did you make out of these statements? Why?	Expressing opinion

Okuhle's responses to this task showed some ability in focussing on the text to present answers he provided. *Okuhle* responded as follows:

1. He meant that why do they want to live with white when Indians also had their area to live in.
2. I disagree, because nobody deserves to die no matter what they have done.
3. He was thinking about the way in which he was going to persuade them or Mr Osborne not to kill the Indians.
4. The sense that I get is that the workers agreed volubly because Mr Osborne was their boss so they were scared that they will lose their jobs.
5. A sense that Poobal had a feeling of fighting back, because of the statement he makes that, "some White people are stirring up the trouble".

Okuhle suggested that workers agreed with Mr. Osborne without questioning his motives because they were afraid they might lose their jobs. This could have been because there were no laws protecting workers at the time. Such suggestion was inferred from the text. Interpreting with its sub-skill of inference is at the heart of critical thinking (Beaumont, 2010). Learners need to read between the lines of what the text implies. Hence, *Okuhle* was able to look at a text on its literal level and was then able to take the clues from the text in order to be aware of other less obvious ideas.

5.4.5   *Aspect 5***:** Introducing secondary text in *analysing and evaluating task* could cast the primary text in a new light so that students can take the topic deeper, maintain their interest and engagement in the topic, and see a different perspective or point of view.

Analysing and Evaluating Tasks

Here students were expected to produce a culminating piece of writing (or a speaking activity) that would enable me to assess their development in critical thinking. Consequently, I was able to discern where the participants were in terms of their skills development. That recognition allowed me to determine how to proceed in the future, and that formed baseline assessment. Both tasks in Table 7 below offered this opportunity.

Table 7 Analysing and Evaluation Tasks

Prompt	Language Focus
1. Read the story again in conjunction with the excerpts from the Bill of Rights. What can you say about human Rights in relation to what you have read from Govender's (2008) short story?	Describing the circumstances
2. Compare and contrast the Human Rights during 1949 and 2010. What has changed? Do you think people can change? Provide 5 tips to ensure that people's Rights are not violated.	Comparing and contrasting with insight

Participants were given an excerpt from the Bill of Rights (See Appendix H) as a secondary text to read with the primary text so that different perspectives from those in the text were drawn upon. The following responses from participants indicated the extent to which they have developed the skills to think critically and especially critical thinking as it is defined in this study, that is, the development of an active, conscious, purposeful awareness of what one encounters both in the classroom and in the outside world, and since, during this phase, participants were encouraged to intentionally apply critical thinking skills in their engagement with literary works. That was captured from *Nkululeko's* response:

> 1.   The right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private
>   sources. Their Rights were violated because they were not wanted in the
>   community they were living in, and they were also beaten and their houses
>   burnt down.

2. I think people can change because before (1949) people were discriminated in front of the police and they just stood there and watched, but that have changed, there's no apartheid anymore because there is

I. Unity

II. Caring about each other

III. We do not treat each other badly

IV. The rate of violence has decreased

V. There is no discrimination

Njabulo indicated the following:

1. Human Rights – the people segregated by the color bar of their skin. There were some other public places which they were not allowed to use but they were all citizens of the same country.

2. Democracy

- Freedom for everyone who live in South Africa.

- The law is for all people equally

- Have a right the people of South Africa.

These findings signified that the participants were able to use the related source to the topic and thereby took the topic deeper and were able to see a different and another perspective which was not obviously presented from the text. That demonstrated some development of critical thinking skills. That was evidenced by *Njabulo's* insight in that some people were not allowed to use other public places while they were the citizens of the same country. The use of the phrase "not allowed" suggests that he was able to realize that someone/group was controlling that condition and it was a condition that was socially constructed. So, the text was not read for the sake of reading but was read to identify the deeper seated ideological implications of the South African society. It meant that people knew that they were not allowed to live in particular areas and they had to take that as the "true" condition of their circumstances. Through critical thinking, *Njabulo* was able to comprehend that this was not the 'truth', naturally given positioning of their subjectivities.

5.4.6 *Aspect 6*: Having been introduced to the above activities, learners' ability to **make decisions** using critical thinking skills in a non-classroom setting can be stretched. Learners can develop language skills and critical thinking skills as part of their everyday life. This is

because these activities are not an end in themselves but a stepping stone. Critical thinking skills can be transferred to everyday life.

Importance of making decision tasks

Learners can make decisions in a task that involves completing an assignment, a test, or homework. Regarding this study, learners completed an assignment. They might be given an activity where they need to make a decision based on a particular topic. Learners were asked to identify a problem in their home, community, or the broader world and address it. They may see an issue that interests them and pursue it. They ask questions, read between the lines, and ask for clarification, so they look at the situation and consider options before acting or reacting. Activities regarding Task 6 are tabled in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Making Decisions

Prompt	Language features
1. Identify a problem in your immediate community, in South Africa or in the world where Human Rights are or have been violated. Explain how they have been violated.	Following or describing process
2. Having identified the violation of human Rights, suggests change where it is needed.	Proposing solutions with should
3. Identify a problem in your community and propose a solution	
4. Talk with your partner or family member, make an achievable goal, and pursue it.	

In relation to some of the issues raised above *Siyabonga* provided some solutions. He noted, for example, that:

1. In Zimbabwe – the people are not allowed to have a say in what happens in their country because of the oppressive government that is in violation of the right to freedom of speech.
2. They should change their leadership and have leaders that will hear and work with people.

3. A problem in my community is that many people are unemployed because they lack the skills. The solution here should be to train people and provide the necessary skills for them this way it will be easy for them to get jobs.

These tasks enabled myself and participants to understand the distorted nature of social reality in terms of practices, and social arrangements and situations whose consequences are unsatisfying, ineffective, or unjust for some or all those involved and affected. Working together with participants in that regard proved worthwhile for this participatory action research study. This distortion was captured in *Nkululeko's* point in that "*different places were created for different races*" A distortion takes place when one understands that allocating different races in different places is naturally given so that one unquestioningly accepts the condition one finds him or self in society. Participants were also able to show understanding of this distortion and this was also captured in *Siyabulela's* response when she asserted, in relation to the aspect of '*Making Decisions*' in 'The Sequence of Critical Thinking Skills, that:'.

1. In South Africa there was xenophobia, the violation of the emigrants to be here. Some were here for work and had their passports with them but they were beaten up by South Africans.
2. They are human like us, they also deserve to be welcomed warmly.
3. The rate of drugs is high, those who supply them should be arrested.

It was crucial for this project and for *Siyabulela* to realise that "they are human like us". But because of the distorted view and unjust practices towards other human beings there is practice of xenophobia. This was the same as the attack of Indians by the Zulus in Durban in 1949. After the mob had found out that Dumi was lying about the whereabouts of the Indian family he was renting a house from, we learn from Govender's (2008) that:

> All mercy deserted them. It deserted the souls of fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, giving way to the savagery that lurks eternally in the human heart. Out of the time warp of primeval hate flew the spear. It shot through Dumi's chest. There was no pity, no reason in the hearts of these malleable souls, held captive by minds more savage in their cunning – the cunning on which empires have been built (Govender, 2008, p. 108).

These were uncritical, unjust practices towards other human beings and Mr Osborne cunningly tricked workers by persuading them that "this is your country: we white people have come to improve it for you...these people have come to make money. They have houses. You haven't. You can tell your friends they can come have all the paraffin they want, free of charge" (Govender, 2008, pp. 107 − 108). Such issues must be challenged because it is quite clear that with the help of the text participants were able to draw directly on real and concrete human and social conditions as was alluded to from a Marxist literary criticism. Participants were able to comprehend a text in a sceptical way by challenging and questioning the established positions in terms of gender and power relations. This was witnessed by *Nobuhle's* argument against women abuse:

> Violence against women caused by men. Women are being beaten by their husband for non reason that can be mention but they are taking an advantage of that they are stronger than women.

Congruence to *Nobuhle*, *Okuhle* pointed out that: "

> There are places where women or young girls are forced to marriage at a very young age and their right to safety and security, the right to freedom of speech are being violated.

While the story from Govender's (2008) *1949* is not about Zimbabwe *Siyabonga* demonstrated some aspects of critical thinking by learning something from one context and being able to apply such knowledge in another context which also forms part of critical thinking (Stott, 2008). From the above responses and assumptions from participants, literature is viewed as a process resulting from the socio-historical and political realities in society. Literature engages with the society that shaped it (Geerstema, 2007). Govender's (2008) text was therefore used for the purpose of mediating on South Africa's social as well as political practices pervasive then and relevant currently in terms of not valorising a particular group as the carrier of legitimate political action. In this way a communicative space in which communicative action could be fostered among the participants was created in which problems and issues could be thematized for critical exploration aimed at overcoming felt dissatisfactions, irrationality, and injustice (Fay, 1987). In this way the relationships between the realms of the individual and the social were deliberately explored and/or

investigated as depicted in Figure 3.1 in chapter 3. Through Govender's text myself and participants were able to understand how socially constructed conditions shapes the world of an individual and also how powerful individuals can shape the social conditions the members of society happen to find themselves in. For example, through the social institution of marriage women are sometimes forced to marry someone they do not love. I think the challenge with these activities would be for the participants to be able to distinguish when it is appropriate to call into action these critical thinking skills independently. For example, would participants be able to answer questions requiring certain analytical skills or critical awareness, but without teacher's prompt? Will they know when to "switch on" their critical thinking skills (Willingham, 2007)? This is because learning to think critically is not like riding a bike, a skill picked up and easily maintained (Willingham, 2007). From another perspective, Van Gelder likens learning these skills to learning to dance ballet (Van Gelder, 2005). He points out that:

> It must be studied, it is difficult and remains challenging even when one is quite proficient, and there is always more to learn...humans are not necessarily designed to be all that critical: Homo sapiens evolved to be just logical enough to survive (Van Gelder, 2005, p. 42).

A recommendation arisen from the above findings was that critical thing skills' instruction should be an explicit part of the curriculum. That is why this study also chose to include data from documents (RNCS) in chapter 2 in order to indicate the importance of critical thinking skills development among learners. Critical Questions 1 and 2 had been partly answered at this stage. But more data had to be analyzed, and then subjected to reflective evaluation to determine the extent to which the research findings of this study answer the Critical Questions and meet the purpose of this research study. Below I discuss the themes that were identified in the PLAN & OBSERVE phase of this study.

The identified themes provided and defined the socio-structural and political ideology which characterized apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa's socio-political realities. The above responses from learners demonstrated that all learners were able to identify themes of discrimination, interracial conflict, gender stereotypes and the representation of apartheid South African life. Such responses corroborated the data that was qualitatively generated here

under in terms of the themes identified above. Table 9 below presents the themes identified during the analysis of the informal discussions and critical thinking tasks engaged in by learners.

Table 9 *Themes identified from informal discussions and the sequence of critical thinking tasks based on Govender's (2008) 1949* short story.

The Framework	Themes
Literary expression	Racial conflict
Historical Materialism	Stereotypes
Political Ideology	Ideologies
Dialectical Materialism	Political History
	Gender relations
	Textual
	expression

The above table presents the themes identified from data. These themes represent the responses provided by learners in their critical engagement with Govender's (2008) *1949.* Their attempts to analyze critically the above short story were dealt with individually as separate themes. To do so, these themes were further categorized in terms of how they relate to one another as that helped to avoid repetition during the analysis process. This categorization gave rise to the framework within which the themes were discussed. The framework was expressed in this way: literary art as a social expression, historical and dialectical materialism, apartheid and democracy as well as political ideologies. The themes that were analysed are gender relations, and racial conflict, stereotypical attitudes. All these themes were used to find out the extent to which learners had developed their capacity of critical thinking when they engage with literary works into their lives and outside the classroom context. The next section deals with each in turn.

5.5 Literary Art as a Social Expression

The issue of the relationship between literary art and society as presented in the short story was further revealed by participants during semi-structured interviews on *1949.* During the interview process, most learners revealed that Govender's (2008) short story was an attempt to tell the truth and reproduce things affecting the lives of the greater number of people in South Africa. Govender (2008) used characters and presented to his audience the ills of the

apartheid regime and its effects. For example, asked whether or not Govender's novel portrays the social and political aspects of South Africa, *Siyabonga* had this to say from questions 1, 3 and 4 (See Appendix F):

> 1949 is very similar to the political nature and racial attitudes of apartheid, because in 1949 short story we find that different races are set apart and that the dominant race was the whites and this is how that situation was in apartheid South Africa ... we are shown that the whites were staying in houses that were big while the other races were staying in smaller houses, we also find out that whites have most of the money and power ... I feel that blacks were being exploited and that whites were taking over their country .... (*Siyabonga*, semi-structured interview 26 October 2010)

Siyabonga's answers from the semi-structured interviews showed insight into the interpretation of the text by showing an awareness of the ills of the old South Africa and its social stratification, but he was unable to reflect on the notion that it was not all White people who were responsible for the suffering endured by the black majority of this country. It was a system of the government of the time, although it was driven by White people, but it was the system that needed to be changed.

On the same set of questions *Siyabulela* did not believe that people had to fight over 'small things' but she also shared the view that White people were the cause of all the conflicts. She answered that:

> It represents the extent of apartheid and people protesting for freedom ... they are presented in a way of showing what it was like to be discriminated ... it is not exciting to know that they were fighting over small things worst of all the conflict/havoc was caused by white people (*Siyabulela*, semi-structured interview 26 October 2010).

The social construction of whiteness and white privilege which is invisible yet observed in everyday practice as it was the case in the quotation above was discussed in chapter 2. While *Nobuhle* did not put the blame on white people, she realised that their social conditions were better than other races; she believed that humanity should know no boundaries:

> In 1949 we are being told there was similar political nature and racial attitudes of apartheid ... white were staying in houses that were big while the other races were staying in small houses ... I feel very painful because we all should be equal but we are not (*Nobuhle*, semi-structured interview 26 October 2010).

The social conditions in which White people happened to find themselves were not the consequences of nature but were socially constructed and *Nobuhle* noted that when she pointed out that "we should all be equal but we are not". In that way the life of the South African history was observed, exposed and criticised. Furthermore, *Siyabonga's* views and interpretation of the relationship between literary art and society revealed the contradictions that dominated South Africa during the apartheid rule. As a learner in the New South Africa, *Siyabonga's* interpretation showed that he was able to mediate *1949* world created in Govender's short story to that of a real life currently. This was clearly shown in the sense that *Siyabonga* was able to identify and relate to the Pass Laws and other Acts of apartheid South Africa. How was that relevant? Consider the conditions under which people live today, they are a legacy of apartheid some benefitted others did not.

Amongst the legislations presented in the text was "the notorious Pegging Act, the forerunner of the Group Areas Act which intended to 'peg the encroaching hordes of Indians and Blacks to their boundaries" (Govender, 2008, p. 106). Those practices also forbade any relations between Whites and non-Whites. *Siyabonga's* interpretation of the role played by legislation in 1949 was made clear in the sense that he accurately attempted to depict life and its problems within the context of apartheid South Africa. *Siyabonga's* critical engagement with the above short story, one may argue, was strengthened by the way in which he and other learners engaged with the critical questions based on the short story in the assignment topics offered to them. An example that served to support the above claim was the assignment topic offered to the learners:

"1949 can be classified as a successful historical novel". Write a well-structured essay of 2-3 pages in which you critically evaluate this statement by referring to incidents and characters in the novel. *Siyabonga* answered that:

> 1949 is a representation of life and everything in the past South Africa. The 1949 novel describes how the apartheid era in the past South Africa started and what was behind it. The 1949 novel shows how some people feel threatened when they see that other people can reach the high level of life that they are in…it is natural that a person who lives a good life may not want the other person to reach that place in life and some people use others to get there but some say you have to step on something to go higher unfortunately blacks had to be stepped on during the past South Africa (*Siyabonga*, semi-structured interview 26 October 2010).

On the basis of the above responses, it was argued that *Siyabonga's* ability to see the novel as symbolically representing South African history was grounded on his developed capacity to use critical thinking skills, the nature of the questions formulated for critically engaging with the novel, and the ability to establish the relationship between literary art and society's history. Through this text, Govender (2008) provided a particular aspect of South Africa's socio-political reality and from that aspect one could learn why South Africa is what it is today (current socio-political realities). In other words, he showed the reading public how the historical influences gave rise to the present state of South Africa's socio-political realities, and how those influences are still witnessed today. On this basis, his short story made it clear that without understanding the historical materialism of South African politics, to which I turn in the next section, it would be difficult to understand how the country has come to be what it is today.

5.6   South Africa's Past and Present Experiences through the Eyes of the Participants

Govender (2008) provided a subjective picture of modern life informed by exposing the duhumanising effect of human relationship during the apartheid regime. In his depiction Govender (2008) also provided more than one view of life, he attempted to show the different classes, manners, and stratification of life during apartheid rule in South Africa. He achieved that by combining a wide variety of details derived from historically observed and documented facts to approach the norm of experiences amongst South Africans in order that his writing was well situated within the confines of the country's history. In relation to the semi-structured interviews, not only did *Siyabonga* viewed the short story as representative of the South African socio-political realities as discussed above, rather, he also contended that the teaching of this novel gave him a chance of understanding some of the historical factors that led to the existence of the different racial groupings in South Africa, and how those

reasons shaped the current South African situation. For example, asked whether the teaching of this short story, given its historical component, equipped him with knowledge and critical thinking skills for life outside the classroom, *Siyabonga* commented:

> Yes, I think it prepared me for life outside classroom, the short story teaches us how things were during those days. It does so by educating us that this is how things were during apartheid. So these kinds of things need not be repeated. It teaches about some aspects of history and how, why South Africa is the way it is now. It tells us that racial discrimination was wrong, now things have changed. The short story makes us aware of the dangers of racial discrimination. But it is better in our country now because one is free to do what you want. I think it is important that we accept one another without being prejudice (*Siyabonga*, semi-structured interview 26 October 2010).

Drawing from the above comments, *Siyabonga* made reference to the past practices and the ills of racial discrimination by putting more emphasis on the fact that these were things not worth repeating in society at large. *Siyabonga* achieved that by discouraging the racial discrimination that dominated white-ruled South Africa, while embracing the principles of democracy that condemn racism and racial prejudice. Moreover, *Siyabonga's* use of the emphasis that "...these kinds of things need not to be repeated", and that the short story teaches us "... we accept one another without being prejudice", reveals the unevenness in the life of South Africa's society, and how other members of the country were treated.

Siyabonga's ability to engage critically with the novel was also shared by *Siyabulela* who, when asked about the extent to which Govender's short story allowed her as a reader to see the novel as representing aspects of socio-political history of South Africa, she had this to say:

> The writer writes his novel not using a third person narrator who also knows what is going on. He takes us through to the characters thoughts and feelings by using literary devices like direct and indirect speech. So in this way he makes you identify with characters and what the story is about. So, you learn about the injustices of apartheid that some people have experienced on our behalves (*Siyabulela*, semi-structured interview 26 October 2010).

Siyabulela's understanding of the technique employed in the representation of South Africa's history was an important one, for it provided an insight that the ill practices identified by *Siyabonga* in the preceding paragraph might not have been felt or experienced by all people of South Africa, but one had the feeling that those things should not happen again. Once again, the critical understanding of the short story presented by *Siyabulela* above revealed the extent to which she had moved from unintentional application of critical thinking from the PLAN & OBSERVE phase to intentional application in the ACT phase of action research cycle, and the nature of the sequence of critical thinking tasks above and assignment topics and questions asked on the short story, prepared them to engage independently with the text. While the above assignment question might have led learners to treat literature as a direct reflection of social reality, this study does not surmise that literature is direct reflection of social realities but a mediation of them by providing a space for self-aware engagement with social issues. This can be said to be one of the weaknesses of this study. It should however, be noted that the story is in fact told in the third (3rd) person narrative technique. The following assignment topic (See Appendix K) confirmed this:

> *1949 a* representation of life, implicitly suggests that we owe it to ourselves to be united in our diversity as citizens of this country. Write a well-structured essay of 2-3 pages in which you critically evaluate this statement by referring to incidents and characters in the short story.

The above essay question/topic type encouraged *Siyabonga* as well as *Siyabulela* above to see the short story as presenting historical events through a narrative frame that renders South Africa's socio-political realities as a way of dealing with history and coming to terms with the inaccessible otherness of time that has passed and therefore is the past, in this case a particularly brutal past. In that sense literature was seen as a textual mediation of the past, a passage towards the future through the past, which as Jameson (1982) reminds us is inaccessible to us except in textual form and must therefore be clearly distinguished from historiography, which is the form that this mediating textual process takes[3] (Geertsema,

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[3] Jameson, 82. Jameson further writes that 'history . . . is *not* a text, for it is fundamentally non-narrative and nonrepresentational; what can be added, however, is the proviso that history is inaccessible to us except in textual form'. The brute fact of history, the raw force that it enacts, the actuality of what happened, cannot be represented but is, nonetheless, only accessible through the mediation of textual form, that is, through historiography as the writing-of history, and literature as an engagement with the historical past.

2007). Through her skill in revealing the narrative of literary devices used in the retelling of this history (although she mistakenly claimed that the story was not told in a 3rd person narrator) , *Siyabulela* was able to come to terms with the brutal South African past in terms of how SA people suffered racial oppression and prejudice under apartheid. In an attempt to suggest a way forward by responding to the question: "Write a well-structured essay of 2-3 pages in which you critically evaluate the statement that, *1949* implicitly suggests that we owe it to ourselves to be united in our diversity as citizens of this country" (See Appendix K) *Siyabonga* had this to say:

> In this case it is Dumi who is unified in diversity as he tries to solve the racial problems around him… As a main character in this novel we are shown that Dumi gets to experience life personally with three different groups of races that are involved. Firstly, he is black and he gets to experience all the challenges and circumstances of being black at that time. We know that life was tough for black people during that time with white people having all that power and Dumi got to experience that…Dumi because he is a central character had also many ways to experience the Indian lifestyle. He rented a two roomed house from an Indian named Mr. Maniram…also had an Indian friend and neighbor who he saw almost every morning although they were from different race…It was easy for Dumi to see how the whites lived their life as his boss was white, Mr. Osborne who used to ask Dumi to drive them to Osborne family mansion for the splendid New Year's Party.

To achieve portrayal of life during apartheid and the willingness to live united in our diversity, that is, being able to live together although we are different in terms of race, *Siyabonga* presented Govender (2008) as a writer who took a pessimistic view and portrayed a kind of life that centered on the negative part of human existence, and critiqued with sensitivity the fraught nature of race and power relations in apartheid South Africa. He further stated that through such a narrative presented in the short story, Govender wrote more openly about South Africa's political problems and by trying to document the corruption and disenchantment caused by apartheid South Africa and its imposed policies of racial inequality. Hence, Dumi was renting a two roomed house, while Mr Osborne owned a mansion. These conditions did not just happen by chance but were skillfully planned by the

apartheid regime. But there was a sense of hope suggested by *Siyabonga* still responding to the above question:

> …During the New Year's Eve Party Mr. Osborne allowed for Dumi to have fun. Dumi does say that it was a splendid party and that he wishes people to always be this happy. But happiness only lasts a short period usually. After Dumi experienced life on all these races and saw that none of these races were all that mean it made things quit difficult for him. I think he was the one affected a lot because he knew the truth, but knowing the truth made things worse because he did not know what side to pick. His own people were being used to kill and torture innocent people and this was confusing because they were being used without realizing it.

Mr Osborne was mean yet not mean. There was a place for humanness in him although he used people without realizing it. According to Marx (1975), the effects of inequality such as those identified by *Siyabonga* and *Siyabulela* above, as well as the experiences highlighted by *Siyabonga*, are fundamental aspects of the socio-political realities which literature seeks to expose, and which need to be changed through a Marxist notion of democratic struggle. It is in relation to this same type of inequality that Ritzer and Schubert (1991) call for a unifying force to ensure a democratically organized system free of inequalities. On this basis, both *Siyabonga's* and *Siyabulela's* claims as presented above related to Govender's (2008) observed facts of life of South Africa's history, where he exposed and criticized the society's immorality and ethics, but still managed to portray life as imaginatively as possible. The next section focuses on political ideologies as one of the themes evident in the informal discussions and classroom observations.

5.7 Apartheid as Political Ideology

The short story highlights that one of the factors that shaped the then South Africa was the use of propaganda (which was based on half-truths). For example, Mr Osborne used propaganda and coerced workers into violently attacking the Indian community. Events like these are nasty, destructive and were familiar SA. Through Govender's (2008) short story one could see how propaganda supported the ideology which shaped the contradictions in the apartheid South Africa. In this way it is possible to see how ideologies may function as powerful tools for controlling and shaping people's view of the world in which they live. In the context of this study, Govender's portrayal of White people as purveyors of civilization in

South Africa but at the same time indirectly causing trouble for all races in this country is an important one, (not all White people though) for it reveals certain ideological contradictions which dominated apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. In the present day South Africa it is not so much about White people dominating other people on the basis of race but more on the basis of class which is also shaped by ideological contradictions. The point is ideology can be used to control people. Govender (2008) for instance, presents Mr Osborne claiming that they as White people came in this country as the men charged with the agenda of improving it when he says:

> The Indians deserve what they are getting. They make a lot of money from you people and they have no respect for you. This is your country: We white people have come to improve it for you. We have built roads, hospitals, schools and shops. These people have only come to make money. They have houses. You haven't. You can tell your friends they can have all the paraffin they want, free of charge (Govender, 2008, pp. 107-108).

In relation to the above quotation, the White community saw itself as being the upholders of civilization, charged with the task of ensuring that all African people were civilized, meaning that they had to progress and get out of 'dark ages'. This was however, controversial considering that Black people continued to live under inhuman conditions in Bantu staans/homelands in terms of Group Areas Act of 1953, and that White people did not see themselves as the equals of Black people of this country. This is confirmed in reference to the speech by former Prime Minister of South Africa from (1954-1958), J.G. Strydom:

> [T)he Lion of the North ...who made certain that he did not make equal what God had not made equal. He who confirmed to his people that: As a Calvinist people we Afrikaners have, in accordance with our faith in the Word of God, developed a policy condemning all equality and mongrelisation between White and Black. God's word teaches us, after that He willed into being separate nations, colours and languages.

This notion of racial inequality between Whites and Blacks in South Africa is evident in all sections of Govender's (2008) short story, as had been demonstrated above. While Black people were oppressed under White rule, they were also responsible for ill doings to other people like Black on Black violence or purporting violence against other human beings, as well as sexual exploitation of women and children Govender (2008) writes that:

> Osborne was chatting to some of the staff in Zulu. Dumi could hardly
> believe his ears. He was joking with them about burning down the houses of
> the Indians. Perhaps he didn't realize these people were serious. Reports
> were coming in of houses and shops being looted and burnt and people
> being assaulted, raped and killed (Govender, 2008, p 107).

In relation to the above quotation, *Nobuhle* mentions that:

> There is violence against women caused by men. Women are being beaten
> for no reason that can be mentioned but men are taking an advantage of that
> they are physically stronger than women. The abuse of women should be
> changed by sitting down and try to resolve it (*Nobuhle*, semi-structured
> interviews 26 October 2010).

The exploitation and raping of women as shown in the quotation above also exposed issues related to gender relations (to be discussed later in this Chapter) where women are subjected to sexual exploitation and physical torture, harassment and humiliation in our society, this is personal experience. My assumption here was that *Nobuhle* did not just relate such sexual exploitation to the story but she related them to the things that she might have witnessed or heard about, and that was how she engaged with the text. The next section offers an exploration of democracy as a political ideology.

5.8 Democracy as Political Ideology

An ideology which existed during the apartheid regime as shown in the preceding section proved to be the major shortfall in terms of good governance, also in the socio-political democratic dispensation of South Africa. Such an ideology as supported by propaganda tends to continue and dominate South African politics even in its democratic rule. This situation has a kind of politics that demeans ordinary people by getting them to vote, and then ignoring them for five years, for example, if you look at what happens when the election comes [politicians] come and make promises and when they get into power, people's lives do not change or the change is so little that it is not worth mentioning. You still find that in some places there is still no running water, electricity, houses, schools and many other basic services. While it is necessary to acknowledge that it will take longer to address structural imbalances that are the result of the colonial rule and apartheid but, it is difficult to

comprehend why things have improved so significantly if one goes to the homes and townships of those political leaders as well as the rifeness of corrupt governance. They do things for themselves and forget about the people who voted for them. And that is why many people do not want to vote any more, it is because they have been misled on numerous occasions. I acknowledge that this is my subjective position which might not be scholarly, but since the study is to do with the ability to think critically, it was worth mentioning. Ideology ensures that the powerful, the few at the top of the pile, get rich while the rest remain stuck in poverty, as was the case with the likes of Mr Osborne and *Dumi*, respectively. As a White male South African, he benefitted from the apartheid rule in terms of the legislations that were in place at the time, just like the Black males in high political ranks benefit in the current political playground at the expense of the very same people they claim to stand for. Nevertheless, in this study there is a sense of hope as far as the future of South Africa is concerned. This was indicated by *Siyabulela's* comment during a semi-structured interview when she said:

> There is togetherness today which was something that did not exist back then, so comparing what is happening now no one would be laughing about what happened back then because violence is a bad thing and we wouldn't want to go back to those days (semi-structured interview 26 October 2010).

In the context of this study, the above response showed a need for collaborative efforts towards establishing political trust and stability if effective democratic socio-political dispensation is to be realized. To do so, Govender (2008) established the textually-constructed character of *Dumi* who had share a life with different races in the short story, although he paid with his life for wanting to believe in humanity. *Dumi* shared life with characters from the White community, Indian community and Black community, representing many shades of personalities, allegiances and political posturing on all sides. Through Govender's short story learners learned about the ills of the past and from it shared the desire not to relive such ills. The next section discusses issues on gender relations

5.9   Gender Relations

The portrayal of women in the short story was one of the aspects which did not go unnoticed although they had no significant part to play. The interviews with the participants showed that the role of women in the short story was insignificant and that revealed issues regarding

gender inequality, which perpetuate gender stereotypes. In the short story men are the owners of businesses, they work and enjoy economic stability, and nothing is mentioned of women in that regard. Gender stereotype is perpetuated in that way because of the assumption that women cannot work but should stay at home and look after children. Here I do not suggest that this situation applies to all men and women but, when the question, "What can you say about the role that is given to male and female characters in the short story?" was asked, for instance, *Nobuhle* wrote:

> According to my understanding, well I can say that there was a bit of apartheid because if we can remember properly in this novel it all about the male but then females were not really included very much. If we look at this novel, Dumi was a male and was the only person who was involved in those past riots and I had realize that there is none main role which was given to a specific women.

The issue of women portrayed as insignificant with no specific role as shown in the quotation above was a critical one. In the short story there was a portrayal of only one woman [Mrs. Maniram] who: "was sobbing quietly, 'My children, my children!'…Mrs. Maniram sprang into action. She bundled the children into the outhouse and the family were hidden under the beds and in the wardrobes" (Govender, 2008, p. 108). So, one could see from the essay topics/questions set for the learners how the issue of women's portrayal was highlighted:

> 1. What can you say about the role that is given to males and women characters in the short story, *1949?* Write a well-structured essay of 1-2 pages in which you critically evaluate this question by referring to incidents and characters in the novel (See Appendix K).

I did mention that the insignificant treatment of women is not practiced by all men but it took place in the short story. The insignificant, non-depiction and representation of women's experiences as shown in the above quotation from *Nobuhle* clearly revealed and identified with the ideology that was highlighted through the novel of subjugating women into positions of powerlessness and noiselessness in the subjectivity of Mrs. Maniram. This non-representation of women characters was significant as it is highlighted above. Furthermore, it revealed the South African situation particularly regarding women such as gender discrimination and inequality. For instance, what was expected of Mrs. Maniram was to take care of the children,

nothing else. But *Nobuhle*, from the essay question mentioned a different view from that one when she wrote that:

> There is what we call (gender equality); it is where by female have got equal right just like males do. There must be tolerant between the two sexes by accepting they are different. We live in a democratic country where apartheid is no longer allowed and where problems are solved through equality. Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity.

The quotation above is suggestive of the need to establish an unbiased society in which gender roles and relations are redefined with the intention of creating equality in both social and political domains. Although such issues were not directly dealt with in the short story it was clear, at least from the participants' point of view after having read the story, that there was a need to move towards establishing equality between gender roles by creating a clear vision of South Africa; from a restrictive white-ruled government to a democratically elected government which, to a certain extent, would deal with and address issues such as racism and gender inequality. *Dumi* is presented as someone with real hopes and dreams for a better place where people would live freely without fear of one another and as a result evoked enormous sympathy from the readers, especially as he tried to protect the Maniram's from being attacked by the Zulus and ended up being killed with them. It is not clear whether Govender deliberately did not represent women experiences but whatever the case, their insignificant representation was important in this study, for it provided to readers a variety of ways in which issues of gender and racial inequalities could be identified, challenged and resolved.

5.10 Racial Conflict

The short story exposed issues of racism between Blacks, Whites and Indians in apartheid South Africa by carefully juxtaposing them as separate groups of the human species with no common beliefs and origins. It presented Whites regarding themselves as a nation charged with the task of maintaining racial purity in South Africa. Although the short story presented the scenario in Durban, the presentation was symbolic of the racial conflict that existed across South Africa as a country. The issue of racial conflict was also raised by *Nobuhle* when she responded to the statement "*1949* is a representation of life and everything in the past South Africa as opposed to the present South Africa, in her short essay she pointed out that:

> … this was a culmination of the dissatisfaction over the social and economic divisions in the area. During the past compared to nowadays, it is totally not the same because people were discriminated against by White people. White people were usually taking an advantage of that they were bigger than Black people financially which was not right"

So, the short story indicated that South Africa was a racist country, a country where everyone who was not White was treated as if he/she was a visitor, everyone was not free except for Whites because they thought this was their home only. This view was also shared by *Nkululeko* who stated that:

> … Whites were only people who have freedom in everything in S.A. Blacks were needed to have a letter that allow him/her to be in town. Whites were the owner of everything in the world … so during apartheid ... things were too difficult such that one can only imagine how Black people, especially women, felt when they were abused and raped simply because they were not White... (Semi-structured interview, 27 October 2010).

In relation to this representation, one could say that "Durban and Umkumbaan" where in the action took place is a microcosm of the larger country of South Africa. The reader became acquainted with the townspeople of both races in *1949*, and therefore developed sympathy for some and abhorrence of others. From the short story participants argued against the racial conflict that existed and still exists within South Africa today. The short story showed us, the readers, how people of different races found it difficult to accept people who did not share the same cultural backgrounds, beliefs and racial identities as part of the same community. We therefore learned something in terms of the construction of racialised identities. However, one could also make an interesting comment on this by pointing out that the short story had given us some skills of knowing where we come from and where we are going. In relation to this point Geertsema (2007) points out that literature mediates access to the real in the present; it is not only concerned with the past and does not only look backward, but in doing so also looks forward. In engaging with the brute fact of history, literature constitutes not only a response to the past but also shapes our understanding of the present and thus works to shape the real and offer a space for critique, a "speaking truth to power" [4] (Geertsema, 2007).

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[4] Compare Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*. London: Vintage, 1994.

We have a rainbow nation now. The short story prepared us to teach our learners about the way in which they should accept and appreciate others, although it taught us about the past, it also showed us how things were during those days and how change is important in our society. The rainbow nation mentioned above is one that leads to multi-culturalism and multi-racialism as a positive step towards social humaneness. In the context of this study, the teaching of literature served one of the ways to create an awareness of the sociopolitical problems which characterize South African politics, and possible alternatives for dealing with such problems.

Regarding classroom observations, participants' conscious effort of practicing critical thinking is not being denied here, but celebrated as they also observed themselves and reflected upon their actions. For example, in one of our encounters with the participants, 18 October 2010, I asked who could coordinate between me and them, *Nobuhle* was a willing participant. However, *Nkululeko* claimed that "*nothing wise can be done by girls*". It was interesting to observe *Siyabonga* asking *Nkululeko* if he had a reason for why he viewed girls that way. *Nkululeko* was reminded by other learners that he cannot make claims based on hearsay, since the ideas of critical thinking had already been introduced during the PLAN & OBSERVE phase. Action research was therefore, a conscious effort to reflect on one's practice in an attempt to transform and improve upon it.

5.11 A Reflective Evaluation on Data Analysis

This section presents a critical evaluation by reflecting on data analysis discussed in the preceding sections of this Chapter. This reflective evaluation sought to respond to the critical questions that guided this study as shown in the opening Chapter. These critical questions are:

1) What are possible strategies to develop learners' critical thinking skills?

2) How do learners understand the notion of critical thinking?

3) How have learners developed their understanding of critical thinking in relation literary works?

The reflection process also assisted in determining the extent to which the teaching of literature in a secondary school could prepare learners with the knowledge of developing critical thinking skills in order to understand literary art as a mediation of the social and thus an imaginative engagement with society that helps shape it where identities are negotiated. To answer the first question: *What are possible strategies to develop learners' critical thinking skills?* Critical reflection on analyses in the preceding sections revealed that learners were able to identify particular themes which were considered salient in the short story. During the PLAN & OBSERVE phase learners showed some insight of critical thinking which the study concluded that such skills were applied unintentionally. Through the teacher's help and having a strategy before beginning to teach these skills was viewed as important in this study. Teachers should not just go into the classroom and teach, they need to have a strategy in mind, for example, engage in baseline assessment in terms of finding out how much learners know about critical thinking skills so that they can establish how and what they need to focus on developing such skills.

In the PLAN & OBSERVE phase learners were able to identify themes including, among others, the re-telling of South Africa's history, gender inequality and racism under apartheid regime. Learners were, furthermore, able to relate the identified themes to the socio-political realities of current day South Africa. While their ability to engage with the short story in the process of identifying themes revealed that learners' background in terms of race and gender identity had, to a certain extent, influenced their understanding and interpretation of the text, they however showed that they knew very little about critical thinking skills. Critical thinking

skills had to be nurtured and developed further as well as the ability to read independently. Also, language (grammar) needed to be improved especially for EAL learners. Critical thinking skills are not incidental but need to be taught and included in the schools or teacher's teaching and learning programme. As a result of the above critical analysis in the first phase, this study concludes, at this stage, that learners needed to know what the meaning of critical thinking is so that they were in a position to intentionally apply them in and beyond the classroom situation. The possible strategies are therefore to know what and how much learners know about critical thinking, then introduce them to the ideas of critical thinking, informally discuss with them and observe them while discussing. Such strategies would more than likely give a teacher an indication and how to progress as far as the development of critical thinking is concerned. Furthermore, the teacher would have an idea as to the notion of critical thinking that learners have.

In the ACT phase learners demonstrated their development of critical thinking in relation to literary works. They validated skills and knowledge to interpret critically the relationship between literary art and socio-political realities. However, I should also mention that learners treated the tory as a direct reflection of social experiences which was not the idea of this study. With regards to history, for instance, *Njabulo*, pointed out that the teaching of *1949* offered him the kind of knowledge that served to ground his understanding of what South Africa looked like under apartheid. He emphasized the fact that the teaching of a short story of this nature provides readers with an idea of the contradictory nature of the historical processes of the country they find themselves in. He further pointed out that the short story has the potential to assist those who were more affected by the appalling conditions of the apartheid rule to make peace with the past. This is what he had to say:

> Now we don't have to be prejudice to each other because all the bad things are over. But I am not saying that what white people did was correct, it was absolutely wrong and stupid, but it has passed with the time...and because it is now over, I can marry a white person, an Indian or Black, there is no problem in that because it is only love .... (Njabulo, semi-structured interview, 27 October 2010).

In light of the above, *Njabulo's* understanding clearly showed that he saw literary art as a textual expression, to use Culler's (1997) words, that seeks to articulate certain attitudes, feelings and realities in a given society.

Furthermore, the kind of knowledge that learners presented was such that they saw a close relationship between literature and society and that the teaching of literary art served as a means to foster an in depth understanding of how certain ideologies influence the ways in which a community of readers is able to view the world in which they live. This knowledge has a lot in common with Marx's understanding of the relationship between literature and society. Marx (1976) points to the fact that literary art as a product of social reality cannot be divorced from a variety of human experiences which it seeks to represents. Writing about the worldliness of literature Geertsema (2007) invokes Edward Said's powerful double sided notion that what writing does is to engage actively with the world, while at the same time worldly circumstances affect those texts. In that sense I share Geertsema's (2007) notion that the result of the above postulations is a complex dialectic, one that moreover in often ironic ways foregrounds the complexity of that dialectic. Jameson's (1982) basic theoretical position posits that texts are passages to the real, but it perhaps more explicitly adds an activist edge to that position (Geertsema, 2007). When we read texts we need to be aware of their place-in-the-world, and we need to notice their active engagement with that world[5]. Perhaps stretching Said's notion a little bit, continues Geertsema (2007), one could argue that after apartheid South African fiction is more than ever involved in engaging with the world, and indeed that it adverts the reader to this engagement. The way in which participants demonstrated engagement with Govender's (2008) text both at a literal level and implied level regarding activities designed in order to develop their capacity to think critically attest to the abovementioned engagement.

While it is interesting to acknowledge, on the one hand, the extent to which students were able first, to engage critically with the text and, secondly, relate certain historic events to the socio-political realities they considered to have shaped South Africa's society, it is also important to note that their engagement with the text might have been a consequence, first, that the text analysed is a South African-based short story and raises issues that are already

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[5] Edward Said, *The World, The Text and The Critic*, 1983.

part of the learners' generally known experiences and, secondly, the historical events captured in the short story already formed part of the history taught to the students from history classes. Most importantly, this situation made one wonder whether or not the students could have engaged critically in similar ways with, other literary texts which deal with political issues far removed from the South African context. Also on the basis that literature has no direct contact to social 'realities'. These issues, the study proposes, are relevant for further research.

The above situation, however, may be the result of the nature of the critical questions which guided this study. In other words, the critical questions arguably confined themselves only to the nature and the extent of the mastery of skills and knowledge in the teaching of literary art. Perhaps the selection of the short story, which formed part of analysis in this study also channeled students into making central the issues which they were able to identify with, rather than critically relating such issues to certain dominant theories of literary criticism and the role they play in exposing society's values, the ideologies and dominant beliefs which shape our understanding of the world. This area of weakness may be addressed in the future research projects as suggested in recommendations for future research in chapter 6.

5.11 Conclusion

Chapter 5 presented the qualitative data analysis as an attempt to meet the suggested purpose of this study. The Chapter did so by means of responding to the critical questions of the study. This was evident in that, while the short story presented several themes, which could serve to highlight the unjust practices of the past, the learners were able to relate such themes to their everyday experiences as well as to the real life context of South Africa's politics. To that extent, Chapter 5 threw light on the kind of knowledge and skills students have gained in relation to the teaching of literary art in schools for critical thinking. The Chapter showed that learners' conceptualisation, that is, their capacity to use critical thinking through literature in the school context could make an effective tool for making learners aware of the role of literature in society. Chapter 5 revealed that, although one may argue, learners' ability to identify certain themes in the text was simply because the whole content of the short story was the re-telling of the already known history of the South Africa's politics, it was clear that learners did not simply consider literature as an entertaining piece of written work, rather, they saw literature as having a special role to play in society, but this realization took place

after being introduced to critical thinking through the sequence of critical thinking tasks. While there are a number of questions that might be raised as to the attainment of critical thinking skills by learners, some of the questions have been raised above, this study concludes that, if teachers could have a programme and strategies in place that would assist them in developing learners capacity to think critically, that would be an achievement in developing the kinds of learners (and future leaders) that SA needs. I believe that critical thinking skills are relevant in education today and I argue that such skills should not be left to be tackled by universities, but secondary schools should have tangible programmes to address this issue as it is a requirement for academic engagement. Chapter 6 presents a concluding summary of all the Chapters presented in this study as well as recommendations for the future development of teaching literary art for critical thinking at secondary schools.

CHAPTER 6

Summary and Implications of the study

In a country where education was used to divide and undermine certain political, social, economic and cultural interests, it would seem necessary for pedagogic and learning practices as well as other related areas of teaching and learning to become central in the development of education that is informed by critical thinking. Schooling institutions should be committed to serve as sites for the production of sound knowledge and skills for eradicating the remnants of apartheid rule. Teachers must be seen as agents charged with the task of ensuring the rapid achievement of socio-political changes governed by the principles of South Africa's new democratic dispensation. To do so, this study argued that the teaching of literary art in the context of schooling could serve as one of the possible means of ensuring that the injustices of the past are not repeated in the present day South Africa. This can be done if learners and teachers are equipped with the skills to think critically. All this is demonstrated in the course of this study through various chapters as they are briefly recapitulated below.

Chapter 1 offered a rationale which informed the purpose of this study. This Chapter also presented the efforts by the South African government in promoting the teaching of critical thinking skills, and why this study chose literature to do so. Equipped with the skills to think critically, learners would make informed judgements and think critically about society so that the history of apartheid South Africa cannot repeat itself.

Chapter 2 offered a review of related literature by locating the study within the current understandings of critical thinking both internationally and nationally, indicating that the choice of literature review would later inform the lenses chosen to study the phenomenon as well as ontological and epistemological assumptions of the study. Historical developments in the teaching and learning of literature within the context of schooling were also discussed, by exploring the different functions literature performed in various social settings as seen by literary theorists and scholars. The chapter began by presenting the historical development of the teaching of literature as part of formal education within the international and local context. It then engaged with ways in which critical thinking was embedded in such a history. The chapter further indicated that, while critical thinking features prominently among the skills to be promoted through formal curriculum in South Africa (DoE 2006), there seems to

be observable difficulties in realising this in practice. This, the chapter argued, warrants concerted efforts to investigate strategies to improve the teaching and learning of critical thinking. The chapter then engaged current literature on the promotion of critical thinking and it drew from the theoretical frames used for the study. This engagement focused on the place of critical thinking in EAL where curricular issues were discussed for the promotion of critical thinking in the context of schooling.

Chapter 3 discussed the concepts and theories used in the study by explaining why such concepts and theories are relevant to this study. Orthodox Marxism, not approached from a functionalist, economic determinist explanation of the relationship between schools and capitalist production (Au, 2006), for example, was one of the theories discussed. This theory was chosen because it draws quite directly on real and concrete human and social conditions. Marxism does take into account other pertinent issues (but not only limited to material conditions of the proletariat), for example, the relative autonomy of the superstructure to the economic base (Althusser, 1971). The Chapter demonstrated that learners could construct their knowledge by employing Constructivism as a theory of learning. This was in terms of how they could be assisted by the help of the teacher in creating alternative knowledge(s) in dealing with issues discussed. Nonetheless, Constructivism had to be modified so as to fit within the environment in which the study was conducted, that is, EAL context. That was the reason Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development was used in conjunction with constructivism to initiate "scaffolding".

Reader-Response theory was also an ideal theory that was chosen because it painstakingly takes into account the learners' personal response to a text by allowing literature to be relevant to their lives and makes it possible for multiple interpretations to be accepted, rather than just one correct interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1938 & Iser, 1978). Nevertheless, because there was a real text involved in this process to which learners were supposed to refer to justify or modify their responses, not all readings could be acceptable and some were more so than others. So, as readers, learners had to map out possibilities and impossibilities of meaning. The number of concepts and theories used in this study were, consequently, described and explained in detail in this chapter.

Chapter 4 discussed the research activities carried out during the course of the study. The knowledge claim position taken in this study was one of critical stance (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The design followed was that of critical participatory action research (Kemmis et al., 2000), with a qualitative approach to data generation and analysis. In this Chapter, the context in which the research study took place and the manner in which the participants were accessed and selected were described. The instruments used in the research process included informal discussions, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, learners' assignments, and critical thinking tasks. The following questions guided the collection and analysis of data:

1) What can be done in order to develop the capacity of learners to think critically?

2) How do learners understand the notion of critical thinking?

3) How learners have developed their understanding of critical thinking in relation to the tasks designed in order to engage with literary works?

The Chapter began by discussing the paradigmatic knowing of the study after which the research method was justified. Then it moved to motivating for the relevance of the research design, the research instruments for the study and the issues of reliability were discussed. Lastly, the sampling of the study participants was discussed, as well as the ethical considerations and limitations of the study were elaborated.

Chapter 5 analysed the data collected from 6 selected participants, regarding the development of their capacity to think critically when they engaged with literary works. The analyses took place in the PLAN & OBSERVE phase, the ACT phase as well as the REFLECTIVE phase of the action research cycle. In the PLAN & OBSERVE phase participants' values and considerations regarding critical thinking in relation to literary works were highlighted using informal discussions and classroom observations. The second step of the cycle, ACT phase involved the tasks that have the potential to develop learners' capacity to think critically. The sequence of critical thinking tasks, semi-structured interviews and learners' assignments were used for data generation in this phase. The next step, the REFLECTIVE phase, explored data generated from the two previous phases mentioned above. The focus of reflection was

directed to analyse data addressing the 1ˢᵗ 2ⁿᵈ and 3ʳᵈ questions. The data for this stage was obtained from instruments mentioned above.

The Chapter further provided a reflective evaluation that sought to clarify responses to the critical questions which guided this study and, most importantly, met the purpose of the study. This reflective evaluation highlighted that the selected learners revealed a convincing potential knowledge of the relationship between literature and society, although they seemed to have demonstrated a mimetic reflection of some or other given reality but that engagement was not just imaginative but critical. Their manifestation of this knowledge was made clear in their ability to discern the historical, political and socio-economic problems which shaped the current socio-political realities present in South Africa. That was the manifestation of the developed capacity of learners to think critically.

6.1   Prospects for the Future

The work done in all the previous Chapters of this study suggest that there is still much research to be done in the teaching of literary works in post-apartheid South African schools, especially in advancing critical thinking. Drawing from the findings of this research, countless questions were raised and left unanswered within the confines of the investigation undertaken. As a consequence, it is finally necessary that a line is drawn and ideas for further work need to be considered for determining the extent to which the teaching of literary art can make for an effective tool in equipping learners with the knowledge and skills for critical thinking. Given the above, this Chapter closes by providing a list of recommendations for contemplation and future examination of pedagogic practices in the teaching of literary art for critical thinking.

6.2   Recommendations

My first recommendation recognizes that while the purpose of this study was to teach literature for critical thinking, it could be said to be preparing learners with the knowledge and skills for critical reasoning, more research is needed to investigate the extent to which these learners, after the completion of their schooling, are able to put in practice the skills and knowledge acquired at secondary school level in their daily conduct. The second recommendation is that while this study was limited only to the pedagogic practices in the teaching of literary art for critical thinking at a secondary, more research is needed to

investigate *how* such pedagogic practices are implemented in other schools in order to ensure that learners as future leaders and members of society are able to acquire the required skills for critical literacy. This will assist in identifying areas of concerns, and developing other alternative means for ensuring that the teaching of literature does not simply serve as a means to an end, or for deepening students' language skills, but as a tool for inculcating knowledge and infusing students' awareness of the role of literary art in schools and society. The third recommendation refers to the argument in this study that there is a strong need to introduce pedagogic practices in the teaching of literary art, rooted in, and informed by, a theory which seeks to enhance students' understanding of the fact that literary art can be said to be the mediation of the material world where identities are negotiated. Such a theory-driven approach will, I want to argue, form:

- first, the basis of students' understanding of the relationship between literary art and society in terms of the imaginary resolution of real contradictions,

- secondly, assist students in realising how literary theory is able to mediate between their understanding of the country's socio-political realities and the role literary art plays in societies they find themselves in since it is shaped by the society from whence it comes,

- finally, create an awareness of what constitutes a just society. In the case of South Africa we need to search for ways of thinking, ways of perception that will help to break down the closed epistemological structures of South African oppression. . . . The challenge is to free the entire social imagination of the oppressed from the laws of perception that have characterised apartheid society.[6] (Ndebele, 1991)

In light of the above, learners would understand that the teaching of literature cannot be understood in complete isolation from the society which it seeks to critically engage with. From this view, the interrelatedness of literature, theory and society thus neither admits the separation of human experiences, nor encourages the isolation of social historical processes.

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[6] Ndebele, *Rediscovery of the Ordinary*. Though "Redefining Relevance" was first published in 1989, an earlier version dates back to 1986. See N. S. Ndebele, 'Beyond "Protest": New Directions in South African Literature' in K. H. Petersen (ed.). *Criticism and Ideology: Second African Writers' Conference Stockholm 1986*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1988. 205-216.

Instead, as factors contributing to societal development and human freedom, theory as a mediating tool and, literature, as a social expression, form a special and peculiar part of the whole historical context of the entire system. This suggests that both literary theory and art have definite and specific laws and aesthetic principles that define the structure of the social system. On this basis, the study argues that continuing the work that has begun through this research project is of paramount importance. This will benefit, amongst others:

- Teachers in English discipline with an interest in inculcating critical literacy skills to learners by engaging their knowledge in ways that will render them as critical agents who bring into the classroom a wealth of critical insights in learners;
- Curriculum development specialists who prepare literary set works for South African learners.

These stakeholders, through their collaborative efforts, would contribute to the development, spread and maintenance of acquired abilities and skills for creative thinking, reasoning, probing and critical engagement with varieties of texts as sources of knowledge pertinent towards the establishment of a just society and human freedom.

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APPENDIX A

<u>UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL</u>

DECLARATIOTION: LEARNERS AND PARENTS

A STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF LITERARY ART AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL TO PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

I ....(full names of the learner) and

I ....(full names of the parent) hereby confirm that we understand the nature of the research and we consent to participating in the research project.

We understand that we are at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should we so desire.

SIGNATURE OF LEARNER   *DATE*

..   *..................................*

SIGNATURE OF PARENT   *DATE*

..   *....................................*

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU-NATAL

DECLARATION: [SCHOOL'S NAME] SCHOOL GOVERNIG BODY

A STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF LITERARY ART AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL TO PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

I, ..., Principal of [SCHOOL'S NAME] School , on behalf of the [SCHOOL'S NAME] School Governing Body, here by confirm that we understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project, and we consent to conduction of the research project in [SCHOOL'S NAME] School.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL   *DATE*

APPENDIX C

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Languages, Literacies, Arts and Media and Drama Studies

Edgewood Campus

Private Bag X 03

Ashwood 3605

Pinetown

3600

19 September 2010

Dick Ndlovu High School

1 Richmond Road

P O Box 1366

Pinetown

3600

031 706 3548

Re: **REQUEST TO INVOLVE YOUR CHILD IN A RESEARCH STUDY.**

Dear parent

I am the teacher of English language at Dick Ndlovu High School and doing my second year for a Master of Education Degree at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am asking your permission to involve your child in my study. The study involves 8 Grade 11 learners.

I am interested in investigating the extent to which literature can be taught to develop learners' critical thinking skills by looking at how literary tasks are designed and the teacher's role in that regard. Critical thinking is important since it empowers a person to solve problems, learn effectively and make sound judgements. Participation in the study is seen as beneficial to learners' and educators' understanding of how to improve the teaching and learning English studies.

The topic for the study is: **TEACHING LITERATURE FOR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

The data will be collected during October-November 2010. I understand that this is a crucial time for learners but, the advantage here is that the participants for the study are the learners I teach, and this is in line with an attempt to improve the teaching and learning process. Data collection will take place in the form of informal discussions, classroom observations, critical thinking tasks, semi-structured interviews as well as learners' assignments. Collecting the data will take place if and when it is convenient for learners and/or during Saturdays when I take extra classes, and that is a school arrangement. Data will be stored with strict confidentiality: no unauthorised person will have access to such data and when appropriate, data will be destroyed. I would like to assure you that no real names for learners will be used in the write up of the interview and the information will only be used in my study. Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed. Your child is free to withdraw from the study at any point. He/she will not be disadvantaged in any way by so doing. Financial expense is not involved in this project.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation. For more information about my study please contact my supervisor Dr. EM Mgqwashu Tel: 031 260 3549; Cell: 0735609955; e-mail address< > mgqwashue@ukzn.ac.za. I can be contacted on Cell: 0761140021; e-mail address< > siyabulelaokuhle@webmail.co.za

Yours sincerely

Nkosinathi E Madondo

………………………..

APPENDIX D

<div align="center">

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Languages, Literacies, Arts and Media and Drama Studies

Edgewood Campus

Private Bag X 03

Ashwood 3605

Pinetown

3600

19 September 2010

</div>

The Principal

Dick Ndlovu High School

Private Bag X 1366

Pinetown

3600

031 706 3548

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT a RESEARCH STUDY AT Dick Ndlovu High School)

Dear Sir

I am a second year student and pursuing a Master of Education Degree at UKZN (Edgewood Campus) and currently planning a research project for my dissertation. The title of the research study is: **TEACHING LITERATURE FOR CRITICAL THINKING AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

The study is a qualitative-quantitative critical participatory action research involving 8 purposefully selected grade 11 learners who are doing English additional language.

The research aims at interrogating the extent to which literary art can be used to inculcate critical thinking skills among learners by looking at how literary tasks are designed and the teacher's role in that regard. Critical thinking is important since it empowers a person to solve problems, learn effectively and make sound judgements. Participation in this study is seen as beneficial to learners' and educators' understanding of how to improve the teaching and learning English Studies.

I request your permission to allow me to conduct the research at the above mentioned school during October-November 2010. I understand that it is crucial time for learners but the advantage here is that the participants for research are the learners I teach, and this is in line with action research on in situ practice. The short story which will be used in this study is a prescribed text for grade 11 in 2010. Data collection will take place in the form of informal discussions, classroom observations, critical thinking tasks, semi-structured interviews as well as learners' assignments. Collecting data will take place if and when it is convenient for learners and/or during Saturdays when I take on extra classes. Learners who do not participate in the study would be taught together with the rest of the class but they would not be used as data sources. The data is going to be stored securely and treated with strict confidentiality: no unauthorised person would have access to data and learners are going to be referred to by pseudonyms. When appropriate, the data will be destroyed.

The research will be explained to the relevant learners and parents, and their consent requested. Learners will be informed that participation as a data source is voluntary and any participant is free to withdraw from the study when they feel it is necessary to do so, and that no one will be disadvantaged, as a result.

I will unreservedly appreciate your response in this regard. For more information about my study please contact my supervisor Dr. EM Mgqwashu Tel: 031 260 3549; Cell: 0735609955; e-mail address< > mgqwashue@ukzn.ac.za. I can be contacted on Cell: 0761140021; e-mail address< > siyabulelaokuhle@webmail.co.za

Thank you

Yours Faithfully

…………………………………..

Nkosinathi E Madondo

APPENDIX E

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Languages, Literacies, Arts and Media and Drama Studies

Edgewood Campus

Private Bag X 03

Ashwood 3605

Pinetown

3600

19 September 2010

The Education Officer

Department of Education

Pinetown District

Pinetown

3600

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT a RESEARCH STUDY AT Dick Ndlovu High School.

Dear Sir

I am a second year student and pursuing a Master of Education degree at UKZN (Edgewood Campus) and currently planning a research project for my dissertation. The title of my research is: **TEACHING LITERATURE FOR CRITICAL THINKING AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

The study is a qualitative-quantitative critical participatory action research involving 8 grade 11 learners who are doing English additional language.

The research aims at interrogating the extent to which literary art can be used to inculcate critical thinking skills among learners by looking at how literary tasks are designed and the teachers' role in that regard. Critical thinking is important since it empowers a person to solve problems, learn effectively and make sound judgements. Participation in this study is seen as beneficial to learners and educators' understanding of how to improve the teaching and learning English Studies.

I request your permission to allow me to conduct the research at the above mentioned school during October-November 2010. I understand that it is crucial time for learners but the advantage here is that the participants for research are the learners I teach, and this is in line with action research on in situ practice. The short story which will be used in this study is a prescribed text for grade 11 in 2010. Data collection will take place in the form of informal discussions, classroom observations, critical thinking tasks, semi-structured interviews as well as learners' assignments. Collecting data is going to take place if and when it is convenient for learners and/or during Saturdays when I take on extra classes. Learners who do not participate in the study would be taught together with the rest of the class but they will not be used as data sources. The data is going to be stored securely and treated with strict confidentiality: no unauthorised person would have access to data and learners will be referred to by pseudonyms. When appropriate, the data will be destroyed.

The research will be explained to the relevant learners and parents, and their consent requested. Learners would be informed that participation as a data source is voluntary and any participant is free to withdraw from the study when they feel it is necessary to do so, and that no one will be disadvantaged, as a result.

I will unreservedly appreciate your response in this regard. For more information about my study please contact my supervisor Dr. EM Mgqwashu Tel: 031 260 319; Cell: 0735609955; e-mail address< > mgqwashue@ukzn.ac.za. I can be contacted on Cell: 0761140021; e-mail address< > siyabulelaokuhle@webmail.co.za

 Thank you

Yours Faithfully

…………………………………..

Nkosinathi E Madondo

APPENDIX F

SEMI-STRUCTRED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS (administered after students read alone)

1. To what extent do you consider Govender's (2008) *1949* representative of the socio-political nature and racial attitudes of apartheid South Africa?
   - How is this represented in the text?
2. What political beliefs or opinions does the short story characterise?
   - How do you know this?
3. How are such aspects of South Africa's politics presented in the short story?
4. As a Black learner, how do you feel about such aspects raised in the short story?
5. Do you think that learners from different racial backgrounds like Coloureds, Indians, Whites, would feel the same way as you do about the aspects raised in the short story, explain briefly?
6. Why do you feel the way you do and think the way you do in both question 4 and 5 above, respectively?
7. How did the understanding of critical thinking assisted you in responding to socio-political issues and racial attitudes as they are presented in the short story?
8. What exactly did the teacher do in empowering you to think critically about literary works?
9. Is there a special experience that you would like to talk about with regards to teaching and learning of literature using critical literacy, in other words, what knowledge have you gained from teaching and learning of the short story using critical thinking skills?
10. Do you consider yourself using critical thinking skills that you have acquired so far in your school life, in your future career?

APPENDIX G

A Sequence of Critical Thinking Tasks

Table 2 Observing Tasks

Prompt	Language Focus
Look at the picture(s) of people. What do you see?	*There is/are*
Look at the picture with many people. What do you see?	*Has/have*
Draw a picture in your mind and imagine what it was like to be in that situation for the people in the picture. Describe it.	Nouns and adjectives

Table 3 Identifying assumption Tasks

Prompt	Language Focus
1. Look at the two pictures. Which picture you prefer? Why?	Expressing likes and dislikes
2. Have you seen any situation like the one in the second picture? How was the mood like? Why?	Describing a situation using simple past
3. What do you know about protesting? [or] Do you think people should protest?	Giving reasons with *because*

Table 4 Understanding and Organising Tasks

Prompt	Language Focus
Consider what you have said about whether people should protest or not and the reasons you gave. How did the house 'Dumi' lived in looked like and where Mr. Osborne lived?	Descriptive adjectives, sequence words
Why were they living in such different locations?	Retelling the story in the simple present/past
Tell your partner what you remember from the story in relation to question 2 above.	Giving reasons with *because,* indirect speech

Table 5 Interpreting tasks

Prompt	Language focus
What did Mr. Osborne mean when he asked, "Why do they insist on living with us?" How do you know this?	Retelling in the present or past tense
Mr. Osborne said, "The Indians deserve what they were getting". Do you agree or disagree with Mr. Osborne? Why?	Giving reasons with insight using *because*
What do you think *Dumi* was thinking when Mr. Osborne said the above words?	Giving a definition
What sense do you make of the statement that, "some of the workers agree volubly".	Giving reasons with insight on taken for granted assumptions/knowledge
Poobal said, "Some white people are stirring up the trouble". Then *Dumi* asked, "But why never call the police?" Poobal responded that the police know, "They are just standing and watching". What sense can you make out of these statements? Why?	Expressing opinion

Table 6 Analysing and Evaluation Tasks

Prompt	Language Focus
1. Read the story again in conjunction with the excerpts from the Bill of Rights. What can you say about human Rights in relation to what you have read from the Govender's (2008) short story?	Describing the circumstances
2. Compare and contrast the Human Rights during 1949 and 2010. What has changed? Do you think people can change? Provide 5 tips to ensure that people's Rights are not violated.	Comparing and contrasting with insight

Table 7 Making Decisions

Prompt	Language focus
1. Identify a problem in your immediate community, in South Africa or in the world where Human Rights are or have been violated. Explain how they have been violated.	Following or describing process
2. Having identified the violation of human Rights, suggests change where it is needed.	Proposing solutions with should
3. Identify a problem in your community and propose a solution	
4. Talk with your partner or family member, make an achievable goal, and pursue it.	

APPENDIX H

Text A

EXCERPT FROM THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Read through the following excerpt from the Bill of Rights, the second chapter of the Constitution (1996). This part of the Constitution lays down the basic human rights to be respected by all citizens.

Freedom and security of the person

12.   (1)   Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right -

(a)   not to be deprived of freedom arbitrarily or without just cause;

(b)   not to be detained without trial;

(c)   to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources;

(d)   not to be tortured in any way; and

(e)   not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way.

  (2)   Everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right -

(a)   to make decisions concerning reproduction;

(b)   to security in and control over their body; and

(c)   not to be subjected to medical or scientific experiments without their informed consent.

APPENDIX I

established a system of rule for rural blacks. It tried to revive tribalism and made no provision for elected representatives.

THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN

The first successful collaboration between the SAIC and the ANC was the Defiance Campaign of 1952. Together, they protested against the unjust laws and took the struggle to new levels of mass action.

In 1952, Dr J.S. Moroka, the new President of the ANC, sent a letter to Prime Minister Malan asking him to abolish the laws that the people felt were oppressive and unjust. He informed Malan that if he failed to do so, a campaign of non-violent defiance against these laws would begin.

A Defiance Campaign Planning Council was set up and chaired by Dr Moroka. Walter Sisulu and Dr Dadoo prepared a detailed report on how to keep the campaign a disciplined and peaceful protest. The two men became very close life-long friends as a result of their work together.

Above (background): 6 April 1952, Defiance Campaign. People from all over the Reef attend a mass meeting at Freedom Square, Fordsburg.

Left: The masses hear Moroka and Dadoo speak from the platform.

Right: A passive resistance mass meeting in Durban.

THE PASSIVE RESISTANCE CAMPAIGN

Long before the Nationalist Party came to power, apartheid-like legislation was already being implemented by the Union government of Jan Smuts. Just as black people and coloured people suffered, so too did people of Indian origin.

In January 1946, Smuts announced his intention to introduce the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill. This would prohibit Indians from purchasing land from non-Indians. It would also force Indians to elect whites to represent them in Parliament. These acts became known as the 'Ghetto Acts'.

The Natal Indian Congress (NIC), under the leadership of Dr. 'Monty' Naicker, and the Transvaal Indian Congress, under the leadership of Dr. Yusuf M. Dadoo, led a Passive Resistance Campaign against the Ghetto Acts. On 31 March 1946, 6 000 Indians marched in Durban in support of the South African Indian Congress' (SAIC) resolution for Passive Resistance.

On 13 June 1946, a mass meeting of over 15 000 people at the "Red Square" in Durban was addressed by Dr Naicker. After the meeting, a procession marched to a plot of land that had been designated for the use of 'whites only'. Here, 17 passive resistors (including 7 women) pitched five tents in defiance of the Acts. They were quietly challenging the law, inviting arrest.

By the end of the campaign, over 2 000 Indian passive resistors had gone to prison. Many of these passive resistors were women.

APPENDIX J

APPENDIX K

A Sequence of Critical thinking Tasks

Observing Tasks

1) In the picture of one person, there is a white male, he looks to be rich because he is dressed formally and must be leading a high standard life

2) It has a group of Indian people who are protesting because they want freedom.

3) I think being in that situation was very difficult as well as dangerous because protesters are sometimes shot or you can even get squashed between the crowds

Identifying Assumption Tasks

1) I prefere the picture of the Mahatma Gandhi, because he seem to be rich and living a peacefull life, also because I do not like violence and in the other picture there is a lot of violence as people are protesting

2) Yes I have, The situation was very tense especially when the police came to the scene and there was a lot of gun fire people running in every direction and some got injured

3) I have seen in the past that people protest when they want something, for example when there was the SOWETO uprising and blacks were protesting because they want freedom for all
I do not think it is wise for people to protest, because protesting leads to a lot of unwanted injuries and deaths, I would rather that people talked out their issues

Sgboza

Understanding and Organising Tasks

1) Dumi lived in a two roomed outhouse and Mr Osborne lived in a family mansion in a sprawling kloof estate and it had a pool.

2) I think they were living in such different locations because of the apartheid law which separated racial groups from staying together and Mr Osborne owned a better house because he was white and the whites were dominant than blacks at that time.

Interpreting Tasks

1) He meant that why do the indians want to have with them! the whites even though the indians are not allowed.

2) I disagree, because he was saying that Indians deserve the torture and I do not think anyone deserves to be tortured

3) I think he was thinking that his boss Mr Osborne gets really frustrated when he sees something he doesn't like because that was the first time Dumi saw him that angry

4)

5) I figure that the police too also were supporting the violence and the riots because they were suppose to be doing their job and stopping the violence, but they were not they were just standing and watching and this may also be because most of the police during the apartheid era were white.

Analysing and Evaluating

1) The rights that were being violated are :
- The right to freedom and security of the person
- The right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources
- The right not to be tortured in and any way
- The right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way
- The right to security and control over their body.

2) Yes I do think that people can change with time, and people can learn or be taught that violence or injustice does not solve problems it just causes more problems

Tips
1) Many more rights have been added to the rights that we had before 1994 to ensure that everyone's comfortable
2 People can report when they feel that their rights are being violated
3 People are taught about their rights to make sure that they know them
4
5

Making decisions

1) In Zimbabwe - The people are not allowed to have a say in what happens in their country because of the oppressive government that is a violation of the right to freedom of speech.

Making Decisions

2) They should change their leadership and have leaders that will hear and work with the people.

3) A problem in my community is that many people are unemployed because they lack the skills
- The solution here should be to train people and provide the neccesary skills for them this way it will be easy for them to get jobs

23 January 2001   Jabonya   1.5.

1949 Is a representation of life and everything in the past South Africa

The 1949 novel describes how the apartheid era in the past South Africa started and what was behind it. The 1949 novel shows how some people feel threatened when they see that other people can reach the high level of life that they are in.

The trouble and riots during 1949 in Tekweni could have all been avoided if some white people had not stirred up the trouble and made the riots go further. These white people did this because they wanted to get rid of the Indians because some Indians were as rich as the white people were and the whites wanted to be only them who were the superior race, they did not want to believe that other people could reach their level of lifestyle.

In the past South Africa when white people came to Africa I think they had seen an opportunity of black people. I think the realised that they could use their cunning ways to influence black people to do anything that they liked. White people saw an opportunity to come rule in South Africa, because they saw themselves to be clever than black people and they knew that their cunning ways would influence blacks and blacks believed that white had came to improve their land for them but whites had something else in mind.

So white people managed to use their cunning ways on black people. And they made blacks believe that they were worthless. And that blacks deserved the little that they got

20 January 2011   Siyabonga   6.

(1949 - Novel)

- What can you say about the role that is given to male and woman characters in this Novel?

- I think compared to the time male and woman now have very different but I think better roles in the world. In the Novel we found that woman don't have much say in the things that happen around them, And they hardly even go to work. In this novel woman have to handle the household work just take care of the house and the children and leave all the work and earning a living to the men. The men made all the important decisions so woman did not have a say in everything that happened.
- Now that everyone has equal rights man and woman are taken as equals and woman can now have a decent job and they now have a right to say what they wish and they also make important decision about things that concern them. The man are not taken as superior as they were in the past South Africa, in the new South Africa everyone is equal the woman now do the jobs that were being done by men and they can get paid of them the man also have a right to do the work that was being done by woman.
- It is better this way It's good that the power is shared amoung different genders and no one can complain that they are not getting something because now nothing stop you from doing what you want no matter what gender race or sex you are you can do whatever you wish with your life.

at the end of the day. The white people made sure that blacks believed that whites were improving their land for them but even though it was like that why did not blacks ask themselves that they never done anything to free. Everything was going very well for whites they had the land and their own personal schools. This was all well in order untill when the Indians came in to the picture.

- When Indians came whites had to be worried because they knew that they couldn't convince them like blacks and they thought they would convince blacks to take on the whites so this is why in the 1940 riots the white people stirred up the trouble against indians they wanted to get rid of indians and they used blacks to do it. This made them look as if the white were not involved in the trouble and it was only between blacks and Indians

It is natural that a person who lives a good life may not want the other person to reach that place in life and some people use others to get there but some say you have to step on something to go higher unfortunatly blacks had to be stepped on during the past South Africa.

26 January 2011   Syabonga   8

1949

Characters
- Dumi
- Mr Osbome
- Mr Mohumed
- Mr Manirium
- Mr GV Naido

Setting
- Cato manor
- Tekwini

What happening? (The problem)

Whats happening is that Dumi who is a bowzer boy for the model garage is waking up to go to work. his job is to sell petrol and as he gets up he does'nt realise the trouble in Tekwini, he also does not realise that there is an unusually big run on pervapin sale that day

Climax

We found the climax almost at the end of the story whe Dumi try is trying to help Mr Maniram and his family, we found that the crowd wants to kill them including Dumi if he is trying to hid them

Resolution

I do not think we find a resolution to the problem in this Novel because Dumi ends up dying and that is not how problems are solved and maybe the crowd keeps on killing Indians

My initial response to the novel

=> My initial response is that through this novel I have realised what I may think caused there to be so much violence during apartheid times and I may have realised what was behind the 1949 Durban riots and why. Behind the riots of 1949 white people were stirring up the trouble because they thought of Indians to be clever and that they could be as rich as they are or Indians could tell or show that blacks were being used.

=> This in relation to the apartheid era. I think because the apartheid era ended some time after the Durban riots. I think that even though Indians were tortured blacks finally realised that they were being used and they took on the whites

28 January 2011   Siyabonga   10

<u>Unity in Diversity</u>

Unity in diversity is to be joined together into one group
even then you may be different you join together with one
specific reason that you wish to solve. In this case it is Dumi
who is unified in diversity as he tries to solve the racial
problems around him.

- As a central character in the novel we are shown that Dumi
gets to experience life personally with all three different groups
of race that are included. Firstly he is black and he got to
experience all the challenges and circumstances of being black at
that time. He knows that life was tough for black people during
that time with white people having all that power and Dumi got
to experience that.

Dumi because he is a central character had also many ways
to experience the Indian lifestyle. Firstly because he rented a
two roomed outhouse from an Indian named Mr Munirum who
lived with his family. So in this case it wasn't difficult for
Dumi to see the challenges that the Indians were facing and to see
that they were almost similar than his problems. Dumi also had an
Indian friend/neighbour who he saw almost every morning they
were quit close although they were both from different
races.

It was easy for our central character "Dumi" to experience
and see how the whites lived their life as his boss was white
his boss was white and his name is Mr Osborne. Mr Osborne
used to ask Dumi to drive them to Osborne family mansion

Siyabonga 11.10.

for the splendid New years eve party. Mr Osborne was not that mean it is said in the novel that he passed on his family old clothes to his staffs. And during the new years eve party Mr Osborne allowed for Dumi to have fun. Dumi does say that it was a very splendid party and that he wished people to always be this happy. But happiness only lasts for a short period usually.

After Dumi had experienced life on all these races and saw that none of these races were all that mean it made things quet difficult for him. I think he was the one affected alot by all the trouble that took place because he knew the truth, but knowing the truth made things worse because he did not know what side to pic his own people were being used to kill and torture innocent people and they was confusing because they were being used without realising it.

If Dumi had decided to stay with his people he would have been taking his boss's side and doing what he thought was wrong but he did not do that he decided to help and unite with Indians and in the end he paid with his life.