

POST-COLONIAL STUDY ON J.M.COETZEE'S DISGRACE

Vijaya Lakshmi B

MPhil Scholar

PG & Research Department of English

Bon Secours College for Women

Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

Coetzee is sensitive and faithful to his native country's colonial history. He is a successful novelist and linguist. This paper explains the struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor. In postcolonial writing, the justification of the position of other people is revealed by the damaged and distorted life of the South Africans under Apartheid. Post-Colonialism begins at the moment of colonial contact. This is about the defiance which colonialism brings into being. Post-Colonial literature shows the eventual outcome of Colonialism. This paper reveals the reminiscence self of the Colonized. It describes the struggles of an uncommunicative college professor, his harassment case, tragic situations on his daughter's farm, characters' decisions of their pathetic situation and the balance of power between Negroes and White people. This paper portrays the struggle and guilt of the group of people who are dominated in the beginning, who try to cope with a changing world in an apartheid-free South Africa. It explains the sufferings, injustice and disgrace faced by the people.

Keywords: Post-colonialism, disgrace, struggle for power, post-apartheid, harassment, displacement.

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Postcolonial literatures and postcolonial studies have acquired the attention of many readers and scholars around the world. Post-colonialism deals with the effects of colonialism on culture and society and it addresses the subjects of post-colonial identity, culture, national, ethnic, gender, race, racism and their interactions in the development of a post-colonial society.

The term 'Post-Colonial' is originally used by the historians to describe the period after colonization. In literary criticism, the term is used from 1970's to discuss the cultural, political and linguistic effects of colonialism. This paper reveals the colonial situation which leads to the broken and separated relationship between parents and children and between men and women. Such destroyed relationships are miserable and weak.

Disgrace is the Man Booker Prize novel in which J.M.Coetzee demonstrates accuracy and searches for something that is problematic. It is published in 1999 and it is the first novel about the post-apartheid South Africa. Apart from his previous novels, this focuses mainly on the disgrace of whites when they lost their power. It revolves around fifty-two-year-old, David Lurie, who is the protagonist. The intention of this paper is to reveal the secret of degradation for the white people in the new South Africa after the collapse of the apartheid system.

The character David is seeking to exploit others and he is the father of undisciplined daughter, Lucy. She is physically and ideologically distant from him. He has no connection with his former wives. This leads him to approach a prostitute named Soraya. He is dismissed from his professor job after seducing a student named Melanie Isaacs. Such events create much distance and separation between father and daughter.

The characters Soraya and Melanie are black and dark respectively, who describe the unfairness of colonialism. They portray the consequences of colonialism in the postcolonial society. The imperfection in relationship is depicted through the arrogance of whites, degradation of natives and oppression of women. Women, whether white or black, are still the victims of dislike.

The characters are deep-rooted with the lack of communication. David is unwilling to talk but Melanie is the symbol of silence. Only David's own thoughts reveals Melanie's situation. These degraded girls are silent. The farmer, Petrus is impossible to understand and Lucy stops communicating with her father when he tries to comfort her after the seduction. This shows the voiceless state of the colonized people and the separation between blacks and whites.

In the post-apartheid world, there occurs a nature and balance of power. The transfer from Cape Town to the countryside makes David to enjoy changes without knowing the future dangers. After his arrival to his daughter's farm, he experiences various pathetic situations. He is set on fire, his car stolen and his daughter seduced. Such situations make him to realize the undesirable vision of modern, post-apartheid South Africa.

The struggle for power begins and chaos becomes common. This leads to violence. Lucy refuses to punish the gang who seduced her. She also refuses to abort the child she impregnated because of the seduction. She gives her own land to the farmer, Petrus and becomes his third wife. This shows the shift of power. Lucy always considers the personal things but her father focuses on the social and political things. She understands the fate of the natives living in the country which is considered as a European homeland. Land ownership is the great political and strategic support of European Colonizers. The changeover of power shift is seen through property and sex.

In the beginning, Lucy is the landowner but her land passes on to a landless farmer, Petrus. So many changes occur in government policy. Petrus celebrates in a party after knowing that a post-colonial era has begun. He is polite and clever and does all the chores. He fails to be in the place when the gang comes to seduce Lucy. He finds difficult to catch the gang when he is informed about the committed crime. As a white man, David thinks himself as an odd one, like Negros used to feel in their own country when the white minority are dominant.

The downfall of colonizers portrays through the turnover of power in sex. David is highly satisfied with the company of Soraya in the beginning. He sees her as an object and spends most of his time with her. She is silent and weak. Later, she becomes a subject by making everything upside down. Melanie's reaction on her seduction is weak since she destroys the fame of college professor and disrupts his position. This is the most important feature in post-colonial literature where the white man is displaced with the displacement of Negros in colonial times. This shows the destruction of white man by dislocation, non-identity and non-authenticity. Also there is a similarity between the predatory father David seducing twenty-year-old Melanie and his daughter's seduction by a gang in front of his eyes.

Thus, the native South Africans have to undergo suffering, injustice and degradation in order to stay alive during colonial and apartheid times. Whites have no choice in the post-apartheid era. This is the difference between Lucy and Lurie which troubles David's conscience. Lucy feels that she has to overcome this situation to continue her life but David pretends himself that moral principles will bring sequence to the nature of human. It is very difficult for Lucy to overcome all this because she is a lesbian and an independent girl. But her aim is to recollect the past and the survival to carry on with her life.

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