



WOMEN AS VICTIMS IN J.M. COETZEE'S NOVEL 'DISGRACE'

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ABSTRACT

J.M. Coetzee lived in South Africa during the Apartheid era till the country's transition to the newly formed government. He wrote about South Africa's racial politics during Apartheid and its transition in his novels. In his novel *Disgrace* J. M. Coetzee deals with the evils of Colonialism and Apartheid. It also portrays the resentment of the whites being forced to accept subservience. Despite the abolition of the Apartheid policy in 1994 the whites found it difficult to lose their power over the blacks. The struggle for power among blacks and whites continued in the black dominated areas.

In this paper I will study the complex relationship between colonizer and the colonized especially women in J. M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace*. The paper will delve into the questions such as who is the exploiter and who is the victim. It will also study whether women are able to fight patriarchy and racism.

Keywords- Apartheid, Post- Apartheid, Power, Violence, Racial, Sexual.

The implementation of the policy of Apartheid in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 had given power and privilege to the whites over the blacks. The blacks were oppressed and repressed in their own country. Racial segregation came to an end with the abolition of the policy of Apartheid. Although apartheid officially ended in 1994, the issue of race as a primary marker of identity has continued to permeate many aspects of contemporary public and private life (Bok, pp2). As opposed to the overt and explicit racial classifications legitimated under apartheid, racial identities are still invoked in many subtle ways. (Bok, pp.2)

Even after the dismantling of Apartheid and lifting of bans on interracial relationship the whites continued to be authoritative and powerful. 'The period of interregnum continues, as the white regime holds on and the black nation experiences a new set of growing pains. (Knox pp. 75)

'After the implementation of apartheid in 1948, racial distinctions became legal categories, and in 1949 saw enactment of the prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act. In 1930, an amendment to the 1927 Immortality Act added "coloureds" as a category in the laws prohibiting sexual relations between whites and non whites. These laws were not repealed until 1986.....' (Knox, pp 63-64)

These prohibition laws strained the relation of white women with black men and black women with white men by trying to keep them apart. The laws prohibited any kind of meaningful cross-racial connection 'but the black man-white woman pairing is inherently subversive, since neither half of the pair has the ultimate political power of the white man.' (Knox, p.64)

Even after apartheid era came to an end the racial hierarchy remained the same. Even after the shift in social order, the whites refuse to accept the change. This paper will critically analyse the issue of race and sexuality in the novel *Disgrace* set in Post Apartheid South Africa.

“Racism” is understood as the ideology of racial superiority which prescribes that “a designated racial group is either biologically or culturally inferior” (Bok, pp.2), and then uses such beliefs to rationalize their domination. (Bok, pp.2)

The biological distinction of sex (between male and female) is used to construct and enforce the social distinction of gender (between masculine and feminine). Therefore, gendered approaches to literature have often sought to counterbalance the male focus that this involved by concentrating more strongly on women’s perspectives. (Literature and Gender.p.1)

J.M. Coetzee lived in South Africa during the apartheid regime and its transition to form a democratic government. He wrote about the social and political issues of South Africa till he migrated to Australia in 2002. Dominic Head says,

‘His work was embodied a form of intellectual challenge both to the late-colonial violence and oppression of apartheid, and to the dangers of retributive violence in the period of transition to democratic rule. In either case, his work has not always chimed with the popular mood: as an ‘apartheid novelist’ a term he would strongly resist, his work has been perceived as too oblique, with an insufficient political charge.’ (Head, pp.22)

Coetzee’s literary works portray the politics, culture and society of South Africa and comments on the inhumanity brought by colonialism and apartheid at a universal level. Coetzee comments on the evils of colonialism on the Black South Africans and the doubly colonized black women in South Africa. J. M. Coetzee delves into the complex relationships that form between the colonizer and the colonized especially gendered ones.

In this novel the author depicts the social change that has occurred after the policy of apartheid was abolished. J.M. Coetzee presents David Lurie the protagonist of age fifty-two and divorced, as a womanizer, exploiter and an extremely selfish man. The opening paragraph introduces us to the kind of life this salacious and lecherous man leads. He has been visiting Soraya, a prostitute by profession regularly for almost a year. His life has become quite monotonous and mechanical but at the same time she gives him satisfaction. Technically he is old enough to be her father, but then technically, one can be a father at twelve (*Disgrace* pp. 1). This statement is ironical for David in the microcosm and most men in the macrocosm. In spite of their own age, they desire for younger girls. David Lurie himself has always liked women of his daughter Lucy’s age, initially he goes after Soraya, then Melanie.

David Lurie has been divorced five times and still goes to visit Rosalind, his ex-wife at her house when things go wrong. He puts it as ‘someone to count on when the worst arrives; the fall in the bathroom the blood in the stool (*Disgrace* pp. 43). Being outside marriage, he has solved the problem of sex rather well. The reason for the failure for his marriage is him being a womanizer. He believes ‘a woman’s beauty does not belong to her alone, it is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it (*Disgrace* pp. 16). And if she already shares with someone, he says, ‘Then you should share it more widely’ (*Disgrace* pp. 16). He is not content with the sexual life he has in his marriage. His marriage lacks the kind of sexual fulfillment he yearns for. He gets these ingredients of sex and fulfillment with women of his daughter’s age initially Soraya and later Melanie.

The family ties were not as strong as in the days of antiquity. The transition from colonialism to capitalist economy had led to subversion of conventional values. Family ties were no longer considered necessary or significant. David’s childhood was spent in a large joint family with mother, aunt and sisters since his was a broken family. In the latter half of his life, he was divorced five times. He believes, the company of women has made him a lover of women and led him to become a womanizer. For several years now he still needs women like Soraya if only for ninety minutes a week to fulfill his physical needs. Soraya on the other hand has a family of husband and children, but her husband knows little about the real Soraya. She is careful not to disclose to her

husband her life outside her home. Though prostitution was considered a profession it was still not a socially accepted and a respectable profession rather it was still a taboo. Soraya was living in a patriarchal society where women are victims of patriarchal prejudices. Soraya fears her husband's male hegemony will be challenged once he finds out, that his wife is using her sexuality for someone else other than himself. She struggles to conceal her identity both from her husband and her clients. Once her precarious double life is exposed to David, Soraya starts getting cold, and then announces, she will take a break to look after her ailing mother.

David should have closed the chapter once he is hinted by her, instead, he pays a detective agency to track her down till he gets her real name, address and telephone number. He telephones her when the husband and children are out and starts harassing her and tries to impose himself on her. David Lurie forces himself into her private space causing tension and disturbance to her. Dominance of the whites on the blacks continued to exist after the apartheid era came to an end. They resented to lose power but still dominated on the blacks. The cross racial intrusion while showing dominance, subjects Soraya to his whims and he attempts to overpower her private space. David occupies the private spaces of the powerless black women that brings negative outcome instead of enduring relationship.

His sex with Soraya has not been passionate. The author reveals:

In the field of sex his temperament, though intense, has never been passionate were he to choose a totem, it would be snake. Intercourse between Soraya and himself must be, he imagines rather like the copulation of snakes: lengthy, absorbed but rather abstract, rather dry, even at its hottest (Disgrace pp. 2).

The description of this act reveals Soraya's sexual exploitation and suffocation by Lurie.

The quite and docile Soraya suddenly turns aggressive and commanding. 'Her Shrillness surprises him: there has been no intimation of it before. But then what should a predator expect when he intrudes into a vixen's nest, into the home of her cubs?' (Disgrace pp. 10)

The paradox of seeming freedom and vulnerability is well encapsulated here. Soraya is one of the representative women in Coetzee's novel struggling against various forces of oppression including male oppression and racial oppression. Both black women Soraya and Melanie struggle for survival against men like David, in the habit of thrusting himself on the women he desires. By doing so they are not only exploited racially but he exploits their sexuality and gender as well.

Soraya is a victim oppressed both by the white male as well as capitalism. She is only paid half the amount of the services she renders. The other half is taken by Discreet Escorts the organization she is employed with. For them she is a mere object not an individual whose usefulness is what interests them.

'..... in a sense they own Soraya too, this part of her function' (Disgrace pp. 2). After all Soraya is living in a patriarchal culture, where the male is the source of authority and the women live in the shadow and fear of men. The consequences of the penetration into private spaces and inter-racial relationships bring tension in the text.

The Apartheid era from 1948 to 1994 had given power and privilege to the whites over the blacks. The Blacks were oppressed and repressed in their own country. Racial segregation of the blacks ended with the end of the apartheid era but the dominance and discrimination by the whites on the blacks continued.

Black women were the most exploited and oppressed sections of society and struggled against the social conditions. Cheryl Walker observes that the traditional tribal and economic status of black women at the time of Industrialisation and urbanization was not only racialised and gendered. (Sakamoto, pp.232)

She points out that sexual discrimination in colonial and apartheid South Africa was incorporated into the system of labour exploitation used to exert state control over African women and their economic status. To keep African women in traditional junior roles and to tie them to the rural areas, the state worked to stem the tide of African women's migration and perpetuated their subordinate position. The sexual

hierarchy was thus maintained alongside the colour hierarchy of white over black in the interests of the capitalism in South Africa. (Sakamoto, pp.229)

Gender and race are issues in African literary tradition where women were doubly oppressed as women and as blacks.

In this novel the author depicts the social change that had occurred after the policy of apartheid was abolished. Through this novel Coetzee deals with social issues prevalent during Post-apartheid era especially that which concerned race and gender. Inequality in male-female relationships and the existence of patriarchal cum racist stereotypes were a common feature in South Africa.

Soon after Soraya is out of his life, Melanie takes her place. She is one of his students in his University and thirty years his junior. He tries to woo her with wine and music. *He* tells her that her beauty is meant to be shared with others. He again imposes himself on her before she realizes it. 'On Sunday morning he drives to the empty campus and lets himself into the department office. From the filing cabinet he extracts Melanie Isaac's enrolment card and copies down her personal details: home address, Cape Town address, telephone number. He dials the number (Disgrace pp. 18). It is ironic that in spite of Melanie's literary passions being works of feminist writers, Adrienne Rich, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, she does not learn to assert herself and is helpless. David on the other hand is a follower of Byron, hence chooses to follow his kind of scandals.

He forcefully has sex with her. 'The girl is lying beneath him, her eyes closed, her hands slack above her head, a slight frown on her face. He has always been an intruder in her life' (pp. 19). He goes to the auditorium, sits in the dark to leech at her while they are rehearsing a play and later thrusts himself again on her, coming into her flat without prior permission.

'He has given her no warning; she is too surprised to resist the intruder who thrusts himself upon her when he takes her in his arms, her limbs crumple like a marionette, words heavy as clubs thud into the delicate whorl of her ear. No, not now! She says struggling. My cousin will be back!' But nothing will stop him' (pp. 24).

Melanie is powerless before him, her teacher. He therefore takes advantage of her powerlessness and sexually harasses and exploits her. She struggles silently and continuously as she is too traumatized to share her exploitations with anyone. She does not have the guts to protest and is unaware and hence gets crushed under the strain of male oppression. The author also draws our attention to society's oppressive attitudes towards the passive and ignorant women. She is also compelled to accept exploitative relationships due to cultural authority. In age he is as old as her father and yet likes to have sexual relationships with a young woman of her daughter's age.

David wants to get from women regardless of their wish. He abuses Melanie of sexual violence against her will. Melanie can't refuse David outright. David is only interested in his yearnings. Despite being her teacher, he transgresses beyond his boundaries and his duty towards his student. He sees women as the object of desire. He mixes sexual desire with power. He manipulates Melanie to have sex with him. Even after being her teacher, he brazenly disregards the relationship of trust, respect and moral responsibilities. Melanie surrenders to the whims of Lurie due to racial and sexual fear. The betrayal of Lurie by taking advantage of his position is ironical.

The day the complaint is filed, the memorandum reaches him from the office of the Vice-Rector, Student Affairs notifies him of the complaint lodged under article 3 of the University's code of conduct, dealing 'with victimization on grounds of race, ethnic group, religion, gender, sexual preference or physical disability.' (Disgrace pp.39). He is called to discuss the complaint and a query about Ms. Isaac's attendance. In spite of her attending only two classes in the past month the matter was not reported. On the contrary her attendance was marked. She had missed the mid-term test but, in the records, she had scored seventy in the mid-term. By manipulating, David wanted to make things easy for Melanie so that she in turn would feel obliged towards him. He is shocked at the complaint lodged against him. He is aware of Melanie's ignorance of her power and is assured she would never have taken such a step herself. He knows, she is too weak to use woman's power.

Melanie is born in a patriarchal society dominated by her boyfriend and father and is too scared to go against them. This is the reason she is forced by them to complain against her teacher to which she can't object.

Later he meets the committee on discrimination to discuss about the complaint. From the very beginning he is assured by the University that his name and Ms. Isaacs' name would be protected and the matter would be handled in the strictest confidence. It is ironic that they protect his name to such an extent that he is not allowed to be given the penalty he deserves. His lawyer suggests him to go for a private settlement and to take an undertaking either as leave or community service or counseling so that the University persuades the girl and her family to drop the charges. He refuses outright as he fails to understand how counseling would cure him of inappropriate desires.

The committee had two other women Farodia Rasool from social sciences and the other who taught in the Business School. There was equal representation of both the sexes in the committee but the chairperson was a male. This revealed their patriarchal culture that men were the source of authority. David accepts the charges and does not want any legal advice or counseling. The committee is not satisfied and feels that he accepts the charges only in name 'in the hope that the case will be buried under paper and forgotten.' (Disgrace, pp.51) The men are very supportive, they want to protect him and see to it that he does not lose his job. In their opinion it was one of its weak moments. He is human after all and every human has weak moments. They want to find a way out of his problems and want him to be back in the classroom. Instead of sympathizing with Melanie they take his side not only because he was their colleague but more importantly that he was a male and a white. 'We would like to help David, to find a way out of what must be a nightmare. (Disgrace pp. 52)

The women in the committee try to be assertive and want to recommend the severest of penalty for his deeds. What makes them most furious is when he dares saying 'I was not myself. I was no longer a fifty-five old divorcee at a loose end. I became a servant of Eros.' (Disgrace pp. 52). Firstly, they do not approve of such kind of relationship between a teacher and his student. Most importantly he had abused and exploited a young black woman. He had taken advantage of her vulnerability and his power. She was of his daughter's age and he had no right to touch her. He was no less than a shark among the helpless little fisheries or a great thick boned male bearing down a girl child, a huge hand stifling her cries (Disgrace pp. 53).

After the incident, the trust in her teacher had been brutally destroyed. She had turned to him in the hope of some guidance but was betrayed. The bigger issue involved is the political issue behind the individual's case. Melanie is a representative of black female sufferers of society burdened with double oppression. We gain access to a much broader issue of mistreatment of women by men. They suffer more, particularly if they are ignorant of their power.

Professor Lurie did not want to go beyond pleading guilty as he wants to be honest and knows he cannot trample his instincts. In fact, he tells the Media as well, he is enriched by the experience and given a chance would indulge in it again. He is made the object of ridicule; his photograph comes out in the newspaper with an inverted waste paper basket over his head that makes him look like a dunce. He was made a laughing stock in the whole town. It is a disgrace for him what greater disgrace can he think of.

A last chance is given to him by the men of the committee. A draft statement is prepared to satisfy his point of view as well as theirs. He is only asked to take a leave of absence but is not dismissed. Whether he would like to return to teaching duties would be his discretion and that of the Dean and Head of the Department. Hence, he is saved from the severest penalty, the women demanded. It is obvious that the men favour David with no concern for Melanie, the abused. The women try to give voice to the victim of sexism, show resistance and are prepared to fight back. Yet their voice is trampled to the ground. The men wield power in the committee as well as in society and strive to dominate women. Their decision reflects the patriarchal society and those with power fight to preserve it. It is clear that women in this society are doubly colonized by both imperial and patriarchal ideologies. This dual oppression introduced by the colonizers continues after colonialism leading to women's marginalisation.

David ends up losing his job and respect due to his weakness for women but has no remorse on his fall out. David had fallen into disgrace and has to flee Cape Town to his daughter Lucy's remote farm in the Eastern Cape. She had moved there six years ago as a member of the commune and when the commune broke up Lucy chose to stay behind on the small holding with her friend Helen. Belonging to a new breed of educated urban women and the experience of a broken family led her to stay unmarried.

She has found a solution for a companion by searching a complex relationship with her own gender for fulfillment and emotional wholeness. David had never been able to understand this complex relationship both Lucy and Helen share. Lucy is a heterosexual and thrusts into moments of homosexuality to protect herself using it as a weapon against men but she has calculated it wrongly. The men see it as defying her gender norms and want to set her right making it obvious of their disagreement with her of choosing to stay in the countryside without a male counterpart thus going against the traditional and gender norms of society. Hence the dominant gender manipulates to keep her down through exploitation. She is pinned down and shown defeat by being raped and robbed. David's effort to intervene to protect his daughter also fails and is tormented physically and the thugs win the battle.

David blames the incident of loot and rape to the antagonistic and brutal environment of the countryside.

It happens every day, every hour, every minute, he tells himself, in every quarter of the country.... A risk to own anything: a car, a pair of shoes, a packet of cigarettes. Not enough to go around, not enough cars, shoes, cigarettes. Too many people, too few things. What there is must go for circulation, so that everyone can have a chance to be happy for a day. That is the theory; hold to the theory and to the comforts of theory. Not human evil, just a vast circulatory system, to whose life in this country: in its schematic aspect. Otherwise, one could go mad Cars, shoes; women too. There must be some niche in the system for women and what happens to them. (Disgrace pp. 98).

Poverty and unemployment had pushed black South Africans into crime. Lurie counts himself and Lucy fortunate to have survived the incident.

Lucy's treatment as a pariah is mainly because of her gender and being a white minority in the area. She is exploited because she belonged to the white community that had once ill-treated the blacks. After the removal of apartheid laws there has been reversal of roles. The blacks wanted to assert themselves and exercise exploitation wherever they felt they were more powerful especially in places where the black majority exceeded the whites such as this place—Eastern Cape. During colonialism it was the blacks bearing the oppression of whites. Colonialism no longer existed but the after effects of colonialism was still visible in white dominating areas of South Africa where the white majority was lesser than the blacks, the blacks take revenge by oppressing the whites especially the women who were more vulnerable in society. Secondly, she also suffered because of her gender. She dared to indulge in homosexual instincts which were still considered a taboo in society. The pretense she puts of being a homosexual to assert her independent identity is silenced by rape. It is a common fate embraced by many women in the patriarchal society. The pressure of the male power often frustrates the redemptive exercises initiated by women. It clearly demonstrates men's power and powerlessness of the women. Women desiring to be equally powerful are silenced by physical and emotional abuse. As a woman, she shares almost the same experiences and undergoes the same subjugation and marginalisation any other woman would experience under patriarchal imperialism.

This vicious criminal assault has more implications and unfolds in the plot as the story moves. This act of brutality and betrayal comes for Lucy from the thugs after the consent of Petrus. Territorial power is played by Petrus who sends his men to rape Lucy in order to subvert her. These men's relationship with Petrus comes to the forefront after Lucy and her father see one of the men in Petrus' house on the day of the celebrations; the day the land was getting transferred in his name. The boy was one of the assaulters present on the night of the incident. The boy outrightly denies his involvement in the incident and Petrus too pretends to be oblivious of the crime in which the boy was involved. David wants to call the police but is stopped by Lucy. She does not want the evening to be spoilt, moreover she wants to stay amicable to him.' She wants to spend her entire life in the countryside and takes precautions not to strain relationships with Petrus. She knows she would have to

depend on Petrus in order to look after the farm as well as to protect her from the hostile environment. Being a woman, she lacks the physical strength required for the farm. David has his own suspicions of what Petrus was up to in the longer run.

'Petrus would like to take over Lucy's land. ... Petrus has a vision of the future in which people like Lucy have no place... The worst the darkest reading would be that Petrus engaged three strange men to teach Lucy a lesson, paying them off with the loot... The real truth, he suspects, is something far more... (Disgrace pp. 117-118). It is a new world they live in, he and Lucy and Petrus. Petrus knows it, and he knows it, and Petrus knows that he knows it. (pp. 116-117)

Petrus had a greater plan in his mind. He was rightly scheming a conspiracy. He was taking Lucy into confidence by being a good neighbour so much so that Lucy had begun trusting Petrus more than her father. Petrus goes out of the way to help Lucy. He empties the concrete, storage dam and cleans it of algae. Though it is an unpleasant job, he offers to do it. He takes the products to the market with David when Lucy was in distress. 'Petrus swiftly and efficiently lays out the wares, sells them, takes the money, makes the change' (Disgrace pp. 116) Petrus was waiting for the right time to strike at her and she never in her dreams suspected him. David though had guessed it right and convinced they knew about Lucy as well as the forestry station and were no strangers to the district. Petrus did not give any explanation for his absence and was silent till he was asked about the incident.

'The Police must find them, 'he says at last. The police must find them and put them in jail. That is the job of the police.' (Disgrace pp. 118-119). Apart from this Petrus does not say anything. He knew the men and had paid them off with the loot. He hired them to shake her self-confidence as David had guessed. Petrus was taking advantage of a woman's weakness. David had become very upset once he comes to know that the rape had led to pregnancy. He tirades on her negligence and wants her to abort to which Lucy does not agree. He had never dreamt that a seed of a rapist or a robber would continue his lineage. Over supper he gets another revelation that the boy present on the day of the incident was staying with Petrus. David gets an answer from Petrus he least expected, 'Yes. He is a child. He is my family, my people.' (Disgrace, pp 201).

Petrus was concerned about his race, his community, his family. He protected anyone who was a black. Lucy belonged to a different race and though he had been her neighbour working and knowing her closely for several years the community feeling is stronger than the neighbourly feeling. He merely sympathises with Lucy for what happened to her and called it 'unfortunate'. Petrus suggests David to get his daughter married off to the boy. On David's refusal to get her married to the dangerous child, a thug, he offers to marry Lucy himself. David stands aghast, he cannot believe his ears. 'So, this is it, that is what all the shadow-boxing was for: this bid, this bow! And here stands Petrus foursquare, puffing on the empty pipe, waiting for a response' (Disgrace pp.202). Petrus had succeeded in this conspiracy. He realizes now every bit of the incident was conspired to get the farm; Lucy owned. Petrus felt rewarded in the end while David did not like it at all.

Though the circumstances have made the blacks powerful and the whites powerless, how could they ever forget the past when blacks were their subordinates. They had ruled over the blacks for decades. They were a segregated community when apartheid existed and at present when the blacks have got their rights back, they are trying to show their superiority. It is intolerable for David; how could he even imagine being Petrus' father-in-law. David still lived in the past; his thinking had not matured with time. Lucy had changed with circumstances. She knew, circumstances were favourable to the blacks. For her, marriage was for her protection, not for procreation, a marriage of convenience. She was marrying to become part of the establishment.

'Petrus is not offering me a church wedding followed by a honeymoon on the wild coast. He is offering an alliance, a deal. I contribute the land, in return for which I am allowed to creep in under his wing. Otherwise, he wants to remind me, I am without protection, I am fair game' (Disgrace pp.203).

Lucy makes things clear to David before he conveys her decision to Petrus. Lucy has thought about her situation thoroughly and then takes this major decision. She has no brothers; she has a father powerless in terms of what mattered there. Ettinger is close by but he himself is unsafe. Lucy finds Petrus the right person to protect

her. She accepts the proposal keeping certain conditions. Lucy wanted to strike a deal with Petrus that could benefit both of them.

If he wants me to be known as his third wife, so be it. As his concubine, ditto. But then the child becomes his too. The child becomes part of his family. As for the land, say I will sign the land over to him as long as the house remains mine. I will become a tenant on his land 'A bywoner'. But the house remains mine, I repeat that. No one enters this house without my permission. Including him. (Disgrace, pp. 204)

Lucy is a victim in the microcosm but in the macrocosm, it focused on the whites living in New South Africa under pressure in a rapidly changing social situation. The whites are compelled to accept the new situation of role reversal. Historically the burden of the black man's rage against oppression by the whites is evident in the changing social and political situation. Their suppressed anxieties, agony, anguish and anger for whites is finally finding an outlet.

Petrus uses Lucy to gain power and take revenge. Petrus turns out to become more powerful by being able to possess Lucy and her land. Petrus subverts Lucy's power both socially and psychologically. Being a white, Lurie can get away with disgrace but for a black like Petrus, sexual violence means severe punishment, imprisonment or death.

In Post-Apartheid South Africa Petrus rises in status holding more power and influence in his area with the transition from the old to the new government. In New South Africa the blacks who had been victims of the past filled with hatred for the whites wanting to take revenge. Lucy wants to compensate for the repression on the blacks during apartheid and willingly pays the price. Lucy wants to suffer in order to compensate the brutality and humiliation on the blacks by the whites by implementing the policy of Apartheid. She is determined that she must make amends for the mistakes of the whites. She wants to atone for the wrongdoings and ill treatment of the blacks by the whites.

Even after Apartheid came to an end the conflict between blacks and whites became more complex. The shifting racial dynamics of Post-Apartheid South Africa disturbed the whites. The reversal of roles and power where they could be subjugated by the blacks make the situation complex. The whites struggle to come to terms with the change in the social order.

As a white Lucy was privileged to get superior education that was denied to the blacks during Apartheid. Compared to Soraya and Melanie she is not completely helpless and disempowered like the black women though she is still a victim of black hatred. Black women were most exploited and oppressed section of society and struggle against the social conditions. The black women are doubly oppressed.

The nature of the cleavages among them is complex. White women have been separated from black women by a very wide gulf, one located in the basic structures of white supremacy... Furthermore, for the majority of women have been felt to press most heavily upon them. At the same time, the experience of the 'blackness' has varied considerably among different sections of black women. (Sakamoto, pp.229)

The racial problems still exist in South Africa in varied forms; one of them is sexual violence. David uses women by misusing his power for his sexual satisfaction as he is unable to control his desire for women. David is a sexist who seduces women and forces himself on women to gain control on them. Soraya and Melanie are also put in an unwanted situation where he manipulates them to have sex.

Both whites and blacks think they are more powerful and the conflict of power leads to the oppression of women in the form of sexual violence. Both Lurie and Petrus use their masculinity for suppressing those women. Women are used as sexual tools by David and Petrus. A man's domination over women is quite congruent with his domination over blacks ... (Driver pp 39) Lurie can be characterized as racially exploitative. Driver comments that males 'put power into sex and, by implication, sex into power.' (Driver pp. 40)

David later becomes the object of disgrace and public ridicule and loses his reputation. The emptiness in David's life is filled with sex. Sex is used to dominate in the women's life as he is superior to Soraya and Melanie. Sex can be seen as humiliation for Petrus whose intentions is to make Lucy feel helpless and vulnerable. Lucy

has to undergo physical and psychological suffering. In fact, all the women, Soraya, Melanie and Lucy have to endure both physical and psychological suffering.

There is still a gap regarding social equality in the Post-Apartheid era. The white male Lurie and the black male Petrus are placed in a relationship of hostility. The whites make a hue and cry about justice given to them if the blacks are the perpetrators. David Lurie is both a sexist and a racist as he identifies his daughter's violation as rape, while his own as normal. The violence by blacks on whites is considered crime and they claim retribution, while for whites on blacks is masked. The Blacks were stereotypically framed. The strain in the race relations becomes obvious with Lurie's blame game. Lurie is racialized as he considers sexual harassment by Petrus a crime and wants to report to the police while his racial exploitation of black women is merely a way to get sexual satisfaction.

Through this novel Coetzee deals with social issues prevalent during Post-Apartheid era especially that which concerned race and gender. His novel delves into the social and political environment that vested even after apartheid. Inequality in male-female relationships and the existence of patriarchal cum racist stereotypes are portrayed in this text.

The novel delves into sexuality and race and also offers perspective on communal and private spaces. The consequences of the penetration into private spaces in inter-racial relationships bring tension in the text. The cross racial intrusion subjects women to the whims of the men. The David occupies the private spaces of the 'other' women that brings negative outcome instead of enduring relationships. The women are affected by racial and gender inequalities. Lucy is a strong female character but submits to Petrus for her safety and protection. Gender roles appear to be wholly subsumed in the archetypal relationship of white/black (Brink pp. 169)

Cross-racial relationship takes centre-stage in this novel. Female sexuality also plays an important role in the novel. Being racially and sexually disadvantaged these women do not have the power even outside the Apartheid structure. History has moved ahead but the power of the whites persists. The relation between sexism and racism has its implications on women. The device of sexuality is ironically used in the text. The treatment of sexuality and its impact on the lives of white and the black women are distinctly different. Coetzee explores the complex connection between race and sex where the women's part is more complex.

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