

## *Chapter VI*

---

## Chapter VI

### ***Disgrace- Post Apartheid Perspective of Marginalization***

*Disgrace* was published when Nelson Mandela came to power after his release from prison. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for twenty seven years for fighting against apartheid. Nelson Mandela felt that the period of apartheid should come to an end and he wanted South Africa to be an independent country. After coming to power his National party framed many strict laws to improve the condition of the natives. Nelson Mandela's dream was to make South Africa as a nation where both the races enjoying equality. Due to his meticulous efforts apartheid came to an end. The aftermath of apartheid made the native people to lead a peaceful life but in turn it made the white people to suffer from various troubles. J.M.Coetzee has dealt with the misery of the white people after the end of apartheid in his novel *Disgrace*. The white people Lurie and Lucy were made to bear the shame of disgrace by the suppressed natives as Althusser says, "Class instinct is subjective and spontaneous. Class position is objective and rational" (13).

The native people were suppressed by the whites during apartheid. But during a course of time the whites were made to suffer humiliation in the hands of the native people. *Disgrace*, a novel set in South Africa, published in the year 1999, won the second Booker prize for the author J.M.Coetzee. "*Disgrace* is not a comforting book. It is much more: it is a disquieting novel and a landmark achievement" (Leusmann, Rev. of *Disgrace* 70). J.M.Coetzee in his works has depicted the trauma of the oppressed and marginalized. South African violent politics, terrible history and the theme of vicious apartheid is the background of his novels. "The relationship between Occident and Orient

is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (Said 05). White people dominated the native people in terms of power, economy, etc under the name of apartheid.

*Disgrace* (1999), is an exploration into and an exposition of South African Socio-political ethos. It is a gripping and searing portrayal of the social and political turmoil that still exists in South Africa. The picture it paints is a cheerless one of a confusing moral world that will undoubtedly comfort no one, no matter what race, nationality or viewpoint. (Parvathy 71)

J.M.Coetzee, in *Disgrace* has described how native people are oppressed and how that oppression makes them violent. “*Disgrace* is yet another surprise, a straightforward narrative that means just what it says, its real subject perhaps too grim for fashionable “progressive” opinion in its current state” (Berner 228). After a course of time the suffering and torture began to take a reverse effect in the apartheid society. In the post-apartheid society the white people became the oppressed. The natives took an upper hand and apartheid was on the verge of decline. The natives retaliated violence and oppression against the white people. The native people were still inflicted by the wounds of the past. The white people became the marginalized and weaker section of the society. *Disgrace*, portrays South Africa’s social and political situation which has turned topsy turvy for the whites have become oppressed and marginalized. All his novels have the backdrop of the social, political and economic life of South Africa. “The mode of realism which Coetzee adopts has had equally ironic consequences, compelling some readers to conflate Coetzee with his character David Lurie, and to see his emigration to Australia as a direct response to the bleak vision of the new South Africa he represents in *Disgrace*” (Easton 124).

Being the first book *Disgrace* authentically paints the situation prevailed in post-apartheid South Africa. It brings out the suffering of white minority in South African society. The author has captured their trauma of seeing themselves as oppressed and marginalized. J.M.Coetzee brings out the problems of the marginalized and the dispossessed people.

Set in Cape Town, *Disgrace* offers a realistic picture of the brutal reality of South African life in the twentieth century. Though the novel deals with the individual life of a Professor it pictures the transitional society affected by racial discrimination and insecurity. *Disgrace* according to Basavaraj Naikar “holds mirror to the contemporary South African society and remains an important cultural record. In spite of its apparently simple style, it has a concealed profundity and affirms the moral order behind all the events of human life” (35).

The plot of the novel is set in the late 1990's. In South Africa Post-apartheid Constitution was adopted in May 1996 which declared that every race was considered equal and power was transferred from whites to natives. The entire social set up was reversed. The story happens after apartheid where white people suffer under the hands of native people. History gradually took a twist and in South Africa after apartheid it is the whites who are oppressed and victimized. “The wounds of the past are inflicted on the now weaker, marginalized section of the society represented by the whites” (Parvathy 71-72).

*Disgrace*, the title covers the theme in two layers. First one describes the David Lurie's disgrace and the later one describes the disgrace of his daughter Lucy who is raped by native men. J.M.Coetzee has also brought out the disgraced state of a nation in transition from apartheid to post-apartheid. The protagonist of the novel is David Lurie a

52 year old man, who is twice divorced and worked at the Technical University of Cape Town as a Professor of Communication. He has a weakness for women. Lurie visited prostitutes regularly to satisfy his lust. The novel begins with Lurie's visit to a prostitute. "FOR A MAN of his age, fifty-two, divorced, he has, to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well" (D 01). "Desire, on the contrary, permits itself to be appealed to by the absolutely irreducible exteriority of the other to which it must remain infinitely inadequate. Desire is equal only to excess. No totality will ever encompass it. Thus, the metaphysics of desire is a metaphysics of infinite separation" (Derrida 115).

Lurie often visits Soraya, a prostitute. J.M.Coetzee focuses upon social evils prevalent in South African society where agencies like Discreet Escorts deal with prostitution. "Soraya is tall and slim, with long black hair and dark, liquid eyes. Technically he is old enough to be her father; but then technically, one can be a father at twelve. He has been on her books over a year; he finds her entirely satisfactory. In the desert of the week Thursday has become an oasis of *luxe et volupte*" (D 01). "A middle-aged professor, having survived two failed marriages, has at least found some quiet meaning of life in his relationship with a prostitute" (Das, Prophet of Pain 166). Lurie's life is an example of modern society which thrives on absurd human relationships.

David Lurie taught Communication skills and Advanced Communication Skills at the University. Lurie also taught a course on Romantic poets, to exhibit his literary passion. He also worked on a project on Byron's life. And he was not a very inspiring teacher and he was also not good in research. His students were also not interested in learning romantic poetry. He didn't try to inspire his students and didn't take efforts to make the lesson interesting. "As a teacher not apparently bothered about the social and

cultural dynamics of the day, Lurie shows an amazing degree of intellectual indifference and withdrawal, and immerses himself in a world of mythical-literary figures whom he often identifies with” (Sreekumar 72-73).

Lurie feels pleasure in the company of women. Lurie reasons out that from his young age he grew up among women. During his childhood his mother, aunts, sisters were there and later, they were replaced by his wife and Lucy his daughter.

The company of women made of him a lover of women and, to an extent, a womanizer. With his height, his good bones, his olive skin, his flowing hair, he could always count on a degree of magnetism. If he looked at a woman in a certain way, with a certain intent, she would return his look, he could rely on that. That was how he lived; for years, for decades, that was the backbone of his life. (D 07)

Lurie’s love for women became inevitable in his life. He somehow managed to get the women whom he wanted. He demands sexual relationship even with his student. “Demand must be added to the need that sustains this primal differentiation for the subject (prior to any "cognitive structure") to make his entrance into the real, while need becomes drive, in so far as its reality is obliterated in becoming the symbol of a love satisfaction” (Lacan, *Ecrits* 548).

Lurie had affairs with his colleagues’ wives, even with tourists and whores. Finally, he settled with Soraya of Discrete Escorts. “Basically, physical sexual desire never exists in man: the desire of man is substantially always psychic, and his physical desire is only a translation and transportation of a psychic desire” (Evola 13). Lurie is attracted by women and he is “caught up in the lure of spatial identification” (Lacan, *Ecrits* 78). He finds

pleasure in having affair with women. He uses all the tactics to draw women towards him and satisfies his lust.

Lurie was shocked to hear that Soraya left the agency and they offered him another girl. Not being satisfied he sleeps with the new secretary of the department. But it ended up in a failure and he avoids her again. “The structuring psychic patterns of Lurie’s views on sexuality is one fraught with uncertainty, incompleteness and ambivalence. His perspectives and deeds related to sex are torn between the binary Culture / Nature” (Sreekumar 78). The new Secretary was very talkative and she complained about her son’s school, where sellers sold drug and the police did not take any action. The intrusion of social evils such as drug addiction ruthlessly exploits the innocent students who are not even mature enough to assess which is good and bad.

Lurie notices young Melanie Issacs a student of the Romantic course. When he speaks to her she was shy to talk and even to look at him. Lurie invites her to his apartment and offers her a drink.

Wine, music: a ritual that men and women play out with each other. Nothing wrong with rituals, they were invented to ease the awkward passages. But the girl he has brought home is not just thirty years his junior: she is a student, his student, under his tutelage. No matter what passes between them now, they will have to meet again as teacher and pupil. Is he prepared for that? (D12)

Lurie has power to influence his students including Melanie. Melanie could not reject his invitation and comes to his apartment. Melanie was afraid of Lurie, who was her Course Instructor. And on the other hand Lurie may feel that as a teacher, he can ask

or he can do whatever he wants to a student. Lurie invites Melanie for a dinner, initially she hesitates and Lurie used that chance to express his desire. Offering liquor he asks Melanie to be with him in the night. When Melanie refuses he convinces her by telling, ““Why? Because 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”” (D16). Embarrassed Melanie leaves his apartment. Melanie has nobody to support her and she is frightened of Professor Lurie. He cleverly misuses her poor economic background and exploits her sexually. The immorality prevailed in the society is depicted by the author. Lurie, a man old enough to be the father of a girl, seduces the girl.

“On the living-room floor, to the sound of rain pattering against the windows, he makes love to her....though she is passive throughout; he finds the act pleasurable, so pleasurable that from its climax he tumbles into blank oblivion” (D19). Melanie leaves his house and the next day he drives her to her flat. He thinks that “*No more than a child! What am I doing? Yet his heart lurches with desire*” (D20).

Lurie knows very well that Melanie is thirty years younger to him and the consequences about this affair. But still he cannot resist the desire for her. The student is oppressed by the tutor, symbolizing the victim-victimizer syndrome. Lurie commits a mistake and it results in a chain of events. All the women whom he had affair came to him voluntarily and he settled them by giving money. But when he forcefully seduces Melanie, his student, it results in his disgrace.

If we wish to recognize a reality that is proper to psychological reactions, we must not begin by choosing among them; we must begin by no longer choosing. In order to gauge their efficacy, we must respect their



succession. Certainly, there is no question of restoring the chain of those reactions through the narrative, but the very moment in which the account is given can constitute a significant fragment of the chain, on condition that we demand that the patient provide the entire text and that we free him from the chains of the narrative. (Lacan, *Ecrits* 65)

Lurie is well aware of the mistake he is committing. This queer behavior of Lurie leads him to many problems. He finds difficulty in taking class because Melanie lifted her head and looked at him. Melanie who is still a junior is misused by Lurie, to satisfy his lust.

“Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core. As though she had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration, like a rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its neck. So that everything done to her might be done, as it were, far away” (D25). Melanie has aversion for having sex with Lurie. She is passive and does not react or yield to his desire. But ignoring her hatred he advances and satisfies himself, knowing very well the grave mistake he is committing.

In the face of the possibility that the intellectual is complicit in the persistent constitution of Other as the Self’s shadow, a possibility of political practice for the intellectual would be to put the economic ‘under erasure,’ to see the economic factor as irreducible as it reinscribes the social text, even as it is erased, however imperfectly, when it claims to be the final determinant or the transcendental signified. (Spivak 24)

Lurie a white man seduces his native student Melanie by misusing his position. Melanie is suppressed by a white man and her economic position did not allow her to ignore him. Melanie Issacs is a student of theatre studies. But she also attended Lurie’s

Romantic Poetry Course. Melanie did not appear for the mid-term test, but Lurie instead of marking absent awards her seventy marks. Lurie is professionally corrupt because of his affair with the student. Actually Lurie's aim was to have an unethical affair and to get away with it. But situations were adverse and Lurie was trapped. "The incest prohibition is universal; in this sense one could call it natural. But it is also a prohibition, a system of norms and interdicts; in this sense one could call it cultural" (Derrida 357).

Melanie did not attend his class but one night she came to his house and asked him to give permission for her to stay in his house. Lurie wanted to be with the girl for only a certain period but it prolonged without his permission. Lurie was reluctant in her stay initially because he was worried that it will cause a scandal. Lurie allows her to stay and he caresses her like a child. "He strokes her hair, kisses her forehead. Mistress? Daughter? What, in her heart, is she trying to be? What is she offering him?" (D27). Melanie did not give him an answer for staying in his house and she promises to attend the class next day.

Lurie exploited Melanie for his sexual pleasure and Melanie in turn exploited Lurie for her own benefit. Lurie is the primary criminal, who tempts his student to indulge in sex. Lurie's adverse situation starts after this incident. Lurie was threatened by Melanie's boy friend who came to his office. He insults Lurie by calling him, "A real ladies' man" (D30).

Lurie smelt the scandal spreading among the students and it coincided with the topic of Byron's scandal. Life of Byron is a parody to life of Lurie. "Scandal. A pity that must be this theme, but he is in no state to improvise" (D31). Lurie insisted Melanie to take up the test which she has missed and also to attend the classes regularly.

But Melanie was shocked and she says; *“You have cut me off from everyone, she seems to want to say. You have made me bear your secret. I am no longer just a student. How can you speak to me like this?”* (D34). The scandal started to spread everywhere in the campus. His colleagues and students begin to gossip and mock at him. The first difficulty which he faced was the damage of his car by her boy friend. This incident is the first indication of the law of punishment for the crime of sexually exploiting the girl student by the male Professor.

Melanie withdraws from the course and Lurie had to bear the consequence. Her father called him and informed him about Melanie’s withdrawal from the course. He asked Lurie to console his daughter and tell her the importance of a University degree. He adds that Melanie has such a respect towards him and she will obey her Professor’s words. Lurie’s position was critical and he thinks; *“Respect? You are out of date, Mr. Issacs your daughter lost respect for me weeks ago, and with good reason”* (D37).

Lurie’s troubled conscience pricked him. He wanted to confess to Mr.Issacs. *“I’ll see what I can do. Why not come clean? I am the worm in the apple, he should have said. How can I help you when I am the very source of your woe?”* (D37). But everything was out of his control and Melanie’s father came to see him. He accuses David for his criminal act. Mr. Issacs says:

‘Professor’... ‘you may be very educated and all that, but what you have done is not right’ ... ‘We put our children in the hands of you people because we think we can trust you. If we can’t trust the university, who can we trust? We never thought we were sending our daughter into a nest of vipers. No, professor Lurie, you may be high and mighty and have all

kinds of degrees, but if I was you I'd be very ashamed of myself, so help me God. (D38)

Regarding his immoral behaviour Student Affairs Vice-Rector sends a memorandum to Lurie. According to article 3.1 a complaint was lodged on Lurie for breaching the university's rules. "Article 3.1 addresses victimization or harassment of students by teachers" (D39). He thinks that on the compulsion of her father and cousin Pauline, Melanie would have lodged this complaint. "The deed is done. Two names on the page, his and hers, side by side. Two in a bed, lovers no longer but foes" (D40). The committee members asked him about the irregularity in awarding attendance and giving seventy marks to the mid-term test which she has missed. The committee explained him about the consequences.

Lurie contacts his lawyer who advises him to go for counselling and ask for a private settlement. But Lurie was angry and says, "To fix me? To cure me? To cure me of inappropriate desires?" (D43). Lurie knows very well that even if the committee says that his name is kept confidential everybody were talking about their affair. Lurie got vexed and another incident made his position very critical. The campus celebrated Rape Awareness week. Women fought for the rapists and a pamphlet was slipped through his door with a message "YOUR DAYS ARE OVER, CASANOVA" (D43).

Lurie is deeply insulted by the scandal and gossip. Lurie suffered from shame and humility because of his affair with Melanie.

...The personal development of David in terms of his retreat from the intellectual and rational hubris that characterizes his life as an academic to the bewildering experiences of violence, isolation and estrangement in the

locale of South Africa's Eastern Cape. His traumatic self re-evaluation induces a new attitude towards others, one which is not the product of national deliberation, but of intuition and "sympathetic imagination", particularly in relation to the dogs that he encounters at the animal clinic. (Kissack 137)

Lurie confesses his mistake before the enquiry committee as "True enough, I was having an affair with the girl" (D42). Lurie does not want the debate to continue and also does not make any move to safeguard his interest. Finally when he prepared to leave he says "I have said the words for you, now you want more, you want me to demonstrate their sincerity. That is preposterous. That is beyond the scope of the law. I have had enough. Let us go back to playing it by the book. I plead guilty. That is as far as I am prepared to go" (D55). Lurie hesitated to ask public apology, but he accepted his fault.

From the very beginning, David Lurie is watchful about his sordid affair with Melanie. He knows that it may land him in trouble. His dismissal from job hardly makes him repentant. What is peculiar about Lurie is a weird sense of compulsion, which makes him go berserk sexually. It is completely beyond his control. (Sharma 72)

In the students' newspaper Lurie's photograph appeared where a man was made to hold a waste bin above his head like a dunce cap. Lurie again receives a phone call from the chairman who asked him to write the statement of apology. But Lurie says "Repentance belongs to another world, to another universe of discourse" (D58). Accepting one's mistake publicly needs courage. It is a first step towards self-realization. Lurie hesitates at first and then asks apology.

Stripped of his job, Lurie plans to go to his daughter's farm house in the Eastern Cape. Lucy earned money by keeping dogs, selling flowers and garden produce in the market. She had a servant Petrus, a native who helped her in all the farm work. On seeing his daughter's farm he comments her as "A frontier farmer of the new breed... The more things change the more they remain the same. History repeating itself, though in a more modest vein. Perhaps history has learned a lesson" (D62). He is much worried about her daughter's safety in the isolated farm house.

It is easy to see Lurie as an allegorical figure representing, if not the habits and attitudes of the ruling class of the old colonial regime, then at least the Eurocentric and cultured cast of mind that sustained the possibility of colonial relations. He is initially disdainful of his daughter's peasant life in the country. He aspires to a higher and more cultured plane of existence. (Patton 108)

Lurie relaxes himself in the country side and goes for a walk with his daughter and her dogs. Lucy asked him about Melanie and his affair. Lurie says that she rejected and denounced him because of the pressure from her lover and parents. Lucy asked him to get married again and this was the first time that they spoke about his personal life. Lurie says, "Every woman I have been close to has taught me something about myself. To that extent they have made me a better person" (D70).

Lucy introduces him to the people who came to her stall. "So: a new adventure. His daughter, whom once upon a time he used to drive to school and ballet class, to the circus and the skating rink, is taking him on an outing, showing him life, showing him this other, unfamiliar world" (D71). Bev Shaw was Lucy's friend and she owned a clinic

for pets. She was a little woman and Lurie didn't find her attractive. "He does not like the woman who make no effort to be attractive" (D72). Bev Shaw, an unattractive woman attracted everyone by doing service to the affected dogs and live stock. "Coetzee's post-apartheid Cape is a dark and fearsome place where small acts of kindness, such as those that the middle-aged, Ugly Bev Shaw bestows on animals she is going to destroy, look both pathetic and outstandingly fine. This is a very foreign country, where normality is suspended" (Grant 35).

Lucy asks him not to under estimate Bev because she cares for the helpless dogs and she is also very generous. Lucy also adds that human beings should be kind to the animals. Lucy asks him to assist Petrus in offering meat to dogs or to assist Bev in cleaning dogs. But Lurie says "I'll do it. But only as long as I don't have to become a better person. I am not prepared to be reformed. I want to go on being myself. I'll do it on that basis" (D77). At times, Lucy echoes her mother's opinion. Lurie admits that he was always attracted towards the women of wit and beauty. Finally he decided to help Bev at her animal welfare clinic which he thinks as retribution for the past sins.

David visits Bev's Animal Welfare League and helps her to tie the legs of a goat. Bev cleans the wound of the animals without hesitation. Her noble service makes him to feel that Bev is like a priestess, who tries "...to lighten the load of Africa's suffering beasts" (D84). The next day they had three strangers in their farm. They pretend as if they came to make a telephone call and believing them Lucy let them inside the farm. They attacked Lurie and also killed the dogs. They damaged everything in their house. They took Lucy's pistol, Lurie's overcoat, shoes and finally his car also. Lurie was hit on the head and he lost his

conscious. When he regained his consciousness he was again attacked and pushed inside the lavatory. He suffered from severe injury and meanwhile they attacked Lucy and gang raped her.

Lurie cried for help and he shouted ““Take everything. Just leave my daughter alone”” (D94). His child was in the hands of the strangers and he cannot do anything to save her because he was locked up in the lavatory. They poured some methyl spirit on him and set fire. His scalp, eyes and ears were burnt. They smashed off the telephone and punctured the tyres of the car. Lurie is deeply anxious about what has happened to his daughter and asks her about it. But she replies, ““You tell what happened to you. I tell what happened to me”” (D99). “In *Disgrace* the historical trajectory of decolonisation is completed and a post-apartheid South African nation is imagined. That is what the rape of Lucy signifies in the narrative-- a shift from white to black power and authority in South Africa” (Stratton 88-89).

The savages have attacked them badly and it was an unexpected incident. Lurie cannot open his eyes properly because of the burns and his bad luck seemed to have no limits. They went to meet Ettinger, an old man who lived nearby. Lurie wanted to lodge a complaint about the happening. Ettinger persuaded them to make safety measures in the farm because the police will not save them anymore. J.M Coetzee portrays society on the verge of chaos after the fall of apartheid. The whites were made to face the consequence of their brutality towards the natives.

Only the power transfer from the whites to the black natives has been affected... The socio-political ethos of modern South Africa enmeshed in a turbulent metamorphosis has shattered the dreams of prosperity



cherished by the black natives and the dreams of peaceful co-existence cherished by the remaining white residents. Coetzee exposes the disgrace that soils the political image of South Africa as he describes the remaining whites seeking security by installing bars, security gates and a perimeter fence and planning to buy pistols and two way radios. (Parvathy74)

Lurie knows that his daughter has been raped by the savages when he was lying unconscious in the lavatory. Anyway he moves to the hospital with Bev Shaw and gets medical treatment for his burns. They reach home where Bev Shaw greeted them and says that Lucy is lying down after taking a sedative. He also sleeps under the influence of the pills. So, in his deep sleep he has a hallucination in which his daughter Lucy asks him to save her. After that he could not sleep because Lucy's voice disturbed him and also because of his physical pain. His wrist, eyes and scalp were damaged badly. "It is David, the father, the man, who is rendered insignificant and ineffectual in the face of the wrath expressed by the robbers in gang-raping Lucy – the relic of the white regime. In a sense, it is the empire retaliating, which is the order of the day" (Sharma 73).

For the first time Lurie thinks about the burden faced by women. Lucy is neither married nor does she has a male lover. Lurie pities his daughter who was ruthlessly raped by the savages. The violent attack upon him and his daughter has become the most traumatic experience, which shocked him to the core. This incident can be interpreted as a kind of punishment for the crime of sexually exploiting his own girl-student, who is of his daughter's age.

"Apart from overtones of rape, there are also suggestions of incest in his relationship: Lurie makes up a bed for Melanie in his daughter's room and has sex with

her in Lucy's bed. Lucy farms in the region in which Melanie grew up, and the latter is like a daughter to Lurie" (Sarvan 27). The actual reason for the rape is the racial discrimination and acute poverty faced by the native people in the post-apartheid regime, which made them to attack the white people.

Lurie is concerned about his daughter who is alone and he feels insecure after the traumatic experience. "For the first time he has a taste of what it will be like to be an old man, tired to the bone, without hopes, without desires, indifferent to the future... he feels his interest in the world draining from him drop by drop. It may take weeks, it may take months before he is bled dry, but he is bleeding" (D107). Lurie worries about the situation of white minority in South Africa. "The blood of his life is leaving his body and despair is taking its place, despair that is like a gas, odorless, tasteless, without nourishment" (D108).

Two policemen arrived and they enquired about the crime. Lucy explains about everything that happened to them but she did not reveal anything about the rape. Lurie later asked her why she did not tell the police about being raped by the savages. Lucy asserted, "I have told the whole story. The whole story is what I have told" (D110). Lurie and Lucy are made as victims of the social, political conditions. They decided to protect themselves from further crimes against them. "Contemptible, yet exhilarating, probably, in a country where dogs are bred to snarl at the mere smell of a black man" (D110). These lines give reference to the racism that was in vogue in South Africa during the period of apartheid.

Lucy considers what happened as, "A purely private matter" (D112). She does not want to make it a public issue. Lucy says, "In another time, in another place it might be

held to be a public matter. But in this place, at this time, it is not. It is my business, mine alone” (D112). Lucy’s words denote the difficulties faced by the white minority community in the post-apartheid South Africa. “Lucy suggests in shielding her rape not that it is inherently, unrepresentable, but that it is unspeakable before a certain audience, one both including her father and exemplified by the law” (Anker 239). According to her it is better to keep quiet after the attack otherwise it will make them more desperate. The whites are made to suffer cruelly and they were passive because the suppressed natives rose as suppressors and they were very aggressive. “Both the father and the daughter have been disgraced irretrievably. And both accept their *disgrace* stoically” (Kaul 10).

Lurie argues with her for being passive about the attack. He compares the violence perpetuated against them to fire for the more it devours the hungrier it remains. Lucy says that “I am not just trying to save my skin. If that is what you think, you miss the point entirely” (D112). “Lucy’s only recourse is to withhold the narrative of *her* experience of rape from men, notably her father, who seek to know and to control its interpretation” (Cooper 32). Lurie is shaken to the core and insist her to make an effort to punish the culprits.

After a few days Petrus returns with his wife. Lurie comments about the disappearance of Petrus while Lucy was attacked by the savage gang. Lucy replies that she cannot order him about because he is his own master. Lurie wonders how an incident of violent attack and rape affects women’s confidence and alters their personality. Lurie also doubts Petrus intentions. Lurie thinks that one day Petrus will conquer the lands of Lucy and Ettinger. He has his own suspicion that whether Petrus has engaged these three men who attacked them “...to teach Lucy a lesson” (D118). Lurie tells Petrus, ““I find it hard to believe the men who came here were strangers. I find it hard to believe they

arrived out of nowhere, and did what they did, and disappeared afterwards like ghosts” (D118). The absence of Petrus from the farm on the day of the attack deepens Lurie’s suspicion. Lurie feels, “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” (D117). But he pacifies himself by telling that Petrus is not very bad and treacherous to do this kind of evil.

“On this level, his story is one of disempowerment and disgrace: first at the University, then at the hands of the gang who attack him and sexually assault his daughter, then once again, voluntarily this time, before the family of his young victims” (Patton 108–109). After his disgrace at the University, he came to Lucy’s farm house for peace of mind, but unexpectedly Lurie suffered from a different kind of disgrace.

Apartheid in this novel is referred as “the old days”; David Lurie thinks about the days when whites had the power to employ and suppress the natives. But now natives began to oppress the whites. This shows that apartheid was on the verge of the decline but peaceful co-existence among the races is not yet realized. “The attack is the point at which Coetzee opens up the arena to the sledgehammer politics of modern South Africa. Lurie and his daughter find themselves ideologically opposed on the fault lines of the old and the new country” (Williams 23).

Petrus, the servant arranged a party to celebrate the purchase of a land through the loan granted from the government. He invited Lurie and Lucy to the party. Lurie was angry with him for slaughtering two sheep for the party. He describes him as hard heartened while compared to Bev who treated the wounded animals. He also thinks about Bev who fights for animal rights. Lurie wants to be like Bev in this aspect of saving animals. In the party Lurie and Lucy notice the two savages who assaulted them and

Lurie wanted to call the police but Lucy stopped him by saying that it will destroy the festive mood of Petrus.

When Lurie enquires about the attackers Petrus gave vague answers. Lurie argues with Petrus and finally says him about Lucy's determination to live there in the midst of all the sufferings. "Petrus, my daughter wants to be a good neighbour- a good citizen and a good neighbour. She loves the Eastern Cape. She wants her life here, she wants to get along with everyone. But how can she do so when she is liable to be attacked at any moment by thieves who then escape scot-free?" (D138). As a father he is worried about Lucy. He feels that again they can be attacked at anytime. "Lucy's relation to South Africa is modestly limited, it is in its minimal way clear-sighted of the country's realities" (Yeoh, *Negotiating Foundations* 30). Lurie is a caring father and worried about his child's safety. In a context Lurie himself admits that all these days he hadn't cared for Lucy and "I have been the least protective of fathers" (D140). He stays at the farm to protect Lucy.

The dark, desolate countryside in the south, where the discourse is raw, elemental, brutal where his daughter Lucy lives alone on a farmstead. He seeks harmony amidst country dirt, dogs and the wild nothingness. On his daughter's small holding, the disgraced urbane intellectual seeks peace, not as a fugitive, but as a still-arrogant romantic. He almost achieves peace when he volunteers to work at an animal refuge run by Lucy's friend Bev Shaw. (Prasannarajan 21)

Lurie often went to the clinic to assist Bev in treating animals and disposing dead dogs. He also disposed the remains and takes the bodies to the incinerator of the settlers Hospital. Lurie feels pity for the dogs which are killed and incinerated. He doesn't want

men to use shovels to beat the dead dog to bring it to correct shape for processing. Lurie takes care of the dogs, attends them and nurses them. The compassionate nature of Lurie is evident in his attempts to save the animals.

Lurie's experience with the dying dogs transforms his attitude to life and death. It is the turning point in his own effective constitution and his relations to others. Through this experience, he comes to accept the mundane and transitory character of his own existence.... At the end of the novel, Lurie "gives up" his favoured dog to death, thereby signaling his own reconciliation to the absence of any higher life and to the finitude of the life that he shares with animals. (Patton 114)

Lurie's situation is reduced to the level of an attendant to a veterinary doctor from a University Professor, was really disgusting and a humiliating experience to him. "A dog-man, Petrus once called himself. Well, now he has become a dog-man: a dog undertaker; a dog psychopomp; a *harijan*" (D146). Lurie asked Petrus to look after the farm as a farm manager when Lucy is taken to Cape Town by him and he agrees to do the work.

Petrus is the sole point of ethical contact between Lucy and her father and the largely undifferentiated indigenous African population. Apart from him, there is only the violence of the young men. It is through her relationship to Petrus and her refusal to dictate the terms of this relation or to give it up after the attack on her that Lucy's becoming – dog is bound up with her becoming- African. Hers is a painful but also a positive micropolitical story of the deterritorialization of the social relations which were both products and supports of the colonial regime. (Patton 112)

Lurie has not yet recovered from the sense of trauma after the rape of his daughter. He is deeply affected by the thought of his daughter's safety. He advises her to quit that place and come to Cape Town. Lurie says, "Lucy, it really is time for you to face up to your choices. Either you stay on in a house full of ugly memories and go on brooding on what happened to you, are you the whole episode behind you and start a new chapter elsewhere" (D155). He wants her to come to Cape Town, but she refuses. According to Lucy the sexual violence caused to her was an act of vengeance against the white community, an act of racial discrimination.

Lurie instructed Lucy to get out of the farm. He offered her money to live in Holland where her mother lives. She was reluctant and refused to leave the farm. Lurie now realizes all the wrong he has done to women. Lucy finds no difference between her father preying on his students and the rapists. Moreover, Lucy feels that her suffering is nothing but the price which she has to pay for staying in a place that belongs to these natives. She is taken aback when Lurie tells her that Petrus and his friends want her as their slave. Thus, the oppression and subjugation of the whites became the rule of the day.

Lurie again tells her that the savages might come back to attack her. Lucy does not wish to leave and she is ready to pay the price for living there. "...what if *that* is the price one has to pay for staying on? Perhaps that is how they look at it; perhaps that is how I should look at it to. They see me as owing something. They see themselves as debt collectors, tax collectors. Why should I be allowed to live here without paying?" (D158).

Lucy as the representative of the white race feels that she has to sacrifice herself to allow the blacks to live in their country. When Lurie asks Lucy to vacate the farm Lucy adamantly disagrees and stays there.

In the hostile stranger rape to which Lucy was subjected, men broke forcibly first into the privacy of her home and then into the privacy of her body. Rape is always a political act – the exertion of male power over a female body; in a rape that crosses racial lines the issues are even more charged. When as, here, it is males of the subordinate race who rape a woman of the dominant race, the rape is likely to inflame vindictive racial passions. For whatever reasons-- she does not explain – Lucy forestalls the further eruption of the rape into a widening public area: it is, she insists, ‘a purely private matter’. (Gane 104)

Lucy feels that the rapists aim was to subjugate the whites. Lurie says that their aim was to make Lucy their slave. Lucy’s view is “‘Not slavery. Subjection. Subjugation’” (D159). Lucy wanted to live a peaceful life by selling the farm to Petrus. She does not want to be a slave but planned to live a life under the protection of the native man Petrus. A transition happened in the society and the native people started to suppress the white people. The white people surrendered themselves in the hands of the native people and they were made to face the consequences of past atrocities committed. They were made to be dependent on the natives for their safety.

“The new South Africa is not characterized by truth and reconciliation, but by revenge and violation” (Paranjape 29). Lurie asks her to sell the farm to Petrus before it is late. Lucy being a bold woman refuses to do so, she wanted to face and fight the danger. Due to this incident there is a difference of opinion between the father and the daughter. There is a generation gap where the old generation is afraid of problems while the young generation is bold enough to face the problems.



In *Disgrace*, women's bodies signify as sites of displacement; for the black men who rape her, Lucy's white female body symbolizes the land from which they have been dispossessed. For David, Melanie's biracial female body offers the opportunity to symbolically reclaim not only his youth, but also his authoritarian position at a university where the white male professor is marginalized by increasing demands of gender and racial diversification. (Wright, *Performance of Displacement* 89-90)

Lurie continued on his project of writing a musical opera on Byron. Because of his physical and mental strain, Lurie was unable to complete the project and it prolonged as his mind got diverted thinking about his daughter's safety.

Byron and his turbulent life is a consistent and deep-rooted obsession with Lurie. It was after separating from his wife amidst much scandal that Byron left England for Europe and befriended Shelly in Geneva. During his stormy and restless life he had many love affairs including Lady Caroline Lamb. The parallels between Lurie and Byron are too conspicuous to look over. Lurie has been divorced twice, has had many affairs and has moved to another area. The identification of Lurie with Byron is fitting at both structural and thematic levels. (Sreekumar 77)

Unable to speak with his daughter Lurie writes a letter to her. In spite of his age he pleads her to leave the farm.

Dearest Lucy, With all the love in the world, I must say the following you are on the brink of a dangerous error. You wish to humble yourself before history. But the road you are following is the wrong one. It will strip you

of all the honour; you will not be able to live with yourself. I plead with you, listen to me! 'Your father'. (D160)

Lurie goes to Melanie's house for meeting her father. Melanie's father Isaac spoke without any anger and listened to Lurie's words. "In Melanie's case, however, something unexpected happened. I think of it as a fire. She struck up a fire in me" (D166). Lurie admits his fault. Lurie apologizes to Mr. Issacs for misusing his daughter and disturbing her career. "I apologize for the grief I have caused you and Mrs. Issacs I ask for your pardon" (D171). Mr. Issacs was happy that David Lurie apologized to him. He accepts Lurie's apology and he tells that God accepts repentance for the sins committed. Lurie says:

I am being punished for what happened between myself and your daughter. I am sunk into a state of disgrace from which it will not be easy to lift myself. It is not a punishment I have refused. I do not murmur against it. On the contrary, I am living it out from day-to-day, trying to accept disgrace as my state of being. (D172)

Mr. Issacs is a theist and Lurie is an atheist. Religion is one of the ideological apparatus of the state which represses or curtails one's freedom. Lurie is an intellectual who defies imposed order and later feels sorry for transgressing boundaries. Self realization has happened in Lurie, a change has come-over him. Lurie's moral transformation is evident from his apology, repentance and confession. He also surprises Melanie's mother and sister by bowing down to them "With careful ceremony he gets to his knees and touches his forehead to the floor" (D173). Lurie asks apology by kneeling down before Melanie's father.

Lurie goes to Cape Town to collect his belongings from his apartment and also from his room in the university department. He was shocked to see that his sound equipment, tapes and records, computer, cutlery, crockery and liquor store and many other items were stolen. He sensed that it was not an ordinary burglary and it was ransacked to the core. Even the lights were cut off and the telephone was dead. He went to the department to collect his mail and books. He comes to know that his room was occupied by a newly appointed Professor. He collected his books from the store room. Lurie noticed that wherever he went the people who knew him pretended not to recognize him. "As of today he is a free man, with duties to no one but himself" (D178).

Lurie got a glimpse of a drunken young girl on the roadside. He offers her a ride and enjoys sex with the drunken girl. Lurie leaves her back at the same roadside. This reflects the state of the teenagers in the apartheid South Africa. They are addicted to drugs and live a wayward life. People like Lurie exploit them for their pleasure. Lurie's attitude never changes. Again he lacks ethics and exploits the young girl who is in an unconscious state.

Lurie returns to the farm and discovers that Lucy is pregnant, on account of the rape. He advises her to go for an abortion but she refuses and tells him that she was not willing to do so. Lucy's resolution of being a mother may be an attempt on her part to mitigate the disgrace heaped upon her and make herself worthy of grace. Lurie was surprised by her answer. She does not want to live according to her father's wish, but she wanted to live according to her own wish. She speaks about her identity and she has the courage to face the traumatic experience. She also raises this question towards her father.

““Why? I am a woman, David. Do you think I hate children? Should I choose against the child because of who its father is?”” (D198). These lines of Lucy give him the answer of why she does not want to abort her baby thus expressing her love for motherhood.

Lurie was shocked to know that she wanted a baby, by the robbers and rapists. He makes her understand that they raped her out of hatred and not of desire. The theme of optimism can be seen through Lucy. She is very much determined to give birth to the child. Lucy is pregnant with the child of a native man. This is a metaphor of new emerging South Africa. Lucy’s child is a child of colonialism.

Lurie discovers from Lucy that one of the savages is Petrus’s relative. She says that boy’s name is Pollux and he stays with Petrus. Lurie was very worried about his daughter’s life in the farm as a single woman. Petrus wanted to marry Lucy and give legal protection. Lurie knows that he does not speak out of concern for Lucy, but his intention was that if he marries Lucy he can have her land as dowry.

Lurie and Lucy discuss on Petrus’s offer and Lurie says that he does not approve of his daughter marrying a man, who has already two wives. But Lucy feels that it was a convenient social and financial deal. She herself explains her situation as: “I don’t believe you get the point, David. 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”. (D 203)

Lucy’s choices are deeply disturbing. We might approve of her stance as a white South African; humility, the recognition that there is a debt to pay, a willingness to start over with nothing – these would not come amiss for

White South Africans, but to feminists her acceptance of rape and her choice to bear the child conceived as a result of rape are dangerous, not least in their implications for all women in a country where violence against women is epidemic. (Gane 105)

Lucy was emotionally attached to the land. She asks Lurie to tell Petrus that she has accepted the offer and she will hand over the land to him. Lurie even questions her whether Petrus was blackmailing her to marry him. But Lucy replies as ““Do you mean, would Petrus expect me to sleep with him? I’m not sure that Petrus would want to sleep with me, except to drive home his message. But, to be frank, no, I don’t want to sleep with Petrus”” (D 203). Through Lucy’s rape J.M.Coetzee has highlighted the effect of losing power. “Post-coloniality, for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent 'neo-colonial' relations within the 'new' world order and the multinational division of labour. Such a perspective enables the authentication of histories of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance” (Bhabha 06).

According to Lucy, even though Petrus is not powerful man, but he has the power to subjugate the minority people like her. She requests Lurie to put forward the following to Petrus:

Say I accept his protection. Say he can put out whatever story he likes about our relationship and I won’t contradict him. 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. (D 204)

Lucy was driven by the harsh realities of her life to accept the contingencies of life and marry Petrus, a native man. This incident reveals the position in which white people are forced to live in the post-apartheid South Africa. During the apartheid era they were very powerful and the natives were forced to live the life which the white people dictated. In a course of time the natives became violent and they struggled for their freedom and this resulted in the subjugation of the whites. “It is possible to say that the floors of the superstructure are not determinant in the last instance, but that they are determined by the effectivity of the base; that if they are determinant in their own (as yet undefined) ways, this is true only insofar as they are determined by the base” (Althusser 135).

Lucy a white woman accepts the humiliation happened to her and wants to live a peaceful life by surrendering her property to a native man. Hence, she asks her father to leave. ““David, we can’t go on like this. Everything had settled down, everything was peaceful again, until you came back. I must have peace around me. I am prepared to do anything, make any sacrifice, for the sake of peace”” (D 208). Lurie was indirectly said by his daughter that his presence in the house disturbed her peaceful life. “Lucy is trying to live the new life of a white woman in South Africa, in humility, forbearance, and tolerance of her black neighbours” (Banville 24).

Lurie joins Bev Shaw in the clinic and assists her. “In order to rehabilitate himself away from the world of disgrace, the transplanted professor joins the Animal Welfare League to help Bev Shaw in looking after the animals. However, his animistic awe and his reaching into the world of animals are coincidences in the novel” (Sadhath 180). The most predominant element in the novel is the treatment of animals. Lurie, after facing shame and disgrace transforms himself. He assists Bev Shaw for giving lethal

injection to sick dogs. This incident changes the perception of his life. “Animals may mean nothing, may *be* nothing in the larger world of the novel . . . but it is precisely as a consequence of their lack of power that they come to assume an exemplary, transformative status” (Herron 472).

The end of the novel shows the changed attitude of the protagonist Lurie. He discovered that the purpose of life was not writing an opera or not to be an animal rights activist but to maintain peaceful relationship with the native people as it was the need of the hour. The task of disposing the dead bodies of dogs with dignity gave him peace and contentment. “To be a dog in this world is to be a base, low, ‘unwanted’, helpless creature without rights or pride. The persistent presence of dogs in *Disgrace* pushes us to consider the shame and disgrace that humans go through, even though it is played out through the lives of animals” (Das, Animal Imagery 71).

Dogs are symbols used in this novel to bring out the meaning of “disgrace”. In fact, ‘dogs’ become real characters in *Disgrace*. Few dogs in her Kennel, like Katy the bull-dog, have names. “Assumed on a deeper level, we can say that Coetzee deliberately repeats the image of dogs to emphasize the novel’s interests in social status and personal disgrace. It may be Coetzee’s way of representing the status that various people hold in society” (Das, Animal Imagery70).

Lurie actively involved in doing service to the dogs. He rarely visited Lucy’s farm. Lucy considers Lurie not as a father but as a visitor. “Visitorship expresses the hope of some new annunciation or intervention – the arrival, perhaps of an unexpected grace” (Barnard 219). Lurie at times felt that he was not a good father to Lucy and he thought that he will be a good grandfather to Lucy’s child. J.M Coetzee beautifully sorts

out the problem of Lurie in these words. “The truth is, he has never had much of an eye for rural life, despite all his reading in Wordsworth. Not much of an eye for anything except pretty girls; and where has that got him? Is it too late to educate the eye?” (D 218). So, this lack of creativeness was the main reason of his inability in completing the musical opera on the life of Byron.

“Coetzee in *Disgrace* presents a somewhat dark world of post-apartheid South Africa but a ray of hope suddenly flashes across this dismal world when he narrates Lurie’s journey from disgrace to grace” (Agarwal 62). Lurie faced all the adverse situations and he was forced to undergo the punishment for violating his professional values. David Lurie was reduced from a genuine human being to an ordinary man who was punished for his sexual weakness. The novel ends with David Lurie bringing a dog to kill. Lurie gives up his ideological stand and by dedicating himself in the service to the society.

J.M Coetzee has given few references to bring out the situation that prevailed in apartheid South Africa. Lucy lived in the countryside where robbery and violence occurred frequently. These type of attacks portrayed in this novel is the result of oppression and violence by the whites in the past against the natives. The brutal incidents against the minority whites became common in every part of the country. J.M.Coetzee has lucidly described the trauma of the oppressed people by exposing the cruelty to its fullest. The wheel turned and the white people were made to suffer by the natives. Lucy’s suffering in *Disgrace* is symbolic of the binary opposition between the victim and victimizer syndrome existing in South Africa.

In *Disgrace*, barbarianism no longer resides in the repressed desires of the colonial unconscious. Rather, white nightmare visions of black rape becomes a reality. What would prompt Coetzee to make the rape of a



white woman by black men the central incident of his narrative? The short answer to this question is that rape is a handy metaphor for colonial and state relations of power. (Stratton 88)

Lucy realizes that the socio-political situation in South Africa has been completely reversed and the natives hold the reign of power. And her father David Lurie was not able to help and save her from the danger. "... This is not a despairing book. It is just honest about the fear of Afrikaners in a country they once ruled with brutality, and about the fear of a man growing old alone" (Bhattacharji 15). It is not safe for a woman to live alone in the farm. Especially white women live in constant fear of being attacked by the native people. From the beginning till the end David Lurie suffers from devastating humiliation.

Yet despite the speed at which the tale is told and the added impetus given by Coetzee's use of the present tense, this novel explores in depth themes both difficult and disturbing with no sense of superficiality. Coetzee brings a discipline to his writing that stands in stark and welcome contrast to many other current novelists. (Grant 34)

J.M.Coetzee's main intention in *Disgrace* was to portray the inequality among races prevalent in South Africa in the year 1999. Political system was corrupt and safety of the people was not ensured. Even though apartheid was on the edge of decline the native people were assaulted. Certain white people like Lucy and Lurie also became victims of racial violence. Attacks on whites became common in post-apartheid South Africa. So the white people surrendered their land to the natives and fled the country. Few people like Lucy stayed with determination and faced the problems. J.M.Coetzee has authentically described the state of the white minority in a post-apartheid country in this novel.