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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Consciousness in the novels of J M Coetzee using Edward Said's *Orientalism*.Shalini Infanta L¹ and Dr K ShanthiChitra².

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Corresponding Author*Shalini Infanta L.****Abstract**

Exaltation of self-realization happens through consciousness and this paper projects the consciousness of the characters, in the inevitable struggles of their lives. Struggle, being indispensable, is in an entirely different fashion throughout J.M.Coetzee's novels. Consciousness, of how individual's temperament shifts easily according to the varied circumstances and the segregation that happens due to the imperialistic thought (Idea that imprints even after the impact is lost) is one predicament. Imperialistic idea comes under orientalism, which is not about the domination or influence of the occident (according to the colonizers' mindscape), but it gives a distinctive idea of how the mind is fixed with the occidental thought unconsciously. In *orientalism* by said, Disgrace subjected to outrageous cruelty towards the other, is emphasized. Knowingly or unknowingly, the characters in the novel are preoccupied with the idea of colonization (Imperialism). This impact is visible in the lives of the characters presented in the novel. In addition, silent victimization of the 'self' by the cruelty of the 'other' is in his novel (occident being the self and the orient, the other).

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Introduction:-

J.M. Coetzee, the white South African writer, shows different phases of life in his novels. Coetzee is a successful writer in bringing the sensitive issues in a lighter note. In all his novels, he deals with susceptible issues. In addition, the characters in his novels are placed in a situation where they feel that they are marginalized for some basis. Coetzee's writing fits into different paradigms of literary studies and in this paper, a different dimension is given. Consciousness is of how individual's temperament shifts easily according to the varied circumstances and the segregation that happens due to the imperialistic thought.

"Conscious experience is at once the most familiar thing in the world and the most mysterious. There is nothing we know about more directly than consciousness, but it is far from clear how to reconcile it with everything else we know. We know consciousness far more intimately than we know the rest of the world, but we understand the rest of the world far better than we understand consciousness." (3 Chalmers)

In the beginning, the world divided into two halves, the east and the west or the Occident and the Orient or the civilized and the uncivilized. The Europeans imperialized on political, economical, social and psychological ideas on the mind of the Orient (colonized) as they consider them as stronger than the Orient. "Because of Orientalism the Orient was not a free subject of thought or action" (3 Said). Orientals did not raise their voice against the Occidents this leads to imperialistic thought in the minds of the eastern countries. Knowingly or unknowingly, people in the eastern countries got used to the domination, suppression, authority, power and supremacy. This paper is all about the invasion and impact of it is segregation. Here the invaders refer to the self (colonizers) who set the rules and standards for the other (colonized) and not only that, they set the agenda through his / her point of view. This act of invasion results in the segregation of people and which results in discrimination between the self and the other. This

paper tries to show the perspective of the other. The unanswered question still prevails about the passivity of the other.

The novels, which are taken for the discussion includes *Disgrace and Waiting for the Barbarian*. Both the novels were taken from different colonial background; the former was set up in the Cape Town and in urban community of South Africa and the latter one in an unidentified territory in the dessert. *Disgrace*, could be viewed in two parts. In the first part, of the novel takes place in Cape Town where the imperialistic idea seems to be dominant and of how the characters in the novel accepts and undergoes the discrimination. In the second part, it takes place in rural part of South Africa where the colonized people takes over the idea of implementing the dominance over the colonizers.

Here in this novel, *Disgrace*, the self of David fails to recognize the importance of the other and he considers the other as the most trivial phenomena in life. David was married and divorced twice and he takes pleasure only with the company of women. Here the other refers to the women in his life, which includes Soraya and Melanie Isaacs. He considers both of them as completely different entities as they belong to some other family and he never lends his ears to the feeling of the women (other) with which he had sex. "Her temperament is in fact rather quiet, quiet and docile" (1 Coetzee). Again, the word 'docile' reminds the idea of the Occident. By birth both the women belongs to the suppressed class and this give him an idea of over powering them and taking advantage over their body. The self of David is very brutal to the women by attacking their body (physical needs) and by affecting their emotion (psychological needs). He tries to show his power on them by attacking to their very need. It is the attitude of the west to dominate and suppress the people over their weaknesses. Both the women remain passive as they had their own personal need, in the case of soraya, she needs money in order to support her family so she fulfills the lust of men and in the case of Melanie, teenager, a spoilt brat who looks for fashion as she was brought up in a conservative family and when she is away from her home she intends to rebel. Both the women were quiet until their consciousness pricks. Here in this novel frequent reference to the women's body is given it reminds the past of how the colonizer takes the women's body with force and it also create a great impact in the culture. It is believed that through women's body passes the ideas of the era.

Melanie files a case of rape against David as she learns the truth that David is not ready to possess her throughout his lifetime. The self of David is not letting him to accept the mistake, which he has done to Melanie and her family. The act of escapism is seen in the attitude of David. Instead of accepting his deed, he tries to justify it. He flees to his daughter's place where his daughter owns a land and she gets the help of Petrus, an Afro-American in order to cultivate the land. Again, the self of David tries to be predominant, where he tries to change the mentality of his daughter, as he does not like her to settle in rural part. He finds it to be impossible for him to stay in an uncivilized place.

"The house, which is large, dark and even at midday, chilly, dates from the time of large families, of guests by the wagonful, six years ago Lucy moved in as a member of a commune, a tribe of young people who peddled leather goods and sunbaked pottery in Grahamstown and, in between stands of mealies, grew dagga. When the commune broke up, the rump moving on to new Bethesda, Lucy stayed behind on the smallholding with her friend Helen. She had fallen in love with the place, she said; she wanted to farm it properly." (60 Coetzee)

Lucy's rape reminds him of the injustice which he had done to Melanie's parent and it reminds the past. "History repeating itself, though in a more modest vein. Perhaps history has learned a lesson" (62 Coetzee). There is a vast difference between Melanie's natures, who likes to fight for the injustice, which happened to her but in the case of Lucy, she does not want to punish the conspirators. What hurts David is that the Afro Americans raped his daughter and he feels that there is reversal reaction in the history.

In *Waiting for the Barbarian*, the colonizers (the self) will torture the silent nature of the native people (the other). Here, in this novel invasion is of two types one is the invasion of colonel Joll and the magistrate in the native land. Even though they are like foreigners (other) to the native land and to the language, still they try to establish their power through torture. Second one is the magistrate (self) of him tries to understand the barbarian girl (the other). The central theme of the novel is the torture, inflicting pain in the persons mind again is also an act of invasion. Magistrate is very kind to the natives whereas colonel Joll tortures the native people and ill-treating them for the status. "Pain is truth; all else is subject to doubt" (4 Coetzee). This line explains the merciless attitude of colonel woman Joll who believes that through pain, he can teach lesson and his action brings out an image that by imposing pain on the other, the self can enjoy the freedom.

Magistrate tries to save the barbarian (other) even though he knows the consequences of helping her. He risks his life and risks himself by isolating him from his group of people (his own country). The self of magistrate remains dominant as he tries to educate the barbarian woman with his ideas. He teaches her the basic knowledge and manners, which again, reminds of the colonizers myth. When he fails to understand her language, he starts by sharing his knowledge. He tries to invade her outside by implanting all the moral values, which he practiced.

At one point of time, he tries to keep the girl with him, as he wants to know about her. Inability of the magistrate to assert his own identity will result in knowing the other. In *Waiting for the Barbarian*, children were ill-treated in the novel and they were discriminated and tortured by the colonizer. Magistrate wants to tear away his identity as colonizer he wants to support and live in the same group of barbarians. As he does not like the idea of torture, he realizes that he is different from the other. Upon rejecting the identity constructed by him, he found himself isolated and his own people consider him to be violated.

Both the magistrate and colonel Joll are foreigners in the land of the native as they were not aware of the places. Even though Joll is new to the place, he tries to assert him by raising his voice over the native and tries to implant his rules on the mind of the native. Here in the novel both colonel Joll and his troop of soldiers fail to understand that they are working under the empire even though they are lesser to the empire. Barbarians are the settlers of the land as other and they are closely connected to the location and the culture of the place as seen as outsiders by the colonizer. "The barbarians, who are pastoralists, nomads, tent dwellers, make no reference in their legends to a permanent settlement near the lake" (18 Coetzee). Magistrate tries to invade the barbarian girl by showing his affection. He knows the torment and suffering underwent by her also, of how she had lost her eyesight. Even after knowing things about her he behaves strangely as if he is not aware of her, this attitude of him invades the girl heart. She does not want to go back to her native people and she likes to settle down with him in the colonies. As an invader he is successful because he does not want to hear or listen to the feeling of the girl instead he did things of what he want to do. He invades her heart, he tries to emphasis his idea on her, and he never tried to look at her from her shoes. These are the attitudes of the western world, which were set using the instruction based on the convenience.

In *Disgrace* and *Waiting for the Barbarian*, the invaders are isolated by the society, which they belong. In *Disgrace*, David was isolated from the society, which he belongs and he moves into the rural place. The shifting of location brings many changes in the life of the main character, David. Changing of place refers to isolation through segregation from the society, which he is familiar with and which makes him to think. The same situation happens to the magistrate from the *Waiting for the Barbarian* where the magistrate was isolated from the society and he was locked inside the room. It is there where he understands his feeling for the barbarian girl.

Throughout the novel, the self fails to understand the other. Only through consciousness, the characters gain their knowledge and understanding of the other. Self-realization and self-repentance takes place only when the consciousness exists in the character. The distinction between the self and the other ends only when the characters understand the term 'consciousnesses'. This leads to a place, which is free from distinction and desegregation, exist in the lives characters of the novel. In *Disgrace*, consciousness works when David's daughter was raped by unknown gentleman and then he realizes the injustice which he had done to Melanie and to her family. This leads him to ask pardon to the family members which he had once ignored. The act of regret is an act of bravery, when someone feels guilty of the deed it shows they are conscious of their action

In the case of the magistrate, he repents for sending the girl far away but his situation is helpless he cannot bring the girl back in his life. However, what he had done is that he stood for the liberty of the native people and fought against his own people and eradicated the slavery from the colonies. This act is a result of segregation that magistrate faced in his life. His own people imprisoned him and they had ill-treated badly by hanging him on the tree but in the end is the victory of the consciousness. Magistrate's consciousness works which resulted in liberty. If the freedom is banned to certain group of people then there will be rebellion. In both the novels, the other remained silent instead of fighting against the self they accepted it to some extent even though they try to rebel it was not that successful. Until the self, understand that what the problem really is nothing can change it. It is the problem of the absence of consciousness even in the history the western world framed the structure based on their convenience and still the eastern side of the world is practicing it as they are used to it unknowingly their mind is fixed with the western ideas.

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