

ETHICS AND POLITICS OF TRAUMA IN J.M.COETZEE'S
POST-APARTHEID FICTION

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that this dissertation entitled "Ethics and Politics of Trauma in J.M. Coetzee's Post-Apartheid Fiction" was prepared by Narayan Prasad Chudal under our supervision. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examination by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY in ENGLISH.

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APPROVAL LETTER

This Dissertation entitled **Ethics and Politics of Trauma in J.M. Coetzee's Post-Apartheid Fiction** was submitted by **Narayan Prasad Chudal** for final examination to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**. I hereby certify that the Research Committee of the Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore accepted it for the degree.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Dissertation entitled **Ethics and Politics of Trauma in J.M. Coetzee's Post-Apartheid Fiction** is my own work and that it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its material for the award of any kind of any other degree. Where other author's sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Signature:

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation concentrates and examines Coetzee's narrativization of trauma in four of his major novels written in the post-apartheid era—*The Age of Iron* (1990), *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), *Disgrace* (1999), and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003). While *Age of Iron* narrativizes the trauma of Mrs Curren due to the horrors of the apartheid, *The Master of Petersburg* captures the trauma of apartheid-like Tsarist Russia, premature death of a son, and the disgrace of having imagined raping a fourteen year old girl. The trauma of disgrace both for the South African blacks and whites receives a full-fledged treatment in *Disgrace*. Similarly, *Elizabeth Costello*, written in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on America, reveals the trauma of human cruelty to animals as well as the holocaust. These novels cumulatively constitute a crucial site for bearing witness to the suffering engendered by the apartheid regime of South Africa or apartheid-like regime of the Nazism and/or the Tsarist Russia through inventing new forms of mourning and community.

Although Coetzee's critics seem to be increasingly aware of the trauma of people in his post-apartheid fiction, this awareness remains more acknowledged than analyzed. Despite the growing willingness among Coetzee's commentators to accept trauma as an important consideration when reading his fiction, there remains virtually no critical discussion of the topic in the criticism surrounding his post-apartheid fiction. My dissertation has aimed to address this critical oversight.

Statement of the Problem

The narrativization of trauma tends to take a political line that can make the situation even worse. This makes me ask the question: how can a literary artist interrogate the ethics and politics of suffering in ways that do not give a one-sided perspective of the establishment? This dissertation answers this question through an

investigation of how Coetzee comes to terms with traumas of the excesses of the apartheid era—the traumas of both the victims and some of the conscientious from among the white South Africans generally known as the victimizers.

Research Questions

So the research questions that have been addressed are:

What makes J.M. Coetzee stand out as a writer of trauma? In what sense is his narrativization of the trauma of the apartheid period ethical? How can Coetzee be said to be an objective writer of trauma? How does Coetzee form a community of sufferers in his post-apartheid fiction? Why does Coetzee sympathize with animals?

Objectives

This dissertation has sought to study how J.M. Coetzee can be read as a writer of trauma or how Coetzee stands out as a writer of trauma. Much of trauma writing suffers from an undertone of a political agenda from the perspective of a dominant community (to which the writer belongs) in what overtly looks like a spotlight on the human dimension. Coetzee avoids this pitfall of trauma writing by exhibiting the traumas of the excesses of the apartheid era—the traumas of both the victims and some of the conscientious from among the white South Africans generally known as the victimizers in his post-apartheid fiction. For him, both the traumatized whites and blacks belong to a community of sufferers. His ethics of memory follows thin rather than thick lines. Coetzee believes that the only way sufferers can be consoled is through an ethical performance of their trauma—an acting out that forms a new political community of the sufferers.

Methodology

This dissertation has analyzed four post-apartheid novels of J.M. Coetzee in relation to trauma theory. Works by Cathy Caruth (*Unclaimed Experience*), Jeffrey

Alexander (*Cultural Trauma*), Beerendra Pandey (“Pedagogy of Indian Partition Literature in the Light of Trauma Theory”), and Avishai Margalit (*The Ethics of Memory*) have been particularly used. Some of the critical and non-critical writings (research articles) over the related books have been consulted to interpret the subject. Cathy Caruth defines trauma as unclaimed experience which resurfaces belatedly much against the conscious will of the victims. She mentions that once it erupts, it must be talked out. Taking clues from Caruth’s notion of trauma as a belated behaviour, Jeffrey Alexander comes up with the concept of cultural trauma which he presents as an attempt to patch a hole in the fabric of a community’s identity. Beerendra Pandey posits that cultural trauma follows thick valence of ethics rather than thin line of morality and it is a vice and not a virtue in literature of trauma.

Findings

Coetzee’s post-apartheid fiction attempts to create a secular life of peaceful co-existence between the people of different races. His white characters serve the poor black characters as their own family members, and vice versa. Both whites and blacks stay together under the same roof, sharing and caring each other in their trauma. They do not remain aloof when they know that others are sufferings, rather they immediately extend their supportive hands to help others in whatever way they can despite their own sufferings. His characters attend to the death of the others and console the family members. For instance, in *Age of Iron*, Elizabeth Curren engages herself in the ethical performances for those who suffer from the police brutality of the Apartheid regime of South Africa. Despite her own trauma of terminal cancer, physical weakness, aging, divorce from her husband, and separation from her only daughter, she sympathizes with the blacks who have suffered from the trauma of poverty, racial discrimination and police brutality in South Africa. The black

characters too help her during her hard times. Thus, by making Curren ethical to others and narrativizing the trauma of both white and non-white characters, Coetzee attempts to create an ethical community of sufferers where both South African whites and blacks live together helping each other.

Coetzee's characters help others irrespective of their race, nationality or class, without any expectation in return. In *The Master of Petersburg*, Coetzee's characters become the victims of Tsarist rulers, revolutionary groups and poverty. But they take care of others forgetting their own trauma. Likewise, in the first half of *Disgrace*, Coetzee's both white and black characters commit crimes taking racial revenge which leads their lives to a traumatic condition. But he makes his characters ethical to their opposite races in the second half of the novel, where they start taking care of others. He claims that both whites and non-whites of South Africa are equally responsible for creating trauma to their counter race, and they would not get rest and peace until they realize that they are fighting a losing battle by torturing their fellow citizens. Thus, by making his both white and black characters ethical to others, the novelist creates an ethical community of sufferers in which both whites and blacks live together in a harmonious relation in *Disgrace*.

Coetzee's characters are found to be ethical to not only other human beings but also animals since they love and take care of them. They talk about animal rights and strongly oppose killing them in the slaughterhouses and imprisoning them in the zoos and the laboratories from where they cannot escape. In his fiction, even animals become the part of human community of the sufferers. The novelist argues that rampant killing of animals causes ecological disturbances which ultimately affect all human beings and animals. For instance, his mouthpiece, Elizabeth Costello in *Elizabeth Costello* experiences trauma due to human cruelty to animals. She claims

that human beings' ill-treatment to animals in the slaughterhouses is unethical and immoral. She compares the human cruelty to animals in the factory farms with the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis: The animal slaughterers are to animals as the Hitler's executioners are to the Jews. She makes this analogy of Hitler's cruelty to the Jews with the human cruelty to animals with a view to stopping human cruelty to animals which has been going on unpunished for centuries. His politics behind making Costello ethical to animal lives is to promote a harmonious co-existence between human beings and animals. Thus, Coetzee has reflected his ecological vision by making it clear that this world is created for all and denying other's existence might lead to a tragic consequence of ecological imbalance in the world.

Conclusion

Coetzee has created a community of sufferers by exhibiting the trauma of both white and black people in his post-apartheid fiction. He has brought both white and black people of South Africa to the same community of the sufferers and has made them live together sharing and caring each other. He has endeavored to end all the crimes of racial revenge committed in the form of murder, rape, theft, and arson attack brought by apartheid regime of South Africa, and apartheid-like regime of Nazism and Tsarist regime of Russia in his novels. He attempts to stop the transmission of trauma from generation to generation by opposing the trend of describing the horrible scene of Hitler's cruelty on human beings. He has also tried to promote harmonious co-existence between human beings and animals through his fiction. Although I have studied these four novels of Coetzee from the perspective of trauma theory, scholars can study them from the perspective of poststructuralist and postcolonial theory too.

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CHAPTER I

PROBLEMATICS FOR THE STUDY

“Coetzee writes in a context where there are harsh realities and urgent ethical questions to be answered” (“Reading J. M. Coetzee Politically” 731).

Sarah Nuttall

J. M. Coetzee is one of the critically-acclaimed South African writers of the past quarter century. He has won the CNA Prize, the nation’s premier literary award thrice. He has been awarded the Order of Mapungubwe, the country’s highest civilian honor. The winner of the 2003 Nobel Prize in Literature, two Man Booker Prizes, the French Prix Femina Étranger, the Jerusalem Prize, the Commonwealth Writer’s Prize, and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, Coetzee is one of the world’s greatest living writers. Born in Cape Town in 1940, educated in South Africa, England, and the United States, and now a citizen of Australia, Coetzee has consistently challenged readers around the globe with his richly nuanced allegorical novels. Educated as a mathematician, computer scientist, and linguist, Coetzee is popular for exploring highly complex theoretical concepts in simple prose which has drawn the attention of many literary, linguistic, and philosophical scholars to his oeuvre.

Having grown tired of computer programming, Coetzee applied for and participated in a Fulbright exchange program to work on his doctorate on Samuel Beckett’s English-language fiction in the United States at the University of Texas at Austin. While completing his dissertation, Coetzee was hired as an assistant professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo, a position he held until 1971 and during which period he worked on his first novel, *Dusklands*. Then he returned to Cape Town to accept a position of teaching English there. Over the course of the next

thirty years, Coetzee published a series of novels and critical studies that established him as one of South Africa's premier literary figures, a career that was eventually honored with the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003. In 2002, Coetzee immigrated to Australia, where he currently resides with his partner, Dorothy Driver.

Due to Coetzee's background in linguistics and his status as a white South African citizen, scholars studied Coetzee's fiction from the perspective of poststructuralist and postcolonial theory. But with the publication of his sixth novel, *Age of Iron* in 1990, critics found a perceivable shift in his writing. The books Coetzee published during the decade of the 1990s are the first indications that the author's career has entered into a new phase in which trauma of people has become central concerns. Although Coetzee's critics seem to be increasingly aware of the trauma of people in his post-apartheid fiction, this awareness remains more acknowledged than analyzed. Despite the growing willingness among Coetzee's commentators to accept trauma as an important consideration when reading his fiction, there remains virtually no critical discussion of the topic in the criticism surrounding his post-apartheid fiction. My dissertation aims to address this critical oversight.

Coetzee, a South African white writer, gives space for those who are non-whites in his writing. His characters have immense responsibilities for those who are in need of their help irrespective of their race. Even his readers feel that they are also ethical participants in the fiction. While talking about Coetzee as an ethical writer, Derek Attridge says that in Coetzee's hands, the literary event is the working out of a complex and freighted responsibility to the other, a responsibility denied for so long in South Africa's history. The reader does not simply observe this responsibility at work in the fiction but, becomes an ethical participant in it (670).

Coetzee reveals the trauma of people caused by apartheid regime of South Africa in his post-apartheid fiction. Apartheid is the former political system in South Africa in which only white people had full political rights, and other people, especially black people, were forced to live away from white people. For instance, they had to go to separate schools. David Welsh defines apartheid as “segregation on grounds of race which refers primarily to the conditions in South Africa from 1948 until 1994” (146). The novels which Coetzee wrote after the apartheid are understood as post-apartheid fiction in which he narrativizes the trauma of both white and black people. Although some of his post-apartheid novels are set in other countries besides South Africa, he, allegorically, represents the trauma of South African people in those novels. Coetzee’s readers find that his characters are ethical to others as they sympathize with their opposite races in their sufferings. By making his characters ethical to others; Coetzee seeks a racial harmony between South African whites and blacks, which is his politics of depicting their trauma in his fiction.

This dissertation concentrates on four of his major novels written in the post-apartheid era—*The Age of Iron* (1990), *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), *Disgrace* (1999), and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003). It examines Coetzee’s narrativization of trauma in these novels. The narrativization of trauma tends to take a political line that can make the situation even worse. This makes me ask the question: how can a literary artist interrogate the ethics and politics of suffering in ways that do not give a one-sided perspective of the establishment? This dissertation seeks to answer this question through an investigation of how Coetzee comes to terms with traumas of the excesses of the apartheid era—the traumas of both the victims and some of the

conscientious from among the white South Africans generally known as the victimizers.

Coetzee invents a new form of mourning and community in his post-apartheid fiction which is grounded on the notion that bearing witness to suffering from the perspectives of sufferers rather than blacks or whites. For him, both the traumatized whites and blacks are communities of sufferers. His voicing of trauma in his post-apartheid fiction deconstructs the narrativization of trauma in disciplinary history which moves along the lines of community and nationhood. He believes that the only way sufferers can be consoled is through an ethical performance of their trauma—an acting out that forms a new political community of the sufferers—whether belonging to the traditionally victimized or victimizing groups.

This study highlights how Coetzee stands out as a writer of trauma. Much of trauma writing suffers from an undertone of a political agenda from the perspective of a dominant community (to which the writer belongs) in what overtly looks like a spotlight on the human dimension. For instance, when a writer belongs to the white community, he or she writes the trauma of his white people only ignoring the trauma of the people of other community, and vice versa. Coetzee avoids this pitfall by depicting the trauma of both blacks and whites and building a new community of sufferers in his fiction. His ethics of memory follows thin rather than thick lines.

Coetzee's post-apartheid fiction attempts to create a secular life of peaceful co-existence between the people of different races, nationality and classes. His white characters serve the poor black characters as their own family members. Both whites and blacks stay together under the same roof of the house sharing and caring each other in his fiction. They help others without thinking whether the sufferers belong to their own community or not, irrespective of their color of skin. Although the apartheid

regime of South Africa had banned the blacks from staying with the whites, Coetzee's characters do not care it, and keep on living together forgiving others in their mistake. For instance, the whites attend to the death of the blacks and console the family members of the victims in his novels. Thus, their ethical performances in the suffering of others console and alleviate the trauma of the victims.

Coetzee, a white South African writer, does not show the trauma of white people only, rather he equally reveals the trauma of black people too in his fiction. Generally, South African whites are known as the victimizers and the blacks as the victims. But Coetzee exhibits that both whites and blacks of South Africa are the sufferers or victims of the bad consequences of the apartheid regime. His black characters do not think that the whites are their enemies, nor do the whites think so. Rather they think that they all are the sufferers of the worst political system. Thus, bringing both whites and blacks to the same community of the sufferers and making them ethical to the suffering of others, Coetzee attempts to end all the crimes of racial revenge committed in the form of murder, rape, theft, and arson attack brought by apartheid regime of South Africa, and apartheid-like regime of Nazism and Tsarist regime of Russia, to promote harmonious relation between the people of different races and classes in his post-apartheid fiction.

Coetzee's characters are ethical to not only other human beings but also animals since they are aware of animal life. They talk about animal rights and strongly oppose killing animals in the slaughterhouses and imprisoning them in the zoos and the laboratories from where they cannot escape. In his fiction, even animals become the part of human community of the sufferers. Coetzee seems to argue that rampant killing of animals causes ecological disturbances which ultimately affect all human beings and animals. Thus, Coetzee reflects his ecological vision making it

clear that this world is created for all and denying other's existence might lead to a tragic consequence of ecological imbalance in the world. Besides creating harmonious relation between the people of different kinds, Coetzee seeks to develop a harmonious co-existence between human beings and animals in his post- apartheid fiction by making his characters ethical to animals.

After a brief introduction and a critical evaluation of theoretical overview in chapter one and two respectively, the third chapter of this dissertation begins with *Age of Iron*, in which J. M. Coetzee engages his elderly white character Elizabeth Curren in the ethical performances for those who have suffered from the police brutality of the Apartheid regime of South Africa. This novel depicts a horrible picture of apartheid regime of South Africa where the black people are trying to overthrow the apartheid rulers, on the one hand, and the apartheid police are suppressing their citizens to prolong the apartheid regime, on the other. In such traumatic condition, Mrs Curren comes to sympathize with the plight of non-white young revolutionaries. She herself is a victim of terminal cancer, physical weakness due to aging, divorce from her husband, and separation from her only daughter. Despite her own trauma, she sympathizes with the blacks who have suffered from the trauma of poverty, racial discrimination and police brutality.

Mrs Curren is the only white character who loves and takes care of all other black characters who are very often hunted by the apartheid police in the novel. There are six African blacks namely, Florence, her two daughters Hope and Beauty, her son Bheki, his friend John, and Mr Vercuiel at Curren's house, and to whom she provides food and shelter when they are in dire need of these things without hoping anything from them in return. Moreover, she is much worried about providing them with security from the brutality of the apartheid police. The black characters too help her in

her trauma caused by terminal cancer, aging and loneliness. For instance, Mr Vercueil, a homeless man who stays at her house, supports her whenever she is in need of his help. Apart from cooking and feeding her, Vercueil helps her in washing her body since she cannot do it herself due to the physical weakness at her old age. He even washes her underwear when she is even unable to move her body. Thus, Coetzee depicts the ethical behavior of his characters who take care of others irrespective of their race and class, which finally brings them to a harmonious relation and peaceful co-existence in *Age of iron*.

Mrs Curren's house is a safer place for the blacks compared to other places since the apartheid police come after the children of the blacks to arrest them in the novel. Unfortunately, two black boys, Bheki and John become the victim of police brutality while they are cycling in the road. A yellow van of the police pushed them to strike with a truck loaded with pipes. John is deadly injured in the event. Although, Curren is herself sick and weak, she forgets her pain, and attends to save the boy's life in whatever way she can: "'Let me,' I said to the plumber. He made way. Kneeling, I lifted aside the sodden blue jacket. Blood ran down the boy's face in a steady, even sheet. Between thumbs and forefingers I pinched together as much as I could of the open flap" (*Age of Iron* 58). Curren's ethical responsibility to the suffering of the boy reflects in her actions mentioned above. Her heart breaks down when she sees the pitiable condition of the boy. She expresses her sympathy to him: "I had the impression he was holding back tears. A child, no more than a child, playing on a bicycle" (61). Thus, making Curren ethical to others and by narrativizing the trauma of both white and non-white characters, Coetzee attempts to create an ethical community of sufferers where both South African whites and blacks live together in an ethical relation sharing and caring one another in *Age of Iron*.

Coetzee's politics behind depicting the trauma of both white and black characters and making them ethical to the suffering of others is to prevent the intergenerational conflicts, and hence, develop a secular life of peaceful co-existence between them. Coetzee's characters, whether they belong to white community or black, are the sufferers of the apartheid. His white characters see the trauma of blacks and, vice versa which naturally helps to lessen their own trauma by realizing that not only the people of their community but also the people of other community are suffering.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation focuses on 1994's *The Master of Petersburg*, Coetzee's metafictional account of Fyodor Dostoevsky's disturbing behavior following the death of his stepson, Pavel. Like *Age of Iron*, I argue, *The Master of Petersburg* is built upon the theme of trauma caused by the apartheid-like Tsarist regime of Russia. In this novel, Coetzee allegorically represents the traumatic condition of South Africa, setting this novel in the context of Russia to be safe from the censorship board of South Africa as it is observed by Nadine Gordimer that indirection, allegory, and distance in his novel have kept Coetzee safe, preventing his work from being banned by the old South African censorship (Scanlan 463). Thus, the influence of South Africa is unavoidable in his writing as he himself speaks: "How we long to quit a world of pathological attachments and abstract forces, of anger and violence and take up residence in a world where a living play of feelings and ideas is possible" (qtd in Easton 589).

During Tsarist regime, people suffered from police agents who wanted to prolong Tsarist system in Russia by taking the revolutionary group in their grip. Fyodor Dostoevsky, the protagonist of *The Master of Petersburg*, suffers from the trauma of his stepson's death. The Tsarist police of Russia killed Pavel and made a rumor

that he killed himself. Owing to the trauma of his son's death, Dostoevsky has become like a mad man. When he is recognized as Pavel's stepfather by the Tsarist police, he is hunted by them due to his son's association with a revolutionary group. Then he gets torture from Maximov, the police investigator who traps him and does not allow him to go out of Petersburg.

Coetzee's characters in *The Master of Petersburg* are ethical to the suffering of others even if they themselves are the victims of Tsarist rulers, revolutionary groups and poverty. They help those who are completely unknown to them but who are in trouble of different kinds. They help others irrespective of their race, nationality or class. For instance, Anna Sergeyevna Kolenkina, a landlady in Petersburg lets Dostoevsky to use Pavel's room. She does not charge him for room rent as she knows that he is penniless. Rather, she provides him with food and money. Thus, she proves to be an ethical character in the novel.

Dostoevsky, the protagonist of *The Master of Petersburg* is himself an ethical character who, despite his pennilessness, assures Anna that he would pay her the rent that Pavel has to owe her. He extends his helpful hands to the needy characters. For example, when Matryona, the landlady's daughter, gets sick, he brings a medicine for her. He is more considerate to Anna too. Anna has an old lamp which can ruin her eyesight so early. So he offers to buy her a new lamp: "“If you will allow me, I will buy you a better lamp”" (*Master* 25). He brings Ivanov, a poor retired civil servant, to his room and provides him with food and bed in a cold night. He gives his single bed to this man and he passes the whole night just sitting on a chair in his room. Thus he fulfils his infinite responsibility to the one who is in need of his help. He helps whoever comes to him asking for help. He gives his borrowed money to even Nechaev, the leader of the revolutionary group, when he asks for it. Although he ever

remains penniless, he “feels in his pocket and brings out his last roubles” (158).

Moreover, he helps a poor woman who has three children, and who has been thrown out of her room since she cannot pay the rent.

Coetzee wishes to create a peaceful co-existence among the people of different kinds, such as rulers and revolutionary groups, police and civilians, father and son, landlady and lodger, rich and poor, and human being and animal in *The Master of Petersburg*. He narrativizes the trauma of innocent people, and his politics behind it is to make the rulers see how they are making their people suffer, so that they would stop suppressing their citizen. Coetzee’s objective of making his characters ethical for others, is to make an ethical community of sufferers who live together in a peaceful environment sharing and caring one another.

The fifth chapter of my dissertation focuses on 1999’s Booker Prize-winning *Disgrace*, arguably Coetzee’s most controversial novel and the subject of an unparalleled amount of literary criticism. The disturbing nature of *Disgrace* has drawn many critics. Kimberly Wedeven Segall argues that “the novel offers a dark depiction of South Africa’s transitional tremors, for the legacy of apartheid does not dissipate overnight. Many black South Africans still live in impoverished conditions with high unemployment rates and crimes” (40). Coetzee narrativizes the crimes committed by both South African whites and blacks in the form of racial revenge which has led their lives to a traumatic condition in the novel. Coetzee seems to say that both whites and non-whites of South Africa are equally responsible for creating trauma to their counter race, and they would not get rest and peace until they realize that they are fighting a losing battle by torturing their fellow citizens. Coetzee makes his characters ethical to their opposite races in the second half of the novel, where his characters start taking care of others in their sufferings. Thus, by making his both white and

black characters ethical to others, Coetzee seems to create an ethical community of sufferers in which both whites and blacks live together in a harmonious relation caring and sharing with each other.

David Lurie, the protagonist of *Disgrace* seduces his black student named Melanie Isaacs who is thirty years junior to him. His sexual harassment of Melanie brings a disgrace to his profession and to his community as well. Lurie is so rigid to change his habit. He is of unbending nature and so insensitive to others. He is a man of sexual desire which emerges like arrows on him. He defends his sexual harassment as a right of desire. In fact, he reduces women into objects to satisfy his desire. He says to Melanie: “‘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’” (*Disgrace* 16). His sexual exploitation of Melanie traumatizes her family in particular and the whole black community in general. When Melanie’s father, Mr Isaac knows that Lurie is the perpetrator of his daughter, his family is so shocked. Moreover, the whole white community of South Africa gets the trauma of shame due to Lurie’s abuse of a black girl since they are bound to have one of their group members as a perpetrator instead of a hero.

The affair between Melanie and Lurie soon comes to light and causes a scandal. Consequently, Lurie is dismissed from the job in his university and his car is vandalized by Melanie’s boy friend, a black boy who had threatened him of taking action. In the second half of the novel, Lurie is attacked and his daughter, Lucy is raped by three colored men in her farm house. After Lucy’s gang rape, Lurie learns to live for others. Then, he becomes an ethical character who takes care of other human beings and animals. Thus, he gets transformed from a self-centered man to a man for others. Moreover, he begins to confess his crime at the end of the novel, which he had

never done before. He realizes how Mr Isaacs, Melanie's father, might be suffering from the sexual harassment of his daughter by him. Therefore, he visits Melanie's house to beg forgiveness for causing trauma to her and to apologize to her father. His apology and respect to Mr Isaac help to lessen the trauma of the Isaac family. Mr Isaac too sympathizes with him since he knows that Lurie has been dismissed from his job. Moreover, he invites Lurie to have a meal with them. Petrus, a black man in the novel accepts Lucy to make his wife and to be the father of Lucy's baby which would be born in future after the gang-rape of Lucy. Both Lucy and Petrus decide to be husband and wife and live together in the coming days. Thus, Coetzee unites his white and black characters in this novel.

Coetzee performs the traumas of both his white and black characters, impartially, in *Disgrace*. He reveals the trauma of Melanie, a black character of the novel caused by the sexual harassment of Lurie, a white character, on the one hand, and the trauma of Lurie and Lucy, the white characters of the novel, due to the gang-rape of Lucy by three colored men, on the other. Hence, both white and black characters of Coetzee become the victim of trauma. To be precise, people of both white and black communities of South Africa suffer in *Disgrace*. Coetzee seems to prevent trauma and its reproduction and intergenerational circulation in South Africa by showing the trauma of both races in this novel. His politics behind uniting and integrating his white and black characters in *Disgrace* is to promote the secular life of peaceful co-existence between whites and blacks in South Africa.

The sixth chapter of my dissertation focuses on 2003's Nobel Prize-winning *Elizabeth Costello*, the novel in which Coetzee depicts his surrogate narrator, Elizabeth Costello's traumatic experiences due to her dispute with her audiences who are not ready to accept her opinions she expresses in different conferences where she

is invited to deliver her lectures. Coetzee chooses Costello, a famous Australian novelist, to express the trauma of people caused by the apartheid-like regime of Nazism in this novel. The novel is entitled by the name of the main character, Elizabeth Costello, who delivers a series of lectures justifying human cruelty towards animals. Costello is shocked to know that millions of animals are slaughtered in the slaughterhouses every year, and no one raises their voices for their rights. She opines that animals have rights to live their full lives, and it is injustice to kill them just because they are not conscious to their existence.

Elizabeth Costello claims that human beings' ill-treatment to animals in the slaughterhouses is unethical and immoral. She is ethical to all living creatures, and particularly to animals in slaughterhouses, laboratories, zoos, scientific institutes, and prison camps, where they are enslaved by imprisoning them. She argues that animals should be allowed to move freely. The protagonist compares the human cruelty to animals in the factory farms with the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis: The animal slaughters are to animals as the Hitler's executioners are to the Jews. Costello makes this analogy of Hitler's cruelty to the Jews with the human cruelty to animals with a view to stopping human cruelty to animals which has been going on unpunished for centuries. Costello states that Hitler's hangman learnt to commit cruelty to human beings from cattle. Coetzee's politics behind making Costello, his surrogate narrator, ethical to animal life is, it seems to me, to promote a harmonious co-existence between human beings and animals in this novel. He seems to say that the Holocaust will come to an end if human beings stop killing animals mercilessly.

Elizabeth Costello, Coetzee's mouthpiece, vehemently protests Paul West's horrible and shocking depiction of punishment given by Hitler to his would be assassins in his book entitled "The Very Rich Hours of Count von Stauffenberg."

Hitler is the perpetrator of millions of Jews who were burned to death in several concentration camps during the Second World War. Costello mentions that Hitler's hangman is a Satan who hanged the victims like cattle. Hitler's cruelty to his enemies is the burning example of human depravity. Trauma of Nazism reflects on the scene described by Paul West in his book which makes Costello sick when she goes through his description of the punishment given to those shivering men by Hitler's hangman. The protagonist's main objection to Paul West is that he has attempted to bring Hitler, whose name people do not want to listen to, back to life from his grave by describing his power and dominance over his victims. His book reminds her of a sexual attack she underwent in her youth by a docker. Moreover, she claims that Paul West's book reminds his readers of the traumas of their past, and hence, puts them in their traumatic situation at present. She further adds that by describing the cruelty of Hitler to his would-be assassins, West helps to transmit the evil of Hitler to the young generation, particularly to the descendants of the Jews who were killed mercilessly in many concentration camps in the World War II. Costello believes that Paul West's depiction of the torture of the plotters by the executioners of Hitler is obscene. She feels a deep moral repulsion about Paul West and his book. She comments that Paul West is inhuman and immoral to show such obscene book which circulates evil and ruins humanity. Rather than telling the story of evil, she recommends, one should put it inside since such story "costs all hell to get him back in again . . . that the genie stay in the bottle . . . the world would be better off if the genie remained imprisoned" (*Elizabeth Costello* 167).

Coetzee's politics behind making Costello object to Paul West's depiction of Hitler's cruelty to his victims is, as I understand, to stop passing the trauma of evil to the new generation of the victims, and thus hurting them more by reminding them of

their cruel past, and by doing so, Coetzee attempts to create a secular life of peaceful co-existence between the descendants of Hitler who are known as the perpetrators and the descendants of the Jews who are known as the victims in *Elizabeth Costello*.

The concluding chapter of this dissertation is a brief overview in which I demonstrate how Coetzee's post-apartheid fiction promotes ethics in the sufferings of others which provides the readers with the ability to imaginatively sympathize with the perpetually suffering and dying others. As a conclusion, this last chapter does not include an exhaustive evaluation of critical material found in the five preceding chapters but serves as a review of the dissertation's major concerns. After a thorough study of his post-apartheid fiction, I have found that Coetzee's characters maintain an ethical relation with the strangers as well as animals in his fiction. They do not remain unfriendly when they see the sufferings of others; rather they immediately extend their hands to help them in whatever way they can despite their own sufferings. They help others irrespective of their race, nationality or class, without any expectation from them in return.

Coetzee reveals the trauma of both white and black people caused by the apartheid regime of South Africa or the apartheid-like regime of Tsarist Russia and Nazi Germany in his fiction. He narrativizes the trauma of both perpetrators and the victims, with a view to forming a community of sufferers. His post-apartheid novels bring people of different races to meet together in peace. To be more precise, his post-apartheid fiction attempts to bring racial harmony between whites and blacks in South Africa by making them use their sympathetic imagination to cultivate a love for the Other. Thus, depicting the traumas of both whites and blacks impartially, Coetzee proves to be a great trauma writer who seeks to create a secular life of peaceful co-existence between whites and blacks in South Africa.

This dissertation, with emphasis on the theme of trauma in J. M. Coetzee's post-apartheid fiction, belongs to the relatively new field of "trauma theory." Works by Cathy Caruth (*Unclaimed Experience*), Jeffrey Alexander (*Cultural Trauma*), Beerendra Pandey ("Pedagogy of Indian Partition Literature in the Light of Trauma Theory"), and Avishai Margalit (*The Ethics of Memory*) have been particularly used in this dissertation. Cathy Caruth, in her *Unclaimed Experience* defines trauma as unclaimed experience which resurfaces belatedly much against the conscious will of the victims. She further says that trauma is linked to those catastrophic events which seem to repeat themselves for those who have passed through them. Such events appear as the possession of some people by a sort of fate, a series of painful events to which they are subjected, and which seem to be entirely outside their wish or control (1). Caruth focuses on the unavailability of trauma to consciousness of the victim until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. Since trauma returns to haunt the survivor later on, it seems to be much more than pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche. What returns to haunt the victim, as Caruth emphasizes "is not just any event but, significantly, the shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident" (5). She mentions that once it erupts, it must be talked out.

Jeffrey C. Alexander talks about cultural trauma in his essay "Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma" in which he relates cultural trauma with group consciousness. He opines that cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways (1). He further adds that human beings need security, order, love and connection. If something happens that sharply

undermines these needs, people will be traumatized as a result (3). Taking clues from Caruth's notion of trauma as a belated behavior, Jeffrey Alexander comes up with the concept of cultural trauma which he presents as an attempt to patch a hole in the fabric of a community's identity. Agreeing with Alexander regarding his view on cultural trauma, Ron Eyerman writes that cultural trauma is "a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social cohesion" (61).

Alexander, in his essay "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals" mentions that Nazism marked a traumatic epoch in modern history in which "two millions Jews had already been massacred and that millions more were slated for death" (210). The horrific trauma of the Jews becomes the trauma of all humankind. The Jewish mass killings were not an end but a beginning. They were part of the massive trauma of World War II, but in the postwar period they and related incidents of Nazi horror were regarded as a birth trauma. Alexander points out that "the atomic bombings of Hiroshima have an originating trauma for postwar Japanese identity" (262). He further mentions that an event which is marked by ethnic and racial hatred, violence, and war, become transformed into a generalized symbol of human suffering and moral evil. Such event has come over the last fifty years to be redefined as a traumatic event for all of humankind (197).

The term "trauma" does not confine to the medico- legal concept. It begins converging on different fields including psychology, sociology, history, political science, philosophy, ethics, literature, and aesthetics. Beerendra Pandey, one of the renowned trauma scholars, mentions that "Trauma is a medico – legal concept that is intimately involved in the shaping of a distinctively late modern form of subjectivity" (124). He redefines the clinical syndrome of post-traumatic stress as mediating between a particular individual's wound and "a disturbance in the ground of collective

experience: a shock to people's values, trust, and sense of purpose; an obsessive awareness that nations, leaders, and we ourselves can die" (125). Agreeing with Caruth regarding the belatedness of trauma, Pandey mentions that the delay of trauma should not be understood as repression of trauma because it shows up with a vengeance when triggered by a similar event. Thus, when someone is hurt, he or she lives through the injury not only physically but also psychologically (125). He posits that cultural trauma follows thick valence of ethics rather than thin line of morality and it is a vice and not a virtue in literature of trauma.

Nell J. Smelser connects the causes of trauma to the processes of social change which includes "mass migrations, wars, mass unemployment, and dislocations associated with rapid social change" (35). More recently, trauma is associated with the increasing recognition of domestic violence, such as child abuse, application of extreme disciplines, spousal battering, incest, rape, and traumatic sexual mistreatment. Moreover, growing poverty, loss of livelihood, progressing illness, aging and retirement, advancing incapacity, alcoholism, drug addiction, revolution, rise of crime, corruption, amoralism of politicians and administrators, death in the family, divorce, and the witnessing of all of these events could be the sources of trauma in human life. Excessive trauma might lead a trauma victim to, as Smelser presents, the paralysis of a limb, the loss of a function such as eyesight, or an inhibition, emotional disturbance, exhaustion, acute illness, intoxications, and traumatic accidents (33).

Describing traumatic symptoms of a person, Avishai Margalit mentions that trauma, like a covered stain, has its bad effects on the victim since it makes the traumatized person react disproportionately to a present trigger on the strength of the injury from the past (126). Traumatic events are very painful memory which one may manage not to brood on for a long time. But then it comes back again and sometimes

with a vengeance. It is hard to remember a past humiliation without reliving it. Margalit further states that a trauma victim is unable to escape from the traumatic memory of his past since memory of painful experience is determined not by the duration of the experience but by its peak point and its end point (137). He talks about the way of healing trauma by making the repressed memories open. He believes that caring others enhances a sense of belonging which gives the other the feeling of being secured. He advises that we should extend our moral obligation to all whether they are our near and dear or not. We ought to guide our behavior towards those to whom we are related just by virtue of their being fellow human being. Kant says “Love thy neighbor as thyself” (qtd. in Margalit 44). Loving others is a duty that all human beings have towards one another, whether or not they find the others worthy of their love.

Ethics of trauma urges one to consider the sufferings of others who might belong to different races or groups. Levinas, in his *Otherwise*, mentions that ethics is a responsibility to the other, described as the neighbor, the widow, the orphan, whose profound destitution places one’s very being in to question. His conceptualization of responsibility is like a debt that one can never pay to the other. It is a duty that does not ask for consent that comes into us traumatically. He further adds that subjectivity is a welcoming or hospitality to the other. It is a sensibility- an exposure to other, vulnerability and a responsibility in the proximity of the others (77). Politics of trauma, on the other hand, is to develop strategies for preventing trauma and its reproduction and the subsequent intergenerational transmission of violence. Ron Eyerman views that the politics of trauma lies in the performance of trauma which permits reconciliation not only of an internal conflict, but also of cultural trauma. This is accomplished through the co-existence of a distinctive and relatively autonomous

collective history and the progressive political and economic integration (111). He seems to say that remembering, working through, and speaking out trauma lead to the lessening of it from the psyche of the trauma victims, which, consequently, helps to promote the secular life of peaceful co-existence of the people of different political and ethnic groups.

To give a clear-cut planning, this dissertation has been divided into seven chapters on the basis of the subject matter they deal with. The first chapter introduces the dissertation under the dissertation topic “Problematics for the Study” which includes a short analysis of J.M.Coetzee’s four post-apartheid novels in terms of ethics and politics of trauma. The first chapter tries to define the key terms like ethics and politics of trauma in relation to trauma theory. Chapter II is the theoretical chapter dealing with the theoretical tools under the topic of “Ethics and Politics of trauma: A Theoretical Overview.” In addition, the related commentaries on trauma theory will be the source of this work. Chapter III, IV, V and VI, being the main chapters of the dissertation, J.M. Coetzee’s four post-apartheid novels have been read elaborately along with the ideas discussed in chapter II. These chapters reveal the trauma of the apartheid, trauma of death, traumatic shame and moral valence of traumatic experience in Coetzee’s *Age of Iron*, *The Master of Petersburg*, *Disgrace* and *Elizabeth Costello* respectively. Chapter VII concludes the work by presenting and illustrating the findings of the research in brief on the basis of the ideas discussed and analyzed above.

CHAPTER II
ETHICS AND POLITICS OF TRAUMA: A THEORETICAL
OVERVIEW

“The experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will. . . . it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor” (*Unclaimed Experience* 1, 3). Cathy Caruth

In Greek, trauma originally referred to a wound or an injury inflicted on a body. In its later usage, particularly in the medical and psychiatric literature, and most centrally in Freud’s text, the term ‘trauma’ is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind. But the wound of the mind, as Cathy Caruth, one of the leading scholars of trauma theory, cites Freud in her *Unclaimed Experience*, is not “like the wound of the body, simple and healable event . . . but rather an event that is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known” (3). Caruth mentions the unavailability of trauma to consciousness of the victim until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. Since trauma returns to haunt the survivor later on, it seems to be much more than pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche. What returns to haunt the victim, as Caruth emphasizes “is not just any event but, significantly, the shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident” (5).

Caruth focuses on the inescapability of trauma’s belated impact on the victim as it shapes his or her life. Trauma does not only limit to the traumatic events of one’s past, it is tied up with the trauma of another, too. In this reference, Caruth views that “trauma may lead to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and

surprise of listening to another's wound" (7). Avishai Margalit, in his *The Ethics of Memory* brings the history of the term "trauma":

Trauma is a medical term that refers to a serious bodily injury or shock from an accident or external act of violence. When the term was adopted in psychoanalysis, it was designed to retain both connotations: of sudden, violent shock from an external source and of injury (in this case emotional injury) caused by the jolt. By scar, I understand the traces that the initial trauma leaves on the psyche, despite various degree of healing. The language of trauma and scarring applies primarily to physical bodies. But these terms are so naturally, and perhaps universally, transferred to the psyche that the categorical distinction between the two is blurred. (125)

Alexander presents that the trauma experience occurs when the traumatizing event interacts with human nature. Human beings need security, order, love and connection. If something happens that sharply undermines these needs, people will be traumatized as a result (3). Events do not create collective trauma as they are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution. Traumatic status is attributed to real or imagined phenomena, not because of their actual harmfulness, but because these phenomena are believed to be harmful. Alexander quotes Hinton who writes, "Terms like 'trauma', 'suffering' and 'cruelty' are linked to the discourses of modernity" (25). Hinton further mentions:

In the mass media, the victims of genocide are . . . rebroadcast to global audiences who see their own potential trauma reflected in this simulation. Refuges frequently epitomize this modern trope of human suffering; they signify both a universal humanity and the threat of the

pre-modern and uncivilized, which they have supposedly barely survived. (qtd.in Alexander 25)

Hinton focuses on the role of mass media for creating trauma on people by showing the victims of genocide. Trauma theory can help to illuminate the tragic difficulties that non-western societies have often experienced in coming to terms with genocide. Alexander quotes Kuper, “genocide is more likely to occur in collective arenas that are neither legally regulated, democratic, nor formally egalitarian” (25). Alexander presents a data of most dramatic and horrifying examples of mass murder that have emerged from within the more fragmented and impoverished areas of the non-western world:

The Hutu massacre of more than 500,000 Tutsis in less than three weeks in Rwanda, the Guatemalan military’s ethnocide of 200,000 Mayan Indians during the dirty civil war in the early 1980s, the Maoist Khmer Rouge’s elimination of almost a third of Cambodia’s entire population in its revolutionary purges in the late 1970s. (25)

Trauma theory helps us understand not about the causes of genocide but its aftereffects. These genocidal actions are so traumatic to their millions of immediate victims, so rarely branded themselves on the consciousness of the wider populations. Alexander informs that Nazism marked a traumatic epoch in modern history in which “two millions Jews had already been massacred and that millions more were slated for death” (210). He mentions that the trauma was localized and particularized – it occurred in that place, with those people. But the mass murder was universalized by a new term “genocide” a crime defined as the effort to destroy an entire people (212).

Regarding the Jewish tragedy, Deutscher writes, “We are confronted here by a huge and ominous mystery of the generation of the human character that will forever

baffle and terrify mankind” (qtd. in Alexander 223). Deutscher indicates the motives and the interests behind the enormities of Hitler, Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Treblinka who marked a traumatic epoch in modern history. Holocaust, as Alexander quotes Hartman, is “Eclipse of Enlightenment or Eclipse of God” (223). The profound, agonizing mystery of the Holocaust echoes through the generations and across international borders. It is an awesome human and theological enigma as an old century prepares to give way to a new millennium.

The horrific trauma of the Jews becomes the trauma of all humankind. The Jewish mass killings were not an end but a beginning. They were part of the massive trauma of World War II, but in the postwar period they and related incidents of Nazi horror were regarded as a birth trauma. Alexander points out that “the atomic bombings of Hiroshima have an originating trauma for postwar Japanese identity” (262). Neil J. Smelser, in his essay “September 11, 2001, as Cultural Trauma” observes that September 11, 2001 has been the greatest trauma in the nation’s history. It possesses all the ingredients of trauma: a trauma is sudden, comprehensive, fundamental, and unexpected. In September 11, nineteen terrorists- none detected, none apprehended- boarded four commercial airlines at different airports, hijacked them, and turned them toward a mission of destruction and death (Smelser 264). Smelser views that these and other attacks were justified by referring to the cultural trauma that the Muslim and Arab worlds had themselves suffered through centuries of Western, and recently American, economic, military, and cultural penetration.

Margalit views that “insult” is the cause of trauma which a victim can never forget. An injury is much sooner forgotten than an insult. Mental scars last longer than physical scars, and the effects of insults and humiliation last longer than mere physical pain (117). He means to say that the scars due to torture are long lasting. He

further asserts that torture is the most horrible event a human being can retain within himself. In remembering torture, the victim dwells on the humiliation, whereas in experiencing torture he dwells on the pain. He believes that “the wounds of insult and humiliation keep bleeding long after the painful physical injuries have crusted over” (120).

Pandey mentions that “Trauma is a medico – legal concept that is intimately involved in the shaping of a distinctively late modern form of subjectivity” (124). He seems to say that trauma is intimately related to shaping the life of a modern man. Regarding the complex politics of trauma, Liisa Malkki cites Fassin and d’Halluin who write that trauma conveys veracity, as long as it is placed in a general framework or presented in experts’ term. As soon as one returns from the general to the particular, however, the evidence weakens. The collective, generalized subject is morally superior to the individual and concrete cases (336, 337). Malkki indicates the complex politics of trauma and asylum in France. He observes that the particularity of a single person’s stories and claims is suspect and the evidence of trauma is now called on to perform a bewildering amount of political work. The survivors of torture, rape, and other forms of violence are made to feel like impostors, having to prove and perform their grounds for seeking political asylum (341).

Cultural Trauma

Jeffrey C. Alexander in his essay “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma” included in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* relates cultural trauma with group consciousness. He opines that cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways (1). Members of

collectivities define their solidary relationships in ways that allow them to share the suffering of others. But it is a human nature that they refuse to recognize the existence of other's trauma. In this reference Alexander writes that "by refusing to participate in . . . the process of trauma creation, social groups restrict solidarity, leaving others to suffer alone" (1).

Ron Eyerman, in his essay "Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity" explores the notion of cultural trauma in the formation of African American identity. He opines that the trauma in question is slavery, not as institution or even experience, but as collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounded the identity- formation of people. Trauma is linked to the formation of collective identity (60). He seems to say that it is the memory of slavery that grounded African American identity.

Unlike psychological or physical trauma, cultural trauma refers, as Ron Eyerman writes "to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social cohesion" (61). Thus, trauma refers to an event or an experience that defines one's identity because it leaves scars and must be dealt with by later generations who have had no experience of the original event. The memory of slavery was part and parcel of a continuing cultural trauma, one that was still very much alive. It was alive because the contemporary society and its culture were understood as "an all-encompassing and oppressing Other, a totality from which one was alienated as well as excluded and against which one must struggle, so as not to be its victim" (Eyerman 109).

Jeffrey C. Alexander in "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals" describes how an event which is marked by ethnic and racial hatred, violence, and war, become transformed into a generalized symbol of human suffering and moral evil. Such an event has come over the last fifty years to be redefined as a traumatic

event for all of humankind (197). The traumatic event of ethnic and racial hatred, and violence vividly lives in the memories of contemporaries whose parents and grandparents never felt themselves even remotely related to it. In this regard, Alexander quotes Sheng Mei Ma who states:

“Holocaust” has become so universal reference point that even contemporary Chinese writers, who live thousands of miles from the place of Nazi brutality and possesses only scanty knowledge of the details of the Holocaust, came to call their horrendous experiences during the Cultural Revolution “the ten year holocaust.” (196)

Alexander explores the social creation of cultural fact, and the effects of this cultural fact upon social and moral life. For an audience to be traumatized by an experience that they themselves do not directly share, symbolic extension and psychological identification are required.

Pandey defines cultural trauma as “a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion” (125). He seems to say that seminal event is not naturally traumatic, but that the cultural templates through which they are experienced turn it into a trauma. Cultural trauma emerges as a socially mediated attribution which emphasizes the representational aspect of culture.

Causes of trauma

Smelser brings Piotr Sztompka’s view that connects cultural trauma to the effects of processes of social change which includes mass migrations, wars, mass unemployment, and dislocations associated with rapid social change. More than a century ago, Charcot described traumatic memories as “parasites of the mind”, Freud spoke of the traumatic memories as “an indelible imprint” as something which the

nervous system “has been unable to dispose of” (qtd. in Smelser 41). In a more detailed description, Van der Kolk describes fixation of trauma as follow:

When the trauma fails to be integrated in to the totality of a person’s life experience, the victim remains fixated on the trauma. Despite avoidance of emotional involvement, traumatic memories cannot be avoided; even when pushed out of waking consciousness, they come back in the form of reenactments, nightmares, or feelings related to the trauma. . . . Recurrences may continue throughout life during periods of stress. (qtd. in Smelser 41)

More recently, trauma is associated with the increasing recognition of domestic violence as a social problem such as traumas of child abuse, application of extreme disciplines, spousal battering, incest, rape, and traumatic sexual mistreatment- and the witnessing of all of these events.

Bernhard Giesen in “The Trauma of Perpetrators: The Holocaust as the Traumatic Reference of German National Identity” mentions the nature of traumas which “represent the rupture in the web of meaning, the break of order and continuity- a dark and inconceivable” (113). He means to say that the traumatic memory reaches back to an act of violence that breaks down the social bond. He describes the role of perpetrators which creates trauma on victims. Perpetrators are human subjects who dehumanized other subjects. They perverted the sovereign subjectivity of the victims but challenged also their own sacredness. Perpetrators create trauma among people of their own communities too. Giesen mentions that if a community has to recognize that its members, instead of being heroes, have been perpetrators whose past is indeed traumatic (114).

Piotr Sztompka in “The Trauma of Social Change” views that it is social change that creates trauma. Change itself, irrespective of the domain it touches, the groups it affects, may have adverse effects, and brings shocks and wound to the social and cultural tissue. He writes that suddenness or rapidness is a denominator of traumatogenic change (158). Moreover, he states that traumatogenic change appears to be unbearable, produces a shock of realization about something that was ignored before. For example, ecological decay, depletion of resources, pollution, traffic congestion, cultural imperialism, and growing poverty, to take some examples from the social domain; or progressing illness, aging, alcoholism, drug addiction, and advancing incapacity, if we look at the personal level (158). Revolution is a good example of traumatogenic social change. It also affects the fate of many groups. Retirement is a good example of traumatogenic personal change. Trauma is also linked to impoverishment and the loss of livelihood t. Rajyogi Brahmakumar Nikunjji points out about the cause of personal trauma in the English national daily *The Himalayan Times* on 21 January 2013. He expresses his view that worry is simply a learned habit, an addiction that is fed by a toxic diet of bad news, unfortunate events and tales of personal traumas of others. People actually are really worried for themselves and their worry is motivated by selfishness (15).

The shift in dominant values, transfer of power, or overturning of prestige hierarchies change the very constitution of society, whereas the rise of crime, corruption, and pollution degrade the context of everyday life, threatening the immediate life- world of every societal member. Sztompko summarizes the features of traumatogenic changes as they are sudden, comprehensive, fundamental, and unexpected, such as death in the family, divorce, loss of property in natural disaster, car accident, bankruptcy of the firm, restructuring of the enterprise, fight among

friends, collapse of the stock exchange, terrorist attack, foreign conquest, break down of the political and economic regime, and revolution (160).

Sztompka presents the events that bring personal and mostly psychological traumas. At the individual level of biography, we experience such events as marriage, childbirth, divorce, death in the family, purchase of a new house, losing a job, retirement, and so on. He defines that trauma is neither “a cause nor a result, but a process, a dynamic sequence of typical stages, having its beginning, but also . . . its resolution” (168). He presents that revolution can bring traumatogenic change in the society. The most painful and adverse condition that revolution can bring is growing unemployment and the pervasive threat of it. Inflation, threatening household budgets and saving, new forms of organized crime, perception of inefficient law enforcement, the flow of immigrant from the poorer countries, pervasive theme of competition, deterioration of life standards, decay of infrastructure of roads and public transportation adding to the discomfort to the everyday life, factionalism, nepotism and corruption, amorality of politicians and administrators are some traumatogenic changes that any revolution brings (175).

A full-fledged trauma is something disruptive, shocking, and painful, only relative to some standard of normal, orderly expectation. The potentially traumatizing events and situations, such as, unemployment, insecurity, rise of crime, etc. are easily defined as traumatic, as they “violate the learned cultural expectations of the bloc culture” (Sztompka 176) as corruption, crime, mafias only add to uncertainty and a lack of social or moral standards.

Jhamak Ghimire, a physically handicapped poet and writer, shares her traumatic shock that is caused when the physically and mentally sound people around her consider her a mere burden. What a traumatic shock would she [the handicapped

one] experience when the clever ones do demand death for her. The clever ones do never think; they speak without thinking of a tender mind. These things also kept hunting her, time and again. There was no one but herself to experience the pain in her and the deep injuries inside her mind caused by such asides. But she had no voice and no signs by which to express her protests; she was doomed to merely listen and to merely tolerate them (33 -34). Our scriptures have imposed several unjust ethics on people born with disabilities or infirmities. Our cultures have laid down such tyrannical traditions that show no mercy or sympathy towards those that have been marginalized and discriminated against.

Effects of Trauma

Nell J.Smelser in “Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma” writes that the affect associated with the trauma-usually fright-returns, is defended against, and ultimately is converted into an organic symptom such as the paralysis of a limb, the loss of a function such as eyesight, or an inhibition (33).Emotional disturbance, physical exhaustion, acute illness, intoxications, traumatic accidents, intellectual overwork are also the traumatic assaults. Smelser quotes a scientific research on symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder presented by American Psychiatric Association:

Recurrent and intrusive recollection of the event . . . recurrent distressing dream during which the event is replayed . . . intense psychological distress . . . physiological reactivity which occurs when the person is exposed to triggering events that resemble an aspect of the traumatic event . . . avoiding thoughts, feelings, or conversations about the traumatic event . . . avoiding activities, situations, or people who arouse recollections of it . . . diminished responsiveness to the

external world (“psychic numbing” or “emotional anesthesia”) . . .
diminished participation in the previously enjoyed activities . . . feeling
detached or estranged from other people . . . markedly reduced ability
to feel emotions . . . persistent symptoms of increased anxiety . . .
difficulty falling asleep . . . exaggerated startle response . . . outbursts
of anger . . . difficulty concentrating or completing tasks. (58)

Freud has divided traumatic neurosis into two symptoms- the positive symptoms which includes flashbacks and hallucinations and the negative symptoms which includes numbing, amnesia, and avoidance of triggering stimuli (Caruth 96). Caruth mentions that trauma theory often divides itself into two basic trends: the focus on trauma as the shattering of a previously whole self and the focus on the survival function of trauma as allowing one to get through an overwhelming experience by numbing oneself to it.

Belatedness of Trauma

Caruth presents the peculiar and paradoxical experience of trauma in its most general definition:

Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. The experience of the soldier faced with sudden and massive death around him, for example, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later on in repeated nightmares, is a central and recurring image of trauma in our century. (8)

As a consequence of the increasing occurrence of perplexing war experience and other catastrophic responses, physicians and psychiatrists have begun to reshape their thinking about physical and mental experience including rape, child abuse, auto and industrial accidents that are now often understood in terms of the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (Caruth 8). Freud has a similar opinion regarding the effects of trauma: “It may happen that someone gets away, apparently unharmed, from the spot where he has suffered a shocking accident. In the course of the following weeks, however, he develops a series of grave psychical and motor symptoms. He has developed a ‘traumatic neurosis’” (qtd. in Caruth 13). What causes trauma, then, is a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind’s experience of time. The essence of the shock as being the direct damage to the molecular structure of the nervous system, whereas what we seek to understand are the effects produced on the organ of the mind.

Trauma is more powerful and permanent than the perpetrators because the latter can be forgotten and driven away, but not the former. Giesen informs that although the perpetrators are defeated and driven across the borders for a time, the trauma is omnipresent, and its public remembrance risks disrupting the fragile coexistence of the opposing camps or ethnic groups (150). Collective trauma requires a time of latency before they can be acted out, spoken about, and worked through. Giesen quotes Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich, “Postwar Germany responded to the disclosure of the Holocaust by an “inability to mourn” (116). At that time neither the individual trauma of rape, death, and dehumanization, nor the collective trauma of guilt and defeat could be turned in to the theme of conversation. There was a moral numbness with respect to the horror.

Trauma victims talk about their trauma after certain period of time. The trauma, unspeakable in the year after 1945, had been turned in to the stigma of collective guilt, publicly contested, and debated between generations. Alexander writes:

When faced with the horror, Jews and non- Jews alike reacted, not with criticism and decisive action, but with silence and bewilderment. Only after two or even three decades of repression and denial were people finally able to begin talking about what happened and to take actions in response to this knowledge. (201)

Caruth transfers the psychoanalytic model of individual trauma to the study of collective trauma. It shifts the focus away from the psychological condition of traumas to a sociological construction of the belatedness which is supposed to have registered the trauma in the first place. The shift from inherently psychological to an overwhelmingly sociological theory of trauma has, however, raised a few critical eyebrows. Pandey quotes Hiro Saito who counter argues:

In examining the so called belated register of a traumatic event in collective memory . . . we should not dismiss the utility of psychoanalysis and psychology outright in favor of sociology, for denial, repression, and silence on the part of the individual survivors in the aftermath of a traumatic event could delay their actions to present their traumatic experiences in public arenas. (126)

A sociopsychological angle of trauma reconciles the standpoint of Caruth with that of the proponents of cultural trauma.

Repetitive nature of Trauma

The return of the traumatic experience in the dream is not the signal of the direct experience but, rather, of the attempt to overcome or master what was never fully grasped in the first place. Not having truly known the threat of the death in the past, the survivor is forced to confront it over and over again. Survival of the victim becomes, as Caruth mentions “an endless testimony to the impossibility of living” (45). A traumatized person can do nothing but repeats the destructive event over and over again. Thus, repetition of the event of destruction becomes the history of the traumatized individual. Regarding the repetitive behavior of the traumatized individual, Caruth observes:

The repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be traumatizing: if not life threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration. And this would also seem to explain the high suicide rate of the survivors, for example, survivor of Vietnam or of concentration camps, who commit suicide only after they have found themselves completely in safety . . . then, traumatic disorder is indeed the apparent struggle to die. (45)

Freud attributes the traumatic fright not simply to the dream itself, but to what happens upon waking up. Dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back in to the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright. Once a person is traumatized, he relives with it throughout his whole life: “The trauma consists not only in having confronted death but in having survived, precisely, without knowing it” (Caruth 46). Caruth seems to say that trauma is the response to an unexpected or overwhelming

violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena.

Margalit believes that shared memory travels from person to person through institutions, such as archives, and through monuments and names of streets. He believes that shared memory is cement for the community involves. He writes “when history is contrasted with memory, history is habitually labeled as cold, even lifeless, whereas memory can be vital, vivid and alive . . . story about the past are . . . more vivid, more concrete, and better connected with live experiences” (67). He seems to say that we cannot affect the past; we cannot undo the past, resurrect the past, or revivify the past. Only descriptions of the past can be altered, improved, or animated.

Margalit states that “Jews are obligated to establish themselves as an ethical community of caring . . . the crucial role of memory for the Jewish community is to serve as a constant reminder of this debt of gratitude” (72). Describing traumatic symptoms of a person, Margalit further mentions that trauma, like a covered stain, still has effects. It makes the traumatized person react disproportionately to a present trigger on the strength of the injury from the past (126). Pandey points out that trauma as it first occurs is uncertain, but that the survivors’ uncertainty is not a simple amnesia; for the event returns insistently and against their will (124, 125).

Relevance of Trauma to Literature

After the Nazi’s mass murder of the Jews, different kind of narrative developed, that gave the evil significantly greater symbolic weight. Holocaust has become a part of contemporary literature. After the mass killing of Jews, literary artists seem to focus their writing on tragic narrative or the genre of tragedy. In tragic narrative, as Alexander writes, “There is no happy ending, no sense that something else could have been done, and no belief that the future could, or can, necessarily be

changed” (226). Alexander further mentions that in tragic narrative, protagonists are tragic because they have failed to exert control over events; impersonal, even inhuman forces are beyond control and comprehension. The sense of helplessness that permeates the genre of tragedy and the experience of pity it arouses. Instead of redemption through progress, the tragic narrative offers, as Alexander puts Nietzsche’s view “the drama of the eternal return” (226). It comes to be understood that there is no getting beyond the story of the Holocaust. There is only the possibility of returning to it. Alexander quotes Hartman regarding the tragic narrative: “Wherever we look, the events of 1933- 1945 cannot be relegated to the past. They are not over; anyone who comes to contact with them is gripped, and finds detachment difficult” (226). He opines that those who study the tragic narrative must reverse history and find a way of restoring to the imagination of coming generations the death of the catastrophe.

Alexander presents the view of Aristotle who explains the role of *catharsis* which “clarifies feeling and emotion. It does so not by allowing the audience to separate itself from the story’s characters” (italics mine 226). Alexander suggests that catharsis clarifies feeling and emotion by forcing the audience to identify with the story’s characters, compelling them to experience their suffering with them and to learn the true causes of their death. The purpose behind writing such tragic narrative by the literary artists is to compel the readers to experience dark and sinister forces that are also inside us, not only inside others. Alexander mentions that we redeem tragedy by experiencing it. We achieve redemption by dramatizing and redramatizing, experiencing and re-experiencing the archetypal trauma. We pity the victims of trauma, identifying and sympathizing with their horrible fate. We identify not only with the victims but with the perpetrators as well (227).

Alexander further adds that the only objective of writing tragic narrative is to avoid the repetition of such event, and for the social benefits of pity. The events of the Holocaust were not dramatized for the sake of drama itself. The project of renaming, dramatizing, reifying, and ritualizing the holocaust, as Alexander believes, “contributed to a moral remaking of the (post) modern (western) world” (228). The Holocaust story has been told and retold in response not only to an emotional need but a moral ambition. If progress is to be made, morality must be universalized beyond any particular time and place. Social tragic narratives are not composed by some hidden hands of history, nor do they appear all at once. Alexander writes:

The new trauma drama emerged in bits and pieces. It was a matter of this story and that, and this scene and that scene from this movie and that book, this television episode and that theater performance, this photography capturing of a moment of torture and suffering. Each of these glimpses in what Meyer Levin had called, in April 1945, “the very crawling inside of the vicious heart” contributed some element to the construction of this new sensibility, which highlighted suffering, helplessness, and dark inevitability, and which, taken together and over time, reformulated the mass killing of the Jews as the most tragic event in Western history (231).

Alexander has mentioned the way ‘trauma’ entered in to the history of modern literature. Initially, the trauma dramas were formulated for an American audience, later on; these works were distributed worldwide, seen by tens and possibly hundreds of millions of persons, and talked about incessantly by high, middle, and low-brow audiences alike. For instance, Anne Frank, the famous tragic genre writer, who wrote *Diary* – a Pulitzer Prize winning text, mentions that the purpose of writing this book is

to “bring Anne’s message to as many people as possible even if there are some who think it a sacrilege” (qtd. in Alexander 233). The purpose of writing trauma literature is to achieve an identification of the audience with the people in hiding. They are seen, not as some strange people, but persons like themselves, thrown in to this horrible situation. With them they suffer the deprivations, the terrors, the moments of tenderness, of exaltation and courage beyond belief.

Rosenfeld writes that Anne Frank’s *Diary of a young girl* is widely read in American schools, and American youngsters regularly see the stage and film versions as well. Many American girls view the tragic story of a young girl as their own story, and her fate as somehow bound up with their fate (Alexander 233). The trauma drama thus continued to work its universalizing effects.

Alexander observes that through traumatic narratives a new world order could be constructed in opposition to violence and coercion by casting and producing the trauma drama to compel identification and channel catharsis, spread to other nations and even to historic enemies of the Jewish People (239). He believes that trauma literature has continuously drawn the attention of the readers: “If the Holocaust were not conceived as a tragedy, it would not attract such continuous, even obsessive attention” (242). From such trauma drama, the readers get the post-Holocaust morality: “When evil shows its face, you do not wait, you do not let it gain strength. You must intervene” (Alexander 248).

Trauma theory began to enter ordinary language and scholarly discussions alike in the efforts to understand the kind of shell shock that affected so many soldiers during the World War I and it became expanded and elaborated in relation to other war that followed in the course of the twentieth century. Alexander writes that Elder created life course analysis to trace the cohort effects on individual identity of these

and the other cataclysmic social events in the twentieth century, he and his students adopted a similar enlightenment mode of trauma: “the holocaust trauma had not been in vain, that the drama erected upon its ashes had fundamentally changed the world or at least the West” (248). Alexander informs that the tragic trauma drama became increasingly subject to memorialization. Special research centers were funded to investigate its most minute detail and college courses were devoted to it.

The term “trauma” did not confine to the medico- legal concept. It began converging on different fields including literature. While discussing the entry of trauma to different fields, Pandey writes:

Since the mid- 1990s, the medico- legal take on trauma has converged with fields such as psychology, sociology, history, political science, philosophy, ethics, literature, and aesthetics to give rise to a fast emerging critical category called ‘Trauma Theory’, which has witnessed a significant privileging after the event of 9/11, 2001. (124)

‘Trauma studies’ has become as emerging issue in modern discourses, like a storm that may have already moved into the core of our being. The current valorization of trauma theory brings to the fore the discursivity of traumatic literature by opening itself to wider social, cultural, historical, and political issues.

Caruth opines that if Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing interest that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet (2). Caruth seems to say that literature can be better read with the implications of the theory of trauma. There is a crucial link between literature and the trauma theory. Giving an example of trauma

literature, Caruth cites Freud in which the most moving poetic picture of a fate can be found in the story told by Tasso in his romantic epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*:

Its hero, Tancred, unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda in a dual
while she is disguised in the armor of an enemy knight. After her burial
he makes his way into a strange magic forest which strikes the
Crusaders' army with terror. He slashes with his sword at a tall tree;
but blood streams from the cut and the voice of Clorinda, whose soul is
imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his
beloved once again.(1)

The action of Tancred, wounding his beloved in a battle and then, unknowingly wounding her again, represent in Freud's text, the way that the experience of a trauma repeats itself through the unknowing act of the survivor and against his very will:

"The repetition is at the heart of catastrophe- the experience that Freud will call traumatic neurosis" (Caruth 1). Like Tasso's epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*, literature of a certain period- the texts of psychoanalysis, of literature, and of literary theory- both speak about and speak through the profound story of traumatic experience.

The exploration of the language of trauma reveals the presence of cultural trauma in fictional representation which functions as a memory to settle old scores rather than a way to escape from the cycle of communal violence. The concept of trauma has become a tool of literary and cultural analysis. The work of the critic of the literature of trauma is both to identify and explicate literature by members of survivor groups and to deconstruct the process by which the dominant culture codifies their traumatic experience. James Berger presents the needs and values of a theory of trauma in the United States at present and interest of trauma among literary and cultural theorists, thus:

First, we can look at a popular culture and mass media obsessed by repetitions of violent disasters: at the successions of DieHards, Terminators, and Robocops, as well as Nightmares on Elm Street, disease and epidemic films, and now the return of the "classic" disaster films of twisters and turbulence and the repeated sequences of miniapocalypses within each film; at "real life" cop shows; and at the news itself, that never exhausted source of pure horror. I am fascinated by the "black box" obsession that follows each airplane crash -the wish (which I share) to witness the last moments, especially the moment that reveals the certainty of death entering the pilot's consciousness. Why do I want to know this, over and over? (571)

The survivor, who has passed through the catastrophe, is a kind of living black box, a source of final knowledge and authority. Berger observes that world wars, local wars, civil wars, ideological wars, ethnic wars, the two atomic bomb attacks, the cold war, genocides, famines, epidemics, and lesser turmoil of all kinds, have shaped contemporary modes of viewing the world (572). But trauma is not simply another word for disaster. Trauma provides a method of interpretation. An event experienced as shattering may actually produce its full impact only years later. The idea of trauma allows for an interpretation of cultural symptoms- of the growths, wounds, scars on a social body, and its compulsive, repeated actions. Berger presents LaCapra's view who says that "trauma provides a method for rethinking postmodern and poststructuralist theories in a clearer historical context . . . Each text would be, in effect, a site of trauma with which the reader would have to engage" (576).

Richard J. Bernstein says that there has been an intensive exploration of such related themes as trauma, testimony, witnessing, and the meaning of evil: "We have

witnessed an outpouring of books, articles, and conferences dedicated to this cluster of topics and themes” (165). Thus, trauma has become a hot topic and a dominant concern in the field of literature since it has captured the imagination of so many thinkers, artists, and poets. Bernstein adds that one cannot underestimate the significance of the Holocaust and the fascination with almost every aspect of the Nazi period. There is simply no other period in history that has been so thoroughly studied, discussed, debated, and represented in a variety of mediums, and there does not seem to be any diminution of interest (165). Even more significant is what happened to the survivors of the Nazi concentration and death camps. Many felt that they could not speak about their experiences or that no one wanted to hear their stories. It was only in the late 1960s that terms like “Holocaust” and “Auschwitz o” began to gain widespread acceptance. Only slowly the public began to pay attention to the narratives and testimonies of Holocaust survivors. Since then there has been a continuous stream of memoirs and documentaries. Gradually, thinkers began to apply and extend categories developed in other disciplines in order to understand the complexities and dynamics of Holocaust memories – concepts such as trauma and latency. Bernstein says:

The concepts of trauma and latency that Freud had forged in a psychoanalytic context were extended and applied to collective and cultural memory. The concern with the cluster of issues dealing with memory has certainly not been limited to the Holocaust. Similar patterns of trauma, latency, and cultural memory and forgetfulness were applicable to other historical phenomena—from the memories of Hiroshima and the Gulag to the dirty wars in Argentina and the torture and disappearances in Pinochet’s Chile. (166)

Overcoming Trauma

Sztompka presents some strategies of coping with trauma. He emphasizes on the expansion of personal and social capital and the growth of resourcefulness which help people feel more secured. Good connection is a decisive or very important factor of life chances. He adds that strong and extended families provide insurance in case of life calamities, support in raising children, therefore allowing the pursuit of educational aspiration for the parents (191). The religious community is another factor that helps to alleviate trauma as Sztompka writes “the support and security provided by the church may be important in alleviating the trauma” (191). The chance of overcoming trauma depends on the scope of individual resources, such as education, connection, rootedness, financial capital, and so on, that can be mobilized in defense against trauma and insulate against its impact. Sztompka further suggests that shopping, dining out, driving fast cars, taking trips to other countries, entertaining lavishly, and enjoying increased leisure are newly discovered pleasure that raise the general mood of satisfaction and optimism (190).

Trauma has positive function too. It appears as a stimulating and mobilizing factor for human agency, which through coping with and overcoming, contributes to the repair of culture. Cultural trauma, in spite of its immediate negative, painful consequences, exhibits its positive, functional potential “as a force of social becoming” (Sztompka 194). Alexander views that a traumatic event may be regarded as ontologically evil but its badness or evility can be ameliorated and overcome. He says that the trauma created by social evil would be overcome, that “Nazism would be defeated and eliminated from the world . . . by a new and powerful social light” (209). Those who had returned from the war were concerned with building a family and a career, not with dwelling on the horror of the past, caring for the survivors to

build new lives in their adopted homes. It is like building the new world upon the ashes of the old.

Alexander puts the view of Zionists who argue that “the Jewish trauma could be redeemed, that Jews could both sanctify the victims and put the trauma behind them, only if they returned to Jerusalem” (220). The German parliament approved a plan for erecting a vast memorial of two thousand stone pillars to the victims of the Holocaust at the heart of Berlin. Cohen mentions the view of a leading politician regarding the memorial: “We are not building this monument solely for the Jews. We are building it for ourselves” (qtd. in Alexander 254). Smelser mentions that “the outpouring of collective solidarity, goodwill toward others . . . can be strategies of coping with shock, fear and disgust” (281). Avishai Margalit, in his famous book *The Ethics of Memory*, talks about the way of healing trauma by making the repressed memories open. He writes, “Making the traumatic, repressed communal memories open, explicit, and conscious is said to have healing power. . . . this is the only way to overcome the irrationality that springs from past trauma, and the only way to gain peace of mind” (8). He believes that revealing the truth about the past will bring reconciliation. Human beings have strong desires for immortality as that of a name. Their trauma is linked to their horror of extinction and utter oblivion. Their project of memory is basically a religious project to secure some form of immortality (25).

Margalit believes that “caring enhances a sense of belonging. It gives the other the feeling of being secure in having our attention and concern” (34). When we care about another, we find it natural to expect the other to be one with whom we share a common past and common memories. Hence, there is mutual cooperation in alleviating the trauma of each other’s. Margalit opines that “our moral obligation should be extended to all: to the near and dear as well as to the far and away” (36, 37).

We ought to guide our behavior towards those to whom we are related just by virtue of their being fellow human being. Love is a duty that all human beings have towards one another, whether or not they find the others worthy of it.

Margalit writes about why German people established the monument in Berlin. He says that the monument in Berlin is an effort by the German people to reestablish themselves as an ethical community, encumbered with painful shared memories, and to turn their cruelty which was what tied them to the Jews, into repentance (81). The purpose of formulating such communities of memory is to engage painful traumatic memories from the past. Collective existences are webs of relations based on bonds in which shared memories play a crucial role. Our ethical relations seem like natural extensions of family relation. Margalit presents that for the goodness within the relation, memory is crucial. So we ethically ought to remember on two counts: for the sake of the goodness within the relation and for the sake of the goodness of the relation (106).

It is injustice rather than justice, tyranny rather than freedom, poverty rather than equality, humiliation rather than dignity that hurt us into politics. It is the centrality of wounding emotions that leave scars in the form of painful memories, in motivating our political actions. Eradicating cruelty and humiliation is more urgent than promoting and creating positive well-being (Margalit 114). In an ethical community, it is love and caring that should reign supreme. Margalit views that to become a moral witness; one has to witness evil and the suffering it produces. He seems to say that witnessing only evil or only suffering is not enough. Being a moral witness involves witnessing actual suffering, not just intended suffering: "A moral witness has knowledge- by- acquaintance of suffering" (149). A moral witness is one who experiences the suffering- one who is not just an observer but also a sufferer. The

moral witness plays a special role in uncovering the evil he or she encounters.

Margalit observes that “Evil regimes try hard to cover up the enormity of their crimes, and the moral witness tries to expose it” (165). The most solid materials for uncovering the facts of the crime are the memories of the survivors.

Margalit emphasizes *hope* for overcoming trauma. “Hope is the eschatological expectation of future salvation . . . hope about a harmonious moral (ethical) order toward which history is striving in spite of temporary setbacks” (italics mine 152). Margalit focuses on the importance of forgiveness. He quotes Jeremiah: “For I will forgive their wrongdoing and remember their sin no more” (169). The one who forgives and forgets is God. Forgetting plays a double role- forgetting the person who has sinned, and forgetting the sin itself. Forgiving means overcoming anger and vengefulness. The decision to forgive makes one stop brooding on the past wrong, stop telling it to other people, with the end result of forgetting it or forgetting that it once mattered to you greatly. Forgiveness restores the personal relationship between the offender and the offended. (Margalit 196).

Trauma carries the potentiality of enabling the traumatized subject to get over the shock of the traumatic moment for it is not only a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site. Pandey suggests that a sharing of traumatic experience through the mutual acts of speaking and listening helps the victims and survivors confront it and work through it (128). The mutual acts of speaking traumatic experience and listening to the traumas of the victims and survivors become important not only for the therapeutic need that they serve but also because they are part of the truth in any particular version of history.

Malkki points out about the significance of counseling individual person under circumstances in which they face difficult outcomes (341). Peter Savodnik focuses on

the remembering past genocides to stop gross crimes against humanity because we have an obligation to prevent future genocides from taking place and remembering past genocides is a good way to do that (90). He seems to say that not remembering is to contribute death and destruction. Backward-looking emotions and attitudes can play an important role in democratic life.

Kevin Z. Moore elaborates that in a rapidly fragmenting world where collective memory plays a prominent role in the determination of rights, privileges, and national and tribal boundaries, the ethics of memory is an urgent topic. He emphasizes on the ethical performance of trauma through memory since “memory, with its implied ethics of forgiveness and forgetting, has left the sacred perimeters of temple, church . . . to become a public agent of national redemption” (77). Memory, after all, is a means of belonging- people feel that they belong where they remember and they want to remain and prosper there. Moore agrees with Margalit’s cautions that forgiveness must include remembering, otherwise, logically, there is nothing to forgive (77). Moore suggests that if you want to be ethical, than you ought to act in a caring way toward those you have decided deserve such caring. A nation or ethnic group can remember and forgive, commemorating a horror as an aspect of national identity and yet ameliorate the vengeance (80). Nikunjji opines that “The best and the easiest way to get rid of traumas is “to live in the present, rather than escape into a negative future or a painful past” (15).

Ethics of Trauma

Levinas, in his *Otherwise*, defines ethics as a responsibility to the other, described as the neighbor, the widow, the orphan, whose profound destitution places one’s very being in to question. But the other, as he adds “orders me before being recognized . . . assigns me before I designate him” (87). Ethics of trauma suggests that

we should consider the sufferings of others who might belong to different races or groups. Levina's conceptualization of responsibility is like a debt that one can never pay to the other. It is a duty that does not ask for consent that comes into us traumatically. In Levina's account, our humanity arises from our inescapable responsibility to the other; our subjectivity is an exposure to the other. Levinas' vision of the encounter with the neighbor gives us a humanism that would appear to transcend the narrow definitions of the human. One experiences an intimation of one's humanity as a traumatic subjection to the other. The ethical relation is, as Walsh puts Levina's description, is the "shuddering of the human, the sleepless night of insomnia, the experience of exile and, in his stunning conflation of responsibility with maternity, the gestation of the other" (173).

Ethics requires one to bear those to whom one does not have a familial relation. In doing so, Levinas conceives of responsibility which is elevated through a discourse of ethics and the experience of suffering. Levinas cautions us that we need not concern ourselves with cultural context; the subject need only know that the neighbor or other is the persecuted one for whom the subject is responsible. Thus, the subject is an exposure to the suffering of the other, and the suffering of the other is appropriated as maternal suffering. Levinas writes that responsibility to the other is an exposure to pain that is registered as a debt: "Pain is a pure deficit, an increase of debt in a subject that does not have a hold on itself, does not join up the two ends" (*Otherwise* 55). He says that subjectivity is a welcoming or hospitality to the other. Subjectivity is sensibility- an exposure to other, vulnerability and a responsibility in the proximity of the others (77). In his "Truth of Disclosure and Truth of Testimony" Levinas writes of subjectivity as an experience of "all the gravity of the body . . . the giving – to – the – other – the – bread – from – one's – mouth" (102). He focuses on

the pain of the subject who suffers for the other. To maintain ethical relationship, the subject realizes that the other is the persecuted one for whom he is responsible to the point of being a hostage.

In his *Basic Philosophical Writings*, Levinas presents that in the ethical relation with the other, the subject is under an accusation by the other, from which it cannot escape. The subject's guilt becomes positive in assuming responsibility for the other. Responsibility is infinite. In fact, the more the subject faces up to its responsibilities, the more it becomes responsible (51). The subject is always in both an ethical and a political relation with the other. Levinas' own examples from everyday life, such as the knock on the door whereby the other disturbs the complacent subject and the ethical recognition of the other implied in saying "after you", "hello", and "goodbye", amount to brief descriptions of an ethical interaction with the other in a familiar social situation (*Entre Nous* 166). For Levinas there is something more important than my own death, and that is the death of the other; the importance of the life and death of the other over that of the subject.

Eduard Jordaan says that in the ethical resistance of the other, the other resists the subject not as another opposing freedom, but awakens the subject to the fact that it has oppressed the other through the exercise of its naïve freedom and the parallel tendency to subject the world to its totalizing mastery. The negativity of shame becomes positive in assuming responsibility for the other (25). It is the "face" of the other that disturbs the complacency and naïveté of the subject; the face signifies what is unique in every person, uniqueness, a uniqueness that is ethical. Levinas believes that the subject is born into a world filled with others, whose places the subject will come to usurp, but which will be explained and made sense of in historical narrative. The other comes to the subject from outside historical narrative. The other exists

outside the closure and thematisation of history, “coming from one knows not where” (*Otherwise* 37) and remains resistant to such thematisation. In the ethical relation with the other, responsibility is asymmetrical. The other’s behavior towards me is his concern and does not affect the fact of my responsibility.

In responsibility for the other, the subject is individuated. “I can substitute myself for everyone, but no one can substitute himself for me” (Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity* 101). Responsibility for the other is incumbent upon me, and me alone. Levinas sees individuation in terms of responsibility for the other as a morally superior form of individuation: “the most profound adventure of subjectivity, its ultimate intimacy” (*Entre Nous* 99). The pinnacle of individuation is that of substituting oneself for the other to the point of dying for the other. The ethical responsibility of the one – for – the other may not be lost sight of.

The suffering of the other may not simply be dismissed by saying “it is terrible”, for the suffering of the other is not just terrible; it is a crime. Levinas, in his essay, “Reflections on the Philosophy” mentions that more than liberalism is needed “to achieve an authentic dignity for the human subject” (63). For him, more is required than merely being good in the private sphere. Levinas, in his 1996, praises the singularity of the selfless action for the other during hopeless times: “To act for remote things at the moment in which Hitlerism triumphed, in the deaf hours of this night without hours- independently of every evaluation of the ‘forces in presence’ - is, no doubt, the summit of nobility” (51).

Whether people have a moral responsibility to remember certain things or not. This is the question that lies at the heart of the ethics of memory. It is a question, Margalit suggests, that can and should influence individual lives as well as collective decision- making about what kind of society we want to live in and how that society

ought to interact with societies around the globe (Savodnik 88). A person's behavior is evaluated in the context of relation with others. Savodnic presents Margalit's distinction between ethics and morality. Ethics refers to relation between people who know each other. Margalit calls these connections "thick relations." Morality refers to relation between people and strangers, or universal "man." He calls these connections "thin relation." Importantly, both ethics and morality refer to interactions (89).

In *The Ethics of Memory*, Margalit points out that memory is the cement that holds thick relations together. Therefore, memory becomes an obvious concern of ethics, which is the enterprise that tells us how we should conduct our thick relations (8). He further adds that there is "a triangle of relations that is at the center of an ethics of memory. One side of the triangle connects memory and caring, the second connects caring and ethics" (27). Thus, caring connects memory with ethics. It is natural that when we care others, we remember them, and then, we maintain our ethics toward them. But, when we stop caring others, we forget them. Therefore, caring, which is a demanding attitude toward others, is a key for ethical relations.

Margalit opines that some of us are by inclination good- hearted people, who may have a diffused benign attitude toward our fellow human beings in general (33). He clarifies that caring does not necessarily require liking. What we find hard is the attention that is implied by caring. We need morality to overcome our natural indifference to others. Indeed, we need morality not so much to counter evil as to counter indifference. One has to admit that the combination of evil and indifference is lethal, like the combination of poison and water. We need the right doses of sympathy toward our fellow human beings to motivate us. Caring cares about the well-being of meaningful others. It is concerned with their wants and needs. Love is a special form of caring (34). Margalit believes that "caring, in addition to being a sentiment, is an

attitude. It is a way of viewing or perceiving as much as a way of doing. It is a selfless attitude” (35).

Martin Heidegger made famous the idea of caring. It is for him a basic feature of the human condition. It manifests itself in looking after someone, in a way that only creatures who have a sense of an open future can care. He stresses the essential role of the future in his idea of caring (236). Caring is a selfless attitude as far as our personal ego is concerned. But it is not immune to collective egoism in the form, for example, of tribalism or ethnocentrism. Margalit says that we are all familiar with people who care greatly about their people and who are ready to make real sacrifices for them but who have utter disregard for those outside the tribe (35). He seems to say that our countrymen engage our sympathy more than foreigners do. Sympathy is a response to suffering, not to success. We offer sympathy to the one that lost the competition but not to the one who won it.

Kant’s view as “Love thy neighbor as thyself” (2) is a duty that all human beings have toward one another since they are people with whom we have historical relations, and not just a brief accidental encounter. In the context of ethics, a neighbor is someone with whom we have a history of a meaningful, positive, personal relationship. Margalit writes that morality can be turned into ethics by “making all relations thick” (45). He highlights the importance of caring for the formation of an ethical community. He describes:

We may care for people and for communities we have not encountered nor are likely to encounter in our lifetime. So why should not humanity constitute such a community based on caring? The attitude of caring, after all, is based on belonging, not on achievement. So belonging to the “family of man” should be enough. What do we imagine when we

imagine a community with whom we are supposed to have thick relations? My answer is that we imagine an extension of family relations that would include relatives we have not met. So why not imagine “the family of man” to be such an extended family? (75)

In ethics, good and bad are to be directly attributed to relationships. Ethical relation, as Margalit argues, cannot be immoral relations: exploitative, demeaning, cruel, humiliating, and so on (87). He points out that in an ethical community it is love, or rather caring, that should reign supreme. Nepotism- that is, favoritism based on family ties is unethical. Nepotism is favoring a family member over a nonmember who has a much better moral claim to the job. So, it is immoral and unethical. A moral witness may well give voice to an ethical community that is endangered by an evil force. Ethics is objective. Margalit raises an ethical and political question as she writes: “Should we remember the hatred of our ancestors to their detractors, out of loyalty to our ancestors? The price of such memory can be high. It can poison our relationship with the innocent descendants of these oppressors” (110). It is better to forget the wounding emotions that leave scars in the form of painful memories.

Bernstein says that memory, memorialization, and commemoration all involve ethical obligations. We feel that certain events and persons ought to be remembered: “We do condemn individuals or societies for forgetting, and praise them for keeping certain memories alive” (168). Memory is a primary concern for ethics and the heart of ethics involves caring. Memory is partly constitutive of the notion of care. Bernstein quotes Margalit: “If I care for someone or something, and then I forget that person or that thing, this means that I have stopped caring for him or it” (169). It is incoherent to say that I care for someone if I cannot remember that person. Bernstein suggests that it is a crucial issue for ethics – and for the ethics of memory – to extend

our caring relation to persons about whom we might initially be quite indifferent – to person with whom we have not had thick relations.

In ethical representations of trauma, Pandey says that “a (very) thin universalism overlays a thick particularism” (132). He presents Edward Said’s opinion in regard of ethical representation of trauma by a writer thus:

A trauma writer should develop a humanistic, critical consciousness. Instead of saying, “These are two warring ethnic identities, simple opposition, immemorial feuds, hatreds,” we should rather . . . say, “These are two communities of suffering.” “Then one can resolve in some way the problem by looking at the possibilities of co- existence, not the notion of separation and partition.” (136)

Saidian humanism, which is centered on peaceful co-existence rather than the manufactured clash of civilizations, concentrates on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together in far more interesting ways.

Ethical education involves enlarging the range of persons and things that we ought to care about. This does not mean that we have to extend this to all of humanity. Most of us living today never had any thick relations with the victims of the Holocaust. This does not mean that we have no ethical obligation to remember them?” (174). Everyone has a moral obligation to remember, as Ross Pole cites Margalit, “gross crime against humanity, especially when those crimes are an attack on the very notion of a shared humanity” (835). But generally speaking, the responsibility to remember arises in the context of our thick relations, and is thus, an ethical one. Poole points out that the term “ethics” covers two quite distinct domains. The first is the field of personal and relatively intimate relations – our relations to the

near and dear. The second is the domain of membership, for example, our membership of the state, or church, or even a university. In these cases, we will not personally know most of our fellow citizens, communicants, or colleagues. We relate to them, not directly, but as fellow members. Our relationship is mediated by a conception of the collectivity to which we belong (836).

Politics of Trauma

The politics of the narrativization of trauma is to develop strategies for preventing its reproduction and the subsequent intergenerational circulation of violence, highly visible in cases like South Africa or Palestine. The commemorations of Nazi regime in West German Republic were popular among the public. West Germany had developed quite a different interpretation regarding the Nazi regime. Undoubtedly, this interpretation deserves a place in the ever-lasting German discourse over the German guilt, the Holocaust and the legacy of the Nazi past. Thus, the politics behind the commemoration of Nazi regime in West German is to overcome the German guilt of the Holocaust and the legacy of the Nazi past.

Eyerman views that the politics of trauma lies in the performance of trauma. In the context of postcolonialism and resurgence of ethnic politics, the performance of trauma permits reconciliation not only of an internal conflict, but also of cultural trauma. This is accomplished through the coexistence of a distinctive and relatively autonomous collective history and the progressive political and economic integration (111). Eyerman means to say that remembering, working through, and speaking out traumas lead to the secular life of peaceful coexistence of the people of different political and ethnic groups.

Giesen writes that the new generation of German nation did not want to be a part of this nation that bears the stigma of perpetrators. The young German felt the

stigma of collective shame and guilt. They did not want to belong to their father's nation: "This group shifted sides and identified with the victims. It became fashionable to give children Jewish names" (27). Thus, the victims not only had a voice again, but also were represented by personal names within the German nation. The politics behind the identification of the new generation with the victims is to promote the secular life of peaceful coexistence between the perpetrators and the victims.

Giesen suggests that rituals reconcile and reunite oppositions and ruptures and provide ways to overcome traumas and losses. Public rituals of confessing the guilt for Holocaust were performed in the fifties and early sixties. He says that for the reconciliation of the oppositions, German president, Heuss, gave a speech at the memorial site in Bergen Belsen. Heuss spoke the famous phrase, "None will lift this shame from us" (130). His speech helps to reconcile and reunite opposition groups. Thus, politics of trauma lies in his speech. He enacted a new narrative that confessed the collective guilt of the German nation, with respect to the Jewish victims. Regarding the politics of performing traumas, Giesen further adds that although the issue of the Holocaust had been addressed before in public by some political representatives of the federal republic, for example, by president Heuss, Mayor Reuter of Berlin, and the leader of the Social Democrats, Schumacher, it was the kneeling of Brandt in Warsaw that became an icon of recent German history (131).

Later, it became part of the rituals performed by heads of state visiting other states and paying respect to the dead of the host nation. As a result "the hostility of the past is blurred in the common act of mourning" (Giesen 132). The trauma of perpetrators who confess their guilt was turned into a triumph that could even be regarded as a new model for public politics. In this tradition an innocent person can,

in an extraordinary public act, humiliate himself in order to relieve the burden of collective guilt from his people. Giesen presents the example of the German president Weizacker, who gave his most impressive memorial speech on the occasion of the fortieth commemoration of May 1945, in which he recalled the different groups of victims, most prominently among them the Jewish citizens. His motive behind recalling Jewish victims in his speech is to develop peaceful coexistence between Jewish and other citizens of the nation. Here lies the politics of trauma.

Giesen further adds that ten years after the German president's memorial speech, thousands of Germans attended observances at the memorial sites at the concentration camps at the fiftieth commemoration, and January 27, the day when the camp Auschwitz was liberated, was officially instituted as a German memorial day for the victims of Nazism (134). These activities of the German government promoted the secular life of peaceful coexistence between the descents of the Jews who are known as victims and other German people who are recognized as the descents of the perpetrators. The trauma, unspeakable in the years after 1945, had been turned into the stigma of collective guilt, publicly contested, and debated between generations. These performances of trauma could soothe the pain or relieve the traumas of the victims, and consequently merge the positions of perpetrators and victims. Hence, the once clear-cut distinction between victims and perpetrators would blur.

Giesen observes that the presentation of the past traumas in German and U.S. movies transferred the issue to a new institutional arena that tends to overcome oppositions and conflicts by the ritual construction of communality. Nobody in the audience could disagree with the fundamental evaluation of the Holocaust, because the movies presented a story and not an argument (141). In this way, the media staging of trauma succeeds in the representation of the victims as subjects with a face,

a name, and a voice. Those who have been reduced to mere objects are remembered as co-humans, as suffering subjects, as members of the national community. Thus, media staging converts the traumas of the past into the power of the present day. The politics of such collective rituals regarding traumas is to heal the fundamental breakdown of commonality between perpetrators and victims, and develop peaceful co-existence between them.

Margalit claims that there is an internal relation between memory and caring, if so, there is an internal relation between ethics and politics when we are dealing with issues of collective memory. Agreeing with Margalit, Bernstein says that “community of memory is a political community” (176). But not all political communities are communities of memory. For example, how the events of 9/11 ought to be memorialized. There are many different groups involved in these debates: survivors, family members of those who were killed, property developers, architects, local, state, and federal officials, and so on. But these debates are about how we ought to remember victims about whom we care. These are essentially ethical political disputes about our collective responsibilities and obligations (Bernstein 176). It is important to remember those wounding emotions such as the events of 9/11 that leave scars in the form of painful memories and which are central for motivating our political actions.

Victor Roudemetof mentions that trauma studies concentrate on the process of social signification through which relics or sites are conceptualized as being of great significance to the life of a group or a community. Such a process is inherently political, for different constituencies employ their claim to the past as a means for fostering claims to the present (6). He points out that in order to analyze the social construction of heroes, victims, and perpetrators; the author develops a theoretical scheme whereby moments of triumph are contrasted against the moments of trauma.

Depending upon whether the actor's subjectivity is preserved or damaged and whether the actor's efforts at mastering the world around him/her are successful or not, the end result is the creation of different characters who are based on human personality structure and, therefore, on a transhistorical interpretation of subjective feelings and emotion – such as the construction of Holocaust survivors as victims, and the construction of the post – World War II German nation as the perpetrator (8). He seems to say that most studies focus on the representation of specific events within a given chronological, geographical, or other setting; their insights into past and present situations are insufficiently linked to social collectives and their historical consciousness.

Roudometof further states that Alexander is concerned with the role of trauma in the modern world and the ways in which “cultural trauma is produced through claims in the public sphere by different and often competing carrier groups that seek to put forth their own interpretations of the past as a means of advancing specific claims” (10). Cultural trauma is, therefore, a new master narrative that is produced by developing persuasive accounts of the nature of pain, the nature of the victim, the relation between trauma victim and wider audience, and finally, the attribution of responsibility. In terms of Alexander's theoretical contribution to the field, Spillman comments that “the core analysis of changes in the meaning of the Holocaust demonstrates that analyzing cultural structures offers empirical insight even beyond what we can read in the well – developed literature on collective memory” (4).

The theoretical literature described above reveals that trauma is an unhealable wound of the mind caused by shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident which returns to haunt the survivor later on. Sometimes trauma affects a group of people losing their identity and meaning, and tearing their social fabric. Trauma

leaves scars on the victims ranging from the paralysis of a limb to acute illness and emotional disturbances. Trauma hunts the victim repeatedly which becomes the history of the traumatized individual. Literary artists focused their writing on traumas after the mass killing of the Jews, forcing the readers or audiences to identify themselves with the characters and experience their sufferings. The purpose of writing books on trauma is to provide message to as many people as possible with a view to reconciling and uniting the oppositions such as perpetrators and victims. This is what we understand as politics of trauma. Ethics, on the other hand, is a responsibility to others. When a person extends his helpful hands to the sufferings of others who may belong to different groups or races, which is what we understand as ethics of trauma.

CHAPTER III

TRAUMA OF THE APARTHEID IN *AGE OF IRON*

“*Age of Iron* dramatizes the impact of the corrupt social context on the individual South African, the manner in which it distorts his or her essential humanity” (“Who Clipped the Hollyhocks?” 2).

Michael Marais

Apartheid is defined as segregation on the grounds of race. It refers primarily to the conditions in South Africa from 1948, when the National Party was voted into power, until 1994. South Africa discriminated people on the grounds of race openly and legally. In 1960, a large group of blacks in the town of Sharpeville refused to carry their passes. Then, the apartheid government reacted by arresting them and passing more repressive laws. The government declared a state of emergency and responded with fines, imprisonment, and whippings. Seventy black demonstrators were killed, wounding one hundred and eighty-seven others in the year. In 1976, thousands of students in the black township of Soweto protested demanding that they should be taught in English rather than the Afrikaans. But the apartheid police fired on the demonstrators, sparking nationwide riots and more repression. They killed more than 500 protesters within a year. In the second half of the 1980s, internal conflict reached its most intense phase in South Africa. This is the period when, as Gilbert Yeoh writes, “increasingly militant township youth were locked in combat against the state which, with emergency powers, was equally willing to utilize violence against the young insurgents” (107). J.M. Coetzee has written *Age of Iron* during such horrible situation of apartheid in South Africa. He reveals the ethics of both white and black characters who share and care each other during their hard times of apartheid in this novel.

Coetzee's characters, whether they are whites or non-whites are ethical since they help others while facing traumas created by the apartheid regime of South Africa in *Age of Iron*. His characters pay attention to the sufferings of others forgetting their own trauma. The author seems to create a harmonious society of South African whites and non-whites by making them ethical to others in this novel. His both white and black characters live together though blacks are not allowed to go and live with whites at that time in the reality. He seems to give a message to the apartheid regime of South Africa that both whites and non-whites are the children of God and human beings should not prohibit them from living together through his fiction.

Coetzee explains the trauma of both white and black characters created by the apartheid regime of South Africa in *Age of Iron*. But, even if the characters are traumatized, they do not forget to exhibit their ethical behavior to those who do not belong to their race, and who are suffering. The more traumatized the characters are, the closer they are with others. His characters are ethical in a sense that they are fair to others and think well of others. Ethics, as Henry Sidgwick writes, is "any rational procedure by which we determine what individual human beings 'ought' to do or what it is 'right' for them to do" (1). Sidgwick's definition of ethics as a rational procedure to do what ought to be done for others in their critical situation, is applicable in Coetzee's characters who always extend their helpful hands to the trauma of other characters. They often sympathize with others' pain. Some of them even sacrifice themselves for the happiness of others.

Coetzee depicts the trauma of Mrs Curren, an old white woman, the protagonist of the novel, who suffers much by the apartheid regime of South Africa in *Age of Iron*. She is alone in her life and suffers from loneliness a lot. Her only daughter has left South Africa for America thirty years before declaring that she

would never return to South Africa again. She is married to an American and has two sons. Moreover, Mrs Curren has a breast cancer and suffers much from the pain it causes. On the one hand, she has a trauma of her deadly disease and loneliness; she becomes the victim of the apartheid police brutality and unethical behavior of the new generation of South Africa, on the other. Physically she is so weak that she cannot start her car and do shopping herself.

Although Mrs Curren is herself physically weak and mentally disturbed, she takes care of those who come and stay at her house in the novel. Her door is open for anyone, whatever race they belong to. There are six black Africans namely, Florence, her two daughters Hope and Beauty, her son Bheki, his friend John, and Mr Vercuiel with his dog who stay at her house, and to whom she provides with food and shelter. Moreover, she is much worried about them thinking about their security from the threat of apartheid police. Anyhow she serves these non-white characters when they are in their dire need of shelter, food, and protection. These black characters too assist her in her trauma of poor physical condition and loneliness. In this way, Coetzee depicts the ethical behavior of his characters who take care of others irrespective of their race, which finally brings them to a harmonious relation and peaceful co-existence in *Age of Iron*.

Trauma of Police Brutality

In *Age of Iron*, almost all characters, whether they belong to white community or black, suffer from the brutality of the apartheid police. Coetzee discloses the trauma of all his characters created by the apartheid police in this novel. But, even if his characters have the trauma of police horror, they keep on helping each other. For instance, in this novel, a white character upsets when he sees the police torturing the black one, and vice versa. The novel explores how South African government used

police force against those who participated in the revolution against the apartheid regime of South Africa that led to the death of many innocent people, including school boys, which created trauma to their family members. Coetzee depicts such horrible situation of South Africa with a view to showing how the South African blacks and whites, even in such painful condition, involve in helping and wiping others' tear, forgetting their own pain in the novel. Regarding police brutality and dramatic increase in deaths in South Africa, David Bruce presents a data that "ICD reports covering its first year of operation - from April 1997 to March 1998, indicated that there had been 737 police action and custody deaths. In the following year, ending March 1999, the ICD recorded 756 of these deaths" (142). Bruce's data seems to match with the events that occur in *Age of Iron*, in which Mrs. Curren witnesses the sufferings of black Africans caused by the apartheid police, and moves forward to save their lives.

Mrs Curren's house is a safer place for other characters compared to other places, such as Guguletu, where there is trouble all the time, and where the police come after the children, shooting and putting them in jails in *Age of Iron*. Florence – a house maid of Curren, her two daughters, her son Bheki, and his friend John also live in Mrs Curren's house to be protected from the police. But, unfortunately, Bheki and John become the victim of police brutality while they are cycling in the road. A yellow van of the police pushed them to strike with a truck loaded with pipes and rods. As a result, they suffer from a terrible accident intentionally caused by the police. Mrs Curren describes:

A light truck stood parked at the curbside, with pipes and rods in the back. There was room enough for the bicycle to pass. But as the yellow van drew level with the boys, the near-side door swung open and

slapped them sideways. The bicycle wobbled and went out of control. I had a glimpse of Bheki sliding down, his arms above his head, of the other boy standing on the pedals, averting his face, stretching out a hand in a warding gesture. . . 'Ah!' of exhaled breath, the crash of the bicycle colliding with the plumber's truck. 'God!' I screamed in a shrill voice that, hanging in the air, I did not recognize as my own. Time seemed to stop and then resume, leaving a gap: in one instant the boy put out a hand to save himself. (55)

The police who pushed them to the back of the truck had been there since the day before. They had been following the boys with an ill intention of killing them. John lies on his back with the blood that streams down his face. The flow does not stop. The truck driver tries to stop the blood using his jacket. Coetzee's other characters too try their best to save John and his friend, and hence performing their ethical responsibility to others in their sufferings. John gets deep injury in his forehead that Curren describes it as: "I saw that the flesh across the forehead hung open in a loose flap as if sliced with a butcher's knife. Blood flowed in a sheet into the boy's eyes and made his hair glisten; it dropped on to the pavement, it was everywhere" (57).

Although, Curren is herself sick and weak, she forgets her pain, and tries her best to save the boy's life whatever way she can: "'Let me,' I said to the plumber. He made way. Kneeling, I lifted aside the sodden blue jacket. Blood ran down the boy's face in a steady, even sheet. Between thumbs and forefingers I pinched together as much as I could of the open flap" (58). As long as she pinches tight, she can hold in most of the flow. But when she relaxes, the blood pours again steadily. When she sees the blood, she feels that it is the blood, like yours and mine (58). Curren's ethics reflects in her

action and statement. She believes that blood of all mankind is one and same whether it belongs to whites or blacks.

John has a terrible cut across the forehead. Since he has lost a lot of blood, he becomes unconscious. Curren's heart breaks down when she sees his terrible condition. She expresses her sympathy on him: "I had the impression he was holding back tears. A child, no more than a child, playing on a bicycle" (61). She can do nothing against the police. She calls for an ambulance. John's injury is an example, which shows how the apartheid police are creating trauma everywhere in South Africa without any reason, and how the innocent black school children become the victim of it. Later on, Bheki, another victim of the police says that the police "are waging this terror against us. They are terrorists" (61). John was taken to a hospital but he was not given any attention in the hospital just because he is black. Mrs. Curren, who herself is suffering from the breast cancer, goes to the hospital to search for John who is still unconscious. She is tired, her hip aches and there is an unpleasant taste in her mouth. She cannot recognize John at first. Later on, as she recognizes him, she presents his heart-rending picture, thus: "I did not recognize the boy whose blood had stuck my fingers together. His head was bandaged, his face puffy, his left arm strapped against his chest. He wore pale blue hospital pyjamas" (71).

John is not Curren's relative, nor has she ever seen him before, still she serves him as her own child. She goes to the hospital to meet him with some fruit: "'You must get well quickly. I have brought you some fruit.' On the cabinet I placed the fruit: an apple, a pear" (71). The ethics of trauma lies in her kind treatment of the one who is not her relative, but a fellow human being. Levinas' definition of ethics "as a responsibility to the other, described as the neighbor, the widow, the orphan, whose profound destitution places one's very being in to question" (*Otherwise* 87) is applied

in Mrs Curren's ethical performance since she fulfils her responsibility for anyone who suffers, even if her own being is in question. In the case of John too, she does what she can for him. Before she leaves the hospital, she touches his free hand and wishes him to sleep well and feel better in the morning. She cares him like a mother who cares her own son.

Florence's son, Bheki is killed by the apartheid police in Guguletu, a place where people's uprising against apartheid regime is at the climax. Mrs Curren goes to Guguletu with her maid, Florence in her car. Regarding Curren's journey to Guguletu, Geertsema views that her journey into Guguletu is also a "journey into Mrs Curren's consciousness, enabling her to see, forcing itself upon her . . . the violence of the other, the unspeakableness of the other, with which Mrs Curren is confronted" (95). Geertsema's view of unspeakableness of the other seems to be relevant to me to make a point that the journey and experience of others' suffering in Guguletu makes Curren more ethical for others. When Florence knows about her son's murder by the police, she puts her head on Thabane's shoulder and bursts into tears. Bheki's dead body, alone with the dead bodies of other four boys has been demonstrated against the wall of a hall to be noticed by the public so that they would not involve in the violence. Mrs Curren describes the traumatic scene of the dead bodies exposed to the public:

The inside of the hall was a mess of rubble and charred beams. Against the far wall, shielded from the rain, were five bodies neatly laid out. The body in the middle was that of Florence's Bheki. . . his feet were bare. His eyes were open and staring, his mouth open too. The rain had been beating on him for hours, on him and his comrades, not only here but wherever they had been when they met their deaths; their clothes,

their very hair, had a flattened, dead look. In the corners of his eyes
there were grains of sand. There was sand in his mouth. (94)

Trauma of the apartheid police brutality has been well depicted in the above extract. The murder of these black boys has brought traumatic change in the identity of African people. Regarding traumatic change in the identity caused by trauma, Alexander opines that trauma is the result of the acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity (10). Mrs Curren is very much traumatized by the death of Bheki. She feels that shivers run up and down her body, her hands tremble. She thinks of the boy's open eyes. She thinks what Bheki saw when he took his last breath. She says "This is the worst thing I have witnessed in my life. And I thought: Now my eyes are open and I can never close them again" (94, 95). "Presumably, her eyes are now open to the human costs of apartheid and its deformations of the human spirit" (qtd. in Hoegberg 37). But, unlike Hoegberg, who thinks that Curren's eyes are open at the cost of others' death, I understand that Bheki's death has opened her eyes to make her more ethical to others since this event makes her experience the ground reality of South Africa and the trauma of innocent people.

Mr Curren is badly moved by Bheki's death which makes her feel like crying. It thickens her speech, dulls her feelings, and turns her into beasts. Although Bheki is not any near and dear person of her by relation, she is the one who suffers a lot by his death. She is even unable to move from the place where Bheki's dead body has been lying. Her ethics in the suffering of others reflects in the case of Bheki's death. The apartheid police are concerned about her security and ask her what she wants, and why she does not go away from there. They are even ready to send for an escort to

take her back to the road. But she does not need their security and is not happy with their activities, rather she wants to show them the scar she has inside her:

What she wanted, before they got rid of her, was to bring out a scar, a hurt, to force it upon them, to make them see it with their own eyes: a scar, any scar, the scar of all this suffering, but in the end my scar, since our own scars are the only scars we can carry with us. I even brought a hand up to the buttons of my dress. But my fingers were blue, frozen. ‘Have you seen inside that hall? I asked in my cracked voice. Now the tears were beginning to come. (98)

Mrs Curren has a scar inside her caused by Bheki’s death, which she wants to show the police so that they would understand how they are inflicting the innocent people. She even asks the police to put down their guns and go home. She suffers more when she experiences that the killings are going on all the time in South Africa. Her ethics in other’s sufferings reflects in the scar that she has in her body. She drops tears in Bheki’s death which sickens her. She is numb in body and soul. She finds herself in the position of Bheki. She sees the sand in his mouth which breaks her heart. Jeffrey Alexander says that “When bad things happen to good people, they become shocked, outraged, and indignant” (3). Mrs Curren, a good woman, is really shocked by Bheki’s death. She remembers Bheki all the time when she is alone. She sobs since they took his life, a precious gift of God. She grieves since Bheki’s life has been robbed by them. She expresses sorrow thus:

I sat down at the table and gave myself up to tears. I cried not for the confusion in my head, not for the mess in the house, but for the boy, for Bheki. Wherever I turned he was before me, his eyes open in the look of childish puzzlement with which he had met his death. Head on

arms I sobbed, grieving for him, for what had been taken from him, for what had been taken from me. Such a good thing, life! . . . And now Bheki, robbed of it, gone, torn away! (100)

Bheki is neither her son, nor her relative. He is the son of Florence, a black woman who lives at her house to help her. But she suffers more than Florence. Thus, Coetzee reveals her ethics in the sufferings of others. Talking about ethical theory, Avishai Margalit writes that “what was spilt in the past was blood, not milk; crying over the spilt blood of your community – much thicker than milk – is what ethical theory is all about” (12). Margalit is true in Mrs Curren’s life since she too cries over the spilt blood of Bheki. She is ethical in a sense that she used to care him when he was alive and now she remembers him after his death. Caring is a demanding attitude toward others. Caring for others makes people ethical. Margalit views that when you care someone, you remember, and when you remember, you are ethical. Therefore, caring, memory and ethics have a triangular relation (27).

The spilt blood of Bheki reminds Curren of John’s blood. She has watched so much blood of both boys, and in both cases she extends her service to the members of the victims, which makes her ethical character in *Age of Iron*. She still remembers John’s blood: “It was the same when that friend of his was bleeding in the street. There was the same heaviness. Heavy blood. I was trying to stop it from flowing down the gutters. So much blood! If I had caught it all I would not have been able to lift the bucket” (114). She loves these black boys who are killed in the encounter with the police. She is fond of Bheki who was still a child when was buried. She feels that she is walking upon him. She says that when she walks upon this land, this South Africa, she has a feeling of walking upon black faces. They are dead but their spirits

have not left them. They are lying there waiting for her feet to pass, waiting for her to go (115).

Despite being so weak owing to her incurable breast cancer and old age, Mrs Curren serves others without caring her own health. She forgets all her pains and sufferings while serving others. She is so caring to others that she keeps John's cycle safe when he is in hospital. Later on, she hands over it to him. She still remembers the day when he was hurt, and bled. She loves John not less than her own daughter. In the letter to her daughter, she tells her, "The more I love you, the more I ought to love him. The less I love him, the less, perhaps, I love you" (125). When John runs away from the hospital with a big wound in his forehead without any bandage on it, she cuts her red tablecloth which is quite clean and then winds it twice around his head and knots it behind. Moreover she advises him to go to a doctor, or a clinic, to have the stitches taken out. These are some ethical performances she conducts in other's sufferings in the novel.

Mrs Curren wants to send John to his house since his life is not secured in her house as she knows that the apartheid police have started hunting them when they come to her house. But nobody comes to take him from his house. The apartheid police follow him. One night, the police come and enter into her house forcefully knowing that John stays there. They want to take his life. At that moment, Mrs Curren tries her best to protect him from being killed by the police: "Wait! I said. 'Don't do anything yet, he is just a child.' . . . 'Give me a chance to talk to him.' . . . 'open the door, my boy,' I said. 'I won't let them hurt you, I promise.'" (139). Her ethical responsibility to John reflects in her attempt to protect him from the police. She aches to embrace him so she orders the police to go away. But then she screams, and falls into a fit of coughing. Without any warning, she was lifted from behind and thrown

out. She desperately utters that she has a cancer of heart which pains her all the time, the pain she catches by drinking from the cup of bitterness. She allegorically tells the police that she has a trauma of their brutality over the black ones, from which she suffers a lot as she sees that all the non-white characters who stay at her house become the victim of police brutality one after another.

Curren attempts to protect John from being murdered from the police, but protecting him seems to be beyond her capacity as she is an old woman having fatal disease – cancer. But she does not give up her attempt and tries to open the door of the room where John is sitting, but before that, a police holds her out. Unfortunately, she is bound to remain shocked witnessing the dead body of John killed by the police. She narrates the heart-rending traumatic scene of John's murder thus:

Scores of people were gathering excitedly from all directions, neighbours, passers-by, young and old, black and white; from all the balconies of the flats people stared down. By the time the police woman and I emerged from the front door they were wheeling the body, covered in a blanket, down the driveway, and loading it aboard. I made to climb into the ambulance after it. 'I want to go with him.' I said, and made another attempt to climb in. (143)

As Curren sees John's dead body, she makes an attempt to get into the ambulance to go with the dead body as she cannot stay at her house without him. Even her physical pain does not stop her from accompanying the dead body of John. When the apartheid police do not allow her to get into the ambulance, she begins to walk down Schoonder Street. Since she is prevented from being with John, she always passes her time thinking about him and remembering his dead body. Although John is not her relative,

he is a black boy who came to her house uninvited to be saved from the police; her love to him proves her to be an ethical character in the novel.

While discussing the police brutality and dark side of the history of South Africa depicted by Coetzee, Dolores Colléllmir Morales writes that “This dark perception of the present is recurrent in Coetzee’s work. For instance, in *Age of Iron* we read, ‘When madness climbs the throne, who in the land escapes contagion?’” (47). Morales’ view regarding Coetzee’s dark perception of history is beneficial to make a point that because of the madness of the apartheid police, even Mrs Curren, an innocent and kind woman, is infected badly in the novel. She becomes a spectacle on Schoonder Street with her wild hair and pink quilt. The police leave her house in a mess making the things in her kitchen out of place. Moreover, two of her unused rooms have had their locks forced and nothing is left untouched. She believes that “The search a mere pretext. The true purpose the touching, the fingering. The spirit malevolent. Like rape: a way of filthying a woman” (154). She witnesses John being murdered by the police and she cannot fulfill her promise to save him. When she sees his dead body, she feels as if she is raped. She often regrets for not being able to protect John from the police. She grieves for John: “His eyes are open and mine, though I write, are shut. My eyes are shut in order to see” (159). Thus Coetzee narrativizes Curren’s trauma caused by the death of John in *Age of Iron*.

The events of police killing the innocent people staying at her house almost drive Curren into madness. She sees the dead even in her dream. The apartheid regime tortures her so much that she does not wish to live anymore. The torture is so intolerable that she wishes to be disposed to the rubbish dump (175). She suffers for others whether they understand her sacrifice or not. In Levinas’s sense, she is really an ethical character who sacrifices her life for others. Levinas’s ethics is an ethics of

exclusively and inalienably my sacrifice. “I am responsible for the Other – says Levinas – without waiting for reciprocity, were I to die for it. Reciprocity is his affair” (qtd. in Tatransky 296). Curren helps others but does not expect anything from them in return. Coetzee makes his characters attend to the death of the Other which I understand as the ethical performance of his characters.

Trauma of Violence

Coetzee reveals the violence created by both apartheid police and new generation of South Africa in *Age of Iron*. The violence caused by them is prevailing everywhere. Eventually, Curren gets the news full of violence in her television which she watches “as birds watch snakes, fascinated by what is about to devour us. . . . Death to life. Boars that devour their offspring” (26). The horrible news of war and death during apartheid makes Curren unable to think. The situation of Guguletu is very bad at that moment since the students on the roads of Guguletu are bunking their classes as a protest of the apartheid regime. Schools have been closed and the children have got nothing to do: “All they do is run around the streets and get into trouble” (34). They are involved in burning down their schools. They are completely out of control of their parents. Not only schools, Guguletu itself “is burning with a low flame” (36). When Curren sees that South Africa is burning everywhere, she feels that she herself is burning as she is exposed to these violent activities which cause emotional disturbances on her.

David Edwards writes that “in South Africa there is a high rate of the kinds of traumatic events that cause post-traumatic stress disorder such as criminal violence, motor vehicle accidents and industrial accidents. As a result, PTSD is a significant public health problem” (209). Curren is distressed by watching the traumatic events occurring around her. She finds the young generation of South Africa completely out

of tract. They even “set people on fire and laugh while they burn to death” (46). These children are not capable of any love. Their hearts are turning to stone. They are the children of age of iron, and apartheid regime is making them to raise their fists in the air like hammers. As a result, there is blood everywhere in the land of South Africa where the blood of human beings seems to be cheaper than water. Curren narrates the violent situation of South Africa thus:

It was early on a Saturday evening, but already the casualties were trickling in. A man in white shoes and a rumpled black suit spat blood steadily into a dish. A youth on a stretcher, naked to the waist, his belt open, held a wad of sodden cloth to his belly. Blood on the floor, blood on the benches. . . . Child Snowdrop lost in the cavern of blood, and her mother lost too. A country prodigal of blood. . . . The dry earth soaking up the blood of its creature. A land that drinks rivers of blood and is never sated. (57, 58)

While discussing about the psycho-social effects of Apartheid and violent crimes in South Africa, Tsoaledi Thobejane argues that “it is due to the history of apartheid rule which subjected the oppressed and exploited to subjugation, inhumanity and self-hate; that ultimately unleashed a culture of violence and lack of respect to human life in this country” (95). Thobejane views that it is the exploitation and inhumanity of the apartheid regime of South Africa that has made the situation so violent. He means to say that people who are exposed to poverty and de-humanization are likely to commit monstrous crime. His view seems to fit to the crimes committed by the young generation who walk carrying gun and staring out into the darkness in the novel. Mrs Curren hears shouts, cries, and calls of these boys everywhere in the street of South Africa. The boys are involved in the revolution against the apartheid regime, and they

are making protest by burning the shanties which pour forth black smoke. They put the jumbles of furniture, bedding, household objects outside the houses and set fire on them. But, at the same time, gangs of men are at work trying to rescue the contents of the burning shacks, going from one to another, putting out the fires. Curren is shocked the moment she knows that these gangs are no more rescuers but the ones who cause fire, and they are not fighting with the flames but with the rain. There are people who are standing by the road and watching the destruction like mourners at a funeral. Curren describes a horrible scene of violence thus: "A man in a black overcoat swung an axe. With a crash a window burst. He attacked the door, which caved in at the third blow. As if released from a cage, a woman with a baby in her arms flew out of the house, followed by three barefoot children" (88). The woman tries to go inside the house again to carry out her baby, but she cannot bring it due to the heavy flames in the house. Like this woman, there are many Africans who lost their children in the violence in *Age of Iron*.

Once when Curren comes out of her house in search of Bheki who had been shot by the apartheid police in Guguletu, she, unfortunately, happens to face a crowd of young people throwing stones at a burning house where a man is trying to put out the fire of his house. A clear picture of South Africa's looming world of rage and violence is best narrated in the following passage:

A stone came sailing out of the crowd and fell with a clatter on the roof of the burning shack. Another hit the wall, another landed at the feet of the man with the axe. He gave a menacing shout. He and half a dozen of his fellows stopped what they were doing and, brandishing sticks and bars, advanced on the crowd. Screaming, people turned to flee, I

among them. But in the clinging sand I could barely lift my feet. My heart pounded, pains shot through my chest. (88)

The crowd seems to be completely out of control. They do whatever they like, and there are many common people, like Curren, who are in trauma of saving their lives.

Curren faces a fight of some kind going on her left. The people who had run away into the bush a minute ago, are suddenly coming back to throw the stones at the burning house. A woman screams high and loud due to the fear. Curren hears the pop of gunfire not far away from her. Even in such terrible situation, Mr Thabane, a black African, helps Curren to cross the pool and reach the path. Thabane's care on Curren is an evidence to prove that Coetzee's characters, both whites and blacks, extend their care toward those who are in troubles, irrespective of their race. Through these characters' service toward one another, Coetzee seems to give a message to his readers that the whites and the non-whites are not the enemies; rather they are the close companions who can live together even in the hard time of the violence created by the apartheid regime of South Africa. Coetzee's politics of depicting the trauma of both white and black characters is to make them live together in a harmonious relation, in the same society caring and loving one another.

When Curren was coming out of the crowd to get her car, one of the agitators asks her to give her car to them. When Curren denies giving him her car, the boy shows his anger. Curren says that the man "made a strange gesture: holding one hand at head-height, he struck it with the other, palm against palm, a glancing blow" (90). For Curren, it is not only terrible; it is a crime, a crime being committed in front of her eyes. Regarding the destructions and crimes committed by the new generation of South Africa, Tarryn Frankish and Jill Bradbury express their concern about the future of South Africa. They put a question, "How does a society make the transition

to peace and democracy after large-scale violent political conflict when faced with enduring socioeconomic and psychological legacies?” (294). Frankish and Bradbury are worried that there will be no peace and democracy as long as the political violence prolongs in South Africa of which Curren becomes the victim in *Age of Iron*. For instance, her car, which she had parked somewhere while going to search Bheki’s dead body, is found to be broken down: “Someone had thrown a rock through the windscreen. Big as a child’s head, mute, it lay on the seat amid a scattering of glass as if it now owned the car” (96). Bheki’s life and her car both come to an end at the same time.

One of the apartheid police asks Curren not to stay there since that is a dangerous place, and anything can happen to her there. Trauma of the political violence reflects in his warning to her. The police themselves tell Curren that those people in there are not the only ones who have died rather the killings are going on all the time. Those are just the bodies they picked up from yesterday (98). The trauma of violence is so painful that it hunts Curren even in her dream as she suffers from the nightmares of violence in the novel. While discussing about the traumatic experience and its flashback in the nightmare, Arlene Audergon writes that “The traumatic experience is not remembered but relived. The experiences of traumatized individuals include both the numbness of cutting off from the experience and the violent replay and intrusion of the events in flashback, nightmares, visceral experience of the events and body symptoms” (19). Audergon’s point regarding the violent replay of the traumatic events in the dream of the victim is applied in Curren who often has bad dreams:

I dream, but I doubt that it is God I dream of. When I fall asleep there commences a restless movement of shapes behind my eyelids, shapes

without body or form, covered in a haze. *Borodino* is the word that comes to me in my sleep: a hot summer afternoon on the Russian plain, smoke everywhere, the grass dry and burning, two hosts that have lost all cohesion plodding about, parched, in terror of their lives. Hundreds of thousands of men, faceless, voiceless, dry as bones, trapped on a field of slaughter, repeating night, after night their back-and-forth marched across that scorched plain in the stench of sulphur and blood: a hell into which I plummet when I close my eyes. (126)

The scenes of the violent activities come to her dream which does not let her sleep soundly. Owing to her deadly cancer, Curren takes red pills, without which she cannot sleep and which bring these horrible scenes inside her in her dream. She often dreams that she is being trapped in a crowd, and shapes are pushing and hitting her. Her trauma of violence is reflected in her dream in which she, sometimes, sees Florence, who had left her house long ago after her son's death. In her dream, Florence is striding again down Government Avenue holding Hope by the hand and carrying Beauty on her back. All three of them wear masks. In her dream, Curren is surrounded by a crowd of people of all kinds and condition (163). During apartheid violence, young boys, instead of going to schools with books and pens, carry bombs in their hands which has made the situation even worse in *Age of Iron*.

Trauma of Loneliness

Mrs Curren's trauma begins from the beginning of the novel as she is alone since her only daughter left her for good thirty years ago. Now her daughter lives in America since South Africa is not a secured place for her. Curren often longs for her daughter to be with her, and to hold and comfort her. She says, "I begin to understand the true meaning of the embrace. We embrace to be embraced. We embrace our

children to be folded in the arms of the future” (5). She is deprived of her daughter’s embrace which any parent naturally longs for. She desires to sit on her daughter’s bed, and runs her fingers through her hair as she used to do in the past. But, now she is alone, with her weak and old body infected with cancer. She is bound to stretch her hand to her daughter through words in her letter: “I must reach out to you in words” (8). She feels that her house has never become warm due to the absent of her daughter for a long time. Her house is built solidly but without love. She feels that even the African sun has not succeeded in warming her house. Mrs Curren expresses her trauma created by loneliness in the following statements:

Suddenly there were tears in my eyes. From not blinking, I told myself. But the truth was, I was crying. Hunched over the wheel, I abandoned myself, first to a quiet, decent sobbing, then to long wails without articulation, emptying of the heart. ‘I am so sorry,’ I don’t know what has come to me. (17)

The statements extracted above reveal how much Curren cries when she is alone. The trauma of loneliness is very painful. Her daughter is not with her so she laments with Florence, her house maid, who too suffers at these moments because of her cry.

Florence has her children who sleep with her. Once, Curren had also a daughter with whom she would sleep. But, now, she has no one of her own. Her trauma of being separated from her daughter reflects when she tells Florence, “Once I had everything, I thought. Now you have everything and I have nothing” (37). We usually care about our children, spouses, lovers, and by extension about some significant groups to which we belong (Margalit 32). Curren cannot be an exception regarding her care to her daughter. But it does not mean that she ignores other people who live at her house.

The trauma of loneliness becomes more painful in her bed time when she closes her eyes and waits for sleep that does not come so easily. Sometimes she wishes to be with her dead mother: “Shivers began to run through me from head to toe. Behind closed eyes I saw my mother as she is when she appears to me, in her drab old person’s clothes, her face hidden. ‘Come to me!’ I whispered” (50). Her mother was dead long ago, and her only daughter is not with her. So she is alone in the world where people do not have any respect to old people and where people always fight for their right. What can be more painful than this? It seems that her life threatening illness is also caused by her continuous loneliness and fright of the apartheid. Freud focuses that “In traumatic neuroses the operative cause of the illness is not the trifling physical injury but the affect of fright” (qtd. in Smelser 33). Curren persistently witnesses violent assault, accident, war, and dead body during her state of loneliness which leads her to the traumatic state. Mental Health Foundation defines loneliness as a “painful sensation of lacking a close companion [which] can lead to acute loneliness” (4). Curren, too, is constantly lonely which has trapped her in a sphere of negative activities such as crying or dropping tears.

Curren often imagines her daughter to be in her house, in her life. She aches to embrace her daughter who is everything to her. But she can never embrace her since she would never come to South Africa again. She wants to be touched by her hand since she has not been touched by any human hands for the last thirty years. Even in the hospital where she has been admitted to, she wishes to be touched by the hands of the nurses: “I was on the point of getting out of the car and giving up, surrendering to the hospital again, letting myself be undressed and put to bed and ministered to by their hands” (67). She feels that she is just like a shell which is left behind by her

child since she is alone on the edge of leaving. She laments that even Vercueil has a dog to lie against; she does not have anything at all.

Curren does not find any difference between herself and Bheki, the boy who was killed by the police and put into the earth, since she too will be buried into the earth soon. Such feeling of loneliness comes to her when she misses her daughter so badly that in her letter she requests her to come and bury her head in her lap as a child does: "Come, says this letter: do not cut yourself off from me. My third world" (127). She asserts that she cannot live without a child, and she cannot die without a child, too. But now she has only pain left in her life and her daughter has been her pain since she is not with her. She even lets Vercueil's dog to lick her face, lips and her tears. These are some traumatic symptoms that Curren exhibits due to her acute loneliness and lack of her contact with her daughter. Rogers and Floyd report some traumatogenic condition of the parents who are deprived of their children in their article. They say that the bereaved parents have more depressive symptoms, poorer well-being, and more health problems, and are more likely to have experienced a depressive episode and marital disruption than were comparison parents (203). Curren is exactly in the same traumatogenic state of bad health and depression as aforementioned by Roger and Floyd. Curren is deprived of the warmth of human body since she has been living alone for a long time. Therefore, she even desires to sleep with Vercueil's dog to get the warmth of it. Curren and Vercueil sleep together with the dog in-between for the warmth.

Coetzee, thus, narrativizes the trauma of an old white woman who lives alone in her house helping other black Africans in *Age of Iron*. Coetzee seems to say that there are many white people in South Africa who are bound to pass their hellish life like Mrs Curren. By depicting the trauma of whites, Coetzee wants to normalize the

trauma of blacks who might be thinking that only blacks are the victims of the whites and whites are always the perpetrators, not victims. Coetzee attempts to open their eyes and make them see the trauma of white people. Both white and non-white characters get familiarized to each other's trauma which helps to normalize their antagonism and creates a harmonious relation between them, which is Coetzee's politics of narrativization of trauma in his fiction.

Trauma of Poverty

Poverty is one of the factors that causes trauma in human life. Coetzee depicts a horrible picture of poverty in *Age of Iron*, where most of the characters do not have their own home, and they take shelter in others' house. During apartheid era, South Africa was badly affected by increasing inequality, poverty and unemployment. The blacks used "violence" as a tool to solve their poverty, but it led them to even more poverty. A firm body of research explains that a culture of violence prevails in South Africa, where violence is seen as the justifiable and normal way of solving problems in the country (Harris 6). Harris seems to be true in the case of the trauma of poverty prevailing in the lives of Vercueil, Florence, Bheki and John who become the victim of poverty throughout their whole lives, and who involve in the violence to end it. For instance, Vercueil would sleep in a house of carton boxes and plastic sheeting before he came to Mrs Curren's house. Curren sees him in the streets: "tall, thin, with a weathered skin and long, carious fangs, wearing a baggy grey suit and a hat with a sagging brim" (3). Vercueil is one of the homeless men for whom August, the month of rains, is the worst month. His trousers are sagged and he has pulled them up. He has only bone in his face and his skin is weathered. He is bound to sleep with his dog in a mattress which people use in the beach, in his little nest full of dust and mess of the woodshed.

There are many scavengers who walk with bare feet in Cape Town. They sleep outdoors and do not sicken. Curren is habituated to these homeless people: “now they are part of life here. Do they frighten me? On the whole, no. A little begging, a little thieving; dirt, noise, drunkenness; no worse” (6). But she fears of the roaming gangs, the sullen-mouthed boys to whom even the prison-house is already beginning to close. Poverty invites different crimes such as theft, abduction and fighting of which Curren becomes the victim in *Age of Iron*. Her house was raided by a group of burglars three years ago: “The burglars took no more than they could carry, but before they left they tipped out every drawer, slashed every mattress, smashed crockery, broke bottles, swept all the food in the pantry on to the floor” (24, 25). The burglars seem to rub her house in order to commit a crime of revenge as she is a white woman. Regarding the blacks’ revenge on whites, Kaba claims that “People of Black African descent resist racial revenge, including against people of European descent” (92) for “slavery, colonialism and persistent humiliation in Africa” (93). Kaba’s view seems to be relevant to make a point that the burglars take racial revenge on Curren since she is white and they are black. When Curren asks the detective why the burglars behave like that, he replies that, “‘It’s the way they are.’ ‘Animal’” (25). In my opinion, it is poverty that turns people into animals in South Africa.

Once, Curren’s car did not start. It needs pushing from behind. Some children helped her by pushing the car. Being so grateful to them, she holds out a coin through the window. She is surprised to see the rush of takers of the coin. Then she emptied her purse (96). Thus, Curren’s love to others spills everywhere. She even empties her purse for others without keeping anything for her. These poor children have nothing to do. They spend time roaming in the streets, and if they get chance, they rub people, too.

Curren becomes the victim of other people's poverty and its consequences in her life since she has to support six black poor people at her house in *Age of Iron*. At the end of the novel, Curren leaves her house and lies in a street being unconscious due to her painful sickness, and the trauma of John's murder at her house by the apartheid police. When she opens her eyes while lying in the street, she finds a child kneeling beside her, feeling inside the folds of the quilt. His hand creeps over her body. The boy is ten years old at most, and he has two companions behind him even younger. The boy is searching gold teeth inside her mouth thinking that she is dead. When the boys know that she is not dead, they withdraw and, like crows, stand waiting. Then the boy inserts a stick into her mouth to find a gold tooth if any. Curren describes the horrible scene of poverty and the mercilessness that it brings to the young generation thus:

Something pressed between my lips, was forced between my gums. I gagged and pull away. All three children were clustered over me now in the gloom; there may have been others too, behind them. What were they doing? I tried to push the hand away but it pressed all the harder. An ugly noise came from my throat, a dry rasp like wood splitting. The hand withdrew. 'Don't' – I said; but my palate was sore, it was hard to form words. What did I want to say? Don't do that!? Don't you see I have nothing?? Don't you have any mercy?? (145)

Curren feels like being beetles with the humped backs, dying, waving their legs feebly, and ants pouring over them and eating the soft places, the joints, the eyes, tearing away the beetle-flesh. The rude boy lifts her upper lip. Curren pulls back and try to spit. The boy unemotionally stands up and kicks the dust with his bare foot. These boys want her gold teeth from which they get money from the pawnshops.

Trauma of Racial Discrimination

In *Age of Iron*, black Africans are discriminated in the public places. The white apartheid police often hunt the black boys in the street not because they are the agitators, but because they are black. Coetzee, being a white writer of South Africa, presents the traumas of non-white characters in his fiction, and this is the reason why Coetzee stands out a great trauma writer. His trauma writing is not inflicted by the cultural politics. He mentions that after the terrible accident of John caused by the police, he is taken to the hospital. But, in the hospital, doctors put him with the old men and among them, there is a mad man who is shouting and swearing all the time. Coetzee says that “It is not a hospital where he is, it is a waiting room for the funeral” (70). Since, the doctors are whites; they put John, a non-white child, in the waiting room instead of treating his wound in his forehead placing him in the bed. White doctors’ harsh behavior on the blacks reflects in the statement quoted above. While discussing about the inequality in mental health services and practices, and its effects, on people of Color, Robert Carter presents a report which says that “people of Color have less access to and are less likely to receive needed care, and the care they ultimately receive is often of poor quality” (140). Carter’s view regarding the racial discrimination in medical treatment seems to be true in case of John whom the doctors do not care at all in *Age of Iron*.

In the novel, Mrs Curren and Florence go to Guguletu in her car, to find Bheki, Florence’s son. When they are nearing the place, one of the apartheid policemen stops them on the way, and asks them where they are going. After Curren’s reply, the police man asks her to drop Florence there: “You can drop her here, she can walk, it is not far” (83). The police man asks Curren to drop Florence there just because she is a black woman. But, Curren tells him firmly that she cannot drop her

there since it is raining, and she has small children. The policeman's rude behavior with the black character reflects racial discrimination in *Age of Iron*, and Curren's defense proves her ethical responsibility and sympathy with the blacks.

Even though, Curren loves Black characters in the fiction, she suffers from the ill manner of them; it is just because she is white. The new generation of the black behaves her as if she is a bad luck for them. Curren describes an ill manner of a girl while she is walking in Guguletu with Thabane to search Bheki: "A girl in an apple-green school tunic advanced on me, her hand raised as if to give me a slap. I flinched, but it was only in play. Or perhaps I should say: she forbore from actually striking" (94). Trauma of the racism is revealed in the girl's bad treatment to her. But, Curren does not mind however way other people behave her. She keeps on searching Bheki who is finally found to be killed by the police. When Curren talks to a police man about Bheki, the people nearby are furious with her just because she is talking to the soldiers: "From the gathering crowd I felt a wave of something come out at me: resentment, animosity. Worse than that: hatred. Would it have been different if I had not been seen speaking to the soldiers? . . . people began to stare at the car with the shattered windscreen. Stares followed me all the way home" (99). These people stare at her as if she is making a conspiracy against them with the help of the police. They do not know that she is very desperately searching for Bheki, a black boy. In the crowd, a black man behaves with her so rudely that other people cannot go against him: "'This woman talks shit' said a man in the crowd. He looked around. 'shit,' he said. . . . he gave me a look as if I were mad" (91). The man's rude behavior with Curren shows the racial crime people commit blindly against the people who have different body color.

Trauma of Disrespect of New generation

Young generation is completely out of control from the grip of their parents, and they do not respect elderly people at all in *Age of Iron*. Nor do they have any tolerance or patience towards old people. In an event, while Curren is trying to come out of the looming world of rage and violence and get into her car, a girl, an enormously fat teenager shoulders her out of her way. Curren falls down on the road. Instead of helping her, the girl shows her anger: “‘Damn you!’ she gasped, glaring with naked animosity: ‘Get out! Get out!’ And she toiled up the duneside, her huge backside quaking” (89). At this moment, Curren feels that she has got blows on her face. She knows that these people can take many blows, but she cannot since she is fragile as a butterfly.

Curren suffers from a crime committed by some schoolboys while she is coming home with her shopping bags. There are three schoolboys who stop to stare at her who is leaning against a lamp-post with her groceries spilled around her feet. They attempt to seize her things away. In between the coughing, she tries to wave them away (121). Thus, such an ill attitude of the schoolboys towards the elderly people is a proof that the new generations of South Africa are growing ugly, and they are not able to think well of others. These school boys cause distress on Curren, an elderly woman in *Age of Iron*. This is an elder abuse of them. World Health Organization defines elder abuse as a “single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person” (3). This definition of elder abuse defined by World Health Organization is true in the case of Curren who expects help from the schoolboys, but gets distress from them in return.

Once, Bheki and John attack Vercueil in the compound of Curren's house. Though, these three boys' bread and butter is connected to Curren who provides them with shelter too, they do not respect her at all. When she sees them fighting, it is her ethics to separate them. But when she tries to stop them from fighting, the boys, Bheki and John look at her with a big eye: "The boy stopped speaking to Bheki and regarded me. I did not like that look: arrogant, combative" (43). The boys, without caring her, beat Vercueil in such a way that he starts bleeding from his lip. They do not have any sympathy on him. When Curren told them not to come to her house if they fight, they even challenge her telling her if she wants a pass from them to come to her house: "Must we have a pass to come in here? They waited for my answer, challenging me" (43). What a traumatic shame – the ones who are living under her care, challenge her. Even if she loves them as her own children, they do not regard her as their care taker. Disrespect of the young boys makes Curren suffer a lot in her old age in *Age of Iron*, and the apartheid regime is the main cause of making the young generation so violent.

Despite their ill manner to her, Curren keeps on treating them ethically. She maintains her ethical responsibility by welcoming them to her house. In this reference, I wish to mention Levinas' definition of ethics, who says that ethics is rather an opening to the other, a welcoming with no conditions, a relation with the other to be established "inventively" each time (Fuh 13). Levinas' idea of ethics as welcoming to the Other with no condition befits to Curren who knows only what is good or just for the Other. She welcomes the black boys to her house in the novel, but expects nothing from them, in return. Moreover, she extends an unconditional love to anyone who comes to her house which makes her an ethical character in *Age of Iron*.

Intra-Race trauma

Traditionally, whites are recognized as perpetrators of blacks, and blacks as victims in South Africa. But Coetzee, in his *Age of Iron*, argues that it is not the color of the skin that determines the role of the perpetrator and the victim, rather it is the human nature that plays a crucial role in categorizing the people into the group of perpetrators and the victims. In his fiction, even the blacks traumatize other blacks, and the whites traumatize other whites. In other words, the characters of the novel give torture to the people of their own race too. Coetzee's politics of narrativization of intra-race trauma in his fiction is to convey his readers a message that they should not think that only the people of other race can be their enemies. The people of their own race can also give them torture, and the people of other race can also help them in their trouble. Hence, Coetzee attempts to avoid the enmity between whites and non-whites in his fiction by making them realize that trauma is not always inter-racial. Thus, Coetzee's such endeavor ultimately helps to create a harmonious relation between whites and blacks in South Africa.

Florence, Bheki, John, and Vercueil are all black characters who fight and torture each other. Once, Bheki and John made a brutal attack on Vercueil in the compound of Curren's house: "He struck back at Vercueil, who stumbled and nearly fell. The boy struck Vercueil again, and now Bheki joined in. . . . Vercueil was on the ground; they were kicking him; Bheki took out the belt from his trousers and began to lash him" (43). Bheki and John thrash Vercueil, but Curren separates them. Thus, in the fight of these black boys, one can witness the trauma of black people inflicted by other blacks or it can be said that both perpetrators and the victims are blacks. Florence hates Vercueil when she sees him at Curren's house. She expresses her hatred towards him thus: "'He lives here,' said Florence, 'but he is rubbish. He is

good for nothing” (44). When Florence charges Vercueil as a rubbish man, he too expresses his anger by raising his hand with his hat as if to strike her. But, her son, Bheki snatches the hat from him and tosses it up onto the garage roof. At that moment, it is Curren who always stops them from fighting. She performs her duty in the sufferings of others even in her old age which makes her an ethical character.

Similarly, Coetzee reveals the trauma of a white inflicted by another white in his fiction. For instance, Mrs Curren is a white woman who very often suffers from the apartheid police who are also whites. The police who are after Bheki and John mistreat her at her house. They speak to her disrespectfully: ““Can you help us? I don’t know, lady. You tell us, can you help us”” (48). The police men’s ill behavior hurts her, and she remembers her past life when policemen used to speak respectfully to other ladies. The trauma of Curren caused by the policemen is the trauma upon white caused by white. The white apartheid police kill Bheki and John who would live at her house and she often regrets for not being able to save their lives from the police who, like her, belong to white race. She is ashamed of them, and talks to their police officer:

‘I don’t know whether you take any pride in that uniform,’ I said, ‘but your colleagues on the street are disgracing it. They are also disgracing me. I am ashamed. Not for them: for myself. You won’t let me lay a charge because you say I am not affected. But I am affected, very directly affected. Do you understand what I am saying?’ (78).

Curren is directly affected from the police’s killing of innocent people. So the police traumatize her. They make her feel ashamed of white people. She prefers to die rather than to stay in a state of shame. Thus, she feels ashamed of white people who traumatize black ones, which helps non-white characters to lessen their trauma from

their psyche since they realize that the people whom they think as their enemies are feeling ashamed of their people for creating trauma on the people of other race. By making both white and black characters ethical in the sufferings of the others, Coetzee fulfills his objective of making secular life of peaceful co-existence between whites and blacks in South Africa, which is his politics of narrativization of trauma in *Age of Iron*.

Trauma of illness

Curren has a cancer which she comes to know the day when Vercueil makes an entry to her house. Trauma of fatal cancer is much more painful for her than the trauma of the apartheid regime itself as her disease is at its last stage, and her doctor has declared it as incurable since it has made its way into her bone. So, she has no any option except “to embrace death as my own, mine alone” (5). There is no one to care her except Florence who has her own three children to look after. Curren’s daughter lives in America with her husband. So, she is alone in this world and, on top of that, she has become the victim of an incurable disease. Her cancer is so unbearable that she takes pills and “lay down on the sofa. Hours later I woke befuddled and cold, fumbled my way upstairs, got into bed without undressing” (12). Her sickness eats her and makes her dry like insect-eggs laid in the body of a host, now grown to grubs and eating their host away, which is slow and cold, sent by Saturn (59).

Curren is emotionally disturbed owing to missing her only daughter for more than thirty years, and spending very long part of her life in loneliness in South Africa. Moreover, she has no hope of meeting her daughter in her future, too, since her daughter has already declared that she will not return to South Africa in her life. Her breast cancer seems to be connected with her repressed emotions and the trauma of loneliness. Regarding the repressed emotions in early life, and their connection with

different diseases, including cancer, in the later life, Gerald Harris cites Gabor Mate who says that “In most cases of breast cancer, the stresses are hidden and chronic. . . . They accumulate over a lifetime to make someone susceptible to disease. Research has suggested for decades that women are more prone to develop breast cancer if their childhoods were characterized by emotional disturbances” (3). Mate’s view about the cancer and its relation with emotional disturbances during early periods of life seems to be appropriate in Curren’s life as she too, has undergone many emotional disturbances in her early life, including her divorce with her husband and her separation from her daughter.

Curren’s illness has made her prisoner at her own house. She feels that her breast cancer is a baby inside her which she cannot give birth to because it will not be born. Her cancer is so painful that she passes her time crying all the time. She describes her pain thus:

Grief past weeping. I am hollow, I am a shell. To each of us fate sends the right disease. Mine a disease that eats me out from inside. Were I to be opened up they would find me hollow as a doll, a doll with a crab sitting inside licking its lips, dazed by the flood of light. . . . Gnawing at my bones now that there is no flesh left. Gnawing the socket of my hip, gnawing my backbone, beginning to gnaw at my knees. (103)

Curren’s disturbed mental condition caused by cancer is expressed in the above extract. Sometimes she feels like committing suicide by setting herself on fire because she has been driven mad due to her despair. She spends time by calling or crying or coughing with sounds that come from deep in her chest.

Ethics of Trauma in *Age of Iron*

Ethics is a force that urges one to be responsible and sensitive to other's need. For instance, if one sacrifices himself to overcome the suffering of others who may not be his near and dear, he is called to have maintained the ethics for others. Herve Corvellec presents Emmanuel Levinas' view of ethics that "ethics unfolds in our relationship to the other. . . . our potential to open ourselves toward the Other, without setting any demand nor condition, is that which commands not only our possibility to grow an ethical relationship but even our mere being human beings" (2). Levinas means to say that to be ethical, one is to be open to others whom one does not know before and, in return, one does not demand anything from them. Mrs Curren, the main character of *Age of iron*, provides food and shelter to anyone who comes to her house, and in return, she expects nothing from them. Thus, she proves to be an ethical character having all traits needed in an ethical person. She is the only white character who loves and cares all other black characters who are very often hunted by the apartheid police in the novel.

Mrs Curren meets Mr Vercueil, a homeless black man, nearby her house sleeping in carton boxes and plastic sheeting in the beginning of the novel. Mr Vercueil is a vagrant having no home, job and property. Mrs Curren finds him the same day when she comes to know from her doctor that she has a breast cancer which has reached to that stage that it would not be cured in future. Although, she herself has been suffering from the intolerable pains caused by that deadly disease, she forgets her sufferings and is ready to serve Mr.Vercueil by providing him with food: "'Do you want something to eat?' I said. He followed me to the kitchen, the dog at his heels, and waited while I cut him a sandwich'" (6). Later on, she keeps on providing him with whatever she eats or drinks. Moreover, she wants to make him better man by

encouraging him to find a job, and not spending the whole day doing nothing. Even if Mr. Vercueil does not take her hospitality positively in the beginning since she is white, and his fear of racial discrimination has not been eliminated from his mind, she keeps on serving him. She asks him to sit on her sofa since he hesitates to sit with her at the onset of the novel: “He waited. ‘Sit down,’ I said. He sat” (9).

While discussing about Curren’s responsibility to Vercueil, Mike Marais writes that following her encounter with Vercueil, Mrs Curren, in the novel’s idiom of responsibility, comes to love the unlovable (173). Marais seems to say that generally white people in South Africa do not like blacks, let alone love them, but, Curren, after seeing the pitiable condition of Vercueil, learns to love him. Marais’ view supports me to make a claim that despite her own traumatic condition brought by her age, terminal cancer, divorce with her husband, and separation from her daughter, Curren loves others. She has learned that she and she alone is responsible for Vercueil.

Mrs Curren helps Mr Vercueil during his trauma of hunger and homelessness and, Mr Vercueil too supports her whenever she is in need. Once, when she is unable to open her garage due to a sudden attack of her deadly disease, he comes from somewhere and helps her. Mrs Curren describes it thus:

I was on my way out to the shops, in the act of opening the garage door, when I had a sudden attack. An attack: it was just that: the pain hurling itself upon me like a dog, sinking its teeth into my back. I cried out, unable to stir. Then he, this man, appeared from somewhere and helped me into the house. (9)

The above extract shows that both Mrs Curren and Mr Vercueil help and care each other when they are in their difficult situations. As the story advances, Mrs Curren becomes more and more caring of Vercueil. She knows what Vercueil is in need of.

She knows that he needs socks, new shoes, a bath, clean underwear, a bed, a roof over his head, three meals a day and money in the bank (17). She does not only know his needs, she tries to fulfill them too. She gives him money whenever he asks for it: “‘If you are in need, you can ask,’ I said. ‘I am not a stingy person’” (19). She is too much worried about him since he spends his time unproductively just lying around, and she wishes that he would learn something. Although Vercueil is not her relative, nor has she ever seen him before, she wishes for his betterment and is happy to see him around her.

Once, a woman from the flat across the road telephoned Mrs Curren warning her that she saw a vagrant on her property, Curren replied that “‘He is not a vagrant.’ ‘He is a man who works for me’” (22). She regards him as her own man. She does not like others to address him as a vagrant. She walks with him down the old road together. She behaves him as her friend and never regards him as a homeless man. Her ethics for others lies here. Even if she feels an exile in her own house and spends many sleepless nights, due to her poor health, separation from her daughter, and the cruelty of apartheid regime of South Africa, she never becomes less ethical to others who come and take refuge at her house. Her ethical behavior to others exactly matches with the view presented by Levinas who describes the condition of an ethical person who undergoes “the shuddering of the human, the sleepless night of insomnia, the experience of exile, and, in his stunning conflation of responsibility with maternity, the gestation of the other” (Walsh 173). Mrs Curren undergoes all these sufferings while maintaining her ethical responsibility for others. Thus, making her ethical to others, Coetzee attempts to create an ethical community of sufferers in this novel where both whites and non white live together in ethical relation sharing and caring each other.

When Bheki's friend, John attacks Vercueil in the compound of her house, Mrs Curren protects him from being heavily thrashed from John. She tells John that he has no right to come there and assault him. She declares that her house is of Vercueil's too: "“This man lives here. It is his home.”" (43) and "“He is doing no harm”" (44). Her ethical behavior towards the helpless one reflects in her statements. Mrs Curren is too worried about the children of new generation who do not follow the advice of their parents in South Africa. She is troubled that even parents do not take responsibility of their children. She wishes the new generation would to be happy and well cultured. She does not want anyone to be spoilt. She is the well wisher of all the people of South Africa and gives priority to their lives over her own. While discussing about Curren's ethical responsibility for others, Eduard Jordaan writes: "In awakening to the other, Curren moves from a Heideggerean concern with her own death (she is dying of cancer) towards a Levinasian prioritizing of the other's life over her own. Her coming into contact with the political violence and oppression of late 1980s South Africa adds to and focuses her expiation for the other" (22). Jordaan's view is relevant to me to verify the point that Curren gives priority to other's life over her own in *Age of Iron*. Although, she herself is the victim of a deadly disease, other characters' sufferings bind her to take up responsibility for them.

Curren becomes more and more ethical to Vercueil as the story advances. Sometimes, Vercueil sleeps outside the house due to her fear, particularly when he comes home late. But Curren, instead of being angry, loves and cares him more like her own son: "“Come inside!’ I shouted above the rain. ‘Come into the house! You can't sleep there!’" (52). She cares him as if he is her own son even while he is sleeping. She feels pity on his miserable body that often remains undernourished. His life is deprived of all the basic things required for any human being. She does not hate

him rather she is getting used to his smell of body. This is what she feels toward South Africa too. When she stays with Vercueil in her car, she feels that they are not strangers, rather they are a couple “married too long” (64). She tries to make him an important person by bringing some changes in his life. She encourages him to find a job and work like other Africans: ““you had better prepare yourself for it”” (66).

Mrs Curren trusts and speaks to Mr Vercueil from her heart. She asks him what he likes to eat, whether he wants to sleep. She takes care of him as she used to do to her daughter when she was young: ““My daughter is my first child. This is the second one, the afterbirth’. ‘Would you like to watch television?’ ‘I thought you wanted to sleep’” (75). These kind statements of Curren prove that she is kind and loving to him. She encourages him to read books which she has kept upstairs. Sometimes, Vercueil sleeps wherever he likes. When she finds him sleeping outside, she asks him to sleep comfortably: “Vercueil was still there, slumped in his deep sleep. I shook him. ‘Mr Vercueil!’ I said. One eye opened. ‘Come and lie down’” (103). She gives him tea when he comes inside. She is ready to put her life in his hands: “I give my life to Vercueil to carry over” (120). When the apartheid police know that Vercueil, a black African, lives in her house, they come to get him out of her house. At that time, Curren shows the most ethical behavior toward him. She does not let the police touch him. She tells Vercueil not to leave her house since the police have no right to come into her house (155). She tells them that Vercueil takes care of her and he is her right-hand man. She protects Vercueil whenever he faces difficulties. The ethics of trauma lies here.

Curren lovingly asks Vercueil to come inside and have his food: ““Do you want something to eat?”” (158). She loves those who come near her irrespective of their color of skin and without any partiality. She says, “One must love what is to

hand” (174). She has many responsibilities for Vercueil, a homeless and disabled man, who has even washed her underwear. While discussing about ethical responsibility, Michalinos Zembylas brings Levinas’ view, who asserts that “ethical responsibility to the Other is not a matter of free will, because one has infinite responsibility to the Other” (67). Levinas’ view on ethics seems to apply in the life of Mrs Curren who has infinite responsibility for Vercueil. She is very much worried about his life after her death. Her trauma is about his future. She asks her daughter, in a letter, not to worry about her, but to take care of Vercueil after her death: “I am going to release you soon from this rope of words. There is no need to be sorry for me. But spare a thought for this man left behind who cannot swim, does not yet know how to fly” (181).

Mrs Curren writes a letter to her daughter who lives in America to hand over her property to her. But she has no one to post her parcel for her daughter except Vercueil. So, she requests Vercueil to do the job which he accepts immediately. This shows that not only is Mrs Curren responsible to Vercueil, he too extends his supportive hands to her whenever she needs. Moreover, he follows her wherever she goes as he knows that she is ill and weak, and in case her car gives her trouble. She, too, wants his support when she goes out: ““ He must come along in case I have trouble with the car”” (62). Thus, in her physical weaknesses and loneliness, Vercueil has become her supportive friend. He had come to her life without being invited like having a baby without choosing. Now she realizes that she would be trapped at her home has there been no Vercueil to push her car. Moreover, he has learnt to help her which makes her so happy that she drops tears from her eyes. He accompanies her wherever she goes. She cannot walk alone. She needs his help in every step of her life: “Vercueil took my elbow. I let him lead me in” (71). She always asks him to

accompany her when she is going somewhere: “‘I am going back to the hospital,’ I said: ‘Will you come with me?’” (70). Thus, both of them support each other like stone and soil since both of them have no one in this world to care them except themselves.

Apartheid regime of South Africa has restricted the black Africans to go and live with the whites. The blacks have to live away from the whites. Even in such horrible situation of racial discrimination, Mrs Curren and Vercueil live together sharing in each other’s sufferings. They maintain their ethics in their traumatic lives which is what I understand as ethics of trauma. Vercueil supports her in her suffering of cancer though he himself is a disabled man. One of his hands does not work properly. Curren also realizes that he is in pain. She says, “It is not I who am in pain, I say to myself: the one in pain is someone else who shares this bed with me” (120). When she cannot move her body owing to her illness, Vercueil lifts her and carries her. At least she gets the lovely touch of someone of which she is deprived of for the last thirty years.

In an event, the apartheid police enter her house forcefully and leave her house in mess. She does not like to stay at her house, so she goes somewhere to spend the night. At that time, it is Vercueil who accompanies her and makes necessary arrangement for her sleep. He never leaves her alone in her trauma. She recalls the night thus: “From somewhere in the dark he fetched cardboard, a carton box folded flat. He spread it and helped me to lie down. Then without haste, without ceremony, he lay down too with his back to me” (147). She is familiar with every hair of his beard, and every crease of his forehead. He cares her in her trouble so much that every day he goes off to do the shopping. In the evenings he cooks, then hovers over her, watching to see that she eats (173). Vercueil even says that he does not want to stay at

that house if she is no more there; he too will go with her. His statement proves that he is there not for her property, but for her. Though he has the whole house to spread himself in, he lives with her in her room to see if she is fine.

Apart from cooking and feeding her, Vercueil helps her in washing her body since she is unable to do herself due to her fatal disease and physical weakness. He even washes her underwear which she describes in this way:

He came upon me washing my underwear in the basin. I was in pain from the bending: no doubt I looked terrible. 'I will do that for you,' he offered. I refused. But then I could not reach the line, so he had to hang it for me: an old woman's underwear, grey, listless. When the pain bites deepest and I shudder and go pale and a cold sweat breaks out on me, he sometimes holds my hand. (175)

The above extract reveals the supportive role of Vercueil in her trauma of physical weakness. Curren is not in a condition of doing her household work like washing and cleaning herself due to her old age and deadly cancer. At that time, there is always Mr Vercueil who extends his helpful hands to her in her sufferings.

Mrs Curren maintains her ethical relation not only with other humans who come to her house to take shelter, but also with animals. For instance, she feeds the dog that Mr Vercueil has brought with him. She loves the cats that she has kept in her house. She pays much attention to these pets during their food time. She forces them to eat their food even if they are not hungry: "'Eat!' I said, pushing the dish at them. The big one lifted a finicky paw to avoid being touched" (11). She allows John, her maid's son, to keep rabbits as pets at her house. But, she becomes so shocked when she comes to know that John forgot to feed them and they starved to death when she was in hospital. She expresses her love to the dead rabbits thus: "I was terribly upset

when I came back and found out what agony had been going on unheeded at the bottom of the garden. Creatures that can't talk, that can't even cry" (18). When Mrs Curren sees Florence's husband and his friends slaughtering chickens using hooks, and cutting their heads off, she cannot tolerate the sight, so she feels like leaving the place at once: "I should have driven off and done my best to forget all about it. . . . So hard and yet so easy, killing, dying" (39). But, finally, she convinces her soul thinking that at least they are not slaughtering cattle, only chickens.

Politics of Trauma

Coetzee's politics behind exposing the trauma of both white and non-white characters in *Age of Iron* is to prevent the intergenerational conflicts between them in South Africa. Coetzee is a white South African writer, but he is sensitive to the sufferings of black Africans. Rather than taking the racial lines, Coetzee emphasizes that victims – whether black or white – are the sufferers. Thus, he emphasizes on a community of sufferers. Coetzee's readers find that both his white and black characters live together sharing and caring each other in their sufferings. Generally, whites of South Africa are regarded as the perpetrators and blacks as victims, but Coetzee seems to say that anyone can be the victim regardless of their color of skin – a fact which he dramatizes by showing the traumas of Mrs Curren, a white character, and Florence, a black character, in *Age of Iron*. Coetzee means to say that whites are not the enemies of blacks, and vice versa, rather they are the supporters in others' sufferings. For instance, when John and Bheki die, Mr Curren does not get satisfaction from their death, rather she becomes one of the sufferers of their death. Coetzee's objective behind the narrativization of trauma of both white and black characters in *Age of Iron* is to end the intergenerational racial conflicts between

whites and non-whites of South Africa, and develop the secular life of peaceful co-existence between them.

In *Age of Iron*, Coetzee's white characters see the trauma of blacks and, vice versa, which helps to release their own trauma by realizing that it is not only the people of their community who are suffering from the apartheid regime of South Africa, rather the people of other community too have become the victims of it. It is a natural phenomenon that when a perpetrator regrets for creating trauma on its victim, the victim naturally feels relieved from his or her trauma. Moreover, when a person of one community extends his service to the trauma of another person who belongs to another community, the service naturally helps to unburden the trauma of the latter. Moreover, serving people of another racial group while they are facing trauma helps to minimize the intergenerational racial conflict which is what I understand as the politics of trauma. While discussing about the politics of trauma, Jenny Kdkin writes that "Private grief is overlaid by national mourning and blunted – or eased – by stories of service and duty" (1). Kdkin's view seems to be true in Coetzee's characters who serve others irrespective of their race that helps to ease the traumas of the victims.

Coetzee's white and black characters help and care each other which help to release their trauma. For instance, Mrs Curren, a white character of the novel, stays with Mr Vercueil and Florence who are black characters. Curren's old car does not start without Vercueil's push. So, she asks him to accompany her whenever she goes out. If he does not push the car, she will be trapped at home. She, too, does not regard him as a homeless man. She respects him as she says: "At the foot of the hill, as we began to slow down, I cast him a glance. He sat relaxed, imperturbable. Good man! I thought" (14). Florence's presence is also valuable in her life. She makes everything ready for her. Curren says: "'Wonderful, Florence,' I said, producing the ritual

phrases: 'I don't know what I would do without you.' But of course I do know. I would sink into the indifferent squalor of old age" (33). Curren's dependency on Vercueil and Florence is reflected in her statements quoted above. She will be trapped at her own house if these non-white characters do not help her. Interdependency of Curren and Vercueil is well depicted in the statement that Curren once states: "I have fallen and he has caught me. It is not he who fell under my care when he arrived, I now understand, nor I who fell under his: we fell under each other" (179). Thus, Curren needs Vercueil's presence, his comfort, his help, but he needs her help too. He needs the help only a woman can give a man. It is Coetzee's politics of keeping these white and non-white characters together in a harmonious relation during the trauma of apartheid regime in *Age of Iron*.

Sometimes, Vercueil and other two black boys – Bheki and John, who stay at Curren's house, fight each other. At that time, Curren stops them from fighting. When the boys charge Vercueil as a rubbish person, she reminds them that there are no rubbish people, and they are all people together. Moreover, she told them that Vercueil is their elder, so they have to respect him. She is trying to make them live together. Thus, Coetzee's characters settle their disputes themselves which leads to the formation of harmonious and peaceful community in *Age of Iron*. Curren does not discriminate the black people who live in her house in terms of their race. She sits on the same sofa with Vercueil and Florence, her maid servant. Vercueil's presence at her house has eased her trauma a lot. She expresses her satisfaction while being with Vercueil in this way:

We could set of house, the two of us, after a fashion, I upstairs, he downstairs, for this last little while. So that there will be someone at hand in the nights. For that is, after all, what one wants in the end:

someone to be there, to call to in the dark. Mother, or whoever is prepared to stand in for mother. (77)

Coetzee seems to say that even in the violence of the apartheid, white and black Africans can live together helping and caring each other. While going to see the dead body of Bheki in Guguletu, Mr Thabane, another black character of *Age of Iron*, assists Mrs Curren to cross the pool: “‘Come,’ said a voice, and Mr Thabane strode past. ‘Yes!’ I gasped, and gratefully struggled after him. But I could not catch up. ‘Slower, please,’ I called. He waited; together he and I crossed the pool and reach the path” (89). Curren gets helped by anyone whom she comes across. Coetzee’s characters often help others in their sufferings forgetting their own trauma. While helping others, they do not care whether the person whom they help belongs to the white community or the black, which is Coetzee’s politics of narrativization of trauma of both whites and blacks in *Age of Iron*.

Mrs Curren tries her level best to settle the problems created by the apartheid police who killed Bheki. She even suggests to the apartheid police that they should put down their guns and go home because they are doing the worse thing. She is angry with the apartheid regime for creating trauma on innocent people of South Africa: “I want to rage against the men who have created these times. I want to accuse them of spoiling my life in the way that a cockroach spoils food without even eating it, simply, by walking over it” (107). Curren means to say that the apartheid regime has not troubled her directly, the troubles of other people caused by it has created trauma on her. How can she be happy when she sees her neighbors being tortured and killed by the police? Her emotion against the apartheid regime has played a crucial role in unifying the black and white characters that ultimately leads to the formation of the harmonious relation among them in *Age of Iron*. While discussing about the

positive role of emotions during times of crisis, Hutchison writes that “Often neglected in scholarly analysis of international relations, emotions play a crucial political role during times of crisis and can become pivotal sites for the renewal of political stability and social control” (65). Curren requests the boys to stop throwing stones at the police since “the stone-throwing and shooting was not a game after all” (115). She tries her best to create peaceful environment in South Africa.

Curren is ashamed of the cruel actions of the apartheid police who, like her, are whites. She is traumatized by the people of her own racial community. She says “Shame never became a shameful pleasure; it never ceased to gnaw me. I was not proud of it, I was ashamed of it” (150). All members of a community do suffer when they know that the perpetrator, who victimizes others, belongs to their community (Giesen 114). But, at the same time, when the perpetrator regrets for committing the crime, his victim gets relieved from the trauma. Curren believes that she has a cancer from the accumulation of shame she has endured in her life. Her realization of crime committed by her people upon black Africans makes the black victims get relieved from the traumas caused by the police. Curren regrets for the crime of her people thus:

‘A crime was committed long ago. How long ago? I do not know. But longer ago than 1916, certainly. So long ago that I was born into it. It is part of my inheritance. It is part of me, I am part of it. Like every crime it had its price. That price, I used to think, would have to be paid in shame: in a life of shame and a shameful death, unlamented, in an obscure corner. I accepted that. I did not try to set myself apart. Thought it was not a crime I asked to be committed, it was committed in my name. I raged at times against the men who did the dirty work – you have seen it, a shameful raging as stupid as what it raged against. . . . I wished death on myself too.’ (149, 150)

It is Coetzee's politics of making Curren realize the crime of her white ancestors upon the blacks in the name of racial discrimination. Her regrets and rage upon the perpetrators of her own community normalizes the traumas of the blacks.

Curren feels that she was born a slave and she will most certainly die a slave. She says: "I have no idea what freedom is, Mr Vercueil. I am sure Bheki and his friends had no idea either" (150). But, she realizes that Vercueil starts giving her new attention. They visit new places together. Vercueil prefers traveling with her in her car. He tells her that if she likes, they can go on driving all the way round the Peninsula. He tries to avoid her boredom by taking her in tour. Hence, by depicting harmonious relation between Curren and Vercueil, Coetzee attempts to create peaceful coexistence between whites and non-whites in his fiction. Moreover, Coetzee seems to say that both whites and blacks are equally suffering in the hard time of the apartheid, and hence they belong to the same community of the sufferers rather than the community of whites and blacks. Thus, by revealing the trauma of both whites and blacks, Coetzee seems to create a community of sufferers in his *Age of Iron*.

Mrs.Curren herself is in physical agony of breast cancer, but she takes care of six other black people during apartheid. She often forgets her own physical and mental pain and extends her service to those who are in trouble. She fulfils her duty of serving others in their sufferings even if she herself is in the trauma of separation from her daughter, divorce from her husband, and grip of incurable sickness of cancer. She lives for others and is ready to die for them. Her service to others in their sufferings makes Curren an ethical character in the fiction. Coetzee reveals the ethics of both white and black characters who share and care each other during their hard times of apartheid. For instance, Mrs Curren and Vercueil stay together through good times and bad being supportive of each other come what may. And thus making his both white and black characters ethical to their opposite races, the author seems to

seek the possibility of secular life of peaceful co-existence, and not separation and partition between South African blacks and whites. Moreover, he attempts to develop an ethical community based on caring or love in *Age of Iron*.

CHAPTER IV

TRAUMA OF DEATH IN *THE MASTER OF PETERSBURG*

J.M. Coetzee's situation as a South African writer living under a repressive regime on the edge of revolution must have contributed to the genesis of *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), his novel about Dostoyevsky. ("Stalking Stavrogin" 351). Gary Adelman

J.M. Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), set in 1869, is a narrative about a Russian novelist named Fyodor Dostoevsky, who comes out of self-imposed exile in Dresden to St. Petersburg upon the news that his stepson – Pavel has died in a fall from a tower. He comes to collect the papers and other belongings of his dead stepson, and in the process, he becomes caught up in various aspects of the dead boy's former life. This novel is a complex work that draws on the troublesome life of Dostoyevsky, the life of the author, and the tsarist regime of Russia. In this novel, Coetzee has allegorically expressed his own experience of apartheid regime of South Africa as Michela Canepari Labib mentions that due to the allegorical and ambiguous nature of Coetzee's fiction, his novels could and should be placed within a larger discourse which transcends apartheid South Africa (106).

Coetzee allegorically represents the apartheid regime of South Africa in *The Master of Petersburg*, although it is set in the context of tsarist Russia of 1869. It is difficult to read Coetzee's novel in isolation from his experiences under the old South African regime with its distortions of reality. Agreeing with Labib's view regarding Coetzee's allegorical nature of writing fiction, mentioned above, Bert Beynen opines that Coetzee has written the reality of South African apartheid in *The Master of Petersburg* in a disguised form as he did in his previous writing (477). Coetzee has narrated his own experiences of the apartheid regime of South Africa choosing

Dostoevsky as his protagonist of the novel since there are many similarities in their lives. Critics claim that fictional Dostoevsky is Coetzee himself. For instance, Lawlan compares and finds the similarities between Coetzee and Dostoevsky thus:

There are perhaps similarities between the positions of Coetzee and Dostoevsky: both authors live(d) in a time of political unrest in their respective countries (and wrote with the threat of censorship hanging over them); both chose voluntary exile abroad for a time before returning to their native countries; both have been accused of being reactionary, of displaying complicity in the oppression of certain groups in their societies. The workings of revolutionary organizations in both countries are also comparable, consisting of "underground cells" utilizing terrorist tactics to attack the sections of society they see as subjugating them (136, 137).

Coetzee's novel has crossed the boundaries of South Africa's literary frontiers, but still the influence of the country is there. Regarding Coetzee's experience of South Africa in his writing, Kai Norris Easton mentions that Coetzee's novels retreat and roam; they root themselves nowhere. But the South African base is there-in the Cape, from which his stories emigrate (585). Coetzee is familiar with the apartheid repression of South Africa, and the tsarist despotism of Russia which began in 1700 and ended in 1917. Accordingly, this novel has been published in 1994, the year of apartheid's collapse in South Africa, and is set in 1869, the late years of tsarist Russia (Easton 586).

Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* depicts the historical reality of apartheid-like tsarist regime of Russia, in which, his abstract forces of anger and violence of apartheid are clearly reflected as Coetzee and Clive Barnett have declared that the

context of Coetzee's novel is understood according to a particular, stabilized model of South African reality under apartheid (300). They mean to say that Coetzee's novel should be read under the reality of South African Apartheid. His characters act as a mirror of South African reality. Grayson claims that despite being set in a clearly defined place and time far removed from the preoccupations of South Africa, *The Master of Petersburg* continues to be regarded by critics as a South African novel addressing specifically South African themes (61). Critics view that when Coetzee wrote this novel, South Africa was like 19th century tsarist Russia and Cape Town was like St Petersburg of Russia.

South Africa in apartheid era and nineteenth-century tsarist Russia are regarded as similar forms of historical tyranny. Thus, Coetzee has incorporated the apartheid regime of South Africa with the tyrannical regime of Tsarist Russia in his novel. As Dostoevsky, the protagonist of the novel, feels shocked when he encounters the horrible political atmosphere of Russia, Coetzee too feels depressed in his life due to the shocking politico-legal environment of South Africa. David Attwell claims that Coetzee has a Dostoevskian shock of encounter with the people and with the whole politico-legal environment of South Africa, an encounter felt not as a single event or phase but as a seemingly permanent condition (237). Coetzee presents similar subject in his *Age of Iron* and *The Master of Petersburg*, which are based on the uprising of Africa and Europe respectively. While discussing about students' uprising in *Age of Iron* and *The Master of Petersburg*, Dennis Walder notes the correspondence between the liberal student activists Coetzee had known about from his earlier Cape Town University days in *Age of Iron*, and the Nechaev's gang, the student anarchist movement encountered in *The Master of Petersburg*. Walder further adds that these novels are also painfully moving accounts of personal loss, of Coetzee's mother in the

former, and his son in the latter (500). Coetzee's own son died at the age of 23 in a mysterious falling accident.

In Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*, Russia is shown to be in the grip of tsarist police who torture their citizens as apartheid police do in South Africa in his *Age of Iron*. During Tsarist regime, people suffered from police agents who wanted to prolong tsarist system in Russia by taking the revolutionary group in their grip. Zubatov, the inventor of police socialism in Russia, was convinced that the Tsarist system could only survive if the revolutionary opposition were firmly in the hands of police agents (Bailey 462). Recalling the tsarist police brutality of Russia, Fredric S. Zuckerman narrates that as the years of the early twentieth century passed, Russia acquired most of the attributes of a modern police state. The centralization of all police services had been more or less achieved before the 1905 Revolution. The political police machine obtained powers of supervision, arrest and detention, and the right to inflict penal sanctions outside the control of the normal judicial machinery (279, 280). Even the people of rural area suffer from the hooliganism shared by the Tsarist Russia. Hooliganism, as Neil B. Weissman claims, was especially widespread in and around formerly rural centers too during tsarist Russia (231). Coetzee narrates the trauma of death, poverty, police brutality, and shame in this novel.

Trauma of Death

Fyodor Dostoevsky, the protagonist of *The Master of Petersburg*, suffers from the trauma of his stepson's death. As in Coetzee's *Age of Iron*, Mrs Curren and Florence suffer from the death of Bheki who has been murdered by the apartheid police of South Africa; similar kind of traumatic event occurs at the onset of *The Master of Petersburg*. Dostoevsky's stepson, named Pavel, has been murdered either by the police of tsarist Russia or by Pavel's friend, Nechayev – the leader of the

revolutionary group. Dostoevsky is in Dresden of Germany when he hears from one of his friends about the death of his son in St Petersburg of Russia, so he comes to St Petersburg to know the reality of his death. Later on, when he is recognized as Pavel's father by the tsarist police, he is hunted by them due to Pavel's association with the revolutionary group which they know from the confiscated papers of Pavel. In this novel, the protagonist suffers much from the untimely death of his son, at the age of twenty two, and the torture of the tsarist police as well.

Dostoevsky is unprepared for the onslaught of grief caused by the death of his stepson. He comes to Petersburg to seek the help of people to find the mystery of his son's death which traumatizes him a lot in the novel. Talking about the trauma of death, John S. Stephenson says that some families and individuals who are faced with death and dying situations seek professional help (459). Stephenson is true in the case of Dostoevsky who too seeks people's help to find the reality of his son's death. Then, he goes to the room which Pavel had rented when he was alive, as the room is still vacant. Anna Sergeyevna Kolenkina is the landlady who lets Dostoevsky to use Pavel's room. She, thus, proves to be an ethical character of Coetzee. In the room, Dostoevsky sees a suitcase which he had given to Pavel as a gift in the past. As he lifts the suitcase on to the bed and opens it, he sees Pavel's white suit there. Later on, the white suit becomes the reminder of Pavel's death for him. He is so grieved that "he presses his forehead to it. Faintly the smell of his son comes to him. He breathes in deeply, again and again, thinking: his ghost, entering me" (3, 4). He silently takes Pavel's name three or four times. Trauma of his son's death is so painful that he cannot breathe properly, and in his breathing also he "forms the syllables: *Pavel*" (5).

Pavel has already been buried in a grave in Yelagin Island where Dostoyesky visits to see the grave. His landlady, Anna also accompanies him. In the island, near

the grave of his son, he begins to cry remembering his dead child as he is not prepared to accept the death of his son so early: “Why now? he thinks, irritated with himself. Yet the tears are welcome in their way, a soft veil of blindness between himself and the world” (8). His eyes are full of tears while he is walking around the cemetery in the island as Pavel lives in his memory all the time. The novelist depicts the heartrending situation of Dostoevsky who mourns all the time for losing his son so unexpectedly:

Sentence had been pronounced; and the letter of sentence, addressed to me, was on its way, passing from hand to hand, only I did not know it. *The joy of your life is over:* that is what the sentence said. Unbuttoning his coat, unbuttoning his jacket, he kneels, then pitches awkwardly forward till he lies flat upon the mound, his arms extended over his head. He is crying freely, his nose is streaming. He rubs his face in the wet earth, burrows his face into it. (9)

Dostoevsky speaks in his cracking voice that his son is not dead, and Anna – his landlady assures him that he is not dead. Anna expresses her motherly love not only toward her daughter but toward Pavel too.

Memory of Pavel’s death does not go out of the mind of Dostoevsky who wants to hear from others how his son died. Even in the tenth day of Pavel’s death, his memories are still floating in his mind and which he wants to gather and conserve more. He never wants to forget his son as: “the very thought of Pavel being forgotten enrages him” (14). Dostoevsky is Pavel’s mother and father too. He is everything for him. Pavel’s own father had died when he was seven years old, and his mother died when he was fifteen. So it is only Dostoevsky who looked after him when he was alive. But, now, Pavel is no more in this world. This bitter reality of Pavel’s death

hurts the protagonist a lot: “from the depths of his throat, where he can no longer stifle it, a sound breaks out, a groan. He covers his face with his hands; tears run over his fingers” (16). He is sometimes in a rage since everyone is alive when his child is dead. Though he is alive, he has no faith in life. He wants to spend his life on a river-bank with armies of other dead souls. He often suffers from the thought that he will never see his son again.

Owing to the trauma of his son’s death, Dostoevsky has become like a corpse laid out since being alive has become a kind of sickness for him: “He wants to be dead. More than that: to be extinguished, annihilated” (17). Dostoevsky suffers physically as well as mentally due to the trauma of his son’s death, and has become like a mad man. Ross Mullner and Jack Goldberg, while discussing about the consequences of trauma caused by death, inform that “trauma, which can be defined as any external cause of injury or death, has been called the neglected disease of modern society” (140). They are true in a sense that Pavel’s death is a disease which has been inflicting Dostoevsky day by day, so he has become like a dog that has lost a bone, scratching here and there.

Caruth illustrates that trauma imposes itself again, repeatedly in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor (3) and it, as Eleanor Kaufman quotes Caruth, “returns to haunt the survivor later on” (46). In *The Master of Petersburg* too, the protagonist is so much haunted by the trauma of his son’s death that it comes to his nightmare too. During a night, he sees a horrible dream. The dream goes like this:

He is swimming underwater. The light is blue and dim. He banks and glides easily, gracefully; his hat seems to have gone, but in his black suit he feels like a turtle, a great old turtle in its natural element. Above

him there is a ripple of movement, but here at the bottom the water is still. He swims through patches of weed; slack fingers of water grass brush his fins, if that is what they are. He knows what he is in search of. As he swims he sometimes opens his mouth and gives what he thinks of as a cry or call. With each cry or call water enters his mouth; each syllable is replaced by a syllable of water. He grows more and more ponderous, still his breastbone is brushing the silt of the river-bed. Pavel is lying on his back. His eyes are closed. His hair, wafted by the current, is as soft as a baby's. From his turtle-throat he gives a last cry, which seems to him more like a bark, and plunges toward the boy. He wants to kiss the face; but when he touches his hard lips to it, he is not sure he is not biting. (17, 18)

Even in his dream, Dostoevsky carries Pavel on his back, and he wants to kiss on his face. He suffers in his dream too. He tries to call Pavel's name, but his mouth is filled with water. He feels like an old turtle swimming through patches of weed. Thus, his traumatic condition caused by his son's death is clearly reflected in his dream.

Every day, Dostoevsky comes to Pavel's room and lays his white suit out on the bed. In his son's absence, his white suit reminds him of his son. How much he loves Pavel is obvious when he starts sniffing the armpits of Pavel's suit. The smell comes clearly not that of a child but of a fully grown up man, since Pavel was twenty two years old when he died. He wishes to preserve the smell of Pavel's armpits if possible. He inhales it again and again: "How many breaths before it fades? If the suit were shut up in a glass case, would the smell be preserved too?" (19). He wants to keep Pavel's white suit as his memorial, as Thomas P. Crocker points out that one way of maintaining loyalty to the event is through memorial. Its aim is to allow the

ordinary to continue unaffected. It is an attempt to remind us not to forget (311).

Dostoevsky does not wish to forget Pavel. On his bed, he turns over and draws the white jacket of Pavel over his face, and inhales it too.

Since the day the news of Pavel's death came to him, Dostoevsky realizes that something has been moving out of him as he becomes gradually weaker and weaker. Pavel's death is so traumatic that he feels that he is dead with Pavel. He often repeats "I am the one who is dead or rather, I died but my death failed to arrive" (19). His heart goes on beating loudly for a long time, and he feels as if he has been carried by dead water or a dead stream. He often imagines how Pavel felt at the last moment when he fell from the tower, and when he was sure that he would die in a second. Therefore, he cannot concentrate his mind in writing as his mind is occupied by the thought of his son's death: "His mind is running to the moment of Pavel's death. What he cannot bear is the thought that, for the last fraction of the last instant of his fall, Pavel knew that nothing could save him, that he was dead" (20). He cannot distinguish himself from Pavel when he imagines that it is not Pavel who fell from the tower, it is he himself. The painful memory of Pavel's death by falling from the tower has made Dostoevsky's life so miserable. Talking about painful memories and their effects in human life, Gay Becker, Yewoubdar Beyene and Pauline Ken state that traumatic memories render the present unreconciled. Embodied memories of violence and death have allowed the world to become an unspeakable, hostile, and death-ridden place (321). Traumatic memory of Pavel's death gives Dostoevsky a lot of physical and emotional pain in the novel.

Dostoevsky feels that he is the father of misfortune. Every day he wishes to go back to Yelagin Island, to see the grave where Pavel is lying, but he cannot go there due to his financial crisis. So, he just sits on his bed with Pavel's white suit on his lap

and laments that “the cord of love that goes from his heart to his son’s as physically as if it were a rope. He feels the rope twist and wring his heart. He groans aloud” (23).

He wants someone to talk about his son to know how he died. He remembers that Pavel was not serious in his study. If he had seriously studied, he would not have died so early, since none of such events would have occurred in his life. Dostoevsky tries to speak, but his voice emerges strangled. Then, he begins to cry soundlessly: “No longer holding back the tears, he feels his way back to the table, buries his head in his arms, and lets loose howl after howl of grief. No one strokes his hair, no one murmurs a consoling word in his ear” (28).

Dostoevsky remembers his dead son even while he is walking in the roads of Petersburg. His eyes move restlessly from one passing person to the next searching for the one who looks like his lost son. By their walk, he will recognize his son. He tries to summon up Pavel’s face: “‘Pavel!’ he whispers, conjuring his son in vain” (49). He is not ready to accept his son’s death, so he has not said farewell to his son as he cannot give his son up so easily. Rather, he wants his son returned to life. He feels that his son is inside him, but he does not know how to resurrect the baby. Thus, he feels paralysed even while he is walking down the street. Regarding why Dostoevsky seeks to bring his dead son to life, David Attwell views that Dostoevsky does so in part because this is what it means to live a Russian life (231). But, Peaco believes that Dostoevsky is so traumatized by the death of his son that he wants to bring his son back to life by writing a story about him. He creates a rich mental picture of his son to imagine him back to life (374).

Pavel’s death is a grief which has come to the protagonist before its time to devour him. So, his mind is filled with visions that come and go swiftly and he is not in control of himself. He pushes his paper and pen to the far end of the table, lays his

head on his hands and utters “I am going to faint” (53). He madly thinks that he is Pavel and Pavel is he, and demonstrates abnormal behavior addressing his dead son ““Hello, old friend. Goodbye, old friend”” (54). Moreover, he does not like to eat his supper due to the traumatic memory of his son’s death which he cannot avoid, as Smelser says “traumatic memories cannot be avoided; even when pushed out of waking consciousness” (41). He wears Pavel’s white suit, and wants to hear Pavel’s deep voice from his chest, a voice that says ““See what a treasure is gone from the world!’ he wants to cry out: ‘See what we have lost!’” (58).

Traumatic memory of his dead son is so painful for Dostoevsky that he shuts himself in his room, and tries to calm himself. He whispers the word *Pavel* again and again (60). When he suffers from the trauma of his son’s death, he takes his son’s name and shakes his head, whispering Pavel’s name. In his dead son’s room, he has been an object of pity all the time. He desires to go to Yelagin Island and meet Pavel in his grave, but it has been impossible for him to go there again and again since he has been marked by the police of the tsarist Russia as the father of Pavel who had an association with the revolutionary group when he was alive. Moreover, he has many creditors in the city whereas he himself is penniless. So he is bound to stay in Pavel’s room and exhibit uncommon activities because of the trauma of his son’s death: “He goes down on his knees, rests his forehead against the bed, tries to find his way to Yelagin Island and to Pavel in his cold grave. Pavel, at least, will not turn on him” (67). He kneels and kneels, but Pavel does not come. At last, he moves into his bed sighing. Thus, he starts showing some strange symptoms of trauma which are, as in Karyn Ball’s words, “beyond the parameters of clinical study” (1). Dostoevsky has no idea about where he is and who he is. At times he feels as if he has been born a

minute ago into a world of unrelieved night (69). Over traumatic effect of his dead son has made his head ache as if a fist were clenching inside it.

Dostoevsky keeps on mourning for his dead child, and his morning seems to have no end. His mind, which is filled with painful memories related to Pavel's death, is restless. He is lost in the thoughts of his dead son. Even in his imagination, he sees a boy who has lost his ship in the sea. The boy keeps on "beating about in the waves, keeping himself somehow afloat, the boy shouts in terror: he breathes and shouts after the ship that has been his home, that is his home no longer" (78). He is eager to see his son even in his sleep. So, he enters his sleep each night with the intend of finding his way to Pavel, but at night he is awoken almost at once "by a voice, thin to the point of being disembodied, calling from the street below. *Isaev!* The voice calls, over and over, patiently" (79). "Isaev" is Pavel's surname which the protagonist hears at night in his sleep. The voice could be the reflection of his desire to see his son. He just hears the disembodied word calling from the street, but the bitter reality is that he would never see Pavel again. This is the reality that hurts him again and again in his life. So he feels that Pavel's death is his death too. Wherever he goes he bears Pavel with him like a baby who has become cold within him.

Dostoevsky does not know what to do next, nor does Pavel speak to him. He misses his son so much that "if he knew the words came from Pavel he would obey them without question" (81). Naturally, trauma of death of children becomes very difficult for any parent to bear. It cannot be an exception in Dostoevsky's case whose head is swimming and he is suddenly exhausted due to the persistent memory of his dead son. He often sees the vision of Pavel walking towards him. He is about to smile at Pavel, but, there is no Pavel in reality. It was only his illusion created by the persistent thinking about his son's death. He sees the vision of Pavel repeatedly as

Caruth mentions that “The painful repetition of the flashback can only be understood as the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event” (43). Caruth’s view is true in Dostoevsky’s life too, since he cannot avoid the painful event of his son’s death from his mind. When Nechaev, Pavel’s friend and the leader of a revolutionary group, tells Dostoevsky about Pavel’s murder by the tsarist police of Russia by pushing him off a tower, he is more traumatized imagining the last moment of Pavel’s fall and his pitiable broken dead body after the fall:

Upon him bursts the thought of Pavel’s last moment, of the body of the hot-blooded young man in the pride of life striking the earth, of the rush of breath from the lungs, the crack of bones, the surprise, above all the surprise, that the end should be real, that there should be no second chance. Under the table he wrings his hands in agony. A body hitting the earth: death, the measure of all things! (105)

Dostoevsky goes to see the tower from where Pavel had been pushed off to be killed either by the police of tsarist Russia or by his own friend named Nechaev in the charge of betraying him. Looking below from the top of the tower, Dostoevsky imagines “Between here and there Pavel was alive, more alive than ever before. . . . a truth that wrings the heart!” (121). But, the last moment of Pavel’s death is so painful that he is restless to hear the description of his son’s death from someone who has seen the event on the spot. He is shattered imagining how much pain his son underwent at the last moment before he died. He cannot sleep even in his own room thinking about his dead son.

Dostoevsky recalls the moment when his wife had read the message of his son’s death, and how he had felt the words beat in his head and how he had cried: “‘Fedya, *Pavel is dead!*’” (124). He had taken the telegram in his hands, read it

himself, staring at the yellow sheet, trying to make the French say something other than what it said. Finally, he has got to bid farewell to Pavel forever “Dead. Gone forever from a world of light into the prison of the past. With no return. And the funeral already took care of. The account settled the account with life. The book closed” (124). When this reality of Pavel’s death comes to his mind, Dostoevsky feels that he himself is dead and buried. He imagines that Pavel is searching for the light to emerge. He thinks how he can find his dead child within himself, and allow him a voice to sing his sad song. He wants to make Pavel alive to sing his song of sadness because of his compelling reality of bodily suffering and death, the threat of shame, and the desire for salvation (Tremaine 588).

Dostoevsky wishes that his dead son would come to exist to this world using him as a means and find his way to his thigh-bone and pipe to him from there. He wishes that Pavel would speak again, “Father why have you left in the dark forest? Father, when will you come to save me?” (126). Discussing about the symptoms of a traumatized person, Margalit points out that trauma makes the traumatized person react disproportionately (126). In *The Master of Petersburg*, Dostoevsky reacts disproportionately to the death of his son. For instance, he wants to have his dead son back since he wants to kiss him on the lips, which is impossible, as a dead body which is already buried, cannot come back. He even requests Anna, his landlady to bring his son back even for just a minute. A mentally sound person does not make such request. What Dostoevsky demonstrates are his symptoms of madness due to the uncontrolled memories of his dead son. He even hates St Petersburg for what it did to his son.

Dostoevsky is imposed to Pavel’s childhood memories several times in the novel. An image of Pavel comes back to him when Pavel was seven, and he was in his grey checked coat and ear-muffs and boots too large for him. But, now Pavel is no

more in this world. Now, he regrets for coming late to St Petersburg to see the dead body of his son. Perhaps he could have consoled himself had he been able to brush Pavel's lips with his fingertips: "I came too late to raise the coffin-lid, to kiss your smooth cold brow. If my lips, tender as the fingertips of the blind, had been able to brush you just once, you would not have quit this existence bitter against me" (153). It is too difficult for him to leave St Petersburg where Pavel is lying in the grave, and go back to Dresden where his wife is waiting for him. Now he realizes how difficult it is to be a father of a son who died before him leaving him in his old age. Moreover, his only child dies when he is too old to have another, so he expresses his sorrow: "'I am the one who carries the madness'" (202).

Pavel's death makes Dostoevsky feel more alone. He feels as if he is a traveler on a vast plain with the storm-clouds overhead. He recalls Pavel again and again which makes his life more traumatic as Caruth mentions that repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be retraumatizing; if not life threatening (45). Dostoevsky brings Pavel to his mind like a man probing his own wound. He even imagines Pavel under his blanket of earth and snow on Yelagin Island. He whispers, "Poor child!" (214), imagining his son's cold body in the grave. When he reads Pavel's papers, it becomes so difficult for him that instead of reading, he closes his eyes and touches his lips to the page, and then recalls Pavel's thin body in his childhood: "how small his toenails were, as though they had not grown since he was a child" (220). But now he has lost that thin body of Pavel who has gone to another world leaving him alone there.

All the morning he shuts himself up, sitting with his arms locked around his knees, his head bowed. He is not alone, but the presence he feels in the room is not that of his son, rather a thousand petty demons, swarming in the air like locusts let out

of a jar (228). He feels that Pavel's body is buried now within him, in his breast, and he is bound to live in the place where Pavel has been buried hearing the voices of whole Russia murmuring within him. Due to the continuous mourning of his son's death, Dostoevsky is getting weaker, and he mistakes himself for a stranger. His dark beard looks like a curtain of bees. But the bitter reality is that he will never get his son back however thin and lean he becomes: "Ultimately, if he wants to meet him, he will have to meet him in death" (238). So he sits paralyzed in grief, weeping without cease.

Dostoevsky cannot think nor can he write. He becomes like a prisoner in his own room. Pavel's images keep on visiting to his memory in which he finds Pavel, "naked and broken and bloody, in the morgue; the seed in his body dead too, or dying" (241). Dostoevsky has nothing in his mind except the memories of his dead child which make him feel like a soldier shot on the battlefield, bleeding and seeing the blood. What traumatizes Dostoevsky most is the persistent thought of not being able to see or meet his son before his death and not being able to save him from being dead. The bitter reality is that he would never see his son again in his life, which hurts him again and again throughout his whole life.

Traumatic Shame

Fyodor Dostoevsky, a forty nine years old protagonist of *The Master of Petersburg*, commits many shameful acts which create trauma in the lives of himself and other characters in the novel. Actually Dostoevsky has come to St Petersburg from Dresden after hearing the news of his stepson's death, and to find the reality of it. But, instead of finding the reality of his son's death, he himself involves in the seduction of his son's landlady – Anna Sergeyevna Kolenkina, a widow who provides him with a room where Pavel would stay when he was alive. Dostoevsky has his own

wife named Apollon Maykov in Dresden whom he had married after Pavel's mother died. His wife, Apollon is as old as Pavel as he had married a too young lady in his old age. Despite his own young wife, he is involved in the adulterous relationship with Anna whose own husband is dead some years before, which creates a trauma of shame in *The Master of Petersburg*.

Besides having sexual affair with Anna, Dostoevsky attempts to seduce Matryona – Anna's fourteen years old daughter to whom his son – Pavel had friendship when he was alive. Dostoevsky does not have relationship with Matryona, but he often imagines of having an affair with her. In another word, he uses both Anna and her Daughter for physical and mental comfort respectively as his momentary, acute sexual desire for his landlady amuses him. He lives in Pavel's room in Anna's apartment, so Anna sometimes goes to his room to talk to him about Pavel or to console him in his trauma of his son's death, or sometimes to call him for supper. But whenever he finds Anna alone, he becomes erotic. Once, Anna was in his room talking about Pavel and consoling him in his trauma of his son's death, he looks at slim fingers of her small hand and desires for those hands to caress his hair: "Absurdly, he would like to lay his head on her breast and feel those fingers stroke his hair" (10).

Anna accompanies Dostoevsky to the grave of Pavel in Yelagin Island, and when she is trying to help him by writing the number of Pavel's grave, his sexual desire arises all of a sudden: "he wants to take this woman by the arm, drag her behind the gatekeeper's hut, lift her dress, couple with her" (11). Then, a question arises whether Dostoevsky is really in trauma of his son's death since a really traumatized person does not show such erotic symptoms so frequently. Moreover, he would like to see Anna's naked body in her flowering youth. He gazes Anna's

fourteen years old daughter – Matryona with the same desire when she happens to come to his room to call him for dinner. She raises her eyes for an instant, encounters his gazes exploring her, and turns away in confusion. Her manner is enough for him to be angry with her: “He wants to grip her arm and shake her. Look at me, child! he wants to say: Look at me and learn” (13). Dostoevsky, indeed, loses his morality and a common sense that is required to a human being. Being an old man, fit to be the grandfather of Matryona, he expresses sexual emotions the moment he finds her alone, which also creates traumatic shame in the novel.

When Anna comes to his room bringing tea, Dostoevsky does not show any interest in having tea; rather his interest is on her temple and cheekbone, the dark liquid eyes and brows. He stares at her with nakedness so that “for a moment she meets his gaze. Then she averts her eyes, steps back uncertainly, makes a strange, awkward kind of curtsy, and flees the room” (24). Dostoevsky does not feel ashamed of his act as if shame seems to have lost its power on him, and its place is taken by a blank and immoral passivity. Despite her disapproval, Dostoevsky forces Anna to have an affair with him: “He puts down the empty cup and lays a hand on her shoulder. ‘No,’ she says, shaking her head, pushing his hand away, ‘that is not how I do thing’” (53). Slipping past his hands, she disappears into the curtained alcove. But, Dostoevsky does not give up his attempt to seduce her. Although Anna orders him out, he sits down and waits. He takes her hands which are cold and trembling. She cannot meet his eyes. She tells him, “‘I want you to know I have not done this before’” (55). When he tries to kiss her, she averts her head. But, finally, due to his persistent urge, Anna surrenders to him and agrees to have sexual relation with him. Coetzee describes their adulterous relationship thus:

They spend the night together in his son's room. What happens between them happens in the dark from beginning to end. In their lovemaking he is struck above all by the heat of her body. It is not at all as he had expected. It is as if at her core she were on fire. It excites him intensely, and it excites him too that they should be doing such fiery, dangerous work with the child asleep in the next room. He falls asleep. Sometimes in the middle of the night he wakes with her still beside him in the narrow bed. Though he is exhausted, he tries to arouse her. She does not respond; when he forces himself on her, she becomes like a dead thing in his arms. In the act there is nothing he can call pleasure or even sensation. It is as though they are making love through a sheet, the grey, tattered sheet of his grief. At the moment of climax he plunges back into sleep as into a lake. (56)

Dostoevsky, after seducing Anna and forcing himself on her, passes the day thinking of her, and quivering with desire like a young man. He often goes to her room when her daughter is asleep, with a view to having physical relationship. Moreover, he thinks about, as Jane Poyner claims, abusing Anna's fourteen years old daughter – Matryona, imagining her laid out naked on the bed (132), which proves that he is a morally corrupted man since he is responsible for corrupting the child.

Dostoevsky visits Anna's shop where Anna and her business partner, an old man are sitting. Even in the shop, Dostoevsky discloses a sexual desire on her. If there is no old man hovering behind her, he would reach across the counter; take her hand and whisper to her "“You have lightened my day”" (51). Thus, his mind dwells insistently on Anna. Moreover, he often tiptoes across Anna's room at night while she is sleeping with her daughter, with a view to getting a chance to have sexual relation

with her again. Even Matryona knows that he has come to her room to have relation with her mother since she is awake while he is tiptoeing across the room. She has been watching his every motion with unremitting vigilance (58).

Both, Dostoevsky, and his son, Pavel, while he was alive, have an affair with Anna. It is a traumatic shame that both father and son have a sexual relation with the same woman. Anna starts herself coming to his room at night without warning, and through her, he passes into darkness and into the waters where his son is floating among the other drowned. He is ready to share the bitterness with his son having relation with the woman with whom his son had before, as he addresses his dead son, “‘Do not be afraid,’ he wants to whisper, ‘I will be with you, I will divide the bitterness with you’” (58). He strokes her long thigh up and down despite her disapproval. She tries to stop him, but he seduces her forcefully:

He takes her by the arm. It is dark, she is carrying a basket, she cannot free herself. He presses himself against her, drawing in the walnut scent of her hair. He tries to kiss her, but she turns away and his lips brush her ear. Nothing in the pressure of her body answers to him.

Disgrace, he thinks: this is how one enters disgrace (59).

Anna is not happy with Dostoevsky’s forceful attempt to have relation with her whenever he gets an opportunity to do so. She believes that he is using her to get her daughter. Therefore, she does not want to be dragged in any further. Moreover, she reminds him of his own young wife in Dresden and suggests to him that he should wait till he is with her again. But, when he returns to Dresden, his wife will be changed and infused with the trace he brings from this widow: “Through his wife he will be reaching to this woman, just as through this woman he reaches – to whom?” (60). Dostoevsky is so sensuous that using one woman he often imagines reaching to

another woman. For instance, he wants to reach Matryona using Anna. He is unfaithful to his wife as he infuriates her spoiling their married life for which he has no guilt at all. On the contrary, he has a sense of his own rightness. Later on, Anna remains indifferent to him. It is his fault as he should not have expected the woman who used his son in the pride of his days.

Dostoevsky had better dress and get out of the apartment before the shame of his act descends: “he must find a place out of sight, out of the hearing of decent people” (68). He is not fit to stay in that place where only honest and fair people live. In other words, it is urgent for him to get away from this place before he is discovered in all his disgrace. He himself realizes that he is in disgrace and accepts that Pavel is fortunate in a sense that he was not born of him, so he need not have to share his disgrace (70). He attempts to frighten Matryona and make her surrender to him by telling her a story of an evil world, in which a captain beats his sister who is a cripple. He knows that Matryona rejects with all her soul the vision of the world he is offering since she believes only in goodness. But his intention behind telling this story is to corrupt her innocent life.

Dostoevsky tries to seduce Matryona – a fourteen years old child of Anna with whom he has already had an affair. He pats the bed beside him and asks her to sit there, and: “hanging her head, she slides closer. He folds her within the circle of his arm; he can feel her trembling. He strokes her hair, her temples. At last she gives way and, pressing herself against him, balling her fists under her chin, sobs freely” (75, 76). But despite her cry, he imagines that she is in her ecstasy. This is a kind of violation he commits with a child. He keeps on committing disgraceful acts which seem to have no bound. He imagines that she is in the crook of his arm, and his five fingers are gripping her shoulder. She might as well be sprawled out naked. He further

imagines that she is one of those girls who give themselves because their natural motion is to be good, to submit. He thinks of child-prostitutes he has known in Germany, and thinks of men who search out such girls (76). Thus, Dostoevsky's mind is filled with the thoughts of seducing Matryona whenever she comes to his room to call him for supper, creating traumatic shame in the novel.

Dostoevsky almost rapes Matryona in his imagination when she is in his room, and who innocently thinks that he is the father of Pavel who was her dearest friend when he was alive, and for whom she still mourns. But Dostoevsky is possessed by devils in his imagination, which is an evidence to show how much a man can fall into the ditch of disgrace. He imagines of raping Matryona thus:

Recognizing the flavor of innocence in the gesture with which the girl cups her breasts for him, in the movement with which she spreads her thighs. In the tiny room with its stale odours, she gives off a faint, desperate smell of spring, of flowers, that he cannot bear. Deliberately, with teeth clenched, he hurts her, and then hurts her again and again, watching her face all the time for something that goes beyond mere wincing, mere bearing of pain: for the sudden wide-eyed look of a creature that begins to understand its life is in danger. (77)

After imagining such a horrible scene of raping a virgin girl, he comes to a normal position as before, soothing her a last time, and withdrawing his arms from her. When she comes to his room to light a candle for Pavel, he puts his fingers closer to her shoulder, drawing her tightly against him, and feeling the soft young bones of her.

Moreover, Dostoevsky's mind is occupied by the memories of his romance with Anna. Memories of his nights with her flood back with sudden fullness. But, he expresses his dissatisfaction with the love making of Anna. He says that in his love

making with Anna, he could hear nothing but the flapping of bed sheets like wings. Although he is not satisfied with her, his desire grows “pointing like an arrow to her” (85). Anna is the one whom he wants most. It is really shameful for a man of forty nine, who, instead of mourning for his dead son, involves in the memories of those nights when he spent with Anna. Desire in all its luxuriousness overwhelms him. It is so shameful that whenever he sees a woman, an unexpected flutter of desire passes on him. For instance, when he sees the tall woman who is his son’s friend, and a member of the revolutionary group, “a disturbing excitement creeps over him” (100). The most shameful matter of all is that the tall woman puts her foot against his knowing that he is the man of desire. Thus, even the public knows his weaknesses regarding his desire for women.

Dostoevsky even imagines making an affair with the Finn girl with whom, he guesses, Pavel had an affair: “He sees the Finn naked, on a bed of scarlet cushions, her bulky leg apart, her arms held wide to display her breasts and a belly rotund, hairless” (107). On an impulse he takes her hand. She looks up with surprise. He does not have a sense of what is right and just. He wants to embrace her, wants to take her in his arms. He is a sensualist and an extremist of the senses as he wants to live in a body at the limits of sensation, at the limits of bodily knowledge. For him, as he says “everything is permitted” (114).

Dostoevsky becomes so irritating in the lives of Anna and Matryona that they want him go from the house. Yet, he hungers to have Anna in his arms again. He does not believe that Anna is indifferent to him. On his own he feels like a dog chasing its tail in tighter and tighter circles (127). At the core of his hunger is a desire that on the first night with Anna, he did not fully know it but now he seems to have become centered on her smell. As if she and he were animals, he is drawn by something he

picks up in the air around her: “He sees himself sprawled over her like a lion, rooting with his muzzle in the hair of her neck, burying his nose in her armpit, rubbing his face in her crotch” (128). By loving Anna, Dostoevsky is destined to long for her daughter – Matryona who has sensed that her mother and Dostoevsky has an affair, so she tries to reclaim her mother. When Anna is with her daughter at her room, he imagines that “if the child were away he would not waste another word. He would snuff out the light and in the dark he and she would find each other again. They would have the big bed to themselves” (130). Thus, Dostoevsky does not think any other things except Anna, and his strong desire to have affair with her at the age of forty nine, particularly while he is mourning his son’s death, which leads him to a traumatic shame.

Dostoevsky’s erotic desire for Anna becomes even stronger than before which is a matter of shame. When Anna comes to his room, he leans across her and puts his hand on her thigh. And coming closer to her, he grips her neck, and draws her face toward his face. Anna, a widow, tries to avoid him, but he wants her more and more: “he wants her not in this narrow child’s-bed but in the widow-bed in the next room” (133). It is a traumatic shame that Dostoevsky imagines writing a book named *Memoirs of a Russian Nobleman*, a book of evil in which he does not seduce Matryona, a young daughter of Anna, but frightens her and disturbs her sleep by telling a story, which makes her doubtful of her own purity that three days later she gives herself up to him in despair. He imagines that Anna will be the true begetter of the book, but she would never see it. His imagination goes like this:

With a chapter in which the noble memoirist reads aloud to the young daughter of his mistress a story of the seduction of a young girl in which he himself emerges more and more clearly as having been the

seducer. A story full of intimate detail and innuendo which by no means seduces the daughter but on the contrary frightens her and disturbs her sleep and makes her so doubtful of her own purity that three days later she gives herself up to him in despair, in the most shameful of ways. (134)

The way Dostoevsky thinks about a story of seduction of a young girl is shameful, and nothing seems to stop him to imagine such vulgar ideas. Moreover, he seems to have lost all the moral principles concerning right and wrong. He just waits for Anna to come to his room for sexual relation despite Matryona's awareness of what is happening between him and her mother.

Dostoevsky's cunning attitude shows that he wants to have a child from Anna, despite his own wife who is also named "Anna", and who is of the generation of Pavel. Keeping his own wife in Dresden, he commits adultery with Anna in St Petersburg and moreover, he wants to have a child from her, who so shamefully responds to his proposal thus: "What nonsense! You have a wife and child already!" (224). In her response, he gives a very nonsense logic regarding why he wants a child from her. His logic is that he wants a child from her since he, Anna, and Matryona belong to Pavel's family whereas his wife and her child belong to a different family. There is no sense in his logic. Moreover, he says that he wants to stay with Anna and send the allowance to his wife in Dresden.

Dostoevsky keeps on committing adultery, forgetting his purpose of coming to St Petersburg. There seems to be nothing more important on earth for him except Anna from whom he wants to give birth to his savior. Every midnight, Anna comes to his room and "they make love as though under sentence of death, self-absorbed, purposeful. There are moments when he cannot say which of them is which, which

the man, which the woman” (225). Dostoevsky forgets about himself during the intercourse. After their sexual intercourse, they lie against each other as if they are husband and wife in the narrow bed of Pavel, which is soaked with “a real river of seed” (225). From their conversation, they reveal that both of them are using each other as a route to reach to their children. Anna sleeps with him because of Pavel, or to reach Pavel as she finds Pavel on him, and he sleeps with her making her a route to reach Matryona. Physically they are together, but mentally they are with the children of one another. Anna says to Dostoevsky, “‘It’s the truth, clear for anyone to see! You use me as a route to her, and I cannot bear it!’ . . . ‘You are in the grip of something quite beyond me. You seem to be here but you are not here’” (231). Anna has a fear that Dostoevsky might use her daughter as she used Pavel while he was alive. Now, she regrets for sleeping with Pavel as she says “But now it is costing me too much. It is wearing me down. I would never have gone so far if I weren’t afraid you would use Matryona in the same way’” (232).

After making love, both Anna and Dostoevsky sleep together until Matryona comes to his room next morning to find her mother fast asleep in his arm, snoring. He sees the grave child at the door who sees and knows all of their shameful activities. But for him, all things are permitted so he sleeps with her mother without caring how his reckless act affects the psyche of the child. He corrupts her which is an assault upon the innocence of a child. As he has crossed the threshold, so he is in the mist of shameful fall from which no one can save him. He does not rape Matryona, but commits rape in his imagination when she is in his room, and he sleeps with her mother in her presence, thus creating the traumatic shame in the novel.

Trauma of Apartheid-like Regime

Tsarist regime which began in Russia in 1700 and ended in 1917 was like apartheid regime of South Africa regarding police brutality and their oppressive and autocratic nature. In *The Master of Petersburg*, Coetzee depicts the political scenario of Russia of 1869, when Tsarist regime and its suppression was almost at the peak movement. During this period, several political movements existed in Russia aiming at overthrowing the repressive Tsarist rulers. Coetzee reveals his influence of apartheid South Africa through Dostoevsky who is his mouthpiece in the novel, since Coetzee has said that writing is always autobiographical and that “the only sure truth in autobiography is that one’s self-interest will be located at one’s blind spot (*Doubling the Point* 391), and Jane Poyner argues that this blind spot is constructed by Coetzee in the figure of Dostoevsky in *The Master of Petersburg* (2009, 131). Although this novel is set in the context of Russia, it allegorically represents the apartheid regime of South Africa since it is written in the waning years of the apartheid in South Africa.

Coetzee’s *The Master of Petersburg* is written in the context of tsarist Russia, but the story and theme of it is very similar to his *Age of Iron* which is written in the context of Apartheid regime of South Africa. Similar content of these novels supports to make a claim that Coetzee allegorically represents the apartheid regime of South Africa and trauma created by it on people in his *The Master of Petersburg*. In both novels, there are woman characters who are so ethical for others that they help others by providing them with food and shelter at their houses, and in return they do not expect anything from them. For instance, Anna is an ethical character who loves Pavel in *The Master of Petersburg*. Similarly, Mrs Curren is an ethical character who loves Bheki in *Age of Iron*. Pavel lives in Anna’s apartment in *The Master of*

Petersburg, and Bheki lives in Mrs Curren's house in *Age of Iron*. Pavel is murdered by the tsarist police of Russia, as Bheki is murdered by the apartheid police of South Africa. Dostoevsky and Anna suffer from the death of Pavel, similarly, Florence and Mrs Curren suffer from the death of Bheki. Anna helps whoever comes to her house seeking for her help, and similarly Mrs Curren helps whoever comes to take shelter at her house. Anna has a daughter, and so has Mrs Curren. Anna is a widow and so is Mrs Curren.

Jane Poyner observes that the parallels between Tsarist Russia and apartheid South Africa are transparent: both are oppressive societies which have subjected their citizens to censorship, imprisonment, torture and exile; both nations are undergoing great change (139). The people of both Russia and South Africa had suffered from the police of their countries. While discussing about the police brutality of Tsarist Russia, Theodore H. Friedgut states that the Cossacks had arrested and jailed some 150 rioters. At the same time, beaten off or dissuaded in their attempt to storm the factory offices and with the central bazaar a smoking ruin, the main body of rioters burned and pillaged what the accounts call "another bazaar" 74 – these were the homes and shops of Iuzovka's Jewish. The losses in human life and in property were shocking. According to official reports twenty-three civilians were killed, seven more were burned to death (259).

Coetzee's art seeks for itself the task of bearing witness to the abundance of real suffering engendered by apartheid (Durrant 434). In *Age of Iron* where one can see the suffering of the characters created by the apartheid regime of South Africa, Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* bears witness to plenty of sufferings of the Russian people engendered by the apartheid-like Tsarist Russia. For instance, Dostoevsky's stepson – Pavel has been murdered by the police of Tsarist Russia, and

his personal documents have been confiscated by them in *The Master of Petersburg*. When Dostoevsky goes to the police station to get his son's belongings back, he himself becomes the target of the police's hunt, as the author says: "His heart sinks. He had hoped simply to be handed Pavel's belongings and walk out of this place. What he can least afford is that the police should turn their attention on him" (30).

Dostoevsky is trapped by the tsarist police when they find the name list of the people to be killed by the underground revolutionary group in the charge of people's enemies in one of Pavel's papers. Thus, the police know Pavel's association with Nechaev and his revolutionary group who "stands first and foremost for the violent overthrow of all the institutions of society, in the name of a principle of equality" (35, 36). As a result, the innocent people of Russia become the victims of both police brutality and the revolutionary group. As in Coetzee's *Age of Iron*, two little boys named Bheki and his friend John have been murdered by the apartheid police of South Africa; Dostoevsky's son, Pavel has been killed by the apartheid-like police of tsarist Russia in his *The Master of Petersburg*.

Dostoevsky gets torture from Maximov, the police investigator who asks him several questions regarding his son's association with Nechaev's criminal gang. Indicating Nechaev's gang, Maximov declares that "these child conspirators are certainly a different kettle of fish from their predecessors. They believe that they are immortal. In that sense it is indeed like fighting demons" (45). Finally, Maximov does not allow Dostoevsky to leave St Petersburg until his son's police case is settled. Indeed, the police investigator wants to arrest Pavel's friends who are involved in the revolutionary group led by Nechaev by taking Dostoevsky's help. But Dostoevsky is completely unknown about the revolutionary group, which Maximov is not ready to accept easily (46). Thus, he falls in the trap of the tsarist police and the revolutionary

group. Dostoevsky is only a representative character of Coetzee who seems to say that there are many innocent people in Russia who have become the victims of both the tsarist police and the revolutionary groups of Russia.

The tsarist police of Russia killed Pavel and made a rumor that Pavel killed himself. Thus, Nechaev is committed that he will take a revenge of Pavel's murder: "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (102). Moreover, Nechaev wants to use Dostoevsky to make his plan successful by forcing him to write about the reality of Pavel's death as he knows that people believe Dostoevsky's writing since he is a great writer of that time. He tries to persuade Dostoevsky: "Those in the forefront of the struggle continue to be hunted down and tortured and killed. I would have expected you to know this and write about it. Particularly because people will never read the truth about your son and others like him in our shameful Russian press" (103). On the one hand, Maximov, the police investigator is persuading Dostoevsky to give him information of the members of the revolutionary group so that it will be easier for them to arrest the criminals; Nechaev, the leader of the revolutionary group is forcing him to write about Pavel's murder by the police, so that more people will take part in people's uprising, on the other. Thus, Dostoevsky falls in the trap of two forces created by the apartheid- like tsarist Russia.

Dostoevsky sees a fight between students and the police force of Russia outside the faculty of Philosophy. He is so traumatized when he knows that the revolutionary group murders Ivanov in the charge of being police spy. Ivanov is a poor man whom he had provided food and bed in his room before. Therefore, the police go to Anna's apartment in search of the murderer of Ivanov suspecting that Dostoevsky might have played a role in murdering him. The arrival of tsarist police to her room traumatizes Anna and her daughter Matryona: "The police have been here,

Fyodor Mikhailovich, they are looking for a murderer!’” (109). The police suspect Dostoevsky as the murderer of Ivanov, and ask him about his previous involvement with him. They are not ready to accept that he invited Ivanov to his room to provide him with food and shelter out of love. Later on, the tsarist police suspect and hunt him more when they know that he is in contact with Nechaev. Nechaev’s gang killed Ivanov as he says to Dostoevsky: “‘we lose one, they lose one’” (120). He means to say that his group killed Ivanov as a revenge of Pavel’s murder by the police.

Dostoevsky does not get rest and peace in St Petersburg when the tsarist police know that his son is the friend of Nechaev and with whom he Dostoevsky himself has a good relation now. So the police follow him and watch his activities constantly. Moreover, he has been summoned again and again by the police in connection with Pavel’s papers: “At noon the concierge brings a message. He recognizes the grey paper and red seal at once. The end of waiting: he is instructed to call at the office of Judicial Investigator Councillor P.P. Maximov in connection with the matter of P.A. Isaev” (135). Hence, the police hunt Dostoevsky as if a hunter hunts a wild animal in a jungle. His heart hammers unpleasantly because the police officers are offended when they read Pavel’s papers. They even come to his room with the Finnish girl whose ankles are shackled: “He opens the door. Before him stands the Finnish girl, flanked by two blue-uniformed policemen, one of them an officer” (169). The police bring the girl to get his room which makes him suffer a lot from the trauma of police horror making him sick in the novel.

Pavel’s death is merely the bait to lure Dostoevsky from Dresden to Petersburg. He has been the quarry all the time. The tsarist police have confiscated his passport, so he is bound to live in St Petersburg watching the battles between students and the police going on all day. Anna tells him that “‘all the businesses have closed –

it's too dangerous to be out on the streets . . . working-men have begun to join in. And the students are setting fires again'" (229). Describing about the student-police fighting in the tsarist Russia, John D. Hazard, in his essay entitled "Students, Professors and the State in Tsarist Russia" presents that:

What should professors and students do when they perceive their government to be intolerable? Old-timers in the AAUP will recall the campus unrest of 1968; in both the United States and Western Europe classes were disrupted, universities closed down, buildings set afire, and police summoned to restore order. Professors were called upon to sit on disciplinary tribunals and were forced to decide whether to teach or to join the counterculture (53).

Hazard's observation regarding the pitiable condition of students and professors in the tsarist Russia is based on the fact. Similarly, Coetzee also portrays the picture of war between the police and the students in *The Master of Petersburg* in which, because of the widespread indiscipline among the students body, the universities are to be closed until further notice. So both the police of the tsarist Russia and the revolutionary groups are equally responsible in creating traumas in the lives of innocent people like Anna and Matryona who have connection with none of them in the novel.

Trauma of Poverty

Coetzee depicts the heart-rending picture of poverty in Russian society because of the war and corruption of tsarist rulers in the novel. He describes the lives of tramps and prostitutes lying in the streets with old blankets pulled over them (61). These street people have no gloves, so they use their blanket as a muff to get warmth in the winter. Ivanov is one of the poorest characters in the novel who has lost his two children in a sickness due to the lack of money to pay for doctors. He shares his

trauma of poverty with Dostoevsky thus: ““I have lost two children myself. Swept away. Meningitic fever, that is the medical term. My wife has never recovered from the blow. They could have been saved if we had had the money to pay for doctors”” (87). It is a very painful and heart-breaking event to lose one’s children just because of the lack of money to pay for the doctor. But for Coetzee’s characters, tragedy has become the way of life.

Poverty is prevailing everywhere. Even societies that have witnessed unprecedented prosperity during the last five decades, such as the United States of America, have not been able to exile either poverty or destitution from within their borders (Nandy 108), and Russian society cannot be an exception of it. Dostoevsky himself is penniless and he has no money to pay the rent. Moreover, he has half a dozen creditors in Petersburg. So he requests one of his friends to send him some money (168). Nechaev takes Dostoevsky to an underground room where he happens to see three children with bare feet and mucus on their lips. They are the children of a woman who provides them with food from the money she gets through prostitution in which she is bound to involve when she has no any other alternatives of earning life (183). The hunger of these children is so unbearable that when they look at others, they only see fat cheeks and a juicy tongue. When Nechaev is narrating him about the trauma of these children’s hunger, their mother appears there with food wrapped in a white cloth, the food that she buys with the money that she earns from prostitution:

Under her arm she bears something wrapped in a white cloth. The children’s noses are keener than his. All together, without a word, they slither down from the bed and slip past the two men. The girl tugs the cloth loose and the smell of fresh bread fills the room. Without a word she breaks off lumps and gives them into her brothers’ hands. Pressed

against their mother's skirts, their eyes blank and vacant, they stand chewing. Like animals, he thinks: they know where it comes from and do not care. (191)

The mother of these three children is thrown out of her room where she has been staying, since she cannot pay the rent, and she is compelled to be a prostitute to feed her children. Thus, Coetzee reveals that poverty is the main cause of flourishing prostitution in Russia in his novel.

Dostoevsky sees these poverty stricken children and wonders "If Christ is hidden, why should he not hide here in these cellars? Why should he not be here at this moment" (201). The tsarist rulers do not pay attention to the basic needs of its citizens. Therefore, people's unbearable trauma of poverty is the main reason behind the formation of many revolutionary groups to overthrow the repressive Tsars from the government of Russia. Coetzee demonstrates the sufferings of his characters caused by the mercilessness of the revolutionary groups, on the one hand, and the irresponsibility of the tsarist government, on the other.

Ethics of Trauma

Coetzee's characters in *The Master of Petersburg* are ethical in the sufferings of the Other even if they themselves are in the trauma of death, poverty, fear of tsarist police, revolutionary group, and the conflict between old and new generation. His characters help those who are completely unknown to them but who are in trouble of different kinds. In other words, Coetzee's characters co-operate to others who may belong to different nationality, class, race, and ethnicity. They do what others ask them to do without any expectation from them in return. Ethics, as Jacques Derrida puts it, is an absolute form of hospitality which involves saying "yes" to the stranger, "to who or what turns up, before any determination, before any anticipation, before

any identification” (77). Derrida’s view regarding ethics is very similar to Levinas who describes ethics as a hospitality to the visitor who arrives without “knocking” and “assigns me before I designate him” (87), and this assignation “is entry into me by burglary” (145). The characters of *The Master of Petersburg* are hospitable to the unknown visitors. Thus, they fall under the definition of ethics defined by Derrida and Levinas. For instance, Anna Alegeyevna, the land lady in the novel, welcomes Dostoevsky who comes to her apartment unexpectedly, and whom she does not identify as the father of Pavel at first, but still provides him with food and a room. Hence she extends her hospitality to a stranger, and proves to be an ethical character of the novel.

Dostoevsky is also an ethical character who, despite his pennilessness, assures Anna that he would pay her the rent that Pavel has to owe her. He shows his responsibility for his son, and thus proves to be an ethical father. He loves his son so much that he has given him a suitcase, his dearest possession, as a gift despite the fact that he himself is a debtor of many people in the city. When Pavel was very young and did not like to go to school, he would take him to school for his first term and assure him: “I will come back . . . You will not be abandoned” (5). Thus, Dostoevsky proves to be a loving father. He says that he is Pavel’s mother and father as well. He is everything to him, and more (16). He is the one who has to bring up Pavel day by day and has made him his son when everyone else has left him behind.

Dostoevsky pays tribute to his son, however belatedly, which is his respect to his dead son. Although, Pavel is his stepson, he brings up him and loves him as his own flesh and blood. His ethics to his dead stepson reflects in his statements when he says ““Pavel Alexandrovich Isaev is my stepson, my late wife’s only child. But to me he is my own son. He has no one but me in the world”” (33). Sometimes he would

chide Pavel for spending too much money, but he did so for the betterment of his son. He is ethical to Matryona too, to whom he says “‘If you were to die your mother would mourn you for the rest of her life, . . . and I too’” (77).

Jane Poyner mentions that Michael Marais has utilized the theories of the philosophers like Levinas and Blanchot, with their concern for responsibility to the Other, to analyze the role of the writer-figure ‘Dostoevsky’ in *The Master of Petersburg* (643). Poyner is true in a sense that there are many situations in the novel in which Dostoevsky extends his helpful hands to the needy characters. For example, when Matryona gets sick, he brings a medicine, a little brown bottle for her cough (136). He is more considerate to Anna too. Anna has an old lamp which can ruin her eyesight so early. So he offers to buy her a new lamp: “‘If you will allow me, I will buy you a better lamp’” (25).

Dostoevsky meets a very poor man named Ivanov, a retired civil servant, who is supposed to stay at his post on the ground floor of the house where he lives. The night is very cold and dark, and the man has made his nest there. The man is old, tired and hungry. Dostoevsky feels pity on the miserable condition of this man. So he brings this man to his room “stumbling in the dark like two drunkards, they climb the stairs. At the door of his room he whispers to the man to be quiet and takes his hand to guide him” (86). Moreover, he provides him with food and bed that night. He even gives his single bed to this man and he passes the whole night just sitting on the only chair available there although he himself is exhausted, and his headache has not gone away yet. He requests the man to go to sleep, and when he wakes from the chair, he sees that Ivanov is still there, sprawled across the bed. He stays with Ivanov till late in the morning and thinks “the beginning of the unexpected” (88). Ivanov is fresh, cheerful, and well-rested in the morning. Dostoevsky sets out breakfast for him on the

table. Thus he fulfils his infinite responsibility to the one who is in need of his help. He sacrifices his food and sleep for the Other. He maintains his ethics which requires bearing those to whom one does not have a familial relation. He sets an example of an ethical character by helping Ivanov in the novel.

The murder of Ivanov by the revolutionary group led by Nechaev in the charge of being a police spy traumatizes Dostoevsky a lot. Nor does he like the way Nechaev's revolutionary group murders other innocent people in the name of people's vengeance in the novel. He shows his ethical responsibility for Ivanov by expressing his sympathy to him: "Ivanov wasn't an enemy of the people, he was a man with no money in his pocket and a family to feed, like tens of thousands of others. If he wasn't one of the people, who are the people?" (121). He is sad and appalled that a man like Ivanov who is quite harmless is killed in Russia. He is not happy with the idea of the revolutionary group who has made a plan of killing the innocent people of Russia in the name of people's revenge. He regrets that his stepson is also one of the members of the group. Now, on behalf of his son, he wishes to go to that person whom Pavel was allotted to kill, and ask him to forgive him for what his son has done to him: "Because I intend to go to that person's house and before the door, on my knees, give thanks that Pavel never arrived" (99).

Dostoevsky helps whoever comes to him for help. He even gives money to Nechaev, the leader of the revolutionary group, when he asks for it. Although he ever remains penniless, he "feels in his pocket and brings out his last roubles" (158). Moreover, he asks Matryona to give a single fifty-kopek coin to Nechaev when she is unsure to whom she should give it. He loves Nechaev as much as he does to his son – Pavel: "in God's eyes there is no difference between the two of them, Pavel Isaev and Sergei Nechaev, sparrows of equal weight" (238). He even helps the poor woman

who has three children, and who has been thrown out of her room since she cannot pay the rent. When the woman requests him to help her, he borrows five roubles from Anna Sergeyevna, his landlady, and out of which he gives the woman two (197), and proves to be an ethical character.

Coetzee's characters are ethical not only to human beings, but also to animals. In *Disgrace*, David Lury takes care of dogs in the farm of Lucy. Likewise, in *The Master of Petersburg*, Dostoevsky loves the grey dog which slinks cautiously up to him while he was returning after observing Pavel's grave. The dog has a sore on its back, so it whimpers all the time. At that moment, Dostoevsky feels pity on that dog and starts speaking with it: "I will come again tomorrow, he promises: I will come alone, and you and I will speak" (11). He regards the dog as a human being.

One night, Dostoevsky hears a howl of a dog and realizes that he must get dressed and answer the call of the dog. He must answer to what he does not expect. At last he comes upon the dog which is tethered to a drainpipe by a slim chain which has become wrapped around a foreleg, jerking the leg up whenever it tightens. When he reaches the dog, it retreats as far as it can. Coetzee describes Dostoevsky's strong sense of ethical responsibility to help the dog when it is in the danger of death, thus:

It flattens its ears, prostrates itself, rolls on its back. A bitch. He bends over it, unwinds the chain. Dogs smell fear, but even in the cold he can smell this dog's rank terror. He tickles it behind the ear. Still on its back, it timidly licks his wrist. . . . The dog gives a heave and is on its feet. Though he is not fond of dog, he does not draw back from this one but crouches as its warm, wet tongue licks his face, his ears, licks the salt from his beard. He gives it a last stroke and gets up. . . . Who would chain a dog outdoors on a night like this? (81)

There are many people in St Petersburg who hear the howl of the dog, but it is only Dostoevsky who gets up and goes out at midnight to help the dog. After coming to his room, he still thinks about bringing the dog and making some kind of bed for it at the foot of the stair. He even thinks that Pavel will not be saved till he has freed the dog and brought it into his bed. Thus, he shows his ethical responsibility to the suffering of the dog. His ethics of trauma reflects at this point of the novel.

When Pavel was alive, he used to help Anna's daughter in her study. He was a good friend of Matryona whom he taught French and German (14). So, Matryona cannot forget him after his death too. To her, Pavel is not yet dead; he still lives somewhere in her. As Pavel was always considerate to them, Anna and her daughter were very fond of him. Anna appreciates Pavel: "He was a fine young man. I am sorry we knew him for a short time only. He used to read to Matryona at bed time. She looked forward to it all day. There was a real fondness between them" (25). Thus, Pavel's landlady praises Pavel for being so cooperative to her daughter. Despite being young, Pavel was a serious person who thought about Russia, about the condition of poor people and the things that matter to ordinary folk.

Lopez argues that in Coetzee's fiction, personal relationships may be ethically transformed and the ultimate ethical lesson of unconditional hospitality may be learnt (Marais 162). Lopez is true in a sense that Coetzee's characters face the unexpected arrival of the intruder, and they perform an ethical act of welcoming them. In my reading of *The Master of Petersburg*, Anna Alegeyevna's act of welcoming Dostoevsky who enters her room uninvited is ethically exemplary. Dostoevsky does not even tell his name to Anna when he enters her room. His entry in her room, in Levinas's word, is like a "burglary" (145). He says to Anna "Forgive me for coming unannounced.' 'My name is . . . ' 'I believe my son has been a lodger of yours'" (2).

Dostoevsky wants to stay in his son's room, for which he asks for Anna's permission in which she does not say "no" to him, rather she says "I will give you a key" (4). Thus, by giving him the key of Pavel's room, Anna, the land lady of the Apartments, proves to be another ethical character of Coetzee.

When Dostoevsky is unknown about the place where his dead son is lying, it is Anna who accompanies him while visiting to Pavel's grave in Yelagin Island. Anna is a single woman who has to take care of her daughter, and run her grocery shop herself. But, when she knows that Dostoevsky is in the trauma of his son's death and unknown to his grave, she forgets her own troubles and is ready to help him to find the place of Pavel's grave. Moreover, she plants a flower near Pavel's grave, and says that Pavel is not dead, thus, showing motherly love towards Pavel (10). During supper time, Anna knows that Dostoevsky has nothing to cook, so she asks him to join her for supper. She asks him, "As you can see, we are about to have supper. You are welcome to join us" (12). It is a very rare case in the world that a landlady feeds her tenant. Anna is such a landlady who feeds Dostoevsky, her tenant, though the food she offers is simple: soup, and potatoes with salt and butter.

Anna takes care of Dostoevsky, particularly, at the time of dinner and lunch though she is very busy and has to do everything herself being a single woman. As she knows that Dostoevsky has not eaten anything when he is dressed and ready for the street, she asks him so lovingly: "Are you going out then? Will you have some tea before you go?" (54). Thus, Anna is ethically responsible for the Other in the novel. Dostoevsky has been living at her room for a long time without any progress in his purpose of finding the reality of Pavel's death. During this frustrating period, Anna feels sorry for his wife who is in Dresden and waiting for him desperately. So she suggests to him that he should leave the city for the sake of his family: "it will be

better for you to get away from this sad city. Better for your family too. They must be missing you” (132). Anna’s ethical responsibility for the Other reflects in these kind statements of hers.

When Dostoevsky mourns for his dead son, Anna consoles him saying that “‘I feel for you, Fyodor Mikhailovich,’ she says, ‘but you must remember you are not the first parent to lose a child. Pavel had twenty-two years of life. Think of all the children who are taken in infancy’” (141). She tries to comfort him by reminding him that it is the rule, not the exception, to suffer loss. She herself lost her first child when it was too young, and so she underwent the trauma of death. Thus, Coetzee’s characters are the sufferers of different kinds, and by narrating the trauma of his characters, Coetzee attempts to form a community of sufferers in his novel.

Matryona is another ethical character in the novel who lights a candle at a photo of Pavel in his room. When Dostoevsky asks her why the candle is so important to her, she replies, “‘So that he won’t be in the dark’” (78). Moreover, she gives some money to Nechaev when he is in need of it. She also helps the Finnish woman, one of the members of the revolutionary group named Katri, when she has been arrested by the police of the tsarist Russia, and is going to die with hunger. She even gives her a wedge of rye bread and a cucumber (172). The tsarist police guard does not allow Matryona to give money to the Finn woman. Nevertheless, she helps her by providing her with food and money, and thus, proves to be an ethical character in the novel.

Politics of Trauma

Coetzee wishes to create a peaceful co-existence between different kinds of people, such as rulers and revolutionary groups, police and civilians, father and son, landlady and lodger, rich and poor, and human beings and animals in *The Master of Petersburg*. He depicts the trauma of his characters and shows how, even in their own

trauma, they extend their helpful hands to others who are suffering. Coetzee seems to put an end to the conflicts among the people of different kinds created in terms of their class, power, and generation gap in his novel. He narrativizes the trauma of innocent people, and his politics behind it is to make the rulers see how they are making their people suffer, so that they would stop suppressing their citizen. Similarly, he reveals the unkind actions of the revolutionary groups which bring trauma in the lives of the innocent people, and his politics behind it is to make them realize their mistake, so that they would stop torturing people. Coetzee's landlady and lodger live together as if they are the members of the same family. His characters help poor people by giving them food and money, and try to make them happy even if they themselves are not rich enough.

Coetzee's objective of making his characters ethical for others, is to make an ethical community of sufferers who live together in a peaceful environment sharing and caring one another. Like in *Age of Iron*, where Coetzee shows the trauma of the African people created by the suppression of the apartheid police of South Africa, he shows the trauma of Russian people created by the tsarist police of the apartheid-like regime of Russia. Coetzee's politics behind the narrativization of trauma of his characters in this novel is to create, as Agata Krzychylkiewicz views, a fair communist system in Russia (339), where the rulers and the ruled can live together in a harmonious relation.

Coetzee depicts the trauma of Russian people created by the apartheid-like tsarist regime of Russia with a view to getting the tsarist rulers, and allegorically the apartheid rulers of South Africa to see the real trauma of their people – how their citizens are bound to live in horror and terror created by them. He attempts to make the rulers ethical to their citizen. On the one hand, he narrativizes students' revenge

against the tsarist rulers, and on the other hand, he presents the mercilessness of the tsarist rulers in the name of controlling the students' movement. Consequently, both of them create sufferings on the people like Dostoevsky whose son has been murdered by the police and made a rumor that he has committed suicide; Anna who becomes the victim of police horror; Nechaev who is hunted by the police; the Finnish woman who is arrested and beaten by the police; Ivanov who is murdered by the underground revolutionary group, and other innocent people who become the victim of poverty and social injustice in the novel. Pavel's murder traumatizes Dostoevsky and his friends. Later on, he himself is hunted by the tsarist police. All the characters of Coetzee are the sufferers of different kinds, so he creates a community of the sufferers whether they are rich or poor, or rulers or ruled in his novel.

Coetzee seems to convey a message to both revolutionary group and the tsarist rulers of Russia that they should stop their actions of killing people and causing trauma in the lives of the survivors. Rather, they should let people survive in peace and rest. Coetzee's characters help other people or strangers during their hard time, and his politics behind making his characters ethical to others is to make them live in a secular life of peaceful coexistence. For instance, Pavel, when he was alive, taught Matryona, daughter of his landlady, some French poems which she can recite till now (25); his landlady, in return, provided Pavel with supper. Thus, they live in a harmonious relation sharing and caring each other. After Pavel's death, Anna and Matryona provide Dostoevsky with supper since he has no money to buy food: "A tap at the door. Matryona's voice: 'Suppertime!'" (61). Moreover, Dostoevsky, Anna and her daughter, Matryona agree to go for an outing to Petrovsky Island together. Anna apologizes to Dostoevsky immediately whenever she hurts him, and he too excuses her. Once, he had lost his temper with Matryona, but he apologized to Anna for his

fault: ““As for losing my temper with Matryona, I am sorry, I regret it and will apologize to her”” (167). These are some examples which show that Coetzee’s characters respect each other irrespective of their social class or rank.

Dostoevsky calls Ivanov to his room and provides him with food and bed although he himself depends on Anna for it. Ivanov is poorer than Dostoevsky, so he helps him. Dostoevsky says ““You never dreamed – did you? – when you first clapped eyes on me, that one day we would be sitting down together, the two of us, and drinking tea in a civilized fashion. Yet here we are”” (89). So, it is Coetzee’s politics of making rich and poor live together sharing and caring each other.

Dostoevsky attempts to convince Nechaev, the leader of the underground revolutionary group to stop his actions of murdering people in the name of people’s vengeance: ““By what right do you speak in the name of the people? The people are not vengeful. The people don’t spend their time scheming and plotting”” (103). Thus, Dostoevsky tries to make Nechaev ethical and responsible for the people who have right to live in peace. In the first half of the novel, Dostoevsky does not seem to like Nechaev; but in the second half, he loves him: “Embracing the boy, trapping his arms at his sides, breathing in the sour smell of his carbuncular flesh, sobbing, laughing, he kisses him on the left cheek and on the right” (190). Dostoevsky tries to persuade Nechaev not to be so revolutionary to kill the innocent people. Moreover, he asks him to think about those weaker fellows of his who make the mistake of taking him seriously, and to think about his Finnish friend who has been arrested and tortured by the police (195). Coetzee’s politics behind making Dostoevsky so loving and persuasive to Nechaev is to develop their deep intimacy which leads to the peaceful coexistence between the revolutionary group and the normal civilians, and which also helps to stop their revolutionary actions against the innocent people in Russia.

Dostoevsky does not allow Matryona to keep the instruments of death which belong to the revolutionary group, and which are very dangerous. Moreover, he requests Anna not to let her daughter to get involved with the people of revolutionary group (227). He brings these matters for the betterment of the girl as well as for the peace and rest in the country. In the onset of the novel, although he had imagined of seducing Matryona, at the end, he promises that he would not touch her: ““I would not lay a finger on her, I swear”” (232). Thus, Dostoevsky maintains a good relation with all other characters which helps to form an ethical community of the sufferers, who live in a peaceful coexistence sharing and caring each other in the novel.

Coetzee’s characters in *The Master of Petersburg* are the veteran of the traumas of different kinds. Despite their own sufferings, they help other people who are in sufferings. They welcome others whom they have not even recognized before. For instance, Anna welcomes Dostoevsky to her room and provides him with supper when she comes to know that he is penniless, and is in trauma of his son’s death. Dostoevsky also helps other characters who are in need of his help. For example, he gives Nechaev his last roubles he has in his pocket. He even gives the poor mother of three children two roubles which he has borrowed from Anna. Likewise, he brings some medicine for Matryona when she falls sick while being alone at home. Moreover, he provides Ivanov, a beggar-like man with food and bed whereas he passes the whole night sitting on a chair. His son, Pavel too helps Matryona to read French poetry while he was alive. In return, now Matryona invites Dostoevsky to have supper with her and her mother. Besides, she gives the Finnish woman money and food when the latter is arrested by the police and going to die with hunger. Nechaev also fulfils his ethical responsibility for Dostoevsky by showing him the place where his son had been killed by the tsarist police. Therefore, one can find that

Coetzee's characters are ethical for others since they help others who are not their relatives or to whom they have no any familial relation, rather to whom, they are strangers. Coetzee's politics behind making his characters ethical in the trauma of others is to form an ethical community of sufferers where all his characters whether they are rich or poor, rulers or ruled revolutionary or common citizens, and police or civilians can exist in a harmonious relation. In other words, Coetzee wants to develop a secular life of peaceful co-existence between the people of different walks of life, and also wants to end the century long conflicts prevailing in South Africa through his novel.

CHAPTER V

TRAUMATIC SHAME IN *DISGRACE*

“A novel by J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*, is, it would seem, a book about endings: the end of rape, the end of morality, and the end of humanity – that is to say, the end of a deep distinction between human possibilities and animal possibilities” (“Postmetaphysical Literature” 4).

Michael S. Kochin

Coetzee's *Disgrace* is a post-apartheid novel in which he exhibits the traumatic situation of both white and black South African people owing to their revenge on one another. Coetzee, in this novel, seems to say that, although the apartheid era of South Africa is over, its deadly consequence, in terms of people's revenge on their opposite race, has not been eliminated yet, which has created traumas on both white and non-white people. The author is not happy with the post-apartheid situation of South Africa where people use rape and sexuality as a weapon of taking revenge on each other. *Disgrace* depicts a number of violations occurred in South Africa after apartheid, which created trauma on both whites and blacks which Coetzee shows impartially, and forms a community of sufferers. While discussing about the theme of *Disgrace* Pamela Cooper writes that “the idea of disgrace elaborated in the novel involves desire, sex, transgression, and shame—their expressions and representations” (24). Cooper is right in a sense that *Disgrace* reveals the racial revenge of people making sex a tool of accomplishing their evil task. But in the second part of the novel, Coetzee's characters, both white and black, seem to overcome their trauma when they learn to live together sharing and caring their sufferings each other. Finally, Coetzee is successful in creating harmonious relation between whites and blacks which is his politics of narrativization of trauma.

Trauma of Disgrace

The term “disgrace” as defined by the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, is the loss of other people’s respect and approval because of the bad way sb. has behaved. This definition of disgrace is applied to the protagonist of *Disgrace* – David Lurie, a white professor of fifty two. He seduces his black student – Melanie Isaacs who is thirty years junior to him, and hence, falls into a ditch of disgrace himself. From the very beginning of the novel, Coetzee depicts the disgraceful situation of the post-apartheid society of South Africa in which his characters of one race victimize those of other race. Therefore, *Disgrace*, as Sanders points out, not only narrates the fall from grace of Professor David Lurie of Cape Technical University, but, performs disgrace, what it is to be in disgrace, and, perhaps, what it takes to end disgrace (364). Lurie’s behavior brings a disgrace to his profession and to his community as well. He is divorced twice, but still “he has, to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well” (1).

Instead of preparing his course for teaching his students, Lurie is always in search of women, who could be prostitutes too, to solve his problem of sex. He often visits Soraya, a prostitute who works for Windsor Mansions. Though he is old enough to be her father, he has been to her for over a year and finds her entirely satisfactory because “his pleasure is unfailing, an affection has grown up in him for her” (2). This self-satisfied tone of Lurie points up his selfish self-satisfaction (Kossew 156), because he is satisfied by reducing women into objects. For a ninety-minute’ affair with Soraya, he pays her R400, of which half goes to her boss who has hired her. It is a disgrace that she is paid so little. Moreover, Lurie wants to spend an evening or even a whole night with Soraya. Thus, people, like Lurie, spend their hard earned money on prostitutes that has encouraged developing whore-houses in South Africa.

David Lurie is so rigid to change his habit of seeking women to fulfill his sexual desire. He regards his temperament as a rule. His temperament is fixed and he is too old to change it (2). He lives within his temperament or within his emotional means. But he does not love those women with whom he has sexual affairs since he has never been passionate in his life, which is approved from his sexual intercourse with Soraya that is “rather like the copulation of snakes: lengthy, absorbed, but rather abstract, rather dry, even at its hottest (3). Even Soraya has heard that he has married twice, but both of his marriages end in divorce, and hence, he goes to other women to quench his sexual thirst. If he has been sensitive to the feelings of others, perhaps none of his wives will leave him alone. They leave him because of his unbending nature of changing his bad habit of being insensitive to others. Regarding Lurie’s sexual exploitation of women, Tove Andersson writes that for him “it is acceptable to treat women like property. Not once does he wonder why he got divorced twice, he tends to think that his place in the world is meant to be in the arms of women and the other way around” (7). Lurie uses women just for having sex with them. He believes that whatever he does is right, and this is the reason why readers feel unable to empathize with him in *Disgrace*.

Lurie, even if being a professor of language, does not have any interest in teaching and other scholarly activities such as writing books. In the course of twenty five years’ teaching career, he has published three books, and none of them are popular among the readers. Since he has no respect for the materials he teaches, he cannot make any impression on his students who look through him when he speaks. His memory has become so poor that he forgets even his own name. He says that “Teaching was never a vocation for me. Certainly I never aspired to teach people how to live. I taught only to make a living” (162). He continues to teach just because “it

provides him with a livelihood” (5), but his students learn nothing from him. He often thinks about women only: “if poor ghostly Emma were ever to find her way to Cape Town, he would bring her along one Thursday afternoon to show her what bliss can be: a moderate bliss, a moderated bliss” (6). He is a man of sexual desire which emerges like arrows on him. Moreover, he is a man of double lives, who never bothers to think about how his wife and daughter are surviving in his absence. The company of women has just made him a womanizer.

Lurie is a lady killer: “If he looked at a woman in a certain way, with 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” (7). He even has affairs with the wives of his colleagues. He picks up tourists at the Club Italia, and sleeps with whores. When his first whore left him, he started sleeping with another Soraya who was no more than eighteen and unpracticed: “‘So what do you do?’ she says as she slips off her clothes. ‘Export-import,’ he says. ‘You don’t say,’ she says” (8). The terms “export-import” symbolically indicates his sexual intercourse with other women. Once he took a new secretary, in his department, named Dawn, to lunch at a restaurant, and while coming back, he stopped at his house and they had sex with her. So whenever he finds a woman, he does not leave them without playing with their bodies. Even prostitutes are irritated by his cunning nature of exploiting their bodies. For instance, Soraya, his previous whore, objects to him for harassing her and asks him not to phone her again, hence, showing her irritation towards him, which he has not expected before. Coetzee writes “what should a predator expect when he intrudes into the vixen’s nest, into the home of her cubs?” (10). Thus, he, finally, gets a harsh blow from Soraya for irritating her in *Disgrace*.

After Soraya's refusal to meet him for sexual intercourse, Lurie happens to trap a black girl named Melanie Isaacs, one of his students, who is thirty years junior to him. He invites her to his room for a drink. He does not think that he has to meet her again as a teacher in the class. In one of her questions, he says that he is married twice, but now he is not instead of saying: "Now I make do with what comes my way. . . . Now I make do with whores" (16). He offers her a shot of whisky in her coffee. As she sips, he starts seducing her leaning over and touching her cheek. He invites her to do something reckless. He asks her to spend the night with him. In Melanie's inquiry why she has to stay there, he replies: "'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'" (16). He asks her to share her beauty more widely since, for him, beauty's rose never dies. Thus, he uses sweet words to seduce her. In the first meeting, he just feels her little breasts against him. His seduction of Melanie is absolutely disgraceful since he is her teacher. And his immoral behavior to his own student makes readers feel ashamed of him.

Lurie should have ended his affair with his student, but he does not, rather he gets her detail address from his college and telephones her to meet him at a restaurant, and later on he takes her back to his house. Then, he makes love with her, which he finds the most pleasurable act. Coetzee describes their intercourse thus: "The girl is lying beneath him, her eyes closed, her hands slack above her head, a slight frown on her face. His own hands are under her coarse-knit sweater, on her breasts. Her tights and panties lie in a tangle on the floor; his trousers are around his ankles" (19). Melanie does not seem to be interested to have relation with Lurie, but it is Lurie who forces her to do so. After this affair, Lurie always follows her, even in the college, he comes behind her and puts a hand on her shoulder. He completely forgets the ethics

that a professor should have to his students on the college premises; instead, he gets excited with desire when he sees her there. He even visits to her apartment without being invited. He thinks that, as her educator, Melanie is his own property (Graham 438). Graham believes that Lurie's seduction of Melanie is "the hidden sexual exploitation of black women by white men that has existed for centuries" (437). Lurie never thinks that he has some responsibility to Melanie as her teacher. He only thinks about having a sexual relation with her. He behaves with Melanie as if he has every right to possess her body without respecting the life she has.

Melanie is traumatized by Lurie's follow up all the time even in the class. Her head is always bowed in the class. When he casts a quick glance at her in the class, she pretends to be absorbed in the text, but, in the reality, she has been unable to concentrate on her study from the day she has been seduced. She remembers "the moment on the floor when he forced the sweater up and exposed her neat, perfect little breasts" (23). She drops her glance when she looks up and meets his eyes. After the class, he always wants to talk to her, but she slips away avoiding him. Just a week ago, she had a pretty face, but now she has been disgraced by his presence.

Later on, Lurie forces Melanie to have relationship again and again despite her disinterest. He even goes to her room as an intruder and thrusts himself upon her. "When he takes her in his arms, her limbs crumple like a marionette's. . . . 'No, not now!' she says, struggling. 'My cousin will be back!'" (24, 25). But, despite her struggle, she cannot stop him from having an affair with her. He carries her to the bed room and starts kissing her. She cannot resist him, all she does is avert herself, avert her lips, and avert her eyes. But she lets him lay her out on the bed and undress her: she even helps him, raising her arms and hips. It is not a rape, but it is an undesired relationship nevertheless. During the intercourse, she "die[s] within herself, like a

rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its neck” (25). Lurie’s seduction of Melanie is an attempt not only to reclaim sexual advantage, but to emphasize the traditional patriarchal procedures of the European culture in which such privilege, like Lurie himself, is embedded (Cooper 25). Lurie has committed a big mistake which he realizes himself later on when Melanie tries to cleanse herself of him running into a bath and stepping into the water.

Martin Swales compares David’s exploitation of a woman student with the whites’ exploitation of the colored population in South Africa (8). He seems to relate Lurie’s sexual exploitation of Melanie with the bitter history of white exploitation of the indigenous population in South Africa. But, Matt DelConte believes that Lurie’s affair with Melanie is the sexual colonization of a younger woman by an older man not for physical gratification but to curb the anxiety of powerlessness (438). DelConte does not charge all white people of being exploiters of black women in Lurie’s case. In my opinion, being himself a white writer, Coetzee has maintained his ethics by showing the white character as a perpetrator of the black in his fiction. Moreover, he never claims that whites have not traumatized the blacks. He presents the suffering of all, irrespective of their color of skin which makes him a great trauma writer.

In the first half of the novel, Coetzee exhibits how Professor Lurie exploits a black lady student and traumatizes her family in particular and the whole black community in general. Lurie keeps on committing mistakes one after another. After his seduction, Melanie remains absent in his class, in the day of the mid-term test. But he makes her present in the register, and gives her seventy marks in the subject in which she is absent. Moreover, she remains absent the whole week. One Sunday midnight, Melanie comes to his room and tells him that she wants to stay at his house. Then, Lurie “embraces her, pressing her against him stiff and cold . . . he sits down on

the bed, draws her to him. In his arms she begins to sob miserably. Despite all, he feels a tingling of desire” (26). He does not care about the result of his reckless activities over her. He gets excited with desires the moment he possesses Melanie.

Melanie begins to come to Lurie’s house herself without being invited later on without knowing that it is not a good idea to have relationship with her teacher. She even learns to press herself tighter to him with her face against his belly. When Lurie had met her for the first time in the college garden, he had thought that his affair with her would be shorter. But now she is at his house, and he does not know what game she is playing with him. He should have thought of it before. He just needs her body: “He stretches out on the bed beside her. The last thing in the world he needs is for Melanie Isaacs to take up residence with him” (27). He wants to sleep with her every night. He reaches her, strokes her breasts and buttocks, and asks her to stay at his house. She is like his daughter or even younger. So, Coetzee raises a question: “Mistress? Daughter? What, in her heart, is she trying to be? What is she offering him?” (27). But Lurie strokes her hair and kisses her forehead not knowing whether she is his mistress or daughter.

From her recent activities, it comes to be clear that Melanie is learning to exploit Lurie. Sometimes he gets irritated with her false promise of attending his classes. Coetzee states that if she is behaving badly, he has behaved worse because he is the one who leads, and she is the one who follows (28). Lurie still plays with her body and even makes love to her on the bed in his daughter’s room. As his daughter does not stay with him, so he uses her room to make love with other lady and for that he does not have any regret at all. He does not care how his two divorced wives and a daughter are surviving in this world. He is a pleasure seeking man and thinks only about his entertainment. He always thinks about getting maximum pleasure from the

intercourse with Melanie: "It is good, as good as the first time; he is beginning to learn the way her body moves. . . . when she hooks a leg behind his buttocks to draw him in closer: as the tendon of her inner thigh tightens against him, he feels a surge of joy and desire" (29). He uses women and then, throws them away as he tells Melanie that he does not collect pictures and women (29). Melanie gets angry with him when he tells her that he is not collecting her either. His harsh statement to Melanie becomes the turning point of their relationship. Melanie thinks of taking revenge on him, and he has to pay for it later on, which turns out to be very expensive in his life.

One afternoon, a young man who is Melanie's boy friend enters Lurie's office room and looks at him angrily and then threatens him thus: "'you fuck her.' . . . 'And don't think you can just walk into people's lives and walk out again when it suits you'" (30). Moreover, he warns Lurie that it is time for him to leave and wait and see the result of his recklessness. Despite the man's warning and threat, Lurie still expects for Melanie who does not come to his life again. In return to his thoughtless action, he gets his car which he had parked in the street vandalized: "The tyres are deflated, glue is injected into the doorlocks, newspaper is pasted over the windscreen, the paintwork is scratched. The locks have to be replaced; the bill comes to six hundred rand" (31). Thus, Lurie's car is vandalized, but that is not enough; he has to pay more, later on, in installments for traumatizing Melanie in the novel. His relation with Melanie has become a scandal but still he is in no state to improvise as he does whatever he likes to do. His behavior is like of Lucifer, a character in his poetry, who does not care if it is good or bad: "Exactly. Good or bad, he just does it. He doesn't act on principle but on impulse, and the source of his impulses is dark to him. His madness was not of the head, but heart. A mad heart" (33).

Lurie has already encountered with Melanie's boy friend who has threatened of taking action against him, and who has vandalized his car. Still, Lurie is too rigid to change his habit of following Melanie. Regarding Lurie's consistent pursuit of Melanie, Gareth Cornwell observes that "he persists in his pursuit of her, knowing also that she is too immature to deal with the situation that is developing" (315). His observation of Lurie is true since after his class, he calls to her, and when Melanie stands before him, "Again his heart goes out to her. If they were alone he would embrace her, try to cheer her up. *My little dove*, he would call her" (34). Being a man of fifty two, the way Lurie behaves with his student is completely shameful. Although he requests Melanie to tell her boy friend not to disrupt his classes, she is in no state of following his advice. She rather stares back at him in puzzlement, even shock. She seems to want to say that "You have cut me off from everyone. You have made me bear your secret. I am no longer just a student. How can you speak to me like this?" (34). But, instead, she told him that she cannot take the test since she has not done the reading. Thus, Lurie victimizes her to that extent that she cannot concentrate on her study. He has, indeed, spoilt her life.

When Melanie's study deteriorates, her father, named Isaacs, not knowing the real cause of her poor performance, calls Lurie and tells him to help his daughter for her improvement as he has not still known Lurie's affair with his daughter. He informs Lurie that "Melanie has been such a good student, and now she says she is going to give it all up. It has come as a terrible shock to us" (36). Melanie's father has a great trust on Lurie. But, unfortunately, when he knows that Lurie is the perpetrator of his daughter, Isaac's family is badly shocked. Melanie decides to give up her study since she is overstressed, but her father does not want her to throw away all those years for nothing. Lurie does not believe that Melanie has a great respect for him. He

says himself, “Respect? You are out of date, Mr Isaacs. Your daughter lost respect for me weeks ago, and with good reason” (37). How can Lurie help her when he is the very cause of her anguish? He is like the worm in the apple in her life.

Lurie keeps on falling on disgrace due to his own carelessness in his profession. His classes do not go well so that his students’ attendance in his class is very poor. Only new, passive and quiet students appear to his class. The reason of his students’ poor attendance in his class is that his relationship with Melanie is out. Lurie’s sexual mistreatment of his student causes trauma on his other students too, as Smeler points out that traumatic sexual mistreatment, incest and rape are the sources of trauma (56). One day, Melanie’s father comes to Lurie’s office knowing that he is the cause of his daughter’s distress and poor performance in her study, and expresses his shock which is very heart-rending:

‘Professor,’ he begins, laying heavy stress on the word, ‘you may be very educated and all that, but what you have done is not right.’ He pauses, shakes his head. ‘It is not right.’ The two secretaries do not pretend to hide their curiosity. There are students in the office too; as the stranger’s voice rises they fall silent. ‘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. If I’ve got hold of the wrong end of the stick, now is your chance to say, but I don’t think so, I can see it from your face.’ (38)

Mr Isaacs calls him a viper who has harmed his daughter's future. Lurie has got to listen to these shameful charges of Melanie's father in front of his students and his office secretaries, and for which he has no words to reply him. Hence, he stands tongue-tied, with blood thudding in his ears. Nor can he deny the charge of viper. What could be more disgraceful situation than this state of speechlessness in the life of a university professor?

The affair between Melanie and Lurie soon comes to light and causes a scandal. Next morning, Lurie gets a letter from the office of the Vice-Rector notifying him that a complaint has been lodged against him for violating the university's Code of Conduct that is about victimization or harassment of student by teacher. When he reads it, his heart starts beating horribly. Now he suffers from his own wrong deeds that he committed in the past. He thinks that it is Melanie's boy friend who lodged the complaint, not Melanie. The disciplinary committee of the university charges him of committing two offences. The first is about making Melanie present on the days when she is absent and giving her seventy marks in her mid-term exam in which had remained absent and the second is about his sexual harassment of Melanie. In both charges, he has no defense. The committee advises him to have a legal representative. They even declare that its hearing will be held in camera. Moreover, the committee informs him that Melanie has officially withdrawn from the course she takes with him, and he is expected to refrain from all contact with her (41). But, as Lurie has a rigid attitude, he does not want to follow their advices; rather he leaves in a rage.

Lurie has had enough since his case is supposed to be confidential, but people start talking about it. When he enters the common room, all his colleagues remain silent when they see him without talking to him. Even a younger colleague whom he has a good relation with "puts down her teacup and departs, looking straight through

him” (42). Next day, only two students attend his class. His colleagues make gossip of his relationship with his student, grinding his reputation. Thus he cannot walk straight with his head held high in front of his friends and students. He cannot deny the allegations with his lawyer: ““True enough. I was having an affair with the girl”” (42), he answers to a question of his lawyer. His answer to his lawyer shows that he does not seem to be serious about his crime as he believes that seriousness does not make the case better. He is not ready to take the advice of his lawyer who suggests to him that he should take a spell of leave, in return for which the university persuades the girl, or her family, to drop the charges. His lawyer further tells him to “Take a yellow card. Minimize the damage, wait for the scandal to blow over” (42), but Lurie accepts none of his suggestions.

Regarding Lurie’s rigid or unbending nature, Elleke Boehmer argues that *Disgrace* has generated an extraordinary level of critical commentary. One of the reasons for this is no doubt that the novel features a hero who notoriously refuses to say sorry for an abuse of power (343). Boehmer’s view in terms of Lurie’s unbending nature seems true since he is not ready to take any counseling or sensitivity training, which his lawyer offers him to do. He rather counter argues with his lawyer: ““To fix me? To cure me? To cure me of inappropriate desires?”” (43). Thus, Lurie refuses to acknowledge his crime and improve his habit.

In Lurie’s campus, students are celebrating Rape Awareness Week. Women are against Rape War. They are expressing their solidarity with recent victims. A pamphlet is slipped under his door in which it was written ““WOMEN SPEAK OUT.’ Scrawled in pencil at the bottom is a message: ‘YOUR DAYS ARE OVER, CASANOVA’” (43). Hence, his students are united against him and protest his crime against women. They even call him “Casanova” – a man who has sex with a lot of

women. His scandal is widely publicized, so even his ex-wife hears his disgrace. She expresses her worry with him and informs him that everyone knows about his affair in detail and nobody wants to stop gossiping about it. She mentions that his affair is really stupid and ugly:

Stupid, and ugly too. I don't know what you do about sex and I don't want to know, but this is not the way to go about it. You're what - fifty-two? Do you think a young girl finds any pleasure in going to bed with a man of that age? Do you think she finds it good to watch you in the middle of your...? Do you ever think about that?' (44)

In the above extract, Lurie's ex-wife – Rosalind tries to convince Lurie not to involve in sexual activities with his own younger daughter-like student since his age does not permit him to do so. He is a fifty two years old professor who should know how to maintain his personality. He is too old to be meddling with other people's children. There is no way out except expecting the worst. It is all very demeaning (45).

Moreover, his wife suggests to him that he should not expect any sympathy from her or any other people but that everybody's hand will be against him that will lead his career to a shameful end. She gets irritated that the whole thing is disgraceful from beginning to end and does not feel sorry for saying that his life is disgraceful and vulgar too. The next day, she telephones Lurie to tell him that his scandal has been published in a newspaper. The news goes like this:

The report is on page three: 'Professor on sex charge', it is headed. He skims the first lines. ' . . . is slated to appear before a disciplinary board on a charge of sexual harassment. CTU is keeping tight-lipped about the latest in a series of scandals including fraudulent scholarship payouts and alleged sex rings operating out of student residences.

Lurie (53), author of a book on English nature-poet William Wordsworth, was not available for comment.' (46)

Lurie is the disgraced disciple of William Wordsworth since his sexual harassment of Melanie has traumatized the whole black community as they know that he is a white male who victimizes a girl of black community, and even white community do not remain unhurt from the trauma caused by him since they know that the perpetrator is from their white community. Thus, both white and black community suffer from him.

Giesen says that perpetrators are human subjects who, by their own decision, dehumanize other subjects and, in doing so, they not only distort the autonomous subjectivity of the victims but challenge also their own sacredness. If a community has to recognize that its members, instead of being heroes, have been perpetrators who violate the cultural premises of their own identity, it is indeed traumatic (114). David Lurie comes under Giesen's definition of perpetrator who dehumanizes a black girl of his college through his sexual harassment. Moreover, his white community too has got to recognize him as a perpetrator who violates their identity being a seducer of a black girl, and hence, causes trauma on the whole white community. To his colleagues at the Technical University, and the student community with which he works, David Lurie's expulsion from the department is a disgrace for him. It is not a result to which he gives serious thought (Kissack and Titlestad 139). Coetzee, thus, reveals the trauma of disgrace of both white and black community in *Disgrace*.

The investigation of Lurie's harassment is held in a committee room where the members of the disciplinary committee ask Lurie about his affair with Melanie. At that moment, he does not feel nervous, rather he feels quite sure of himself and does not care whatever happens in the trial. This rigid or unbending nature of Lurie reflects throughout the whole session of the hearing. He even declares: "I have no fear of the

committee. I have no fear of the observer. . . . I plead guilty to both charges. Pass sentence, and let us get on with our lives” (48), advises the committee to do other things rather than making a story over which there is no dispute. He states his position that he is guilty of all he is charged with, and there is no reason to prolong the debate. But he accepts the charges only in name as he puts forward a plea but does not make any confession. He refuses officially to apologize for sexually abusing his student. He even refuses to say sorry, rather he keeps on debating with the disciplinary committee. Instead of saying sorry for sexually harassing his student, he gives reasons why he did such crime: “‘I will not try to describe. Suffice it to say that Eros entered. After that I was not the same.’ . . . ‘I was not myself. I was no longer a fifty-year-old divorce at a loose end. I became a servant of Eros” (52). In his reply, the committee members remind him of the nature of academic life in which one must call for certain sacrifices denying ourselves certain gratification. But their advice does not seem to touch him.

Lurie’s rigidity reflects more in his statements when he says that it is not abuse of a young woman he is confessing to, just an impulse he could not resist (53). Lurie’s behavior with the committee members reminds us of a shark among the helpless little fishes. He does not want to make any further statement to defend himself besides accepting the charges put against him. Nor does he want not make any attempt to cool down what has become a very heated situation which has received a lot of attention. The committee members try to protect him by finding a way out if he apologizes for abusing his student. Although they want to save him from his weakness, wake him from his nightmare and want him back in the classroom, he does not make any effort to be saved from the disgrace himself. He often refuses to admit that that he is wrong. There is difference between accepting a charge and admitting that one is wrong. Lurie knows it, but he is just playing game with them.

As Lurie leaves the committee room, he finds a group of journalists who are ready to take an interview with him. When he tries to avoid them, they catch up with him at the foot of the stairs; one even grabs his jacket to slow him down. But he ignores it, and moves towards the crowded lobby where “people turn to stare at the tall man [Lurie] hurrying from his pursuers” (55). When a tape recorder is thrust toward him, he pushes it away refusing to answer their questions. Slowly, people begin to crowd around him. In a question of one of the journalists regarding whether he felt sorry for what he did, he answers: ““No. ‘I was enriched by the experience’” (56). The girl, excited by his response, smiles and asks him if he does it again. In her question, he shamelessly replies that he will not have such chance again. His careless answer proves that he is not serious in his unclean work of seducing his own student, and still takes the case lightly. As Smelser points out that a victim of trauma may define the trauma as a valuable experience (45), Lurie also says that he is enriched by his affair with Melanie rather than feeling ashamed of his abuse of her. He even gives a clue to the journalists that if he gets such chance of having affair with a girl, he will not let the chance escape from him.

Trauma of disgrace reflects more at the moment when Lurie is circled around the people like hunters who have cornered a strange beast and do not know how to finish it off. Later on, his photograph appears in a newspaper creating more traumatic shame on him:

The photograph appears in the next day's student newspaper, above the caption 'Who's the Dunce Now?' It shows him, eyes cast up to the heavens, reaching out a groping hand toward the camera. The pose is ridiculous enough in itself, but what makes the picture a gem is the inverted waste-paper basket that a young man, grinning broadly, holds

above him. By a trick of perspective the basket appears to sit on his head like a dunce's hat. Against such an image, what chance has he? 'Committee tight-lipped on verdict,' reads the headline. 'The disciplinary committee investigating charges of harassment and misconduct against Communications Professor David Lurie was tight-lipped yesterday on its verdict. Chair Manas Mathabane would say only that its findings have been forwarded to the Rector for action (56).

Thus, Lurie's Scandal is heavily publicized by the newspapers across the country.

While discussing about the role of media in circulating the trauma, Alexander mentions that mediated mass communication allows traumas to be expressively dramatized and permits some of the competing interpretations to gain enormous persuasive power over others (18). In Lurie's case, media plays a vital role in spreading his bad news which his daughter, Lucy who lives in a farm house, far away from Cape Town also comes to know from the newspaper. The journalists focus on the news of his enriched experience that he has after his affair with his student, which he has told the journalist the day before. His sexual harassment of his student brings trauma of disgust, shame and guilt to his white community.

Lurie as a perpetrator of a black girl changes the identity of his white community into a community of seducers as Smelser cites Neal's account: "Just as the rape victim becomes permanently changed as a result of a trauma, the nation [society] becomes permanently changed as a result of a trauma in the social realm" (42). Agreeing with Smelser, Alexander adds that trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute distress entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity (10). The whole white community of South

Africa has got the trauma of shame due to Lurie's abuse of a black girl since they are bound to have one of their group members as a perpetrator instead of a hero.

Critics seem to be unhappy with the irresponsible behavior of Lurie who readily states his guilty before the University Committee established to consider his conduct, only to discover, to his disappointment, that his performance of remorse falls far short of the expectations of the committee. His life is caught up in sensuality and betrayals (Diala 57, 58). Diala is true to evaluate Lurie's negligence for preparing a good statement to convince the committee and he has no any repentance for abusing his student either. He says "That plea should suffice. Repentance is neither here nor there. Repentance belongs to another world, to another universe of discourse" (58). At the sexual harassment hearing, Lurie's admission of guilt does not come from his heart. To be precise, he never wholeheartedly regrets his seduction of Melanie, the memory of whom continues to rouse feelings of desires, and he has no regrets at all about his behavior before the committee (Attridge 110).

The disciplinary committee decides to recommend his dismissal from the job: "Then we should recommend the severest penalty. That Professor Lurie be dismissed with immediate effect and forfeit all benefits and privileges" (51). Consequently, Lurie is expelled from the university. He loses his job at his university which naturally causes trauma in his life since, as Sztompka mentions, divorce, losing a job, and retirement bring personal, mostly psychological trauma (160). He, no longer, becomes a member of his intellectual society. Moreover, his life standard begins to deteriorate day by day overturning his established social status. So, he moves to Eastern Cape where Lucy, his daughter, has a smallholding.

Laura Wright points out that David Lurie, a representative of the dislocated post-apartheid white writer is displaced by virtue of his status as white, academic, and

male in a political context that no longer treats such attributes as definitive (89).

Wright is right to observe that because of his sexual relationship with Melanie, Lurie is displaced and disgraced. He is driven away from the university that will not tolerate his unclean behavior, particularly, his refusal to offer a confession of his wrongdoing. But he does not seem to worry for losing his job because he is no more interested in teaching. Nor do his students offer him any rapport. They did not care to listen to him. So, he enjoys his release from the job. He has been kicked out from his job for abusing Melanie, but, still, she has not gone out of his mind. While staying at his unmarried daughter's farm house, he again starts thinking about Melanie: "Without warning a memory of the girl comes back: of her neat little breasts with their upstanding nipples, of her smooth flat belly. A ripple of desire passes through him. Evidently whatever it was is not over yet" (65). He recalls Melanie when he himself has got to stay with his daughter as a refuge.

Just two weeks ago he was in a classroom teaching his students. But now he has become a useless man in a country home of his daughter whose mother has been divorced from him ten years before. What could be more shameful than this, to depend on a daughter who has never been looked after by the father? When Lurie has nothing to do, and asks his daughter what he can do, his daughter suggests to him that he should help the dog and Petrus – her assistant: "“You could help with the dogs. You could cut up the dog-meat. I've always found that difficult. Then there is Petrus. Petrus is busy establishing his own lands. You could give him a hand”" (76). Thus, Lurie has turned into a dog-man from a professor. He has got to help Petrus, a black man to be paid. Moreover, Lucy advises him to help Bev Shaw at her clinic since she is desperate for volunteers, but not to expect to be paid. She asks him to do that out of the goodness of his heart. She sounds as if she is trying to make him repair his past

misdeeds. But, he is still not ready to be changed. He is ready to help them, but not in the condition of being reformed: “‘All right, 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’” (77). Lurie’s unbending nature reflects in these statements in which he determines to go on being bad. He knows that he is not only in trouble, but rather in disgrace. Therefore, he asks Bev Shaw if she has a use for him.

Regarding Lurie’s rigid nature, and his obligation to help the dogs, Tom Herron says that David Lurie helps those creatures that accompany him in his journey into disgrace and to which he eventually turns when all other options appear closed (470). Lurie’s disgraceful situation tends to force him to have animal career. Initially, he had come to Lucy’s house for a short period, but now he is sharing her house, her life and he has to be careful not to bring his old habit back. Lucy tries to convince him to find a job, but he does not believe that people will hire him for teaching. He self-humiliates: “‘I am no longer marketable. The scandal will follow me, stick to me’” (88). He thinks that the disciplinary committee has been unfair to him since he has been punished for following his instincts. He means to say that he should be allowed to follow his instincts like other animals. By endorsing instinct, experienced by even the small birds, Lurie attempts to naturalize desire and its claims, deeming it authentic in contrast to the falsifying norms of the law (Anker 245, 246).

Lurie has his own measure of shyness about showing himself in public with his one eye and his white skullcap after the brutal attack of three colored men on him at his daughter’s farm house. His burnt ear looks like a naked pink mollusk which he cannot expose to the public. He hides his face, but he looks worse than odd and repulsive like “one of those sorry creatures whom children gawk at in the street. ‘Why does that man look so funny?’ they ask their mothers, and have to be hushed” (120).

All of a sudden, Lurie becomes an outsider, a country recluse, losing himself day by day. He is ignored by the people even by his own daughter who believes that she is raped by three black men as a revenge of her father's sexual harassment of a black girl, so: "She must wish him gone and the sooner the better" (134). At this moment, Lurie weeps with his tears flow down his face that he cannot stop; his hands shake.

Lurie's life becomes like that of those unwanted dogs which feel the disgrace of dying in Bev Shaw's clinic. He becomes the one who takes charge of disposing of the dead dogs. Nobody knows him in his new society. Once, Petrus called himself a dog-man, now Lurie has become a dog-man: a dog undertaker: "He saves the honor of corpses because there is no one else stupid enough to do it. That is what he is becoming: stupid, daft, wrongheaded" (146). Lurie cleans the floor of the surgery, the place where he has a sexual relation with Bev Shaw recently, which is an evidence to claim that he has not changed his old habit of having affair with women even after her daughter's rape. He is supposed to help Bev Shaw in her clinic of dog, but he starts having relation with her: "this must be how, in her innocence, she assumes adulteries are carried out. . . . He folds her in his arms; she nuzzles her ear against his chin; his lips brush the tight little curls of her hair" (149). Bev Shaw knows that he has come from a big city, because there is a scandal attached to his name that he makes love to many women and expects to be made love to by every woman who crosses his path.

Lurie does not feel ashamed to have an affair with Bev Shaw who is one of his daughter's friends. He has got to get used to the physically ugly woman like Bev Shaw, and even less than her, and stop calling her poor Bev Shaw: "If she is poor, he is bankrupt" (150). Lurie keeps on having relationship with Bev Shaw since she is the only woman available to him. They work together in the clinic of dogs, and when their voluntary duty is over, they have sexual affairs on the floor of the surgery before

they go their homes. His disgraceful activities make him feel that he is obscure and growing obscurer: "A figure from the margins of history" (167). Finally, Lurie is tired of country life and its complications. When he comes home, he does not feel like a homecoming in Lucy's farm house. Nor can he make a living in his city home near the university "skulking about like a criminal, dodging old colleagues" (175). Hence, he is bound to spend a life without hope and prospect at his daughter's house.

Lurie hires a room, dark and stuffy, in a house near the clinic as he cannot stay with his daughter any longer. He has even changed his surname as Lourie so that people will not know him and his scandal. His house owner does not allow him to cook at his room. In his room, he looks like a mad man, spectacle for small children of the village who peer at him over the concrete wall. When he rises from his seat, the boys drop down and run away with excitement: "What a tale to tell back home: a mad old man who sits among the dogs singing to himself" (212). Finally, Lurie waits to be a grandfather of a child who is going to be born after the gang-rape of his daughter. As a father, he has not been much of a success, as a grandfather he will probably score lower than average. By the end of the novel, David has been stripped of all of the conventional markings of identity: his job, his possessions, his sexuality, even his surname which is misprinted as "Lourie" in a newspaper (Stratton 96). Lurie has a humiliating life to be a grandfather of a child who will be born from a mother who has been gang-raped by three colored men in her smallholding.

Trauma of Rape

Jenny Edkins says that force and violence like rape, torture and child abuse give rise to trauma. The victims of trauma feel they are helpless in their enforced encounter with violence and brutality (3). The traumatic event which Caruth mentions as the shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident (5), causes more trauma in

Lucy and Lurie's lives in *Disgrace*. Lurie is attacked and his daughter, Lucy is raped by three colored men in her farm house. After the brutal attack of the men on him, Lurie becomes so weak that he has to call Bill Shaw – Bev Shaw's husband and suffer the public shame and loss of honor. Lurie describes how the strangers enter his house and rape his daughter thus: "the tall man follows. After a moment the second man pushes past him and enters the house too. Something is wrong, he knows it at once. 'Lucy, come out here!' he calls, unsure for the moment whether to follow or wait" (93). Then, Lurie is locked in the lavatory, and his daughter is raped by the men causing his disgrace. After that, there is silence at his house for a while. Later on, the rapists set fire on him. One of his wrists is swollen and throbbing with pain. And then, they kill Lucy's dogs with her rifle. Finally, they take all things of Lucy's house including Lurie's car.

Lurie cannot recollect how this all happen to him as Caruth says that any traumatic event is not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on (3). After the traumatic events of rape, attack and robbery, Lurie cannot sleep well. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, he awakes with a dream that Lucy has spoken to him: "Come to me, save me!" (103). In his vision, Lucy stands with her hands outstretched. He tries to get back to sleep but cannot. So, he gets up and taps on Lucy's door. She is lying with her face turned to the wall. He sits down beside her and touches her cheek which is wet with tears. Trauma of rape is so painful that Lucy spends nights without closing her eyes.

The blood of Lurie's life is leaving him and despair is taking its place since, "In Lucy's room, the double bed is stripped bare. The scene of the crime, he thinks to himself; and, as if reading the thought, the policemen avert their eyes, pass on" (109). Even the policemen feel difficult to see the place where Lucy is raped. Regarding the

trauma of rape, Giesen discusses that neither the individual trauma of rape, death and dehumanization, nor the collective trauma of guilt and defeat could be turned into the theme of conversation. There is a moral numbness with respect to the horror (177). Giesen seems to be true in Lucy's case too, since, after her rape, Lucy cannot show her face because of the disgrace. She remains silent refusing to talk about her rape even to her father or to complain it to the police. But, Gilbert Yeoh has a different argument regarding the cause of her silences. He points out that Lucy's gloomy silences in the narrative reflect not her shame but her watchful mentality in active process (29). Whatever the reason, Lucy keeps to herself after the traumatic event of her rape. She expresses no feelings and shows no interest around her.

As Giesen says that a traumatized individual withdraws from active engagements to a secure realm of identity (125), Lucy spends hour after hour lying on her bed, staring into space without talking to anyone:

She would rather hide her face, and he knows why. Because of the disgrace. Because of the shame. That is what their visitors have achieved; that is what they have done to this confident, modern young woman. Like a stain the story is spreading across the district. Not her story to spread but theirs: they are its owners. How they put her in her place, how they showed her what a woman was for. (115)

Lucy avoids sleeping in the room where she has been raped, so Lurie moves his belongings into Lucy's room to chase out the ghosts of Lucy's violators who still hover in her bedroom. But she is not improving: "She stays up all night, claiming she cannot sleep; then in the afternoons he finds her asleep on the sofa, her thumb in her mouth like a child" (121). She has lost her interest in food, and Lurie is the one who has to tempt her to eat. She refuses to eat meat as she is losing herself day by day.

As Smelser says that the trauma has a way of intruding itself into the mind, in the form of unwanted thoughts, nightmares, or flashbacks (53), and Caruth says that traumatic event is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known, so it comes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmare and repetitive actions of the survivor (3), Lurie cannot even imagine how such a frightful event of gang-rape, assault, and robbery occur in his life within a minute. Therefore, he often suffers from the nightmares in which he finds himself in a terrible situation. In his nightmare, he wallows in a bed of blood and finds himself panting and shouting soundlessly. He runs from the man with the face like a hawk in his dream. He is very much worried about Lucy regarding her health after she is raped. He asks her, ““you aren’t hiding something from me, are you? You didn’t pick up something from those men?”” (124). But Lucy does not want to talk about her rape and pregnancy with Lurie since, as Travis believes, she feels that he is unqualified to be the right kind of listener to her rape trauma (238). Lucy seems to indicate his sexual harassment of Melanie which is not less severe than the gang-rape of her. She does not believe that a rapist can understand the trauma of the rape.

Lurie suggests to his daughter that either she should stay on in a house full of ugly memories and go on brooding on what happened to her, or she should put the whole episode behind her and start a new chapter elsewhere. But Lucy ignores his suggestion. She believes that the rapists rape her as a revenge of her father’s sexual harassment of Melanie, so she is still afraid of being raped again: ““I think I am in their territory. They have marked me. They will come back for me”” (158). To the contrary of Lucy’s thought, for Lurie, it is “A history of wrong. . . . it came down from the ancestors” (156). Thus, Lurie and Lucy keep on disputing about why these three black men rape her, which merely adds more traumas to their lives.

The three colored men rape Lucy without any mercy on her “pushing the knife in; exciting afterwards, leaving the body behind covered in blood – like getting away with murder” (158). They rape her like dogs in a pack and the boy, one of the rapists, is there to learn. Lucy could not believe it at first when they attacked her. Lurie describes it to Bev Shaw what Lucy felt when the traumatic event of rape occurred to her:

Lucy was frightened, frightened near to death. Her voice choked, she could not breathe, her limbs went numb. This is not happening, she said to herself as the men forced her down; it is just a dream, a nightmare. While the men, for their part, drank up her fear, revelled in it, did all they could to hurt her, to menace her, to heighten her terror. Call your dogs! They said to her. Go on, call your dogs! No dogs? Then let us show you dogs. (160)

The gang of three rape Lucy and make her pregnant. The child whom she gives birth will have three fathers. Lucy calls them rapists cum tax gatherers roaming the area, attacking women. Lurie has become a father without a son. So, this is how his line is going to end. Lurie cannot tolerate it, but what he can do, as the new circumstance is not in his control. Finally, he stands against the kitchen wall, hides his face in his hands and cries a lot alone.

Ethics of Trauma

In the first half of the novel, Lurie is found to be totally self-absorbed in his dealings with others. In fact, he reduces women into objects to satisfy his desire. His sexual harassment of Melanie is the example of how he can victimize others. He even defends his sexual harassment as a right of desire. He believes that he is free to fulfill any desire even by violating the rights of others. But in the second half of the novel,

particularly, after Lucy's rape, Lurie becomes ethical who takes care of other human beings and animals. He gets transformed from a self-centered man to a man for others. After his daughter's rape, Lurie learns to live for others. He learns to give thoughts to those who are more helpless than him, such as, his daughter, Lucy, women, and the unwanted animals in the novel. Lurie's care of his daughter, and the injured dog, at the end of the novel, exemplifies his ethical relation with others. While talking about Lurie's ethical responses to others, Michael Marais points out that the notions of sensibility, sympathy, and compassion, which the novel repeatedly invokes, were self-consciously developed as an ethical response to the instrumentalist logic of self-directed personality (75). Lurie who knows only what it is like to be a rapist at the first half of the novel, does know now what it is like to be a rape victim at the second part of the novel.

Coetzee is himself, an ethical writer, in a sense that he performs the traumas of both his white and black characters, impartially, in *Disgrace*. For instance, he reveals the trauma of Melanie, a black character of the novel due to the sexual harassment of Lurie, a white character, on the one hand, and the trauma of Lurie and Lucy, the white characters of the novel, due to the gang-rape of Lucy by three colored men, on the other. Thus, both white and black characters of Coetzee become the victim of trauma in this novel. Coetzee seems to say that whoever the perpetrator is, the trauma of the victim is the same. Moreover, Coetzee's white and black characters share and care one another in their sufferings which make them ethical. Coetzee, hence, forms a community of sufferers who take care of others in *Disgrace*.

Lurie's ethical response to other women is revealed at the moment when he gives credit to other women for making him better person: "Every woman I have been close to has taught me something about myself. To that extent they have made

me a better person”” (70). He remembers those women whom he had met in his past, and he wishes their images to continue. He sympathizes with them in his vision:

In a sudden and soundless eruption, as if he has fallen into a waking dream, a stream of images pours down, images of women he has known on two continents, some from so far away in time that he barely recognizes them. . . . What has happened to them, all those women, all those lives? Are there moments when they too, or some of them, are plunged without warning into the ocean of memory? (192)

Thus, in the above extract, Lurie realizes that he is enriched by the women like Melanie, Rosalind, Bev Shaw, Soraya, and the girl in Touws River, for whom his heart floods with thankfulness like a flower blooming in his heart.

Besides, Lurie, on Lucy’s request, decides to go to the animal clinic and help Bev Shaw, which indicates his transformation from a self-absorbed man to an ethical one in the novel. In the past, he did not like animals: “though in fact he is repelled by the odours of cat urine and dog mange and Jeyes Fluid that greet them” (72). He even did not like to enter the animal clinic owing to the bad smell that animals produce. But now, he loves animals. He says “As for animals, by all means let us be kind to them” (74). Accordingly, he begins to spend his afternoons in animal surgery helping Bev Shaw, and for the rest, he helps Lucy for feeding her dogs. He watches the dogs while they are eating. He loves being with them: “He squats, allows the dog to smell his face, his breath” (85).

The traumatic event of Lucy’s rape brings changes in the worldly desires of Lurie. This change in him, as DeKoven mentions, requires Lurie to understand the parallels between himself and Lucy’s rapists as well as the link between himself and other animals, particularly dogs. It also requires him to add to that linkage de-

eroticized middle-aged woman (863), and similarly, Laura Wright rightly points out that after his daughter's rape, David embarks upon the perhaps impossible quest to embody the other—in the form of black South Africans, women, and animals (85). These critics are true regarding Lurie's ethical behavior as he starts serving other women and dogs in the novel. Moreover, he begins to understand others' sufferings after being the victim of traumatic event of assault and his daughter's gang-rape. He manages the farm, the garden, and the kennels after Lucy's rape. He starts thinking about his future, Lucy's future and the future of the land as a whole. He becomes, as Derek Attridge observes, a loving and attentive father (104) of Lucy.

Even while staying at Cape Town for some days, Lurie is too much worried about Lucy, and gives her a call: “‘I thought I’d phone in case you were worried about me,’ he says. ‘I’m fine. I’ll take a while to settle down’” (178). He further asks her whether Petrus is looking after her or not. Moreover, he decides to stand by his daughter even though he knows that Lucy is pregnant and going to give birth to the child of the rapists despite his disapproval. Thus, Lurie really lives for others and he is no more an irresponsible man in the novel.

In addition to helping his daughter and Bev Shaw, Lurie helps Petrus too in cleaning the concrete storage and dam. It is an unpleasant job, nevertheless, he offers to help him. He does all household works of Lucy until she recovers from the trauma of her rape: “He keeps the garden from going to ruin. He packs produce for the market. He helps Bev Shaw at the clinic. He sweeps the floors, cooks the meals, does all the things that Lucy no longer does. He is busy from dawn to dusk” (120). In the past, Lurie never took care of his daughter and his wives whom he used for sexual pleasure and got divorced later on proving himself as self-centered. But now he is changed and starts living for others. Although he has suffered along with his daughter,

he takes care of her by nursing her when she has suffered from the traumatic event of rape, and by attending to her dying enterprise. At the end of the novel, although Lurie lives separately, he pays much attention to Lucy. Every Saturday mornings, he goes to Donkin Square to help Lucy at the market stall. Then, he takes her out to lunch.

Lurie is sympathetic to animals too as it is clear from the love he shows to the young sheep that Petrus, Lucy's neighbor, a colored man, has brought to be slaughtered in the party that he is going to host. Petrus tethers the sheep all day on a bare patch of ground where they have been bleating continuously. The pathetic condition of the sheep upsets Lurie who, then, goes up to Petrus and asks him "Those sheep,' he says – 'don't you think we could tie them where they can graze?'" (123). But, Petrus is busy with his own work and does not care what Lurie tells him. Lurie, a self-absorbed man in the past, now starts thinking about the painful life of animals, particularly, the sheep which do not own their lives, are slaughtered mercilessly by human beings to celebrate their happy occasions. Lurie reflects on the lives of the sheep thus:

An hour later the sheep are still tethered, still bleating dolefully. Petrus is nowhere to be seen. Exasperated, he unties them and tugs them over to the damside, where there is abundant grass. The sheep drink at length, then leisurely begin to graze. They are black-faced Persians, alike in size, in markings, even in their movements. Twins, in all likelihood, destined since birth for the butcher's knife. Well, nothing remarkable in that. When did a sheep last die of old age? Sheep do not own themselves, do not own their lives. They exist to be used, every last ounce of them, their flesh to be eaten, their bones to be crushed and fed to poultry. Nothing escapes, except perhaps the gall bladder,

which no one will eat. Descartes should have thought of that. The soul, suspended in the dark, bitter gall, hiding. (123)

Thus, pitiable life of animal disheartens Lurie. Unbending natured Lurie in the past, now, has become very soft. He extends his ethical duty or responsibility not only to his daughter, Lucy, and Bev Shaw, a black woman, but also to animals around him, may they be Lucy's dogs or Petrus's sheep. He is very sad to know that Petrus is going to kill those sheep and that they would not live long.

Lurie does not like the way Petrus is going to slaughter the sheep at his party. He expresses his sorrow about the sheep with Lucy: "I'm not sure I like the way he does things — bringing the slaughter-beasts home to acquaint them with the people who are going to eat them" (124). There is a bond of love between Lurie and these sheep. He even does not know how this bond of love develops. The lot of the sheep has become important to him. He remembers Bev Shaw caring the old goat, stroking and comforting it and wonders how she gets this empathy with animals. He thinks that someone must have some trick for it, and has to be changed to get that trick: "Do I have to change, he thinks? Do I have to become like Bev Shaw?" (126). Though Lurie hesitates to be changed himself, he has already shown the symptoms of change in his behavior by treating the animals lovingly. Michalinos Zembylas has a similar opinion regarding Lurie's ethical responsibility for others. He rightly observes that after the rape of Lucy, Lurie claims that he is too old to change, repeating this claim on a number of occasions; yet, he does change in the course of the novel, a change that involves learning to become responsible towards the Other (226).

As Lurie loves the sheep brought by Petrus to cut off at his party, he decides not to go to the party even if he and Lucy have been invited, so that he would not have to see the flesh of the sheep in his food. He speaks to Lucy, "I have been thinking

about this party of Petrus's. On the whole, I would prefer not to go'" (126). In the case of these sheep, Lurie is badly disturbed, so he prefers not to be one of the participants of the party. In his heart, he finds only sadness that comes from the memory of those unfortunate sheep. His love over animals is clearly reflected when he takes Katy, Lucy's old dog, for a walk: "He has been out, taking the bulldog Katy for a walk. Surprisingly, Katy has kept up with him, either because he is slower than before or because she is faster. She snuffles and pants as much as ever, but this no longer seems to irritate him (206). In the past, dogs used to irritate him, but now he enjoys with them, which indicates a change in his nature – from a self-absorbed man to a responsible man for the Other.

Besides dogs, Lurie loves the birds that visit Lucy's farm every year. Even in the town where he goes to for some days after he is dismissed from his job, he misses those ducks which he mentions to Lucy in the phone:

His spell with Lucy has not turned him into a country person.

Nonetheless, there are things he misses - the duck family, for instance:

Mother Duck tacking about on the surface of the dam, her chest puffed out with pride, while Eenie, Meenie, Minie and Mo paddle busily behind, confident that as long as she is there they are safe from all harm. (178).

Lurie goes off to the Animal Welfare clinic as often as he can, and offers himself for whatever jobs he can do like feeding animals, cleaning and mopping up. He assists Bev Shaw in killing those unwanted dogs of their owners. He is the one who holds the unwanted dogs while Bev Shaw injects the drug to the vein of the dogs to be killed. He believes that he will be used to the work, but the more killings he assists in, the more nervous he gets since he loves those abandoned dogs so much that

their death makes him cry. He does not understand what is happening to him. He assumes that people who work in slaughterhouses harden their hearts; it is so in most cases. But it does not seem to be so in his case: "He does not seem to have the gift of hardness" (143). He comes to realize that he does not have hard heart. The dogs which are brought to the clinic to be killed come around him and start licking his hand. He lets them to do so just as Bev Shaw strokes them and kisses them. Thus, he becomes as ethical to animals as Bev Shaw in the second half of the novel.

Lurie does not want to leave the dead body of the dogs on the dump with waste from the hospital wards. He is not prepared to inflict such dishonor upon them. So, he brings the bags filled with the dead dogs to the farm in the back of Lucy's kombi, parks them overnight, and on Monday mornings drives them to the hospital grounds himself to save the honor of the dead dogs. Moreover, he does not like the way the workmen break the rigid limbs of the dogs beating the bags with the backs of their shovels before loading them. So, he intervenes and takes over the job himself. He wants a world in which people do not use shovels to beat corpses of dogs. Coetzee presents Lurie's love upon the unwanted dogs, thus:

The dogs are brought to the clinic because they are unwanted: *because we are too menny*. That is where he enters their lives. He may not be their savior, the one for whom they are not too many, but he is prepared to take care of them once they are unable, utterly unable, to take care of themselves, once even Bev Shaw has washed her hands of them. (146)

The dogs are too many for others, but they are not too many for Lurie. Moreover, he is ready to take care of them offering himself to the service of the dead dogs. Thus, Lurie's ethics for animals reflects in his service to them in *Disgrace*. Regarding

Lurie's sympathetic treatment of the dogs, Danta says that Lurie's sympathetic treatment of the dead dogs certainly puts him in a relation to his own death—but a relation to death that is so pure it is somehow unconcerned with the possibility of personal redemption or grace (732). Danta believes that Lurie is not trying to get back his previous graceful position that he had before falling into disgrace by treating the dead dogs sympathetically. Though Lurie begins to redeem his public shame by treating the abandoned dogs honorably, this real action does not yet open onto the possibility of personal grace. But Lurie does not seem to care whether he achieves personal grace or not, he keeps on treating the dead dogs sympathetically.

Lurie buys a pickup from a friend of Bill Shaw to carry the dead dogs to the place where their dead bodies are burnt. He sacrifices his life for the sake of the dogs which are brought to the animal clinic. After breakfast, he leaves his room for the clinic and spends the day there, every day, including Saturdays: "Twice a day he feeds the animals; he cleans out their pens and occasionally talks to them" (211). He is fond of a particular dog among the dogs in the holding pens. It is a young male dog with a withered left hindquarter which it drags behind it. No visitor has shown any interest in adopting it, and its period of grace is almost over. Soon it will have to submit to the needle. He likes playing with this dog. When he plays the banjo, the dog is fascinated by the sound of it: "When he strums the strings, the dog sits up, cocks its head, listens. When he hums Teresa's line. . . . the dog smacks its lips and seems on the point of singing too, or howling (215).

One Sunday, Lurie and Bev Shaw are busy in the clinic where he brings in the unwanted and crippled dogs and cats to be killed. He concentrates all his attention on the animals they are killing and "giving it what he no longer has difficulty in calling by its proper name: love" (219). After killing all these unwanted animal, the young

dog that he is fond of and plays with is left. He does not want it to be killed. He wants to save it for some days due to its love. Bearing the dog in his arms like a lamb, he says to Bev Shaw, "I am giving him up" (220). Alice Brittan observes that when David holds the dogs as they take the needle, even though their terror makes him tremble and weep (489). Lurie is so loving and kind to animals that he weeps for them when they are being killed. Thus, such a rigid or unbending natured Lurie in the first half of the novel turns into a kind and soft hearted man in the second half. The critic, Rita Barnard opines that Lurie's humble and self-imposed duties are thus a way of paying homage to the unusual quality of all once living things (221). The dog he is giving up has been presented as singularly affectionate and endearing.

After Lucy's rape, Lurie experiences how one feels to be the victim of trauma. Now, he realizes how much he had troubled Melanie and her family. He puts himself in the position of Melanie's father, whose daughter has been abused by him, and realizes how much her father is suffering from it. He finally confesses that he has caused trauma to Melanie, and now, he no more blames his desire of impulse for abusing Melanie. He tells Bev Shaw: "'Yes, there was a young woman. But I was the troublemaker in that case. I caused the young woman in question at least as much trouble as she caused me'" (147). Lurie begins to sympathize with Melanie that the trial is a trial for her too, perhaps she too has suffered. Thus, he begins to confess his crime at the end of the novel, which he had never done before. He seems to transform, as Marais points out, his desire for the Other into responsibility for the Other (174).

Like Lurie, other characters of the novel also love animals. They are animal welfare people who are so cheerful to work as volunteers for Animal Welfare League. For instance, Bev Shaw runs a clinic for animal where a handful of volunteers work. Lurie also begins to work at this clinic as a volunteer. Bev Shaw has to kill the old

and unwanted dogs injecting them with lethal, on their owner's request. This task of killing the dogs upsets her as she: "hides her face, blows her nose. 'It's nothing. I keep enough lethal for bad cases, but we can't force the owners. It's their animal, they like to slaughter in their own way. What a pity! Such a good old fellow, so brave and straight and confident!'" (83). Bev Shaw's love to these pets is expressed in the above quoted extract as she is involved in releasing the trauma of Africa's suffering beasts.

Zembylas mentions that responsibility for the Other is constituted by a relationship with the Other that comes from respect for each individual without expectations for any exchange (226). His opine regarding ethical responsibility for the Other is true in the case of Bev Shaw, a black poor woman who serves animals in an animal clinic, and moreover, helps Lucy and Lurie when they are in the trauma of rape and disgrace. Bev Shaw and her husband frequently visit and serve Lurie and Lucy when they are suffering from the trauma of rape and robbery. They care Lucy and Lurie which gives them, as Margalit believes, a feeling of being secure (34).

Bev Shaw serves Lurie with a breakfast of cornflakes and tea when Lucy is in physical trauma of rape. Moreover, she helps him by changing his dressings of the wound that he received from the attack of Lucy's rapists, as he cannot do his dressing himself. She unwinds the bandages of his head and ear: "With a sterile solution Bev washes the exposed pink underskin of the scalp, then, using tweezers, lays the oily yellow dressing over it. Delicately she anoints the folds of his eyelid and his ear" (106). Bev Shaw not only helps Lurie in his suffering, but also sympathizes with Lucy at the time when she undergoes the traumatic shame of rape: "'Poor Lucy,' she whispers: 'she has been through such a lot!'" (140). Thus, Bev Shaw fulfils her ethical responsibility of serving others in their trauma in *Disgrace*.

Lucy also loves animals. She treats animals like human beings. For instance, she loves the abandoned dog named Kathy which is old and unwanted to be adopted by people. She expresses her love to this dog, thus:

‘Poor old Katy, she's in mourning. No one wants her, and she knows it. The irony is, she must have offspring all over the district who would be happy to share their homes with her. But it's not in their power to invite her. They are part of the furniture, part of the alarm system. They do us the honor of treating us like gods, and we respond by treating them like things.’ (78)

Besides loving animals, Lucy enjoys watching birds which come back to her field every year. She feels so lucky to be visited, to be the one chosen by the birds. At the time when she is gang-raped and her dogs are shot by the rapists, Lucy, forgetting her own trauma of rape, expresses her deep love to those dogs which are crying in agony before they die due to over pain. Her ethical responsibility for others forgetting her own sufferings is revealed when she calls those wounded dogs “My darlings, my darlings” (97). Besides her dogs, Lucy loves her cat too. She plays with her cat.

When Lucy sees Pollux, the young rapist, at Petrus house, she suggests to her father that they should behave with him as if nothing has happened to them. Lucy even sympathizes with the boy, her own rapist and requests her father not to get angry with him since getting angry does not help them and it is not wise to take revenge on him as he is not mentally sound: “‘Don't get indignant, David, it doesn't help. According to Petrus, Pollux has dropped out of school and can't find a job. I would steer clear of him if I were you. I suspect there is something wrong with him’” (200).

Thus, Lucy excuses her own rapist, as Margalit focuses on the importance of forgiveness that helps to overcome the trauma (169). Lucy forgives her rapist that helps her overcome her trauma.

Lucy protects the boy, her rapist who peers into the bath room where Lucy is taking a bath, from the thrashing of Lurie: “‘Come, let us go and wash it,’ she says. The boy sucks in the snot and tears, shakes his head” (207). When Lurie knows that the boy is one of the rapists of Lucy, he gets angry with the boy and decides to take revenge on him. But Lucy does not agree with her father’s idea about taking revenge with the boy. Lucy tries to convince her father about not hurting the boy, and helping her to make the situation peaceful:

‘That is reckless talk, David. If you want to think like that, please keep it to yourself. Anyway, what you think of him is beside the point. He is here, he won’t disappear in a puff of smoke, he is a fact of life. . . . 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.’ (208)

The way Lucy reminds her father is a clear evidence of her ethics and responsibility for others. She wants to develop harmonious relation with her neighbors by convincing her father that they cannot go on any further by taking revenge to one another. Moreover, she is ready to sacrifice her life for the sake of peace.

Petrus, Lucy’s neighbor, a colored man, helps Lucy in her sufferings. He fulfills the Levinasian ethics as an infinite responsibility to others in *Disgrace*, by providing Lucy with care and security when she is feeling insecure at her farm house. Petrus assures her of security and protection from any future traumatic event

occurring to her life again. So, Lucy owes him a lot: “Petrus slaved to get the market garden going for Lucy. Without Petrus Lucy wouldn't be where she is now” (140).

Petrus is ready to be the farm manager of Lucy if she and her father go back to Cape Town and he is prepared to keep her part of the farm running in her absence. It is not his intention to capture Lucy's land as he knows that Lucy will come back one day as she is very attached to her farm. He stretches out his helpful hands to both Lurie and Lucy when they are undergoing hard times of their lives and he even reminds Lurie to forget what has happened to them. He tells him “it is bad. But it is finish” (201)

Politics of Trauma

Coetzee's politics of the narrativization of trauma of both white and non-white people of South Africa in *Disgrace* is to develop strategies for preventing its reproduction and the intergenerational circle of violence, highly visible in South Africa. As people of one racial community take revenge on the people of another community using sex as their weapon in South Africa, Coetzee seems to convey a message to them through his fiction that they cannot get peace and happiness until they stop taking revenge on one another. Moreover, he seems to say that people of different racial communities should live together in harmonious relation. Accordingly, Coetzee's characters of different races are found to be helping the people of opposite race in their sufferings, which has contributed a lot to form an ethical community of sufferers in *Disgrace*. For instance, Bev Shaw, a black woman, helps Lucy and Lurie, the white characters of the novel, when they are in the trauma of rape and terrible assault by the three black men on the one hand, and Lurie too helps Bev Shaw in her animal Clinic when she is alone and desperately in need of someone to help her on the other. Petrus, a black man, accepts Lucy who is pregnant by the gang-rape of the three men, and makes her his wife. He assures her of her security, and in return, Lucy

wishes to hand over her land to him, and she is also ready to be his third wife. She does not want to leave her farm even if her life in that place is not secured.

David Lurie, in the second part of the novel, visits Melanie's house and asks her father to forgive him for causing trauma in their lives. Melanie's father forgives him and tells him to forget what has happened. Moreover, he invites Lurie to have dinner at his house. Thus, their activities of excusing others bring happiness in their lives. Coetzee's politics behind making his characters ethical and responsible for others is, in my opinion, to develop a secular life of peaceful co-existence between the people of different racial communities in *Disgrace*. He seems to convey a message to his readers through his fiction that it is very important for the people of different races of South Africa, to accept each other's existence, and forgive others' crime, which can bring peace and happiness to their lives.

As Eyerman views, the performance of trauma permits reconciliation of an internal conflict which is accomplished through the coexistence of a distinctive and relatively autonomous collective history and the progressive political and economic integration (111), Coetzee integrates his characters of different and autonomous groups by making them share the same roof of the house, that helps to reconcile their internal conflicts. He reunites his characters of opposite races in *Disgrace* which contributes to overcome their trauma since they develop the feeling of brotherhood to others after being united. Thus, his politics of narrativization of trauma in his fiction is to lessen or unburden the trauma of South African People.

Both white and non-white characters of Coetzee help one another when they are in trauma. His characters are always found to be in a harmonious relation of brotherhood in his fiction. They never discriminate their neighbors in terms of the color of their skin. For instance, when Lurie is badly wounded by the brutal attack of

three men, Bill Shaw, Bev Shaw's husband, a black man, goes to the hospital to fetch him after his head is dressed and bandaged in the hospital. At that time, Lucy also takes rest at his house: "“Lucy is over at our place. She was going to fetch you herself but Bev wouldn't hear of it”" (101). Bill Shaw believes that, because he and David Lurie once had a cup of tea together, David Lurie is his friend, and the two of them have obligations towards each other. Moreover, Bev Shaw tells Lurie not to be worried about Lucy's security. She assures him of Lucy's security: "“Bill and I will look after her. We'll go often to the farm. And there's Petrus. Petrus will keep an eye out”" (162). Through Bill and Bev Shaw's help to Lurie and Lucy, Coetzee seems to show the readers how black people can help the whites when the latter are in their sufferings.

Petrus helps Lurie and Lucy by selling their products in the market when Lucy is not able to go to the market to sell her products: "“Petrus is in fact the one who does the work, while he [Lurie] sits and warms his hands”" (116). Petrus prefers to help them as for him, country life has always been a matter of neighbors helping each other, looking after each other's pets, and in a crisis ready to lend a hand. Lucy's house is too close to Petrus, so they almost share a house. Although Petrus is not a relative of Lurie and Lucy, he invites them to attend the party hosted by him. They too attend his party with a present for Petrus's wife. Petrus even declares that, "“Lucy is our benefactor”" (129). Lurie and Lucy are the only whites in his party. In this way, Coetzee unites his white and black characters by making them co-exist in a harmonious relation in *Disgrace*.

In his party, Petrus and his wife spend a lot of time with Lurie, making him feel at home. Lurie realizes that they are really kind people. When Lurie expresses his worry regarding Lucy's safety after his death, Petrus assures him of her security thus:

“‘Lucy is safe here,’ he announces suddenly. ‘It is all right. You can leave her, she is safe’” (138). In Lucy’s absence, Petrus assures her of taking all the responsibilities of her farm works too: “‘And I must do all the things – I must feed the dogs, I must plant the vegetables, I must go to the market’” (153). Moreover, Petrus is ready to protect Lucy from any future disaster in her life, and take her under his wing. Lucy, too, allows Petrus to take his water pipes from her field. It is Coetzee’s politics of making harmonious relation with a mutual cooperation between the people of different races.

Lucy does not complain to the police about her gang-rape by the three black men since she wants to develop a good relation with the blacks. Lucy knows that as whites have also committed the crime of rape on black women, the rape of black over white women is also normal. For instance, her own father has committed sexual harassment of a black girl. So she does not find any meaning in complaining her rape to the police. She tells her father the reason why she does not complain to the police: “‘as far as I am concerned, what happened to me is a purely private matter. 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’” (112). Lucy means to say that taking revenge on people using sex as a weapon is natural in South Africa. Moreover, her forgiveness to the black rapists brings her sympathy from the people of black community which at least adds a brick to the foundation of secular life of peaceful co-existence between whites and blacks.

Lucy does not allow her father to telephone the police when they see one of her rapists in the party thinking that it might spoil the party hosted by Petrus: “‘David, no, don’t do it. It’s not Petrus’s fault. If you call in the police, the evening will be destroyed for him. Be sensible’” (133). Lucy is very sensible not to destroy the party organized by Petrus. It means she does not want her father to antagonize Petrus. She asks her father to forget what happened in the past as she wants to develop a good

relationship with Petrus since she has to live in the same place in her future too. Even Petrus appreciates Lucy: ““She is a forward-looking lady, not backward-looking”” (136). Lurie also helps Petrus in pipefitting or plumbing by holding things and passing them to him.

Lucy does not want to leave the place where she has been living despite her father’s request since the place is not secure for her, and she might again be the victim of rape in future too as she is the only white in that locality. But she likes to live there even by paying the tax (158). She does not want to be defeated by leaving the farm then. It seems to be Coetzee’s politics to make her live among the people of black community, so that people of white community learn to live together in mutual cooperation in the community of the blacks.

Since Lucy is pregnant and going to give birth to a child of three black rapists, she accepts Petrus’s proposal of marrying him, so that she gets protection from him, and in return, she hands over her land to him. Petrus who was, once, her assistant is going to be her husband and the father of Lucy’s baby in future. Although it is humiliating, she wants to start from this point. She tells her father:

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.' it is humiliating. But perhaps that is a good point to start from again. Perhaps that is what I must learn to accept. To start at ground level (204, 205).

Thus, Lucy accepts Petrus for the sake of her security and her future child. Both Lucy and Petrus compromise each other and are ready to live together. They are wise to do

so since both of them are in a win-win situation. It is Coetzee's politics to make them marry and live together in *Disgrace*. Such inter-race marriage certainly promotes peaceful co-existence between the people of different races in South Africa.

David Lurie too, after his daughter's rape, realizes how it is to be the victim of rape. He has been the perpetrator of Melanie by abusing her sexually in the past, but now, after Lucy's rape, he becomes a victim of rape and understands how Melanie's father, Mr Isaacs, might be suffering from the sexual harassment of her daughter by him. Therefore, Lurie visits Mr Isaac's house to beg forgiveness for causing trauma to Isaac family in the novel. Since sharing traumatic experience through the mutual acts of speaking and listening helps the victims and survivors confront it and work through it, Lurie and Mr Isaac talk and listen to each other, which helps to alleviate the trauma of Isaac family a lot. Melanie's sister welcomes Lurie when he goes to her house. But, Mr. Isaac is at his school at that time, so Lurie goes to his school to meet him: "He had expected to be tense, but in fact finds himself quite calm" (165). Mr. Isaac, instead of being angry with his perpetrator, gets happy to see him there: "'To what do I owe this pleasure?'" (165). Coetzee, at this moment, shows the harmonious relation between Lurie and Mr Isaac, the perpetrator and the victim, which, finally, leads them to the peaceful co-existence. Coetzee's politics of narrativization of trauma reflects at this point of the novel.

In the meeting of Lurie and Mr Isaac, Lurie tells him all his story, and apologizes to him for causing trauma in his life. Mr Isaac sympathizes with him since he knows that Lurie has been dismissed from his job, and must be undergoing the trauma of financial crisis: "'So Melanie is all right. What about you? What are your plans now that you have left the profession?'" (166). Lurie's visit and respect to the Isaac family helps to release the trauma of the family. Even Lurie gets strength from

the confession of his guilt as Giesen mentions that the trauma of perpetrators who confess their guilt is turned into a triumph (133). Coetzee's politics of making Lurie's visit to Melanie's house, and her father's forgiveness and sympathy on him is to reunite the white and black people, generally known as perpetrators and the victims. His strategy of uniting blacks and whites in his novel certainly helps to stop the production and circulation of racial trauma in South Africa.

Moreover, Melannie's father invites Lurie to have a meal with them: "'Come and have a meal with us. Come for dinner'" (167). Lurie too does not ignore his kind invitation. During the dinner, Mr Isaac introduces Lurie to his wife, Doreen to whom Lurie says, "'I am grateful to you for receiving me in your home'" (169). Then, both perpetrator and the victim sit at the same table and have dinner. Thus, the once clear-cut distinction between victims and perpetrators is blurred at this point. Lurie is white whereas Isaac family is black, but both white and black who were once perpetrator and victim sit at the table of brotherhood now. It is Coetzee's politics of making white and black or perpetrator and victim sit and eat together at the same table.

Melanie's father is so sympathetic with Lurie during his stay at his house. He requests Lurie to stay more and not to leave his house immediately. There is not any indication in their conversation that they were once perpetrator and the victim:

'Mr Isaacs, I am just causing upset in your home,' he says. 'It was kind of you to invite me, I appreciate it, but it is better that I leave.' Isaacs gives a smile in which, to his surprise, there is a hint of gaiety. 'Sit down, sit down! We'll be all right! We will do it!' He leans closer. 'You have to be strong!' (169).

During the meal, Lurie tries to be a good guest, talking enjoyably, to fill the silences. Finally, before Lurie leaves the house, he apologizes for the grief he has caused him,

his wife, and his daughter Melanie (171). Lurie realizes that he has been punished for what happened between himself and Melanie. Mr Isaac too feels sorry for him. So, when Lurie reaches at his hotel at eleven o'clock, Mr Isaac makes a phone call to him wishing him strength for the future.

Coetzee, in *Disgrace*, tends to say that South African society cannot prolong until both South African whites and non-whites live together in a harmonious relation taking care of the people of other community. He creates an ethical community where his characters, finally, sacrifice their lives for the Other in this novel. At the end of the novel, his white and black characters agree to live together helping each other in their sufferings. Moreover, his characters are ethical to animals too. Coetzee's black characters help the whites when they are in need of their help. They do not discriminate others in terms of race. In the first half of the novel, both white and black characters cause trauma to the people of opposite race. For instance, Lurie's sexual harassment of Melanie is the example of whites causing trauma to blacks, and Lucy's gang-rape by three blacks is the example of blacks causing trauma to whites. But, in the second half of the novel, Coetzee's characters show ethical behavior to the people of opposite race. Bev Shaw and her husband's service to Lurie and Lucy during their suffering of rape and brutal attack by the three rapists; Lurie's visit to Melanie's house and his apology to her father for causing trauma to his family, and her father's forgiveness to Lurie; Lucy's acceptance of Petrus's proposal of marrying him, and Petrus's acceptance of being the father of Lucy's baby which would be born in future after the gang-rape of Lucy are some evidences which support to claim that Coetzee's characters are ethical and responsible for others. Coetzee reunites both white and black characters who live together forgiving each other, and forgetting the trauma of the past. His politics behind uniting and integrating his white and black characters in

Disgrace is to promote the secular life of peaceful co-existence between the people of different races in South Africa.

CHAPTER VI

MORAL VALENCE OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE IN

ELIZABETH COSTELLO

“In his novel *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), J. M. Coetzee’s title character espouses philosophical perspectives on cruelty and the human condition in a series of fictionalized lectures. In particular, she takes on the question of human cruelty to animals. As novelist, Coetzee relies on lyrical statements about the nature of cruelty, analogies between the atrocities of fascism and factory farms, and ethical elitism to address these issues” (“The Humanity of Animals and the Animality of Humans” 124).

Agustin Fuentes

Coetzee’s *Elizabeth Costello* (2003) is, basically, the report of how the protagonist of the novel named Elizabeth Costello experiences different conferences held in different time and places, and how she responds to them. Costello, a famous novelist of Australia, is the mouthpiece of Coetzee in this novel. So she speaks for Coetzee, and indeed it is through her that Coetzee explains how it is that this should be the case (Cornwell 356). Cornwell means to say that Coetzee chooses Costello as his surrogate narrator to say what he wants to say about South Africa. Coetzee and Costello have many similarities in their real lives too. David Attwell views that there are coincidences of interests between protagonist and author. He says that like Costello, Coetzee is a vegetarian; he is interested in the novel and in the humanities in Africa and elsewhere, as well as in humanitarian activities in Africa. There is a parallel to be made between Costello's interest in intertextuality and Coetzee's: she has rewritten James Joyce's Molly Bloom and he has rewritten Crusoe (Lenta 105).

Coetzee is awarded Nobel Prize in 2003 for *Elizabeth Costello* which comprises eight lessons that he presented at different conferences as seminar papers. Thus, the novel is set in different places such as America, Africa, Australia, Europe and India. Though the novel is set in different places of the world, Coetzee seems to contemplate on the horrible situation of human beings and animals in South Africa in this novel. Talking about Coetzee's nature of writing novel, Margaret Lenta writes that Coetzee's work *Youth* makes it clear that a setting outside the country does not make a book less South African. One can be sure that the imagined world on which Coetzee reflects for most of the period is that of South Africa (108, 109). Structurally, *Elizabeth Costello* employs the strategy of a fiction within a fiction. Coetzee has chosen to read accounts of fictionalized debates in this novel; it is because this particular mode suits his complex purposes. The novel is entitled from the name of the main character Elizabeth Costello who delivers a series of lectures justifying human cruelty towards animals which have become central to Coetzee's ethical vision as a novelist.

As Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* depicts the trauma of apartheid like Tsarist regime of Russia, his *Elizabeth Costello* presents the cruelty of Nazism to the people of Germany. In other words, this novel reveals the evil picture of how Hitler's hangman tortures the people who are labeled to be the conspirators of Hitler. Hitler killed millions of Jews in Nazi death camps during World War II. While recalling about Hitler's cruelty on human beings, Peter Fritzsche presents that in July 1941, Einsatzgruppen who followed Hitler's armies killed larger numbers of Jewish men, who were murdered more and more arbitrarily as plunderers or in revenge for Soviet atrocities. The numbers of Jewish victims rose dramatically, so that the death tally from specific actions increased from several hundred to several thousand and included

women and children in an uneven expansion of the killing operations in August and September 1941(599). Coetzee reveals Hitler's atrocities on human beings in *Elizabeth Costello*.

The title character of *Elizabeth Costello* compares the cruelty of mankind to animals with the Holocaust: Mankind is to animals as Hitler is to Jews. Thus, Elizabeth Costello uses the analogy of the Holocaust to talk about the horror being done to animals, focusing on the abuse of animals. She says that human being's treatment to animals in the slaughterhouses is unethical and immoral. She speaks on animal rights in the conferences she attends and requests her audiences to maintain an ethical relation with the animals since they are, like human beings, the parts of the ecological system. She is ethical to all living creatures, and particularly to animals in slaughterhouses, laboratories, zoos, scientific institutes, and prison camps, where they are enslaved by imprisoning them. She argues that animals should be allowed to move freely. But when she cannot convince her audiences, she becomes the victim of debates in the conferences she attends, which, eventually, creates trauma to her life.

Trauma of Nazism as the Representation of Evil

Bernhard Giesen views that neither the individual trauma of rape, death, and dehumanization, nor the collective trauma of guilt and defeat could be turned into the theme of conversation (117). Despite Giesen's view that the trauma of death, defeat and dehumanization cannot be talked on, Paul West, the author of the book entitled "The Very Rich Hours of Count von Stauffenberg" written in the Nazi period, and which is included in one of the lessons of *Elizabeth Costello* has circulated the evil picture of death and dehumanization. Elizabeth Costello, the principal character of the novel, reads this book in which the author depicts the horrible picture of Hitler's cruelty to his would-be assassins in the Wehrmacht. The book describes the execution

of the Hitler's plotters which traumatizes her a lot. Moreover, she is in the harmful spell of the novel as she says that the novel is "about depravity of the worst kind, it had sucked her into a mood of bottomless dejection" (157). West Paul's novel makes Costello feel sick. She wants to cry out as she reads since the novel brings her to the depressive condition exposing her to the horrible condition of the Nazi victims.

Aparna Mishra Tarc writes that reading other's novel gives either pain or pleasure to the readers. It can profoundly affect us even if we do not always wish to be affected and bring us back to our psychological injuries, sometimes kicking and screaming, at other times with utter relief (63). The book, which describes death penalty, passes traumas to its readers. Trauma has passed from the Holocaust survivor parents to their children too. Natan P.F. Kellermann, in the reference of passing trauma to the new generation, observes that over a period of three decades, more than 400 papers have been published on the transmission of trauma from Holocaust survivor parents to their offspring (1).

Before examining how Paul West's book has traumatized the protagonist of the novel, I would like to bring some critic's views about the worst consequences of Nazism. Alexander mentions that mass violence against the Jews is a horrifying example of the subhumanism of Nazi action (205). Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia mentions that Nazi aggression led to the deaths of tens of millions, and the ruin of several states. Of the world's 15 million Jews in 1939, more than a third were killed in the Holocaust including 3 million Jews only in Poland. As the Nazis intended to destroy the Polish nation completely, during World War II, 85 percent of buildings in Warsaw were destroyed by German and Soviet troops. Michael Mann views that the Nazi regime was the most genocidal the world has ever seen. During its short twelve years (overwhelmingly its last four) it killed approximately twenty million unarmed

persons including between five and six million Jews (331). Paul West has depicted the truth of Nazi brutality on mankind occurred in human history in his book. He has particularly described the horrible picture of torture and murder of the Jews by Hitler's executioners in his book thus:

The hangman spoke to the souls consigned to his hands, fumbling old men for the most part, stripped off their uniforms, toggled out for the final event in prison cast-offs, serge trousers caked with grime, pullovers full of moth-holes, no belts, their false teeth and their glasses taken from them, exhausted, shivering, hands in their pockets to hold up their pants, whimpering with fear, swallowing their tears, having to listen to this coarse creature, this butcher with last week's blood caked under his fingernails, taunt them, telling them what would happen when the rope snapped tight, how the shit would run down their spindly old-man's legs, how their limp old-man's pansies would quiver one last time? One after the other to the scaffold they went, in a nondescript space that could have been a garage or equally well an abattoir, under carbon-arc lights so that back in his lair in the forest Adolf Hitler, commander-in-chief, would be able to watch on film their sobbings and then their writhings and then their stillness, the slack stillness of dead meat, and be satisfied he had had his revenge. (158)

This is the scene of Nazi brutality that Paul West describes in his book; and this is what Elizabeth Costello reads being sick with herself. She cannot even imagine that such thing had taken place, until at last she pushes the book away and sits with her head in her hands. She does not object to Hitler for killing so many innocent Jews; her objection is Paul West who has described the evil of Hitler in his book which is

obscene: “Obscene because such things ought not to take place, and then obscene again because having taken place they ought not to be brought into the light but covered up and hidden forever in the bowels of the earth . . . if one wishes to save one’s sanity” (159). For her, not only the deeds of Hitler’s executioners and the blockman, but also the pages of Paul West’s book are equally sinful and deserve to be shielded from the eyes of children and maidens.

Alexander’s opinion regarding the circulation of evil through the discourse of Nazi’s mass murder exactly matches with Costello’s view. Alexander opines that the narrative which develops in relation to the Nazi’s mass murder of the Jews gives the evil greater symbolic weight (221), and Costello believes that Paul West brings Hitler back to light through his book. She contemplates on Hitler’s grip on people even after half a century which makes one feel as if the devil walks shamelessly through the streets since Adolf and his supporters still grip the popular imagination. It seems as if an evil universe has been invented by an evil god. The protagonist in the novel argues that Paul West’s thought of presenting such an evil scene of Hitler’s cruelty on mankind is a “black thought” (160). She believes that no one can wander into the Nazi forest of horror and emerge unharmed. She claims that Paul West’s novel leaves terror and pity since it represents the workings of evil for which he seems to be attractive, and thus, has done more harm than good.

The pain and pleasure of reading some fictional works reminds us of an earlier time in childhood and infancy. Traumatic scene of Paul West’s book reminds Costello of one of the traumatic events occurred to her when she was nineteen years old. The event was a frightful sexual encounter she faced in her youth. Talking about the repetitive nature of trauma, Beerendra Pandey mentions that the trauma shows up with a vengeance over a period of time, especially when triggered by a similar event

(125). Moreover, he writes that when someone is hurt, he or she lives through the injury not only physically but also psychologically. His explanation of traumatic symptom of a trauma victim is true in Costello, to whom, Paul West's book triggers the trauma of the past that she has been hiding in her mind till now. She reveals that when she was nineteen, she allowed herself to be picked up by a man who was a docker named Tim or Tom, in his thirties, in the Spencer Street bridge near the Melbourne waterfront. And then, he took her to a bar and after that to the rooming house where he lived. Since she had not slept with a strange man before, she denied having intercourse with him at the last minute. But he did not listen to her, rather he tried to force her when she resisted. Costello describes her traumatic event of sexual encounter with the man thus:

For a long time, in silence, panting, she fought him off, pushing and scratching. To begin with he took it as a game. Then he got tired of that, or his desire tired, turned to something else, and he began to hit her seriously. He lifted her off the bed, punched her breasts, punched her in the belly, hit her a terrible blow with his elbow to her face.

When he was bored of hitting her he tore up her clothes and tried to set fire to them in the waste- paper basket. Stark naked, she crept out and hid in the bathroom on the landing. An hour later, when she was sure he was asleep; she crept back and retrieved what was left. Wearing the scorched tatters of her dress and nothing else she waved down a taxi. For a week she stayed first with one friend, then with another, refusing to explain what had happened. Her Jaw was broken; it had to be wired up; she lived on milk and orange juice, sucked through a straw. (165)

It was her first encounter with evil which she realized when the man's action subsided and hurting her took its place. The man liked hurting her which she probably liked more rather than having relation with him. Though, he might not have known it when he picked her up, he had brought her to his room to hurt her rather than make love to her. By fighting him off she had created an opening for the evil in him to emerge and which emerged in the form of her pain, as the man tortures her: ““You like that, do you?” he whispered as he twisted her nipples. ‘You like that?’, then in the childish, malicious destruction of her clothes” (165).

Regarding Costello's sexual encounter with the docker, Reingard Nethersole mentions that Coetzee's text expresses the intense moment of speechless worldism in a sexual encounter. However, the outcome of Elizabeth's erotic encounter resembles, in the phrase “no longer words but flaming swords” (261). Costello cannot escape from her traumatic past even in her old age now as Cathy Caruth mentions that a trauma victim cannot escape from the “inescapability of its belated impact” (5). Perhaps, Costello's mind goes back to this long-past and really unimportant episode because she has never revealed it to anyone or has never made use of it. In none of her stories is there a physical assault by a man on a woman in revenge for being refused. What happened in the rooming house belongs to her and her alone. For half a century the memory has rested inside her like an egg of stone which will never crack open and never give birth, and she loves to remain silent until she is in her grave. She feels that she is to the hand of the man Tim as the plotters of Hitler's assassination are to the hands of their executioners. Moreover, she believes that her suffering and the sufferings of Hitler's would-be assassins are similar. This is the reason why Paul West's description of the punishment of Hitler's hangman to his plotters reminds her of her own suffering of the past.

Some critics comment that Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* has transmitted evil to the new generation of the Holocaust survivors. Matti Hyvarinen, for example, mentions that *Elizabeth Costello* is not only about terror, it is also about circulating and distributing terror and trauma through language and speech (129). Agreeing with Hyvarinen, Steven C. Canton states that *Elizabeth Costello* attempts to represent evil letting loose that evil in the world (14). After observing Elizabeth Costello's description of her attempted rape and assault by a working-class tough, Canton raises a question regarding her own moral depravity. If Paul West's depiction of the torture of the plotters by the executioners of Hitler is obscene, what about her own depiction of her rape: "does that make it any less *obscene*?" (15). Pam Ryan also views that while Elizabeth takes issue with Paul West over his representation of evil, she does a much better job of telling the story of the execution of Hitler's assassins in the underground cellar, thus doubly indicting herself as an accomplice in evil while using her lecture as a platform from which to tell West that he should have censored himself (281).

Indeed, Elizabeth Costello wants to explain why she feels a deep moral revulsion about Paul West and his book in her lecture in a conference where Paul West was also present. Her main argument against the book and its author is that one cannot "wander as deep as Paul West does into the Nazi forest of horrors and emerge unscathed. Have we considered that the explorer enticed into that forest may come out not better and stronger for the experience but worse?" (161). But she finds it very difficult to explain her moral revulsion about the book until she finds the word "obscene": books like that of Paul West, books about the horrors of the Holocaust, are "obscene." The word strikes her as the right one because "she chooses to believe that *obscene* means *off-stage*. To save our humanity, certain things that we may want to

see (may want to see because we are human!) must remain off-stage. Paul West has written an obscene book, he has shown what ought not to be shown” (168). She comments that Paul West is inhuman and immoral to show such obscene book which circulates evil, and thus, ruins humanity. She believes that the idea of writing about things like the Holocaust has the immoral effect of expanding the stage of moral depravity. We substantially enlarge the universe of immorality by our discussions of the Holocaust. This is why Elizabeth Costello has experienced, while reading West’s book, “the brush of Satan’s hot, leathery wings” (178).

Costello curses Paul West for bringing Hitler and his thugs back to life, giving them a new purchase on the world. Even the hangmen of Hitler take on a life of their own. Rather than telling the story of evil, she says, one should put it inside since such story “costs all hell to get him back in again . . . that the genie stay in the bottle . . . the world would be better off if the genie remained imprisoned” (167). Costello is so upset to know that the devil is everywhere under the skin of things, searching for a way into the light:

The devil entered the docker that night on Spencer Street, the devil entered Hitler’s hangman. And through the docker, all that time ago, the devil entered her: she can feel him crouched inside, folded up like a bird, waiting his chance to fly. Through Hitler’s hangman a devil entered Paul West, and in his book West in turn has given that devil his freedom, turned him loose upon the world. She felt the brush of his leathery wing, as sure as soap, when she read those dark pages. (167)

Trauma of Nazism reflects on the scene described by Paul West in his book which makes Costello sick when she goes through his description of the punishment given to those shivering men, allowing Hitler’s butcher a voice worse than coarse, unspeakable

and unkind remarks at the shivering old men he is about to kill, gibes about how their bodies are going to betray them as they buck and dance at the end of the rope. It is terrible even to imagine that such a man should have existed and it is more terrible that he should be pulled out of the grave when we thought he was safely dead (168). Costello advises Paul West that he must be wary of horror he described in his book. Not only for the sake of the readers, but also for their own concern, they should be wary of not depicting such a horrible event. They can put themselves in peril by what they write or believe. For what they write has the power to make them better people then surely it has the power to make them worse too.

Costello refers to Paul West's novel, particularly the graphic chapter in which he recounts the execution of the July 1944 plotters, excepting von Stauffenberg who has already been shot by an overzealous military officer against Hitler's will, who wanted his foe to die a lingering death. While discussing about Hitler's influence on his followers and his cruelty to Jews, Klaus Hilderbrand writes that Hitler instilled in his followers fanatic faith and unquestioning loyalty, because they believed in this man and his mission (523), so he decided clearing all Jews out of the German power sphere (525). To be precise, the horrible and disgusting depiction of Hitler's hangman's punishment to his plotters described by West in his book sickens Costello and causes trauma on her when she goes through his book.

Costello points out that West should not have ventured into forbidden places by risking himself and risking all. The cellar in which the July 1944 plotters were hanged is one of such forbidden places, and she advises that one should not go into such forbidden places. She even suggests to Mr West that he should not go there either or if he chooses to go, we should not follow him. She opines that "bars should be erected over the cellar mouth, with a bronze memorial plaque saying Here died...

followed by a list of the dead and their dates, and that should be that” (173). Costello mentions that West’s book has taken her to that place where no one has been from the time when the Hitler’s hangman killed the men. Moreover, she feels as if it is her death and the death of those who read West’s book in which Hitler orders his hangman to hang his enemies: “‘Use thin cord’, Hitler commanded his man. ‘Strangle them. I want them to feel themselves dying.’ And his man, his creature, his monster, obeyed” (174). Hitler is so boastful to cause suffering and death of those pitiful men whose last hours belong to them alone.

Costello becomes almost mad when she goes through the description of the brutal punishment of Hitler’s man to those who are supposed to be the plotters of his assassination. She points out that when West wrote his book, he came in touch with something absolute evil and by reading him, that touch of evil passed on to her. She claims that he has committed a crime by bringing back to life, the history of what happened in that cellar in Berlin (177). Costello expresses her trauma caused by Hitler’s inhumanity over his enemies thus:

She knew, before she began the book, the story of the July plotters, knew that within days of their attempt on Hitler’s life they were tracked down, most of them, and tried and executed. She even knew, in general way that they were put to death with the malicious cruelty in which Hitler and his cronies specialized. She goes back to the hangman, whatever his name was. In his gibes at the men about to die at his hands there was a wanton, an obscene energy that exceeded his commission. Where did that energy come from? To herself she has called it satanic. (178)

Hitler's hangman is a Satan who hanged the victims like cattle. Hitler's cruelty to his enemies is a burning example of human depravity. The book makes her realize that we all are poor, forked, and quivering creatures. Although she did not want to read the book, she could not resist it or she could not refuse to read until she finished reading all, and one year later she is still railing against the man who put it to her lips. She still remembers the pathetic condition of the victims before they were killed mercilessly by the hangman in Hitler's commandment:

Those glimpses into hell, who knelt naked at the lip of the trench into which they would, in the next minute, tumble, dead or dying with a bullet to the brain, except that those women were in most cases not as old as she, merely haggard from malnutrition and fright. She has a feeling for those dead sisters, and for the men too who died at the hands of the butchermen, men old and ugly enough to be her brothers. She does not like to see her sisters and brothers humiliated, in ways it is so easy to humiliate the old, by making them strip, for example, taking away their dentures, making fun of their private parts. If her brothers, that day in Berlin, are going to be hanged, if they are going to jerk at the end of a rope, their faces going red, their tongues and eyeballs protruding, she does not want to see. A sister's modesty. Let me turn my eyes away. (179)

Costello claims that Hitler's hangman learnt to commit cruelty to human beings from cattle. In other words, Hitler's hangman committed a crime on Hitler's would-be assassins the way mankind commits on animals. She says: "If Satan is not rampant in the abattoir, casting the shadow of his wings over the beasts who, their nostrils already filled with the smell of death, are prodded down the ramp towards the man

with the gun and the knife, a man as merciless and as banal as Hitler's own man who learned his trade, after all, on cattle" (180).

Costello feels that the men whom Hitler's men killed by hanging are like her brothers and the brutal punishment given to them by Hitler often hunts her. She recalls that the victims were old men hanging dead with their trousers around their ankles. Hitler's executioners made a spectacle of their executions. They hauled their victims through howling mobs to the place of skulls and impaled them or covered them with pitch and set them on fire. She points out that the Nazis are cheap, machine-gunning people who gassed their victims in a bunker, and squeezed them in a cellar which was too much and too unpleasant about the death at the hands of the Nazis who killed their enemies at night and cleaned the cellar in the morning by German cleaning women who came out of Brecht, so that no one can even guess what happened at night in the cellar. They cleaned up the mess, "washing the walls, scrubbing the floor, making everything spick and span, so that you would never know, by the time they had done, what games the boys had got up to during the night" (182).

While discussing about the cruelty of Nazism in Germany, Lutz Kaelber presents that during the rule of National Socialism, the Nazis murdered more than 300,000 disabled children in Germany. It was a core element of Nazism's bio-political developmental dictatorship (14). Indicating Hitler's cruelty to mankind, Costello presents a number of people killed by Hitler's men in his command in a conference where she mentions that between 1942 and 1945 several million people were put to death in the concentration camps of the Third Reich: at Treblinka alone more than a million and a half, perhaps as many as three million. These are numbers that numb the mind. We have only one death of our own; we can comprehend the deaths of others only one at a time. In the abstract we may be able to count to a million, but we cannot

count to a million deaths (63). The aforementioned statements are suffice to present the sufferings of the people, particularly the Jews, caused by the apartheid-like regime of Nazi Germany.

Talking about the atrocities of Nazi regime and its torture to its neighboring countries, Chad Bryant informs that in 1942 Nazi police murdered the entire male population of two Czech villages, Lidice and Ležaky, as revenge for the assassination of a top Nazi leader. Thousands of Czechs and Germans—resistance fighters disappeared quietly in the night. Gentile Czechs and Sudeten Germans watched as Nazi officials and their minions registered, segregated, and then deported nearly 100,000 Jews to their death (1). Coetzee portrays the cruelty of the Nazism as stated by the critics mentioned above in his *Elizabeth Costello*.

Costello expresses her worry for the indifference of people who live in Treblinka, the place where the concentration camp of Hitler is located and where he played the dirty game of genocide. The people living nearby the concentration camp of Hitler did not know or did not bother to know what is going on there. They might have guessed what was going on, but they did not know for sure. The people around Treblinka were not exceptional. There were camps all over the Reich, nearly six thousand in Poland alone, and thousands of them were in Germany. Few Germans lived more than a few kilometers from a camp of some kind. Costello says that not every camp was a death camp, a camp dedicated to the production of death, but horrors went on in all of them, more horrors by far than one could afford to know (64). Costello expresses her anger to the Germans of a particular generation who are still regarded as standing a little outside humanity to be something special.

People around concentration camps did not afford to understand the trouble of the people who are being tortured in the camps. So Costello gets offended and states

that these people who remained silent in the suffering of others in the camps lost their humanity in our eye because of a certain willed ignorance on their part. Under the circumstances of Hitler's kind of war, ignorance may have been a useful survival mechanism but that is an excuse which, morally, we refuse to accept. In Germany, a certain line was crossed which took people beyond the ordinary murderousness and cruelty of warfare into a state that we can only call sin, and no reparations can put an end to that state of sin. A sickness of the soul continued to mark that generation. It marked those citizens of the Reich who had committed evil actions by being ignorant of those actions (64).

Costello is too upset to know that the people in the camps were innocent, but “‘They went like sheep to the slaughter.’ ‘They died like animals.’ ‘The Nazi butchers killed them’” (64). The Jews of Germany were killed so mercilessly that Costello compares their death in the concentration camps with the slaughter of animals in the slaughterhouses: “Denunciation of the camps reverberates so fully with the language of the stockyard and slaughterhouse that it is barely necessary for me to prepare the ground for the comparison I am about to make. The crime of the Third Reich, says the voice of accusation, was to treat people like animals” (64). She curses Nazis for having no humanity in them who treat the innocent people like animals. They are polluted in their normality, and merciless killing of millions of innocent people in the camps by them is the proof of how deeply seated pollution is in them.

Costello claims that Nazis treated their victims like beasts, but it is not their victims who are beasts, it is the Nazis who ill-treated their fellow beings who are created in the image of God, like beasts, have become beasts themselves (65). The Nazis never thought that the people whom they are torturing are fellow human beings not animals. Nor did they bother to put themselves in the place of those whom they

were torturing like animals. Moreover, they never thought what they would feel if they were in the place of their victims. Costello puts her strong statements regarding Nazis' inhumanity and insensibility to their victims thus:

The particular horror of the camps, the horror that convinces us that what went there was a crime against humanity, is not that despite a humanity shared with their victims, the killers treated them like lice. That is too abstract. The horror is that the killers refused to think themselves into the place of their victims, as did everyone else. They said, "It is they in those cattle cars rattling past." They did not say, "How would it be if it were I in that cattle car?" They did not say, "It is I who am in that cattle car." They said, "It must be the dead who are being burned today, making the air stink and falling in ash on my cabbages." They did not say, "How would it be if I were burning?" They did not say, "I am burning, I am falling in ash." (78)

Costello's obsession on human cruelty by Nazism is revealed in the aforementioned extract. She says that human heart is the seat of a faculty, sympathy that allows us to share at times the being of another. But, the Nazis closed their hearts to their victims. They are the people who have no capacity to imagine themselves as someone else. We can call them psychopaths since the lack of humanity is extreme in their case. Moreover, Costello hates those people who use the goods made out of the ingredients of body of the people who were killed by Hitler in the concentration camps thus:

Corpses. Fragments of corpses that they have bought for money. 'It is as if I were to visit friends, and to make some polite remarks about the lamp in their living room, and they were to say, "Yes, it is nice, isn't it? Polish-Jewish skin it's made of, we find that's best, the skins of

young Polish-Jewish virgins.” And then I go to the bathroom and the soap wrapper says, “Treblinka—100% human stearate.” Am I dreaming, I say to myself? What kind of house is this? (115)

Elizabeth Costello criticizes Paul West’s book which has depicted the naked picture of Hitler’s cruelty to humanity for his book has brought Hitler back to life from the grave where he has been lying for the last fifty years. It hurts the present generation of the Jews who are trying to forget his cruelty to their ancestors. Moreover, such description of human cruelty circulates the evil to the new generation. Traumatic event, as said by Alexander, vividly lives in the memories of those whose parents and grandparents never felt themselves even remotely related to it (196). So, Costello objects to Mr. West for presenting Hitler’s triumph over the helpless and innocent Jews, which he ought not to have presented for the sake of humanity, and he should not have crossed the limitation of morality. But crossing the limit of writer’s ethics, he did not do justice to the readers who are bound to be exposed to human cruelty which has caused trauma on them. It is immoral and unethical to hand over such a book of human cruelty to the young generation, and hence, spoil their mind. Mr. West has transmitted the trauma of Nazism to them, and by doing so he has put them in the nightmare of Nazism. Instead of developing the harmonious relation between the perpetrators and the victims, West’s book has developed hostility among them.

Trauma of disputation

The protagonist is invited to different conferences held in different parts of the world to deliver her speeches. But the problem is whatever she says in the conferences; she becomes the victim of her own expressions since she is debated by her audiences who are not ready to accept whatever she delivers in the conferences. They raise questions immediately after she finishes her talk, and she suffers much

when she cannot convince them. The entire novel is the outcome of her debate with her audiences. Even her own son, John and her daughter in law, Norma are not happy with her speeches delivered on animal rights. Costello's audiences have blamed her as irrational and confused, even mad (35). For instance, Abraham Stem, a character in *The Lives of Animals*, an ageing Jewish poet and academic, is so offended that he withdraws in protest from the dinner organized in her honor, when she compares, in her speech, the killing of animals in the slaughterhouses with the Holocaust.

Costello is agonized by the contradiction between her absolute principles and nonresponse on the part of people she encounters. Each narrative of the novel includes all or part of her lecture as well as conversations with her audiences that deepens the debate only. Talking about Costello's argument with her audiences, Richard Handler states that Elizabeth Costello allows its author to try out various moral and political arguments and to rehearse appropriate counterarguments (133). Handler's observation is true since some scholars and even her own family members are outraged and embarrassed by her speech. Her speech even agitates the students of Hillel who demand an apology from both her and the college for giving her a platform; and afterwards, back home in Australia, she is followed by protesters. Nancy Ruttenburg rightly examines that within the novel, much of Costello's audience finds her position morally abhorrent (52). A significant portion of her real world audience has taken her argument quite seriously.

Costello's audiences do not allow her to float her ideas freely. Therefore, her ideas are tied to her. Moreover, she is debated on whatever she says, and her son has got to save her. She expects help from her son even to express the message of her book: "His mother casts him a glance. Help! It is meant to say, in a droll way" (11). After her speech at Altona College, a lady wants to ask her a question which makes

her smile lose. She wants to be away from the debate, but the lady insists of asking her a question. When the dean, Brautegam does not allow the lady to put her question to the speaker, she leaves the refreshment program as a protest, which upsets Costello. Costello always gets negative responses from her audiences. Thus, she is found as an unlucky speaker who never gets support from her listeners in the novel.

Costello is debated by her audiences in a trifle matter. For example, one of her audiences says “There was nothing wrong with the speech in itself. But the title was not appropriate. And she should not have relied on Kafka for her illustrations. There are better texts” (24). To this audience, title of the speech is more important than her speech itself. In other words, form is more important to him than the content itself. Besides, Costello is never encouraged by her listeners despite the fact that she is the noted author of many famous novels. Their applause at the end of her speech lacks enthusiasm which makes her so disappointed. She is not liked even by Norma, her own daughter in law who says that “her opinions on animals, animal consciousness and ethical relations with animals are jejune and sentimental” (61). Her son does not like her ethical relation with animals either, and argues that she should not waste her time trying to help animals since animals do not help themselves, and they deserve what they get.

The audiences of Costello get offended when she compares the killing of animals in the slaughterhouses with the Holocaust. O’ Hearne, one of her audiences debates with her that “to equate a butcher who slaughters a chicken with an executioner who kills a human being is a grave mistake. The events are not comparable. They are not comparable” (108). His point makes Costello speechless. He keeps on insisting on her mistake which leads her to be dissociated from her audiences. They find her sympathetic statements on animals unconvincing and

useless. Her audiences think that her speech has brought hostility and bitterness.

Norma, her daughter in law, expresses her anger to her thus:

‘It’s nothing but food faddism, and food faddism is always an exercise in power. I have no patience when she arrives here and begins trying to get people, particularly the children, to change their eating habits. And now these absurd public lectures! She is trying to extend her inhibiting power over the whole community! . . . She has no self-insight at all. It is because she has so little insight into her motives that she seems sincere. Mad people are sincere’ (113).

Norma believes that Costello is insincere in her lecture and she is trying to impose her power on others. Thus, Costello becomes a burden in the lives of her son and his wife. They often wish that she had not come to stay with them, and they would feel relieved if she left their house as soon as possible. Costello wants to develop a good relation with the people around her but she cannot succeed. She even feels that all of her listeners are participants in a crime of stupefying proportions (114). Moreover, they make her unable to think properly. Her tearful face which she turns to her son hoping for some soothing words reveals the trauma of debate on her. Finally, Costello feels tired losing all her appetite of disputation which she had before.

Trauma of Aging

Piotr Sztompka writes that progressing illness, aging and advancing incapacity are the causes of trauma at the personal level (158). Elizabeth Costello, with the passing of her age, suffers from the trauma of aging and incapacity to think what is wrong and what is right. She cannot even express her belief in life before the penal of judges “At the Gate” – the last chapter of the text. With aging and advancing incapacity, Costello feels insecure in her life. Eckard Smuts rightly observes that

there is an air of insecurity about Costello that her position is in some way tenuous and undefined (69). Costello, with her growing age, has become a little frail. She cannot undertake the trip to deliver her lectures without the help of her son. She used to be able to get away with her appearance in the past, but now she has grown old and tired. Greasy and lifeless look of her hair is the sign of her aging.

John thinks that his mother is like an old and tired circus seal. Day after day, year after year, her hair slowly goes from black to grey. John has become her assistant who will “protect her as long as he is able. Then he will help her into her armour, lift her on to her steed, set her buckler on her arm, hand her lance, and step back” (7). John has lived around her for nearly four decades and he travels with her simply to protect her. She has reached that stage of life that she often needs help of other people around her even to do minor physical work. For instance, while she is landing on the Shore of Macquarie Island, one of the sailors has to help to drop her on the shore. He carries her “as if she were an old old woman” (53). In his arms she rides as safe as a baby. Her growing aging can easily be traced when John feels very difficult to recognize her when he sees her two years later at Appleton College where she has come to deliver her speech on “The Philosophers and the Animal,”: “he is shocked at how she has aged. Her hair, which had had streaks of grey in it, is now entirely white; her shoulders stoop; her flesh has grown flabby” (59). Costello has lost her charm of youth which hurts her son. She grows incapable both physically and mentally which is very painful in the lives of both mother and son.

Due to the persistent trauma of conflict and dispute with the people around her, Costello looks like an old woman of ninety. Her face is seamed; the blacks of her hands are marked with brown. It seems as if he has reached the limit of what can be achieved with a body. Her pathetic condition of old age has been compared to the

condition of the women in the European war: "If there were a mirror on the back of this door instead of just a hook, if she were to take off her clothes and kneel before it, she, with her sagging breasts and knobby hips, would look much like the women in those intimate, over-intimate photographs from the European war" (179). Now Costello no longer likes to see herself in the mirror, since it puts her in mind of death. She wants to wrap up and store away all these ugly things in a drawer since her aging has ruined her wisdom and intellectual.

It is natural that after a certain age anxiety must begin to creep in and life must begin to seem like a waste of precious time. Costello too begins to imagine that one day her names will fade away. This imagination has made her passive and incurious. She has no appetite anymore and the very thought of eating fills her with distaste. Her body feels unpleasantly heavy due to her old age. She feels so insignificant that she compares herself with the frogs which she had seen in her childhood: "What do I believe? I believe in those little frogs. Where I find myself today, in my old age and perhaps my older age" (218). Costello's advancing physical and mental incapacity due to her growing age has led her to this present traumatic state where she finds herself valueless.

Trauma of threat

Costello is persistently asked to express what she believes in her life by a panel of judges as a prerequisite to pass through the gate where she arrives at the end of the text. The judges do not allow her to go through the gate as she is unable to express her belief due to her growing age and advancing mental incapacity. The gate is like a purgatory where she has to suffer many days. The readers may at first think that Elizabeth is indeed at the gate of heaven but they are disappointed soon since she finds her situation far from elevated and rather she recognizes elements of Holocaust

in her dormitory of the gate. She feels that the dormitory at the gate where she is waiting is like a concentration camp of Hitler where she is waiting to be killed.

Elizabeth Costello is a post-apartheid novel which seems to represent the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa. Louise Bethlehem notes that “Lesson 8: At the Gate” of *Elizabeth Costello* contains a persistent interrogation of the relations between representation and material embodiment that draws the text back – despite itself – into the semiotic matrix of South African literary culture, here to intersect the working through of these relations in extraliterary form before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (235). The survival of the material body before a tribunal oriented towards confession in *Elizabeth Costello* presents an opportunity for the haunted and displaced analogy with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

F. R. Ankersmit mentions that Elizabeth Costello is compelled to give an account, or a moral justification, of her life as a writer. It gradually becomes clear that Elizabeth Costello finds herself in some indefinite limbo between life and death or, as she puts it herself, in a kind of friendly purgatory (94), where either she has to satisfy the judges by writing her belief of her life, or she has to remain in a dormitory by the gate which contains the elements of the Holocaust. Since she cannot write her belief as she has no any fixed belief in her life, she is bound to stay in the dormitory for the indefinite future. During her stay at the gate, she feels that she is in one of the camps of the Third Reich of Nazi Germany (198).

Costello feels as if she is a secretary who does not have his or her own beliefs, and who just waits for the call. She says “I am a writer, and what I write is what I hear. I am a secretary of the invisible, one of many secretaries over the ages. . . . I merely write down the words and then test them, test their soundness, to make sure I have heard right” (200). Costello seems to say that a secretary does not have her own

beliefs and writes down what she is instructed to write by her boss. She, too, writes what the situation compels her to write. As situation keeps on changing, her beliefs too keep on changing. She feels committing suicide at the gate when the judges do not agree with what she writes as her beliefs: “She could do the same, here and now: turn herself into a bag, cut her veins and let herself pour on to the pavement, into the gutter. For that, finally, is all it means to be alive: to be able to die . . . for them, her hungry judges?” (212).

She has to pass the test given by the judges to pass through the gate. But she cannot write and submit a statement of her belief to the judges as she has become thoughtless and has no belief in anything. She regrets for being a writer thinking that if she had not been a writer, the judges would not have forced her to write her beliefs, and she would not have been stopped at the gate which is like the concentration camp of Hitler. Moreover, she would not have got such a mental torture if she had spent her life otherwise. The thought of staying in the airless space of the bunkhouse at the gate repels her. Finally, she writes a letter to Francis Bacon requesting him to save her. But, it is not sure whether she is saved or rescued from that purgatory or not at the end of her life. One can easily guess from the haughty and unbending nature of the judges that she would have to undergo a lot of mental sufferings in her remaining life. Hence all her contributions to her society as a renowned writer have gone in vain.

Ethics of Trauma

Coetzee is ethical to animals as he loves them in his fiction. His characters have an ethical relation not only with their fellow human beings, but also with animals. In *Elizabeth Costello*, Coetzee maintains his ethical relation with animals through his mouthpiece, Elizabeth Costello, who sadly expresses her sympathy to those animals which are confined to zoos, laboratories, slaughterhouses and factory

farm confiscating their freedom of free movement. Moreover, she is shocked to know that millions of animals are slaughtered in the slaughterhouses every year, and no one raises voice for their rights. She argues that animals also have rights to live their full lives and it is injustice to kill them just because they are not conscious to their existence. She speaks on animal rights in the conferences she attends.

Costello makes strong statements on animal rights demanding their full lives. She resists other people's protest and keeps on talking against human cruelty to animals. Regarding Costello's ethical relation to animals, different critics have presented their views. For instance, Richard Alan Northover opines that Costello bravely propagates a particular ideological position on animal rights, often in the face of incomprehension, resistance and even hostility (44). Martin Puchner believes that Costello's opinions are revolving for the most part around animals. The most provocative idea put forth by Costello is that the systematized, industrial mass slaughter of animals is comparable to the Holocaust (3). Carrol Clarkson observes that Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* explores Coetzee's ethics of writing, which is perhaps most striking in its consideration of the grammar of subject positions. In this book Coetzee is ethically responsible to others (2). Mascia-Lees *et al.* state that *Elizabeth Costello* deals with deeply philosophical and political issues such as cruelty to animals, evil, and the ethics of representing the suffering that humans inflict on each other and other creatures (84). In *Elizabeth Costello*, Costello argues against the killing and mistreatment of animals for human purposes, comparing animal to human knowledge of death (Tremaine 596). *Library Journal*, in the review of *Elizabeth Costello*, describes that in her longest and most passionate speech, Costello offers a spirited defense of animal rights, comparing the enslavement and slaughter of animals on factory farms to the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis. Costello's rigid morality

and probing intelligence finally illuminate the fundamental question of what it means to be human (114).

Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* is a volume of critical essays devoted to animal rights. Each lesson in Coetzee's work features one or more scenes in which the body, whether that of a god, a human, or an animal, and not infrequently the body of Elizabeth Costello herself, becomes the focus of the reader's attention (Moses 30). Heather Walton writes that *Elizabeth Costello* makes her claim in the suffering of other beings. Their pain presses upon the writer, which may be, in fact, just as hard to bear (288). Don Randall mentions that Coetzee's imagination, as represented in the later development of *Disgrace* and throughout *Elizabeth Costello*, works to recognize the relationships human beings establish with the non-human world and to understand and evaluate humanity in terms of these relationships (210).

The work of Nobel prize-winning South African novelist J.M. Coetzee has increasingly deliberated on animals, human responsibility for them, and the relationships between humans and animals. In his latest work, *Elizabeth Costello*, he presents 'the lives of animals' as the obsession of his main character, an aging contemporary novelist. Like his earlier masterpiece *Disgrace*, *Elizabeth Costello* addresses an important ethical issue for our own times: what are the feelings of animals and how the capacity of animals to feel affect how human beings can, should, or ought to relate to other creatures (Schildgen 323).

Elizabeth Costello loves animals so much that she refuses to eat meat. Both Coetzee and Costello are vegetarians. When she is invited to Appleton College to deliver the annual Gates Lecture, instead of speaking about herself and her fiction that her sponsors would like to speak about, she prefers to speak on animal rights. She stands against human cruelty to animals, although her own son, John and her daughter

in law, Norma do not like her talk on animal rights. But she can realize the feeling of animals and keeps herself in their position. She mentions that when she is reading Franz Kafka's story about an educated ape, named Red Peter, who stands before the members of a learned society telling the story of his life, she felt that she was Red Peter herself: "One that occasion I felt a little like Red Peter myself and said so. Today that feeling is even stronger" (62). Her capability to be in the position of animals reveals her message that all living creature whether they are human or nonhuman are equal, so human beings should treat animals as their fellow beings.

The way human beings treat animals in production facilities (she hesitates to call them farms any longer), in abattoirs (slaughterhouses), in trawlers (fishing boat), and in laboratories shocks her, for she is horrified by the horrors of their deaths in these places. She mentions that such places of animal horror and terror are everywhere: "They are all around us as I speak, only we do not, in a certain sense, know about them" (65). She further adds that we are surrounded by an enterprise of degradation, cruelty and killing, the enterprise which is more dangerous than the Third Reich where Hitler had killed many people, in a sense that Hitler's enterprise has come to an end, but ours is an enterprise without end which is self-regenerating, bringing rabbits, rats, poultry, livestock ceaselessly into the world for the purpose of killing them. She compares human cruelty to animal with Nazis' cruelty to human beings making an analogy – concentration camps are to Jews as slaughterhouses are to animals.

Since men and animals are the co-creation of God, they are, in this sense, fellow beings. So, being cruel to animals is to being cruel to their own fellow beings. Costello opposes St. Thomas who argues that human beings have "reason" by which we can understand the rules by which the universe works. Since animals lack reason,

they cannot understand the universe, but simply follow its rules. Therefore, unlike men, they are part of it but not part of its being: that man is godlike, animals thinglike (67). But Costello effectively denounces, as Graham Huggan suggests, the dominance of instrumental reason as a means of justifying authoritarian behavior both within and beyond the (human) species (720). Costello believes that reason is merely the being of the human brain. If “reason” is the demarcation to distinguish between men and animals, Costello argues, then, Ramanujan who is the greatest intuitive mathematician should be closer to God because of his power of mind which is more than anyone else in terms of having reason. If he is closer to God due to his mind, would he be still closer to God if instead of going to Cambridge, he had merely sat at home (68). Certainly not. So she believes that man is not superior being to treat animals whatever way he likes just because he has “reason.” Moreover, “reason” should not be used to legitimize the abuse of animals.

Costello claims that one should not measure nearness to or distance from God, on the basis of reason or power of the mind. She raises a question: “How are we to know that Red Peter, or Red Peter’s sister, shot in Africa by the hunters, was not thinking the same thoughts as Ramanujan was thinking in India?” (69). In the past, human beings used animals in the war, and won the war with their strength. The animals which were our friends in the war in the past have been used as our food now. Costello recalls that in the olden days the voice of man, raised in reason, was confronted by the roar of the lion or the bellow of the bull. Man went to war with the lion and the bull, and after many generations won that war definitely. Today these creatures have no more power. Animals have only their silence left with which to confront us. Generation to generation, our captives refuse to speak to us. Therefore, we have to save Red Peter and the great apes. She argues that animals should be

granted the right to life, the right not to be subjected to pain or harm, the right to equal protection before the law (70). Animals should be, in themselves, objects of ethical consideration.

Franz Kafka's educated Ape, Red Peter, speaking in human language before the gathering of scholars reveals a wound which he has covered up under his clothes but touched it on every word he speaks. Red Peter's speech discloses that if animals can speak, they can reveal their pain and suffering like human beings. Costello mentions that provided that animals are given training, they can achieve the level of human beings. She gives its proof by giving the example of Kafka's Red Peter and Kohler's apes. She presents Kafka's Red Peter's sorrowful story thus:

According to his own account, Red Peter was captured on the African mainland by hunters specializing in the ape trade, and shipped across the sea to a scientific institute. So were the apes Kohler worked with. Both Red Peter and Kohler's apes then underwent a period of training intended to humanize them. Red Peter passed his course with flying colors, though at deep personal cost. Kafka's story deals with that cost: we learn what it consists in through the ironies and silences of the story. Kohler's apes did less well. Nevertheless, they acquired at least a smattering of education. (71)

It is revealed that animals can be like human beings if they are given proper training. Costello means to say that human beings are just trained animals. So it is illogical to claim that animals are completely different from human beings and that they can treat animals whatever way they like. She does not like human cruelty to animals and strongly opposes the trend of imprisoning animals in the cage or prison camp. She

mentions a pitiable story of Wolfgang Kohler's ape which shows human cruelty on animals:

Although his entire history, from the time his mother was shot and he was captured, through his voyage in a cage to imprisonment on this island prison camp and the sadistic games that are played around food here, leads him to ask questions about the justice of the universe and the place of this penal colony in it, a carefully plotted psychological regimen conducts him away from ethics and metaphysics towards the humbler reaches of practical reason. . . . The fate of his brothers and sisters may be determined by how well he performs. (73)

Costello describes the destiny of the ape which has been confined to an island prison camp for a psychological experiment, and the ape has to perform well. He may think that it could be the justice of the world. The shot-death of his mother, the fate of his brothers and sisters, and his responsibility of representing apedom really upset Costello who expresses her sympathy to the captive chimpanzees that walk around the compound in a circle, for the entire world is like a military band for them. Some of them are naked from the day they were born, and some others are draped in cords or old strips of cloth that they have picked up, some carrying pieces of rubbish (74).

Costello's ethics on animals reflects in the text when she vehemently opposes the human cruelty to animals in the scientific institutes or prison camps. She says that in Kohler's experiment, Sultan is not interested in the banana problem. Only the experimenter forces him to concentrate on it. Like other animals such as the rat and the cat and every other animal trapped in the hell of the laboratory or the zoo, his mind is occupied by a question: "Where is home, and how do I get there?" (74), instead of banana. She contemplates on how much sufferings Kafka's Red Peter

underwent to become an educated man with his bow tie and dinner jacket and wad of lecture note from the day he became captive, trailing around the compound in Tenerife. He has travelled very far to achieve this intellect at the cost of his freedom. She imagines that if Red Peter had any sense, he would not have any children just to submit them to his captors for training, losing their freedom of having natural lives.

Costello strongly objects to Thomas Nagel, a philosopher who claims that a bat is a fundamentally alien creature, more alien than any fellow human being since human mind is not bats' mind. Animals have no conscious mind (76). But Costello puts her ethical view to animals claiming that each and every creature of the earth is equally important, and even a bat is like a fully human. She says that if we are capable of thinking our own death, we are capable of thinking our way into the life of a bat too: "To be a living bat is to be full of being; being fully a bat is like being fully human, which is also to be full of being. . . . To be full of being is to live as a body-soul. One name for the experience of full being is joy. To be alive is to be a living soul. An animal—and we are all animals—is an embodied soul" (77). She means to say that there is no different between animals and human beings since both of them have an embodied soul.

Her ethical relation with animal reflects more when Costello speaks against confining animals into a boundary instead of letting them move freely. Since animals have fullness of being, they cannot sustain in confinement which is a form of punishment. She continues that animals cannot bear confinement, so it is a crime to put them in zoos and laboratories where flow of joy has no place. Confinement is a form of punishment which the West favors and does its best to impose on the rest of the world. This type of punishment is as cruel and unnatural as beating, torture, mutilation and execution (78). Costello expresses that "If I can think my way into the

existence of a being who has never existed, then I can think my way into the existence of a bat or a chimpanzee or an oyster, any being with whom I share the substrate of life” (79). She is disheartened to see animal’s death places, the places of slaughter of animals all around, to which we human beings close our hearts. She laments that each day a fresh holocaust is taking place, but our moral being is untouched and we do not feel tainted.

Costello is shocked to see how people can put in their mouth the corpse of a dead animal and chew hacked flesh and swallow the juices of death wounds (82). She claims that animals are intelligent and if they are trained or reared as human, they can perform like human beings. She gives an example of Ruth Orkin, who tells his mother about an experiment with a young chimpanzee which is reared as human. The chimpanzee is asked to put her photographs with others.’ Orkin is surprised to see that the chimpanzee insisted on putting her picture with the pictures of humans rather than with the pictures of other apes. From this experiment, Orkin concludes that the chimpanzee wants to be thought of as one of us or she may want to say that she prefers to be among the free (83). This performance of the chimpanzee proves that animals love freedom and they also have feeling. Costello believes that the reason the ape chooses to put her photo among the piles of human beings is that she wants to be free like other human beings. Freedom is too crucial in the lives of animals too.

Costello is pretty much against killing animals for meat. She insisted that there is no different between human beings and animals, but still we eat them; we swallow them; and we turn their flesh into ours. She further expresses her dissatisfaction regarding human cruelty to animals in the name of religion. In some religions, people slaughter animals and offer some portion of it to the gods and keep the rest themselves. Human being’s monstrous selfishness reflects in their cruelty to animals

to satisfy their hunger. Do not people have other things except animals to quench their hunger? Costello satires on how mankind legitimizes to have meat, creating a discourse of God's permission to do so:

“Ask for the blessing of the gods on the flesh you are about to eat, ask them to declare it clean. ‘Perhaps that is the origin of the gods,’ says his mother. ‘Perhaps we invented gods so that we could put the blame on them. They give us permissions to eat flesh. They give us permission to play with unclean things. It’s not our fault, it’s theirs. We are just their children.’ ‘And God said: Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you,’ his mother quotes. ‘It’s convenient. God told us it was OK.’ (85)

Costello meditates on the selfishness of human beings who made God to justify his monstrous behavior on animals. Man makes God; man writes scriptures in which God allows him to eat meat. Eating animal is disgusting from which we have not got rid of. For her, there is no difference between God and Dog. Her ethical relation to nonhuman beings of the earth can be recognized from her remembrance of those negligible creatures such as a dog, a rat, a beetle, a stunted apple tree, a cart track winding over a hill, and a mossy stone, which count more for her than “a night of bliss with the most beautiful, most devoted mistress” (225). Dirk Kloppe observes that *Elizabeth Costello* describes an experience where ordinary phenomena, a dog or a tree or a stone, reveal themselves with extraordinary fullness of what Chandos calls “love” and “meaning” (121). Kloppe is true since Costello feels that all these creatures rather than human beings are closer to her memory during her hard time when she is blocked from passing through the gate at the end of the novel.

Although Costello condemns on the culture of eating the flesh of another living beings, the culture of eating meat has become so wide and obligatory that one feels very difficult to adjust to his society if he does not eat meat. Costello brings the example of Gandhi who suffered from the problem of adjusting to his society when he did not eat meat. She points out that Gandhi did not eat meat; as a result, he is condemned to the margins of society (87). She gets upset to know that in England, it is very hard to find people who do not eat meat. In a conference, she objects to Dean Arendt who mentions that animals are not aware and they live in a vacuum of consciousness. Her ethics to animals reflects when she answers to Arendt thus:

They [animals] have no consciousness therefore. Therefore what?
Therefore we are free to use them for our own end? Therefore we are
free to kill them? Why? What is so special about the form of
consciousness we recognize that makes killing a bearer of it a crime
while killing an animal goes unpunished? (89)

Costello presents her view that if the lack of consciousness of animal is a license to human beings to kill animal, then what about babies of human beings, can we kill them too since they have no self-consciousness? Yet we think it a more wicked crime to kill a baby than an adult (89). Therefore, Costello believes that all the discussion of consciousness and whether animals have it is just a smokescreen or an excuse. At bottom we protect our own kind, our babies, but we kill the babies of cows. It is an utter injustice to other living beings. Costello's ethics on animals lies here.

Critic Mahrukh Khan opines that *Elizabeth Costello* is about literary engagement, which includes a reassessment of pressing questions about human rights, animal abuse, and cycles of historical violence(5). *Elizabeth Costello* is a meditation on aesthetic as well as ethical issues. The aim of this novel is to challenge modernist

concepts of civilization (Carstensen 80). Costello challenges this so-called modern civilization by putting her strong argument against the trend of killing animals. She seems to say that killing animals cannot be the sign of civilization. It is rather barbarism. She says that animal killers are like Nazis. If we hate the executioners of Auschwitz, why do we not hate the slaughterers of animals? She raises a question “If we refuse to break bread with the executioners of Auschwitz, can we continue to break bread with the slaughters of animals?” (94). She makes a comparison between the murdered Jews of Europe and slaughtered animals. She repeatedly states that the Jews were killed in the concentration camps of Hitler the way animals are killed in the slaughterhouses. She means to say that Jews’ murderers and animals’ slaughterers are equally cruel people as they do have similar nature of torturing other beings.

In her speech on “The Poets and the Animals” delivered in a conference, Costello expresses her sympathy to animals. She says that she loves that kind of poetry in which animals are treated well. In such poetry, ““animals stand for human qualities: the lion for courage, the owl for wisdom, and so forth” (94). But she gets upset that the panther which is the symbol of the vital embodiment of force is trapped by human beings. So, she asks people who keep animals in the zoo, to think about the ethics of caging large animals. The animal poets, in their poetry, ask those who cage animals to imagine themselves in the cages which inhabit their body and stop from moving freely. Moreover, she suggests to the poets that they should write on animals and should not think that animals do not care what we feel about them. Her request to the poets to sympathize with animals reflects her ethical responsibility for them.

The narrator of the novel hates all kinds of abuse of animals. For instance, she hates bullfighting which is a clue of killing the beast by all means. People make a contest or a ritual to fight with a bull and they celebrate and honor their antagonist

who kills the bull for his strength and bravery. After killing the bull, they eat it in order for his strength and courage to enter them. They look into the eyes of the bull before they kill him. Then, they sing songs about him (97). She calls this practice of killing a bull in a bull fighting and eating it as a ritual is “primitivism.” It is an attitude which is to be criticized and mocked. Such cruelty of man reveals that man is basically savage. Thus, she challenges the so-called modern civilization.

Killing a bull in a bull fighting is impractical in a sense that we cannot feed billions of people through the efforts of men who kill a bull in a bull fighting. Nor can deer hunters armed with bows and arrows can feed these people since we have become too many. She satirizes that “We need factories of death; we need factory animals. Chicago showed us the way; it was from the Chicago stockyards that the Nazis learned how to process bodies” (97). She means to say that Nazis would not have learned to kill so many people in the concentration camps if they had not seen the factories of death of animals. So slaughterhouses are responsible for the birth of Nazism. Her ethical seriousness for animals reflects in her comparison of Nazism with slaughterhouses.

Costello presents the importance of animal life from the perspective of ecology too. She argues that all animals, birds, insects, and weeds, which interact and dance with the earth and the weather, are parts of ecology and we human beings are also a part of the ecological system in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (98). Gilbert Yeoh comments that *Elizabeth Costello* can be seen as evincing an ecoglobal strand that acknowledges the billions of other nonhuman beings that inhabit the globe (79). Yeoh is true since the protagonist of the novel is sympathetic to the pathetic lives of billions of other creatures which share the same earth with human beings. She is worried that human beings are not conscious about the ecological

system in which, provided that one of the elements is disturbed, it will have bad effects on the whole system which consequently affects all of us. She mentions that no creature is of higher and lower order of importance in the eco-system. Her ethical responsibility for all creatures is revealed in her thought of environmentality.

Don Randall examines that Costello wishes to develop the harmonious relation between mankind and other living creatures that leads to the protection of environment. She wants to extend the ethical bounds of human community by envisioning animals as fellow beings deserving the consideration and protection that more typically are accorded only to the human being (209). Human beings, as Costello criticizes, kill all other animals which have no right to complain since we have power of life and death on them. So, killing animals goes unpunished. Moreover, she satirizes on human supremacy over animals: “The only organism over which we do not claim this power of life and death is man. Why? Because man is different. Man understands the dance as the other dancers do not. Man is an intellectual being” (99).

The narrator is disappointed to see that some poets compose poems on big and strong animal such as Jaguar, pandas and gorillas, but not on sheep. Moreover, they write nothing on chickens, pigs, white rats or prawns as they are not newsworthy for them. It is so suspect in the whole animals-rights business. She suggests to them that they should write for all creatures, even for strangers. All professional writers write primarily for a public, but an international writer is someone who has acquired the habit, as Elizabeth Costello says, of writing for strangers (Kochin 81). Costello seems to say that writers should try to be international writers. All can be professional writers, but very few writers are international.

Costello raises a question: “If it is atrocious to kill and eat human babies, why is it not atrocious to kill and eat piglets?” (101). Human beings kill animals which are

also a race of divine, as they are divinely created. But, man enslaves and slaughters them. She describes the pathetic condition of animals in the zoos, where the spectators treat animals like prisoners of war insulting and abusing them:

People complain that we treat animals like objects, but in fact we treat them like prisoners of war. Do you know that when zoos were first opened to the public, the keepers had to protect the animals against attacks by spectators? The spectators felt the animals were there to be insulted and abused, like prisoners in a triumph. We had a war once against the animals, which we called hunting, though in fact war and hunting are the same thing (Aristotle saw it clearly). That war went on for millions of years. . . . But our compassion is very thinly spread. Beneath it is a more primitive attitude. The prisoner of war does not belong to our tribe. We can do what we want with him. We can sacrifice him to our gods. We can cut his throat, tear out his heart, throw him on the fire. There are no laws when it comes to prisoners of war (104).

Costello reveals that people treat animals the way they treat to the prisoners of war. Just recently people of some part of the world have learnt to be kind to animals. In the east, people live together with animals quite naturally. They do not see any dividing line between animals and themselves. But with the Western cultural arrogance which pioneered the industrialization of animal lives and the commodification of animal flesh, animals are exterminated by people in the course of their rise to power (106).

Costello opines that even a hen can speak, and to prove her argument, she presents an event occurred in the life of Albert Camus. When Albert Camus was a young boy in Algeria, his grandmother told him to bring her one of the hens from the

cage in their backyard. He obeyed, and then watched her cut off its head with a kitchen knife, catching its blood in a bowl so that the floor would not be dirtied. The death cry of that hen imprinted itself on the boy's memory so hauntingly that in 1958 he wrote an impassioned attack on the guillotine (a machine for cutting human head). As a result, capital punishment was abolished in France (108). Costello argues that even animals love their lives; they fight for their lives using their entire force without reserve. She further adds that if life is not important to animals, why they fight for their lives with the whole of the being (110). Anyone who says that life matters less to animals than it does to us has not held in his hands an animal fighting for its life.

In response to O' Hearne who says that death does not matter to animals because they do not understand death, she says that since human babies, too, do not understand death, can we offer them to English people for their food as proposed by Jonathan Swift in his "A Modest Proposal"? If so, she chooses to go and live among horses rather than to live in the human society (110). She views that animals and other creatures, created by God should be treated in a humanly manner rather than worshipping the dark gods. She expresses her dissatisfaction to Lawrence whom she charges as a false prophet who told us that if we worship the dark gods, and carry out their observances, we would be saved, and we believed him and went on worshipping the dark gods. But our worship did not save us (127). She seems to advise her audiences to extend their helpful hands for the betterment of other fellow creatures rather than worshipping the nonliving things in the name of God.

Costello is ethical to those children of Africa who are dying with hunger. She pleads inwardly when she sees the children having the stick limbs, the bloated bellies, and the great impassive eyes which are wasting away due to the lack of care and cure. She does not like to drink from the cup in front of those poor children as she is too old

and weak to withstand those pathetic sights. She wants to cry in their trouble. Her kind response to the poor people in Africa reveals her ethical responsibility to the suffering of others. She is shocked to see a man who makes crucifix for Jesus, their savior. She, then, contemplates that if the crucifix of Jesus saves them, then, why they are living in the suffering of hunger; how a man-made god improves their horrible situation of poverty and how an object made by a poor man be the savior of people (136). The irony is that the man who makes crucifix of Christ, man's savior, has arthritis in his hand. It is so funny that a man, who cannot save his own hand, is making others' savior.

Costello takes care of a man named Phillips who is a cancer victim in the hospital where he has been admitted. She has not any personal relation with him; still she helps him when he has no one in this world to take care him. Phillips has a hole in his throat, so he cannot speak. Her ethical responsibility for others lies in her unselfish service to this old man who suffers in a hospital for a long time and finally dies in her lap. Coetzee describes the pathetic condition of Phillips, and Costello's services to him thus:

Mr Phillips has been to hospital for another dose of radiation and has come back in a bad way, very low, very despondent. Why doesn't she look in on him, try to cheer him up? . . . [Phillips is] just an old fellow, an old bag of bones waiting to be carted away. Flat on his back with his arms spread out, his hands slack, not sleeping, just lying, waiting. She stands at the old man's bedside; she takes his hand. She holds the hand and squeezes it and says 'Aidan!' in her most affectionate voice and watches the tears well up, the old-folks' tears that do not count for much because they come too easily. She stands there stroking his

hands until Nurse Naidoo comes around with the tea trolley and the pills. The next Saturday she visits him again, and the next; it becomes a new routine. She holds his hands and tries to comfort him while marking with a cold eye the stages of his decline. (153)

The aforementioned extract speaks how Coetzee's characters serve strangers. When Costello realizes that Mr Phillip's suffering is more painful and heart rendering, she forgets her own trouble, and takes time to serve him. Finally, Costello proves that she is not only ethical to animals, but also to the starving people and strangers of Africa.

Politics of Trauma

Coetzee's characters are ethical to the suffering of not only other human beings but also animals. For instance, in *Elizabeth Costello*, Costello maintains an ethical relation with animals. She does not like human superiority and cruelty to animals at all. She opposes killing animals in the slaughterhouses, comparing it with the Holocaust. She means to say that animals are killed in the slaughterhouses the way the Jews were killed in the concentration camps of Hitler: The animal slaughters are to animals as the Hitler's executioners are to the Jews. Costello makes this analogy of Hitler's cruelty to the Jews with the human cruelty to animals with a view to stopping human cruelty to animals which has been going on unpunished for centuries. Her point is that human being should not slaughter animals, the divinely created race.

Costello protests the confinement of animals in the Zoos, laboratories, abattoirs (slaughterhouses), prison camp, and scientific institutes. She seems to say that each and every creature, including animals, prefers freedom. So, they should be allowed to live freely. She loves all kinds of creatures such as rabbits, poultry, frogs, rats, dogs, cows, bulls, sheep, chimpanzee, and ostrich. She loves piglets as much as human babies since both of them are innocent, and for her, killing piglets is as much

atrocious as killing human babies. She curses those who live nearby slaughterhouses and remain indifferent to the killing of animals. She compares these people with those who live nearby the concentration camps of Hitler and pretend to be unknown about what is going on inside the camps. She appeals her audiences to raise voices against slaughtering animals in the conferences.

Costello focuses on the importance of existence of all human and nonhuman beings from the ecological point of view too. Since all animals are the parts of the same ecological system, damage or loss of one animal certainly perturbs the existence of other animals too. If animals are killed, it will deadly affect to the lives of human beings too. There is not a single species which is useless in the world. So, Costello urges her fellow beings to realize the importance of ecological system and help to preserve animals. Coetzee's politics behind making Costello, his surrogate narrator, ethical to animal life is, it seems to me, to develop harmonious existence between human and nonhuman beings. Coetzee seems to say that both human beings, the perpetrators of animals, and animals, the victims of human cruelty should live side by side in a harmonious relation without harming each other. He opines that the Holocaust will come to an end if human beings stop killing animals mercilessly.

Coetzee's mouthpiece vehemently protests Paul West's horrible and shocking depiction of punishment given by Hitler to his would be assassins in his book. Hitler is the perpetrator of millions of Jews who were burned to death in several concentration camps during the Second World War. The protagonist's main objection to Paul West is that he has attempted to bring Hitler, whose name people do not want to listen to, back to life from his grave by describing his power and dominance over his victims. Paul should not have travelled in the forbidden zone of darkness describing the naked cruelty of Hitler over his victims. His book reminds her of a

sexual attack she underwent in her youth by a docker. In other words, his book has reminded his readers of the traumas of their past, and has put them in their traumatic situation at present. By describing the cruelty of Hitler to his would-be assassins, West has transmitted the evil of Hitler to the young generation, particularly to the descendants of the Jews who were killed mercilessly in the concentration camps in the World War II. It is immoral and unethical to hurt the new generation of the victims who are bound to see the punishment given to their ancestors by Hitler's executioners in his book. West has just made their wound of mind worst, the one which has been healed by time. His book has just widened the antagonism between the descendants of the perpetrators and the victims. Coetzee's politics behind objecting Paul West's depiction of Hitler's cruelty to his victims is, as I understand, to stop passing the trauma of evil to the new generation of the victims, and hurting them more by reminding them of their cruel past. Coetzee seems to say that it is better to forget the traumatic past rather than spoil the mind by remembering it. Coetzee's politics behind objecting to West's book is to create a secular life of peaceful co-existence between the descendants of Hitler who are known as the perpetrators and the descendants of the Jews who are known as victims.

Coetzee reveals the trauma of the protagonist at the last lesson of the text entitled "At the Gate" in which Costello is blocked by the gate-keeper from passing through the gate. The panel of judges gives mental torture to Costello who is helplessly waiting at the dormitory which contains the elements of the Holocaust. She feels as if she is in one of the gas chambers of Hitler waiting for her unavoidable death. This is the trauma created by the stronger ones over the victim who is physically as well as mentally weaker. Coetzee's politics of narrativization of the trauma of his protagonist is to disclose the trauma of the writers who suffer from the

dictatorship of the nation's authority, and make them realize their torture over the helpless ones so that they can be softer in their dealing with the weaker. Thus, Coetzee seems to develop the peaceful co-existence between the stronger and the weaker ones in his last lesson of the text.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: ETHICS AND POLITICS OF TRAUMA IN J.M.

COETZEE'S POST-APARTHEID FICTION

“Being physically present at the death of others affirms the idea of community” (“The Invention of Mourning in Post-Apartheid Literature” 446).

Sam Durrant

Preceding pages show how J.M. Coetzee reveals the trauma of human and non-human beings in his post-apartheid fiction, and his objective behind it. From the deep study of his post-apartheid novels, I have found that Coetzee's characters maintain ethical relation with the strangers as well as animals. His characters help others irrespective of their race, nationality or class, without any expectation from them in return. They have learned to love others. They do not remain unfriendly when they see the sufferings of others; rather they immediately extend their hands to help them in whatever way they can despite their own suffering. Coetzee depicts the increasingly painful sufferings of his characters, both perpetrators and the victims, with a view to promoting their secular life of peaceful co-existence. His post-apartheid novels have brought people of different races to meet together in peace. To be more precise, his novels have brought racial harmony between whites and blacks in South Africa.

In each of the four novels at the heart of this study, Coetzee's characters are found to be sharing and caring others in their hard time, not because the others are their near and dear, but just because they are fellow human beings. For instance, in his *Age of iron*, Elizabeth Curren, the white character, always exhibits her ethical behavior to the children of blacks, even if she herself is traumatized by the apartheid rulers and her incurable breast cancer at her old age. She takes care of six black

African children whom she provides with food and shelter at her home. Although the apartheid rulers prevent the blacks from living with the whites, Mrs Curren does not care about it and keeps on opening the door of her house for the blacks who are being hunted by the apartheid police of South Africa. She sacrifices herself to overcome the suffering of these non-white characters without setting any demand or condition on them.

Elizabeth Curren's generosity of allowing Mr Vercueil, a homeless black vagrant to stay at her house and protecting him from the apartheid police, her kind action of taking Bheki and his friend, John (two black boys) to a hospital for a treatment when they become the victim of the apartheid police brutality while they are cycling in the road, her ethical performance of bringing Bheki's dead body to her house from Guguletu where he was murdered by the police, and consoling his mother, Florence to overcome her trauma, her dropping tears in Bheki's death and remembering him all the time when she is alone, her helpless attempt to protect John from being murdered by the police at her house, and her heart-rending mourning on his death, are some examples of her ethical performances that she conducts for others in *Age of Iron*. Her ethical responsibility for others reflects in her actions and statement, as she believes that blood is one and same whether it belongs to whites or blacks.

Later on, these black characters whom Mrs Curren had protected from the apartheid police brutality cooperate to her in her physical pain caused by cancer. For instance, Vercueil supports her in her pain, washing her body and pushing her car. He gives her a companion taking care of her in her aging until she survives. Thus, Coetzee depicts the ethical behavior of his characters who take care of others irrespective of their race, which finally brings them to a harmonious relation and

peaceful co-existence, which is what I understand as Coetzee's politics of performing their trauma in his *Age of Iron*.

The author continues to explore the theme of secular life of peaceful co-existence between the people of different specialty in each of his four recent novels. Although Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* is set in the context of tsarist Russia, he presents his bitter experience of apartheid regime of South Africa allegorically to prevent it from being banned by the censorship of South Africa. In this novel, Fyodor Dostoevsky, the protagonist of the novel, suffers from the trauma of death of his stepson, Pavel who is killed by the police of apartheid-like regime of tsarist Russia in Petersburg due to his involvement in a revolutionary group which aims at dethroning the tsarist rulers from the power. Dostoevsky, later on, becomes himself the victim of tsarist police who begin to hunt him when they know that he is the father of Pavel. Thus, he does not get rest and peace throughout his whole life. During his trauma of his son's death and police's torture, other characters of the novel help him which, to some extent, alleviates his trauma.

The main objective of this dissertation is to explore how Coetzee's characters are ethical to the suffering of others, which I have said as ethics of trauma. Coetzee's characters in *The Master of Petersburg* are ethical for others even if they have their own trauma of different kinds. For instance, Anna Sergeyevna Kolenkina, the landlady in Petersburg, lets Dostoevsky use a room in her apartment without charging him for rent as she knows that he is in an economic crisis. Moreover, she provides him with food in her kitchen regarding him as her family member. Sometimes she gives him money since he is a debtor of more than a half dozen people in Petersburg and he often remains penniless. She accompanies and helps him to recognize the grave of Pavel in Yelagin Island which is an unknown place for him. When Anna

finds Dostoevsky in a deep trauma caused by the murder of his son by the tsarist police of Russia, she takes care of him and extends her services without expecting anything from him in return. Her unconditional love and help to a stranger gives me a point make a claim that Coetzee's characters have an ethical relation with the strangers.

Dostoevsky, too, serves other needy characters towards the end of the novel. His effort of bringing a medicine for Matryona when she gets sick and a lamp for her mother, Anna; his hospitality to Ivanov, a very poor man; and his monetary help to a poor woman with three children are some examples that prove that he is an ethical character of the novel. By making his characters ethical to others, Coetzee wishes to create a peaceful co-existence between the people of different kinds, such as rulers and revolutionary groups, police and civilians, father and son, landlady and lodger, and rich and poor in *The Master of Petersburg*.

Coetzee demonstrates the traumatic condition of both white and black people of South Africa due to their racial revenge on one another in the first half of *Disgrace*. But on the second half of it, Coetzee's characters maintain ethical relation by caring others in their sufferings. He reveals the trauma of both white and non-white people impartially, and, thus, forms a community of sufferers in *Disgrace*.

David Lurie, the protagonist of *Disgrace*, seduces a black girl of his college, named Melanie and causes trauma to the whole black community of South Africa. Lurie's crime of sexual harassment of the black girl compels the readers to think that the whites are the perpetrators of the blacks. But when, in the second half of the novel, Lurie's daughter Lucy is gang-raped by three black boys, Coetzee's readers are bound to think again that not only the whites but also the blacks of South Africa are

causing trauma to their opposite race, and hence both South African whites and blacks are becoming the victim of rape and seduction in *Disgrace*.

In the second half of the novel, David Lurie turns out to be an ethical for others. For instance, he visits to Melanie's house to ask for forgiveness with her father for causing a traumatic shame to this beautiful family. Melanie's father forgives him and tells him to forget what has happened in the past. Moreover, he invites Lurie to have dinner at his house. Likewise, Lurie's daughter Lucy who has been pregnant by the gang-rape of three black boys and who still has a threat of another rape is accepted by Petrus, a black man, who makes her his wife and provides her with security. Thus, both white and black characters of *Disgrace* become ethical to opposite race by helping them to lessen their trauma. It is Coetzee's politics to make both whites and blacks of South Africa accept each other's existence which, ultimately, leads them to enjoy the secular life of peaceful co-existence.

Coetzee's characters are found to be ethical to animals in each of the texts I have mentioned above. Elizabeth Costello, the protagonist of *Elizabeth Costello*, like David Lurie of *Disgrace*, is an ethical character who loves both human beings and animals in the novel. She appeals her audiences to stop killing animals in slaughterhouses and imprisoning them in the zoos, laboratories, prison camps and scientific institutes. She does not hesitate to compare the crime of slaughtering animals in the slaughterhouses with the Holocaust, the event when the Nazis killed millions of Jews during the World War Second. Costello, who is identified as a famous Australian novelist in the text, talks about animal rights in the conferences she attends. She loves all kinds of animals as much as human babies since both of them are innocent about their existence, and killing animals, as she views, is as hideous as killing human babies. Thus, making Costello ethical to animals, Coetzee seems to

promote a harmonious co-existence between human beings and animals in *Elizabeth Costello*.

Moreover, Coetzee reveals the trauma of people caused by Nazism in this novel. Costello, Coetzee's mouthpiece, requests textbook writers not to draw any picture of horrible crime in their texts, for example, Hitler's crime on mankind in the Holocaust, as they might transmit the trauma of the past to the new generation, making their lives unpleasant. Moreover, such immoral books which describe the crime of the past might remind the readers of their own shocking and painful events of their past as is evidenced by Costello's own remembrance of her traumatic sexual encounter with a docker in her youth when she read Paul West's book that describes a heart-rending scene of punishment given to the Hitler's would-be assassins by his executioner. Coetzee seems to say that trauma of any kind should not be transmitted to the new generations as it makes their lives either revengeful or painful. Coetzee condemns Paul West's immoral book that brings Hitler back to life from his grave, and he appeals textbook writers to be morally responsible to the new generation. He tends to create a harmonious relation between the children of former perpetrators and the victims of the Holocaust in *Elizabeth Costello*.

When Coetzee wrote his post-apartheid fiction, South Africa was still in the grip of the bad consequences of apartheid. He is shocked when he sees South African whites and blacks taking revenge on one another even if apartheid is over. Consequently, the crimes such as murder, rape, theft, and arson attack are rampant in South Africa. Besides, people's uprisings against their rulers are at the apex demanding justice and equality. The apartheid police are arresting and killing those who are involved in the revolutions to overthrow the rulers. Due to students' agitation to dethrone the autocrat rulers from the power, on the one hand, and the apartheid

police's suppression to bring the agitators under the control on the other, the natives of South Africa are in a great trauma of being killed at any moment. That is why, African people leave their country and go abroad seeking protection of life. Coetzee himself had to leave South Africa and live in different countries where he wrote his post-apartheid fiction representing the traumatic condition of South Africa allegorically. Moreover, he suffered from the dictatorship of censorship when he revealed the trauma of South African people in his fiction. So, he used a strategy of setting his texts in the foreign land, but writing the reality of South Africa to be safe from the torture of censorship.

Coetzee wants to create a harmonious relation between the people of different race, nationality and class through his fiction by showing that both whites and non-whites of South Africa are equally responsible for causing trauma to their opposite race. He seems to make them realize that they would keep on suffering from the trauma of rape, theft and murder infinitely until they become ethical to others and stop causing trauma to them. Coetzee wants to put an end to the crime of all sorts committed as revenge to opposite race by making his characters ethical to others. In his fiction, Coetzee makes his white characters sympathize with their counterparts in their suffering, and vice versa. In other words, his characters extend their helpful hands to the suffering of others even if the others do not belong to their race, nationality or class.

In the beginning of Coetzee's novels, his characters are found to be hostile to others, causing trauma to their lives. But in the later part, his characters realize their mistakes and are ready to apologize to and help others. Through his novels, Coetzee seems to give his readers a message that whatever crime they committed in the past, should not be repeated again. They should be ethical to others rather than torturing

them, since torturing others brings no peace and rest in their own lives. He seems to point out that this world is a place for all, no matter what race, nationality, and class they belong to, since all, including animals, are the creation of God. Coetzee often focuses on the point that people can never be happy themselves until they respect and help others in their sufferings selflessly.

Coetzee attempts to open the eyes of the rulers of Apartheid regime of South Africa, and apartheid-like tsarist rulers of Russia, and Nazis of Germany in his post apartheid fiction that they should not torture their citizens in terms of their race, religion and ideology. Moreover, he wants to make people aware of animal rights by appealing them to stop the rampant killing of animals in the slaughterhouses, and imprisoning them in the zoos and prison camps which encroaches their rights of free movement. He seems to say that such an inhuman action of killing and imprisoning animals might lead to a tragic consequence of ecological imbalance in the world.

The post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa provided a forum for the expression of personal loss. But it tended to include individual testimonies within hegemonic national narrative of forgiveness and reconciliation. Coetzee seems to complement this lack of Truth and Reconciliation Commission in his post-apartheid fiction offering his characters alternative times and spaces for the expression of their grief. Coetzee seems to say that just forgiveness and reconciliation cannot always become the right strategy to ease the trauma of the victims as it is exemplified by David Lurie's refusal to offer a public confession in *Disgrace*. Coetzee makes his perpetrators involve in some ethical performances for the sake of their victims rather than making them confess their guilt.

Coetzee's post-apartheid novels constantly reinvent the work of mourning in which he makes his characters do some ethical performances for those who are

suffering, as is evidenced by David Lurie's attempts to ensure the dignified disposal of dog corpses in *Disgrace*, and Elizabeth Curren's love and care of the children of blacks in *Age of Iron*. Since both, David Lurie and Elizabeth Curren, the white characters of his novels, have got the tag of perpetrators causing trauma to blacks, they are made to conduct ethical performances for others, which help to relieve the trauma of their victims. Moreover, in his fiction, Coetzee forms a new community of sufferers to which both South African whites and blacks belong. Besides, he brings all the suffering animals to his community of the sufferers. Thus, Coetzee's post-apartheid fiction has transformative potential, with its ability to fight with legacies of oppression, and imagines new states of being.

As this dissertation has shown, Coetzee comes out as a great trauma writer who avoids the pitfall of writing trauma from the perspective of the writer's own community. He writes trauma from the perspective of the sufferers –whether they belong to white or non-white community. He follows thin line of ethics of memory rather than thick lines. He reveals the trauma of both whites and blacks in his fiction with a view to preventing the lifelong conflicts between them in South Africa. He is equally sensitive to the suffering of animals too as is heavily described in his *Disgrace* and *Elizabeth Costello*.

Coetzee's white and black characters live together caring each other in their sufferings. Generally, whites are regarded as the perpetrators and blacks as victims. But Coetzee seems to say that whites are not the enemy of blacks, and vice versa, rather they can be the supporters to their sufferings. When a black dies, a white does not get satisfaction from his or her death, rather he becomes the sufferer of it, as is evidenced by the suffering of Mrs Curren, a white character in *Age of Iron* when the black boys, John and Bheki are killed by the apartheid police. Thus, Coetzee wants to

prevent the reproduction and intergenerational transmission of violence seen in South Africa by revealing the trauma of both white and non-white people in his fiction.

Coetzee is driven by the awareness of an ethical responsibility for the future generation of both whites and blacks by gesturing towards the possibility of future ethical community of theirs in his fiction. For him, mourning becomes a way of testifying to a fundamental commonality. He comes up against the limit of silence or death. He presents his white characters at the death of others, which helps to alleviate the trauma of the sufferers. Elizabeth Curren's presence at the death of Bheki in *Age of Iron*, Anna Sergeyevna's presence at the death of Pavel in *The Master of Petersburg*, David Lurie's presence at the death of the dogs in *Disgrace*, and Elizabeth Costello's presence at the death of Mr Philip in *Elizabeth Costello* are some examples to make a claim that his characters do not remain aloof when they see others' suffering and death, no matter what race, nationality or class they belong to.

Coetzee's characters recognize their own death in the death of others, and become participants in the loss and grief of the bereaved. Their ethical performance of being participants in the suffering of others leads them to create a sense of solidarity with the bereaved, helping to form a post-apartheid community of sufferers, irrespective of their sameness of race. The very presence of a stranger at such a moment of others' death affirms the idea of the community of sufferers. Rather than simply producing exclusionary national, ethnic or religious communities, Coetzee's fiction makes an appeal to our basic commonality, to the shared fact of our embodiment and our mortality making his characters ethical to other forms of life. For instance, Elizabeth Costello broadens this sense of commonality beyond the human, arguing that art allows us to walk with the beast, and this is precisely what Lurie does in realizing his vocation as a dog undertaker in *Disgrace*. Their ethical behavior with

animals is, in fact, an affirmation of connectedness with others. Lurie, like Costello, is aware of other lives, becoming conscious of the sacred nature of all life forms. Thus, Coetzee's fiction provides readers with an image of humanity with its fullest potential of selfless love for others.

Coetzee as a writer brings reconciliatory voice through his novels which helps to create harmonious relation between people of different races, nationalities, class and race. If people realize their mistakes and misdeeds, and apologize for the same, mutual understanding and living together are possible. In *Age of Iron*, Mrs. Curren helps suffering blacks; in *Master of Petersburg*, the landlady helps poor Dostoevsky who suffers from the loss of his son who was killed by Tsarist police; in *Disgrace* a white professor David Lurie repeatedly seduces a black student Melanie, but his heart is changed and realizes his misdeeds, and asks for forgiveness from Melani family. It is situation that changes his heart. His own daughter Lucy is gang raped and made pregnant, but her life and prestige is ultimately saved when a black neighbor Petrus agrees to marry her. In *Elizabeth Costello*, the protagonist Costello appeals people to stop killing animals, and imprisoning them in zoo, labs and science institutes. She seems to say that animals' life like human beings is significant and they too feel pain and suffer from torture and violence.

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