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Representing the Voiceless in J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*

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By

Rajendra Bahadur K.C.

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Letter of Recommendation

Rajendra Bahadur K.C. has completed his thesis entitled "Representing the Voiceless in J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*" under my supervision. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Prof. Dr. Beerendra Pandey

Supervisor

Date: 2015-12-13

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled "Representing the Voiceless in J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan, University by Rajendra Bahadur K.C. has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Internal Examiner

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External Examiner

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Head

Central Department of English

Date:

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Rajendra Bahadur K.C.

Abstract

The focus of this research is in the area of color discrimination, gender domination and exploitation of the servants by the hypocritical and illegal behavior of the white masters to their servants. Such a study is important in order to investigate the gap between the servants and masters and the relations among them. The research approach adopted in this dissertation includes subaltern studies from the perspective of Gayatri Spivak's, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" An application of the theory of subaltern to Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* throws light on the problems in representing the subaltern by a white South African writer. The findings from this research provide evidence that servants are dehumanized, tortured and exploited by their masters physically and mentally. Female servant Anna is doubly victimized. The text is a presentation and critique of the violence inherent in the colonialist and imperialist mentality of the Western world. The main conclusions drawn from this study are that subalterns do not have mutual relations with other people. They are tortured, exploited, dehumanized and dominated by their masters. Masters or whites perform hypocritical behavior where as servants or blacks are loyal, honest and so on in their behavior. Subalterns cannot speak. This is due to their economy and agency. This dissertation recommends that the subalterns need to be empowered. If they are empowered in various arenas they can speak, they would not be dominated, exploited and tortured neither by their masters nor by the whites.

Representing the Voiceless in Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*

The present research focuses on the issues of the subaltern voice. The color discrimination, gender domination and exploitation of the servants by the hypocritical behavior of the white master are shown in the novel. Therefore, the novel is full of working class as well as black people where the servants are being dehumanized in the world of domination. *In the Heart of the Country* is the second novel by Nobel laureate J. M. Coetzee written in 1977. It is a presentation and critique of the violence inherent in the colonialist and imperialist mentality of the Western world.

In the novel, the servants are being tortured, buttressed and treated relatively inferior by their masters, which opens the door of subaltern. Gayatri Spivak, Gramsci, Ranjit Guha and Pandey are the thinkers of subaltern studies whose insights are used to prove the relative domination.

The condition of the black workers is pitiable. They are found of being deprived of basic democratic and human rights. Despite the several proclamation and consent made by the government, the workers/blacks are dominated by the whites in several fields. Though, the servants are inferior to their masters but in this novel they are treated more than that. They are sexually abused and tortured time and again. Similarly, the novel narrates the issues of the racism, slavery and the trauma that results from the domination. The domination in the novel is relative in the sense the slaves are relatively suppressed by their masters. This relative domination creates the problem, which is addressed through the tool of subaltern. Therefore, this research work attempted to find answers of the given research questions: Why is the protagonist hypocrite in nature? Why

the female servant, Anna is doubly victimized? What kinds of relation do subaltern have with other people? How are subalterns treated?

The present work can be studied from multiple dimensions as racial discrimination, master servant relation, moral degradation, female discrimination, psychological disposition, lust, loneliness and so on. *In the Heart of the Country* has received a contradictory response since its publication in 1977. Various critics, scholars, reviewers and writers too have commented the novel from different perspectives like psychological, racial, feminist, linguistic and narrative technique. Critic Josephine Dodd has observed this novel from the psychological perspective:

Magda's perception of herself is shaped by her having absorbed the lessons of literature and suggests that she may be framed by circumscribed by literacy and psychoanalytic discourse which is ill- suited to her specific spatio-temporal experience. This frame once Magda is scripted by our dominant psychoanalytic discourse to identify her as wanting to be seduced by her father. (139)

Here, she stresses upon herself with the knowledge of psychoanalytic discourse and seems closeness with her own father to fulfill her own sexual interest. This is not directly stated by her but we can understand through her narration of the events. From the perspective of the critic, the whites or masters do not have any ethical identity. They can do anything to fulfill their interest. Therefore, at first she was attracted with her own father but later without caring her own value she got involved with the servant.

Besides the psychoanalytical perspective, Coetzee's use of the white woman narrator in *In the Heart of the Country* is closely related to the post-structuralism form of

the feminine as necessarily disruptive of narrative. In particular, Coetzee engages with both different feminisms' and the feminine as a means by which to address the problems of narrative and discourse. Along with the other, *In the Heart of the Country* is most often in the context of elaborating on the ways in which Coetzee is undermining feminist discourse in order to criticize western feminism. Much as Coetzee provides a critique of Anglo-American feminist discourse. Fiona Proby agrees with the treatment of Coetzee's female narrator:

The difference stems from Coetzee's treatment of liberal Anglo-American feminism and his utilization of different feminism(s). Magda is a parody of Adrienne Rich's *Dover in Diving into the Wreck*, and she is a parody of feminist quest for identity beyond phallic discourse that novel represents a kind of liberal Anglo-American feminism which privileges a contradictory reversal of positions over a deconstruction of positionality purpose. (15)

Through this paragraph, we know that Coetzee is masterfully correcting a wayward and universalizing line of feminist thought. His use of feminism is related to broader phenomena of the use of the feminine as a medium for the postcolonial settler identity crisis, for the authority of the author, and for the crisis of representation.

Likewise, Derek Attridge's account of ethics of the other is the fullest elaborations of Coetzee's ethics: "Though important, the Levinasian lens is not the only means by which one can understand Coetzee's ethics. Turning to a seemingly older-fashioned ethical term, Coetzee himself draws our attention to his pre-occupation with writing and truth" (2).

Analyzing the novel, Stephen Watson argues: "*In the Heart of the Country* is concerned to demonstrate that realism is not real at all, but simply a production of language, a code that people have come to accept as natural" (375). On the other hand, Helen Tiffin has seen Coetzee's deliberate eschewing of realism as "a way of emphasizing the complicity of Western narrative and history" (32). Another critic, Teresa Dovey opines: "Coetzee deliberately adopts the models and theories inhabiting them in a way that closely approximates the Derridian strategy of deconstruction" (10).

Therefore, *In the Heart of the Country* is studied or observed from several angles by different critics, reviewers and essayists in terms of feminism, racism, psychoanalysis, linguistics and narrative techniques. But observing the ground reality and the real situation of South African society, this novel is very appropriate in the case of subaltern studies. Domination and injustice to the servants and female is the vibrant, common and striking issue created by the different characters. Through the lens of subaltern, the work can best be approached. The servants are treated and behaved as inhumane by their masters who are white as well. The masters do immoral activities in order to fulfill their erotic desire and blame the workers again for that reason. The hypocritical nature of masters hovers around the novel which shows that the workers or marginal groups have to suffer.

In this way, above mentioned critics have given various views to the novel, but the issue of subaltern has yet been abandoned, which was fulfilled by the present research.

This study is based on library research apart from the primary text; the researcher concerned different researches, criticisms, reviews and so on to support the claim. As

well as the suggestions, comments, guidance of supervisor, lectures and professors had great value. The researcher also used web sites related to the study. The issues of the subaltern conceptualized by Gayatri Spivak, Ranjit Guha, Dipesh Chakrawarty and David Ludden are taken into consideration. Other different sources were also concerned to make the analysis of the novel from the view point of subaltern.

Although the novel can be studied from multiple facets as: racial discrimination, female domination, ethical criticism, psychoanalytical perspective and so on. But due to the limitation of time, money, sources and other factors the present research has only concerned on the aspect of subaltern. Specially, the eye of subaltern in *In the Heart of the Country* is used neglecting other aspects to make the thesis prove the hypothesis. The incidents of the novel mirrors that the females as well as servants existence are silenced by the absolute power of males and masters which also confirms the features of existentialism. But, the limitation of the research is that it only sticks to the notion of the subaltern. The issue of how the relative domination has been in practice is the basic concern of research.

The current research work primarily aims to show the domination and injustice to the subaltern as well as the thesis also investigates the hypocritical nature of the white narrator-cum- protagonist, Magda, her father's immoral activities, doubly victimization of the female servant and so on.

Treatment of the Subaltern in Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*

The female protagonist-cum-narrator in J. M. Coetzee's novel, *In the Heart of the Country*, seems to be sympathizing victims of apartheid on the surface level. However, in reality, different subaltern's problems arise due to racial discrimination. When we talk about 'apartheid', South African policy of separate development which was initiated by the whites in 1948 AD, and lasted up to 1990 AD, we cannot ignore the whites' exploitation upon the blacks, the coloreds and the Asians in South Africa where racial discrimination was institutionalized by law.

The driving force behind apartheid is the discredited concept of the superiority of the white race. Its historical circumstances brought the white race into contact with non-white races. The white people argue that their duty was to maintain the purity of the race at any cost even though the members of that race constitute a minority. They consider therefore, that if the white in South Africa, as heirs to the western civilization, are to secure its domination over the non-whites, and repudiate the principle of racial equality. For this reason, the non-white cannot be granted the same political rights that the whites enjoy; otherwise the whites would be covered by them. In addition, each of the racial group in South Africa presents different heredity characteristics and has not attained the same level of culture. Racial integration will be detrimental to all of them. Whites and non-whites form distinct social and economic groups and consequently should live separately. This segregation of South Africa has direct impact on every spheres of society. Literature is also heavily affected by this inhumane practice of racial discrimination. The narratives of J.M. Coetzee's novels entirely exhibit the white domination, exploitation and their anarchy. His novel, *In the Heart of the Country*, also

depicts the hypocrisy, brutality and exploitation of whites upon the blacks. Magda, the white spinster cum narrator is presented ironically. Magda's evaluation of her 'self' and 'others' cannot be taken simply. Rather her perception in broad sense should be taken with suspicion.

Here, her relationship with the servants, Hendrik and his wife, reflects that she is showy and artificial in terms of love and affection towards them. But, in deep level, she shows her opportunistic attitudes towards other. She hesitates to speak about the newlyweds and tells us that it is Hendrik who has brought home a new wife. So, in appearance, she seems to be reliable narrator but in reality she turns to be an unreliable character. It is because Magda confidently justifies her own action and rationalizes the actions of others.

Magda, the white spinster, is capable of vivid expression of her emotions. As the narrative unfolds, she expresses her anger, her bitterness, and her hatred towards her father. So she shows her disinterestedness towards him. Perhaps, she thinks that her father can be the cruel and heartless person not only in her career but also for her family. Her father's immoral and violent activities might be the cause to express her emotions and feeling. When her father's new wife comes at home with her father, she feels:

My father's first wife, my mother, was a frail, gentle, loving woman who lived and died under her husband's thumb. Her husband never forgave her for failing to bear him a son. His relentless sexual demands led to her death in child birth to the rough rude boy – heir my father wanted, therefore, she died. The doctor came too late. Summoned by a messenger on a bicycle, he had to come trundling along forty miles of farm-track in

his donkey-cart. When he arrived my mother already lay composed on her deathbed, patient, bloodless, apologetic. (2)

Definitely, it makes her rude towards her father and step mother. As a result, she evokes her own disinterestedness towards the family member. The given lines show that the narrator herself is the subaltern character or daughter is the subaltern because narrator's father wants a son from her mother but she cannot bear as well as narrator's mother died under her husband thumb also symbolizes that female are subalterns in the novel. Only the father wanted son the heir of the family not the daughter.

Magda's father does not regard her in his personal and family matter. There is a dearth of mutual understanding between father and daughter, and they have no co-operation at all. Without considering the future of her daughter her father proceeds his every task according to his own will. He makes Magda alone forever, taking his new wife. So, she expresses:

I was not watching my father bear his bride home across the flats because I was in my room in the dark west wind beating my heart out and bidding my time. I should have been standing ready to greet them with smiles and offers of tea, but I was not. I was absent. I was not missed. My father pays no attention to my absence. To my father I have been an absence all my life. Therefore, instead of being the womanly warmth at the heart of this house I have been a zero, null, a vacuum towards which all collapses inward, a turbulence, muffled, grey, like a chill draft eddying through the corridors, neglected, vengeful. (2)

From these lines of the novel we can state that in front of the father Magda, the central character is ignored and not paid attention. He does not have any concern of her and she seems as absence to him. Being the central character in front of her father Magda is null or zero. This shows that female has no value in the family. Therefore, according to this extract we can say that the females are marginalized and neglected. So, the females are the subaltern.

Having the feeling of melancholy, she wants to revolt against her own father, and the traditional ideas that impose the bad rules over the youngster like her. She opines: "With cunning and treachery, if necessary, I fight against becoming one of the forgotten ones of history I am a spinster with a locked diary but I am more than that" (4).

Likewise, subalterns are inferior in every sectors of life. Even the dolls for the children to play and language to speak also differ from the children of masters to servants. Magda utters the given dialogue as:

I grew up with the servants' children. I spoke like one of them before I learned to speak like this. I played their stick and stone games before I knew I could have a dolls' house with Father and Mother and Peter and Jane asleep in their own beds and clean clothes ready in the chest whose drawers slid in and out while Nan the dog and Felix the cat snoozed before the kitchen coals. With the servants' children I searched the veld from khamma-roots, fed cowsmilk to the orphaned lambs, hung over the gate to watch the sheep dipped and the Christmas pig shot.(7)

The masters' children do not want to play with the servants' children who played with the sticks and stone but they want to play with the dolls as well as they do not want

to speak like them. They do not want to feed cowsmilk to the lamb and so on which are done by the servants' children. This shows that servants' children are living the rural life and masters' children are living the urban life. So, this extract shows that the subalterns are living the life rural and animalistic life.

Similarly, when Anna, Hendrik's wife is raped by Magda's father, Magda performs her brutal role instead of giving sympathy: "Well, come on, what you are going to do now? What are you going to say to your husband of what are you going to say to him about last night? Come on, speak up, what are a you going to tell your husband? What have you been up to here in the house? You slut! You filth!" (8).

Furthermore, Anna, the female servant is also used by Magda's father. Instead of making the servant, he makes her his mistress. Though, Anna cannot speak against him. On the other hand, Anna is treated badly by Magda because she does not accept her physical relationship with her father. Here, Anna is doubly victimized by the master on the one and by Magda on the other. So, Anna is proved as the subaltern in the novel.

Magda does not feel any kind of liberation from her own father: "I like inside a skin inside a house. There is not act I know of that will liberate me into the world" (10). Magda, though being the daughter of the master, does not have any freedom and liberation from the father himself. This is due to the patriarchal concept of the father she has to suffer on the one and due to her own hypocritical nature on the other.

Magda's family belongs to the white and bourgeoisie which cannot understand the feeling of black servants. When Hendrik arrives at the door of her in search of the job, her father exhibits the dominating role upon the black which is evident in his this dialogue:

What kind of work can you do? Can you work with sheep?

Yes, I know sheep, baas.'

'How old are you? Can you count?'

'Are you by yourself?'

'Yes baas, I am by myself now'.

'Do you know the people on my farm?'

'No baas, I know no one around here'

'Now listen carefully, what is your name?'

'Hendrik, my baas'. (22)

So, the dialogue also shows that how dominating and brutal role Magda's father plays. He wants to know each and everything about Hendrik who represents the marginal character as 'other'. On the other hand, Hendrik, the black servant, has a timid role who articulates the term like 'Yes baas', 'No baas' and 'My baas'. The marginal character cannot speak more than that in front of their masters. In this dialogue, the working class people or the blacks can be taken as the subaltern.

Similarly, as Hendrik comes to Magda and asks for job for his wife Anna, she also plays an important role of master. She say, "Look at me, Anna, don't be shy. Would you like to come and work in the house"? And "come on, child, speak, I won't eat you up" (32).

Although belonging to the same gender, Magda is not hesitant to show her inhumane behavior. Her languages signify that how she will behave with Anna? She says child, don't be shy and so on to her which shows the supremacy of whites upon the blacks and masters to slaves.

Magda wants to introduce herself with Anna and says, “Come, Anna, there is nothing to be afraid of. Do you know who I am?” (32). But, Anna becomes afraid and her mouth is trembling and she did not answer. Again, Magda asks, “Well, who am I? “Miss is the miss” (32). After asking twice the same question, then only Magda replies telling “Miss is the miss”. She did not say any more to her. This shows that the subalterns cannot speak properly and directly with their masters when needed too. They even tremble and cannot look straightly on the face of their masters. This is how the discourse is created on the subalterns. Even the subalterns cannot reply the necessary questions asked by their masters. Therefore, we can say that subalterns cannot speak as the theorist Gayatri Spivak said.

Magda imposes on Anna several works. She wants Anna to do many works for her: “Now listen: give her a mug of tea, then, she can get down to work. Show her where the things for scrubbing are kept; I want her to scrub the kitchen floor first of all. And you, Klein Anna, you must see to it that you bring your own mug and plate tomorrow. Will you remember?” (33). Similarly, the working class people cannot share the same mug for drinking and plate for eating. They are behaved as animal.

But, her character cannot remain in beauty and gentleness as usual. Her virtues do not remain within the certain boundaries. Guided by the family history she shows her hypocritical impulses by showing attraction toward the black servant Hendrik and his wife Anna. When her father takes Anna to his bed, she wants to kill him by shooting through the window with his rifle. In the aftermath of the event, drawn out by the father's slow death, she tries to achieve some intimacy with Hendrik and Anna.

Magda shows her hypocritical nature in the novel. Whatever sympathy she shows upon Anna that is not hearty and appropriate. When her father lures Anna to fulfill the sexual interest giving a brown paper packet which is full of candies and diamonds, she does not revolt against the ill treatment of her father. Rather she views all the activities of her own father with Anna. Besides, Magda is entirely disturbed and discarded by her own father. She feels;

Whatever way I turn I am blocked. In a month's time I can see it, I will be bringing my father and my maid breakfast in bed while Hendrik lounges in the kitchen eating biscuits, flicking his clasp knife into the tabletop, pinching my bottom as I pass, My father will buy new dresses for her while I wash out her soiled underwear. He and she will lie abed all day sunk in sensual sloth while Hendrik tipples jackals devour the sheep, and the work of generations falls to ruins. (54)

Magda's murderous fantasies give place of melodrama of sexual politics. As her father gets Anna and entices her to have physical pleasure, Magda, too, relents Hendrik for the fulfillment of sexual desire at any cost. These lines show that the working class people or the servants are dehumanized badly. They want to utilize the servants sensually and morally. They are not in credit either they accept them or to deny them. The politics of their masters is so hypocritical that they are between the two stones. Always the voiceless people have to suffer from such type of miracle played by the so called voiced people.

Thus, to challenge her father and his illegal relation with the servant, Anna, she also creates a sexual politics. She gets involved in the physical relation with Hendrik. She repeats the same mistake her father has committed:

My freedom is at risk, I am being worked into a corner by forces beyond my control, there will soon be nothing for me but to sit in a corner weeping and jerking my muscles. It makes no difference that the corner presents itself to me at this moment as a long walk on the open road at the end of it I shall discover that the earth is round: corners have many shapes.
(69)

This extract shows that Magda can utilize her freedom only through the distraction from her father and having a good relation with the servants. For the sake of balance, she chooses Hendrik as her sexual partner and fulfills her own desire. She uses Hendrik for her pleasure as she wants saying that her freedom is at risk. This shows that how the whites or masters take the working class people. Though, they are used on the behalf of their interest but also they are not satisfied. Therefore, marginal people do not have mutual relations with others as well as they are double victimized by the whites.

Like her father, she also entices and enforces Hendrik to come and approach her especially for the fulfillment of her sexual desire. When Hendrik opposes, she makes different tricks to adopt him: "I begin to hurl things at Hendrik, a kettle handfuls of spoon and knives, plates" (72). She also accuses him of stealing: "Where is the bottle? Tell me! Where is the brandy? Where did you get the brandy?" (72) Despite lots of efforts, Hendrik hesitates to come nearby her. At that time she expresses her anger, "You sot, you

filthy sot, you're finished here, I swear it! Pack your things and get out! I don't want to see you here again" (72).

The servant named Hendrik cannot come in touch with Magda for the physical fulfillment. But, Magda enforces him to come and embrace her. She accuses him as the thief and warned him to leave her home if he denied. This shows the hypocritical nature of Magda because she does not accept her father's illegal relation on the one but she wants to put illegal relation on the other. This is the bitter reality that the marginal people neither can do something nor cannot deny anything by their will. They are forced to do illegal works without their will.

Magda, once again, confronts Anna commanding her to return to Hendrik. She notes about her use of language of power: "It comes of itself one need no lessons, only meek folk around one and a grudge against them for not speaking back" (74).

Magda's efforts are enough to adopt Hendrik. She replaces her father with the black servant as she says:

Hendrik is embarrassed by my diligent hands and eyes, my dutiful hands and eyes, but all the same my woman's hands and eyes wandering to near this pale unprotected manhood. I am aware of his embarrassment, and turn and smile the first frank smile I have given him today, or perhaps in all the years I have known him he lowers his eyes. (75)

This extract says that Magda has illicit relation with Hendrik but she again says that Hendrik lowers his eyes at that moment. At this moment too Magda feels superior to Hendrik because of being white as well as mistress.

Besides, Magda again tries to subvert the hierarchy, and to relinquish her position with history. So, she kills her father once in her mind and once apparently in reality. But she comes to understand very slowly that the destruction of the old order, symbolized in her father will not allow any subversion of the ideology of power because that ideology is already encoded into language. Indeed, immediately after killing the father, Magda finds that she must reverse the hierarchy of the master/slave or self/other discourse with both Hendrik and his wife Anna. After having asked Hendrik twice to help her with the compose of her father, and after two refusals, Magda confronts Hendrik with a rifle, and finally gets his consent, she concludes: "When one truly means what one says, when one speaks not in shouts of panic but quietly, deliberately, decisively, then one is understood and obeyed. How pleasing to have identified a universal truth"(68).

Thus, the conflict between both father and daughter could not be resolved in the entire narrative because of their own self interest and different polarities. Even in the same family and the same race the reconciliation cannot be achieved because of their hubris, i.e. self-centeredness, racist and patriarchal norms and values.

Here, Magda expresses her mastery over a servant Anna, and takes a way to show her grudge and jealousy. Besides, Hendrik, the servant, is also victimized by Magda's threats and domination. She shows her power to engage in any kind of job or to dismiss her from the job. She argues: "Because, Hendrik. I am telling you here and now, if you give trouble I wash my hands of both of you, you can get out today. I want to make myself quite clear. What happens between you and Anna is none of my business; but if she comes to me and says you have been cruel to her, beware!" (81).

On the basis of narrative, Magda wants to take help from Hendrik to quench her thirst though he belongs to the poor and black family. Anyway, she wants to adopt Hendrik lacking the rank, position and status of her. So that she would get chance to get mastery over the sexual partner. She argues:

I stumble backward, let go by Hendrik, who turns away from me to the girl, who is gone. I fall heavily on my backside, my palms are scorched by the gravel, my skirts fly in the air, I am dizzy but gay and ready for more, perhaps what has been wrong all these years is simply that I have had no one to play with. The blood thuds in my eyes. I close my eyes: in a moment I will be myself. (83)

Magda's inability to explain her difference from the law stems from the fact that the laws fill language. Any attempt to speak this difference must remain silent. Although Magda clearly attempts a real subversion of the ideology of power encoded into language, she begins to realize that for such a subversion to occur from outside of history means that the subversion can never be spoken, can never be communicated to another. Indeed, at one point she feels that she has based on the white/black, master/slave or self/other discourse: "The words have come out without premeditation I feel joy. That must be how other people speak, from their heart"(87). Magda again says, "I grew stronger as he grows weaker and order Hendrik and Anna to sleep in her house" (87). The language of the heart cannot communicate.

In addition, Magda, the protagonist cannot run the sheep farm as done by her father after his death. Her father had run the farm smoothly. He had paid to the servants. But, when Magda becomes alone she could not pay to the servants. When the workers

ask for money, she says:" I have no money. You don't work anyway, so why should I give you money?" (105). As a result they left the farm. Magda too leaves the farm. She could not become the heir of the farm. This saying of Magda proves how cruel and dominating the masters are to the servants.

Furthermore, the servants are treated as animals in the novel. They even do not need proper beds to sleep. The given dialogue clarifies the fact as:

'Don't you want to sleep in a proper bed?'

She is bewildered.

'Don't you want to sleep in the bed in the guest-room?'

'No, miss.'

'What! Do you prefer to sleep here on the floor?'

'Yes, miss, on the floor.'(109)

According to the conversation, the servants don not want to sleep neither on the beds nor in the guest room. They want to sleep on the floor. They even cannot speak properly with their masters. Though they want everything that others want but due to many reasons as power, status, money and so on they have to suffer from such cases. This proves the actual condition of the servants.

Magda tells Anna about her name as "Tell me, Anna, what do you call me? What is my name? What do you call me in your thoughts?" "Miss?" Anna replied "Yes;but to you am I only the miss? Have I no name of my own?" Again Anna replied "Miss Magda?"(111) The given conversation also proves that how the subalterns are behaving with their masters. They even cannot tell their name directly. They use polite and respected words for their masters.

However, the servant's names are surnamed as Klein, Little and so on. They are not called with their original name. But when Magda tells Anna to call her with her only name as “I was once also Little Magda. But now I am just Magda, and you are just Anna. Can you say Magda? Come, say Magda for me”. In reply Anna said, “No, miss, I can’t” (111). According to the theorist Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak”? The subaltern cannot speak with others until and unless they get agency. The above dialogue proves the fact.

The conversation between the servant and master also proves the relation of subalterns with others. The given conversation also proves their relation as “Goodnight, Anna” but in reply Anna said “Goodnight, miss”(111). Anna even cannot say goodnight miss Magda even Magda urges Anna to say that. Though the subalterns can speak but due to many reasons as economy, color, class and so on they cannot speak. They are voiceless having the voice.

In *In the Heart of the Country*, the pressure of Hendrik's otherness finally prompts an extraordinary outburst of questions from Magda:

What more do you want? Must I weep? Must I kneel? Are you waiting for me to become your white slave? *Tell me! Speak!* Why do you never *say* anything? [. . .] How can I humiliate myself any further? Must the white woman lick your backside before you will give her a single smile? Do you know that you have never kissed me, never, never, never? Don't you people ever kiss? (118)

It is also clear that Herdrik visits Magda regularly during the night, and she is doing her best to learn the ways of physical love. During the physical love Magda time

and again asks Hendrik different questions but Hendrik do not reply. The language used in the extract is fully biased. Magda puts herself on the top as white slave, white woman and so on. But on the other side Hendrik does not speak a single word to Magda. She urges to speak but he does not. This extract clarifies that subaltern cannot speak until they get agency.

Magda says Hendrik and Anna to sleep in her house because she is alone in the house after her father's death. Magda is getting nervous when she is alone. Though Magda is getting nervos due to loneliness and urging Anna and Hendrik to sleep in her house but the domination lies in the given line uttered by Magda as, "I'll give you proper beds, you won't have to sleep on the floor again"(119). This line also clearly states that before this they used to sleep on the floor. They did not get proper beds too. The servants are deprived of getting proper beds as well as they have to sleep on the floor. The marginal class people are dominated by various facets by the masters.

The servants' consciousness is also not trusted. Though they can have better level of consciousness but that is under question. They are not believed due to the hegemonic discourse. The given extract proves the fact as:

It is the slave's consciousness that constitutes the master's certainty of his own truth. But the slave's consciousness is a dependent consciousness. So the master is not sure of the truth of his autonomy. His truth lies in an inessential consciousness and its inessential acts. (141)

The master's discourse upon the slaves is very dominating. Their consciousness is called dependent consciousness. Even the master is not sure of the consciousness of the

servant. Their truth lies in an inessential consciousness. This shows the condition of the servants in the novel.

The subalterns can only speak with the masters or whites when they have access on the base structure of the society. The base structure includes food, education, money, clothes and so on. According to the Marxist thinker Karl Marx, the society is composed of two groups i.e. Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. Here, the Proletariats do not have access to money, education and so on. As a result, they have to be hegemonized ideologically and economically. Therefore, the subalterns cannot go beyond the interest of their masters.

It shows that how cruel Magda as an employer. She does not take any interest to know the other. She does not try to understand how others are living in miserable condition. So, she depicts her characters and behaviors as an exploiter, cruel and immoral. She always lacks the moral responsibility towards the others i.e. blacks and working class people.

So, through this novel, *In the Heart of the Country*, Coetzee clearly depicts Magda as a hypocritical woman who seems helpful and co-operative, whereas the servants like Hendrik and his wife are portrayed as untrustworthy, insensible and unkind people. In other words, Magda's narrative attempts to present herself as a reliable white woman, whereas the subaltern or marginalized people are presented as unreliable people. In appearance, Magda seems to be a reliable character but in reality she turns to be a unreliable. She tries her best to provide image of herself through self justification and misreads other because of her ethical ignorance. She misunderstands others as a white lady and focuses as if she knows everything. Thus, her boastful and proud nature directly shows that she is superior to others, blacks and workers. In this way, we come to know

that Magda, who is unable to understand the blacks, is untrustworthy, insensible, unreliable and upholder of racist ideology. It shows why Coetzee's novel demands ethics and morality for the proper understanding of the novel. Therefore, Coetzee tactfully presents his narrator ironically to show the clash between the appearance and reality of the white character as well as the domination done upon the marginalized people.

Coetzee and the Problem of the Subaltern

J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* exposes the subaltern problem in South African white writing. Through the depiction of Magda, the white spinster, and her father, the writer shows the relations of subaltern with other people as well as their hypocritical behavior. They exercise their authority, religion, power and politics to other low class people. But, Coetzee remains far from these practices. In *In the Heart of the Country*, Magda forgets her position, power, race, ethical values and widens the gap in her relation with others such as Hendrik and Anna because of her self-centeredness, racial prejudice and hypocrisy. At first, she herself was neglected and dominated by her father when her father brought a new wife at home. Her father too engages with immoral activities. He physically, mentally and morally exploits the servant Anna in order to fulfill his physical desire. Though, Anna's husband and Magda's mother was with them. In this case both of the women are victimized by male which proves the subalterns position. Here, we can say that women are subalterns.

J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* has inserted different dominant representation of human kind to other human kind. The context of this novel is understood according to a particular established model of South African reality. The segregation of South Africa has direct impact on every sphere of society. Literature

especially fiction also cannot remain far away from that impact because of racial discrimination. The narratives of J.M. Coetzee especially in *In the Heart of the Country* shows the racial, gender and class conflict and depicts exploitation, hypocrisy and brutality of whites, masters, males upon the blacks, females or servants. Therefore, Magda, the white spinster or narrator, is presented ironically. Her evaluation of herself and others cannot be taken at face value. Rather her perception in broad sense should be taken with suspicion. In appearance she seems to be a reliable narrator but in reality she forms to be an unreliable one. It is because Magda confidently justifies her own action and rationalizes the actions of others.

Magda tries her best to provide positive image of herself through self justification and misreads others because of her ethical ignorance in terms of race, gender and sexuality. She has racial and gender illiteracy. Being westernized, rationalist and ex-colonizer, she is haunted by apartheid crime and acts. She misunderstands others but pretends as if she knows everything. It is because she considers herself to be superior to others.

Coetzee depicts Magda as untrustworthy, unreliable, insensible, neo-oriental and upholder of racist ideas who misunderstands not only the marginalized people like Hendrik and Anna but also her own father and herself. It shows that *In the Heart of the Country* demands humanity, ethics and morality for the proper understanding of the life. Until and unless we provide humanity, ethics and morality for this novel, the understanding of the self and others remains incomplete. We should provide them through the perspective of the others, only then, we understand them. Her narration is deception and self-deceptive and seems to be an effort for justifying her relation with

Hendrik and Anna. However, her words in fact allow her to distance herself from them. Through narration Magda subtly advances her own interest. Magda is racist who is ignorant of her own image and identity. She is haunted by her hypocritical behavior and her seduction of her own servant. Her perception is self-serving and her sympathy upon the victims of apartheid is just like 'crocodile's tear'. As a result, she can neither empathize others nor she can provide true love to others. She is responsible for her own downfall and falls in disgrace because of her own faults. It is because racism generates inhumanity, domination, exploitation, marginalization and ethical crisis in South African society.

According to Coetzee, Magda's self-centered and self-representation shows her hypocritical nature and remarkable capacity to exploit/dominate others. The assumption of different roles suggests the self-referential nature of the universe in which she acts. As a result, there is strengthening of the tension between imagination and reality. For that purpose Coetzee parodies Magda and her father in *In the Heart of the Country*. They exercise their authority, religion and politics upon others. But Coetzee remains outside from these practices. He entirely discards the history and false narration.

Likewise, Coetzee clearly shows that the subalterns are dominated, exploited, used and abused by their masters or white people. The masters or white people also have ethical problems in their behavior. In the novel, at first females are shown subalterns but in the later phase of the novel the servants or the working class people are shown as the subalterns. When Magda's father brought second wife at home at that time he neglected Magda. Magda was absent but she was not missed. Her father pays no attention to her absence. To her father she is absent in her life. Similarly, Magda's mother lived and died

under her husband's thumb signifies that females are marginalized or dominated by the males. Likewise, Magda's father wants son to be the heir of the family. This also symbolizes that the females are subalterns in the novel. Female cannot be the heir of the family according to the novel.

Similarly, in the later phase of the text, the working class people or the blacks are shown as subalterns. Hendrik and Anna are exploited, dominated and tortured by their masters. Anna, the female servant is physically used by her own masters whereas Magda's hypocritical behavior always tortured Hendrik and Anna both. When Anna is exploited by her master neither Hendrik nor Anna speak against him. Anna's name is also changed to 'Klein-Anna' as well as she is called 'Little-Anna' too sometimes but the master is called only 'baas' and mistress is called 'miss'. Their even name is also not called. So, the novel says something about the quest for love, about the relation between master and slave and between white and black. The distance between the masters and servants is shown wide which proves them as the subaltern.

Therefore, we can say that females and blacks or working class people are subalterns. According to the theorist Gayatri Spivak, "Can the subaltern speak?" The subalterns cannot speak. They are voiceless. Their voices are muted by the power of the center people. Until and unless they are powerful, they got agency they cannot speak.

Representing the Voiceless in Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*

The present research focuses on the issues of the subaltern voice. The color discrimination, gender domination and exploitation of the servants by the hypocritical behavior of the white master are shown in the novel. Therefore, the novel is full of working class as well as black people where the servants are being dehumanized in the world of domination. *In the Heart of the Country* is the second novel by Nobel laureate J. M. Coetzee written in 1977. It is a presentation and critique of the violence inherent in the colonialist and imperialist mentality of the Western world.

In the novel, the servants are being tortured, buttressed and treated relatively inferior by their masters, which opens the door of subaltern. Gayatri Spivak, Gramsci, Ranjit Guha and Pandey are the thinkers of subaltern studies whose insights are used to prove the relative domination.

The condition of the black workers is pitiable. They are found of being deprived of basic democratic and human rights. Despite the several proclamation and consent made by the government, the workers/blacks are dominated by the whites in several fields. Though, the servants are inferior to their masters but in this novel they are treated more than that. They are sexually abused and tortured time and again. Similarly, the novel narrates the issues of the racism, slavery and the trauma that results from the domination. The domination in the novel is relative in the sense the slaves are relatively suppressed by their masters. This relative domination creates the problem, which is addressed through the tool of subaltern. Therefore, this research work attempted to find answers of the given research questions: Why is the protagonist hypocrite in nature? Why

the female servant, Anna is doubly victimized? What kinds of relation do subaltern have with other people? How are subalterns treated?

The present work can be studied from multiple dimensions as racial discrimination, master servant relation, moral degradation, female discrimination, psychological disposition, lust, loneliness and so on. *In the Heart of the Country* has received a contradictory response since its publication in 1977. Various critics, scholars, reviewers and writers too have commented the novel from different perspectives like psychological, racial, feminist, linguistic and narrative technique. Critic Josephine Dodd has observed this novel from the psychological perspective:

Magda's perception of herself is shaped by her having absorbed the lessons of literature and suggests that she may be framed by circumscribed by literacy and psychoanalytic discourse which is ill- suited to her specific spatio-temporal experience. This frame once Magda is scripted by our dominant psychoanalytic discourse to identify her as wanting to be seduced by her father. (139)

Here, she stresses upon herself with the knowledge of psychoanalytic discourse and seems closeness with her own father to fulfill her own sexual interest. This is not directly stated by her but we can understand through her narration of the events. From the perspective of the critic, the whites or masters do not have any ethical identity. They can do anything to fulfill their interest. Therefore, at first she was attracted with her own father but later without caring her own value she got involved with the servant.

Besides the psychoanalytical perspective, Coetzee's use of the white woman narrator in *In the Heart of the Country* is closely related to the post-structuralism form of

the feminine as necessarily disruptive of narrative. In particular, Coetzee engages with both different feminisms' and the feminine as a means by which to address the problems of narrative and discourse. Along with the other, *In the Heart of the Country* is most often in the context of elaborating on the ways in which Coetzee is undermining feminist discourse in order to criticize western feminism. Much as Coetzee provides a critique of Anglo-American feminist discourse. Fiona Proby agrees with the treatment of Coetzee's female narrator:

The difference stems from Coetzee's treatment of liberal Anglo-American feminism and his utilization of different feminism(s). Magda is a parody of Adrienne Rich's *Dover in Diving into the Wreck*, and she is a parody of feminist quest for identity beyond phallic discourse that novel represents a kind of liberal Anglo-American feminism which privileges a contradictory reversal of positions over a deconstruction of positionality purpose. (15)

Through this paragraph, we know that Coetzee is masterfully correcting a wayward and universalizing line of feminist thought. His use of feminism is related to broader phenomena of the use of the feminine as a medium for the postcolonial settler identity crisis, for the authority of the author, and for the crisis of representation.

Likewise, Derek Attridge's account of ethics of the other is the fullest elaborations of Coetzee's ethics: "Though important, the Levinasian lens is not the only means by which one can understand Coetzee's ethics. Turning to a seemingly older-fashioned ethical term, Coetzee himself draws our attention to his pre-occupation with writing and truth" (2).

Analyzing the novel, Stephen Watson argues: "*In the Heart of the Country* is concerned to demonstrate that realism is not real at all, but simply a production of language, a code that people have come to accept as natural" (375). On the other hand, Helen Tiffin has seen Coetzee's deliberate eschewing of realism as "a way of emphasizing the complicity of Western narrative and history" (32). Another critic, Teresa Dovey opines: "Coetzee deliberately adopts the models and theories inhabiting them in a way that closely approximates the Derridian strategy of deconstruction" (10).

Therefore, *In the Heart of the Country* is studied or observed from several angles by different critics, reviewers and essayists in terms of feminism, racism, psychoanalysis, linguistics and narrative techniques. But observing the ground reality and the real situation of South African society, this novel is very appropriate in the case of subaltern studies. Domination and injustice to the servants and female is the vibrant, common and striking issue created by the different characters. Through the lens of subaltern, the work can best be approached. The servants are treated and behaved as inhumane by their masters who are white as well. The masters do immoral activities in order to fulfill their erotic desire and blame the workers again for that reason. The hypocritical nature of masters hovers around the novel which shows that the workers or marginal groups have to suffer.

In this way, above mentioned critics have given various views to the novel, but the issue of subaltern has yet been abandoned, which was fulfilled by the present research.

This study is based on library research apart from the primary text; the researcher concerned different researches, criticisms, reviews and so on to support the claim. As

well as the suggestions, comments, guidance of supervisor, lectures and professors had great value. The researcher also used web sites related to the study. The issues of the subaltern conceptualized by Gayatri Spivak, Ranjit Guha, Dipesh Chakrawarty and David Ludden are taken into consideration. Other different sources were also concerned to make the analysis of the novel from the view point of subaltern.

Although the novel can be studied from multiple facets as: racial discrimination, female domination, ethical criticism, psychoanalytical perspective and so on. But due to the limitation of time, money, sources and other factors the present research has only concerned on the aspect of subaltern. Specially, the eye of subaltern in *In the Heart of the Country* is used neglecting other aspects to make the thesis prove the hypothesis. The incidents of the novel mirrors that the females as well as servants existence are silenced by the absolute power of males and masters which also confirms the features of existentialism. But, the limitation of the research is that it only sticks to the notion of the subaltern. The issue of how the relative domination has been in practice is the basic concern of research.

The current research work primarily aims to show the domination and injustice to the subaltern as well as the thesis also investigates the hypocritical nature of the white narrator-cum- protagonist, Magda, her father's immoral activities, doubly victimization of the female servant and so on.

Treatment of the Subaltern in Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*

The female protagonist-cum-narrator in J. M. Coetzee's novel, *In the Heart of the Country*, seems to be sympathizing victims of apartheid on the surface level. However, in reality, different subaltern's problems arise due to racial discrimination. When we talk

about 'apartheid', South African policy of separate development which was initiated by the whites in 1948 AD, and lasted up to 1990 AD, we cannot ignore the whites' exploitation upon the blacks, the coloreds and the Asians in South Africa where racial discrimination was institutionalized by law.

The driving force behind apartheid is the discredited concept of the superiority of the white race. Its historical circumstances brought the white race into contact with non-white races. The white people argue that their duty was to maintain the purity of the race at any cost even though the members of that race constitute a minority. They consider therefore, that if the white in South Africa, as heirs to the western civilization, are to secure its domination over the non-whites, and repudiate the principle of racial equality. For this reason, the non-white cannot be granted the same political rights that the whites enjoy; otherwise the whites would be covered by them. In addition, each of the racial group in South Africa presents different heredity characteristics and has not attained the same level of culture. Racial integration will be detrimental to all of them. Whites and non-whites form distinct social and economic groups and consequently should live separately. This segregation of South Africa has direct impact on every spheres of society. Literature is also heavily affected by this inhumane practice of racial discrimination. The narratives of J.M. Coetzee's novels entirely exhibit the white domination, exploitation and their anarchy. His novel, *In the Heart of the Country*, also depicts the hypocrisy, brutality and exploitation of whites upon the blacks. Magda, the white spinster cum narrator is presented ironically. Magda's evaluation of her 'self' and 'others' cannot be taken simply. Rather her perception in broad sense should be taken with suspicion.

Here, her relationship with the servants, Hendrik and his wife, reflects that she is showy and artificial in terms of love and affection towards them. But, in deep level, she shows her opportunistic attitudes towards other. She hesitates to speak about the newlyweds and tells us that it is Hendrik who has brought home a new wife. So, in appearance, she seems to be reliable narrator but in reality she turns to be an unreliable character. It is because Magda confidently justifies her own action and rationalizes the actions of others.

Magda, the white spinster, is capable of vivid expression of her emotions. As the narrative unfolds, she expresses her anger, her bitterness, and her hatred towards her father. So she shows her disinterestedness towards him. Perhaps, she thinks that her father can be the cruel and heartless person not only in her career but also for her family. Her father's immoral and violent activities might be the cause to express her emotions and feeling. When her father's new wife comes at home with her father, she feels:

My father's first wife, my mother, was a frail, gentle, loving woman who lived and died under her husband's thumb. Her husband never forgave her for failing to bear him a son. His relentless sexual demands led to her death in child birth to the rough rude boy – heir my father wanted, therefore, she died. The doctor came too late. Summoned by a messenger on a bicycle, he had to come trundling along forty miles of farm-track in his donkey-cart. When he arrived my mother already lay composed on her deathbed, patient, bloodless, apologetic. (2)

Definitely, it makes her rude towards her father and step mother. As a result, she evokes her own disinterestedness towards the family member. The given lines show that

the narrator herself is the subaltern character or daughter is the subaltern because narrator's father wants a son from her mother but she cannot bear as well as narrator's mother died under her husband thumb also symbolizes that female are subalterns in the novel. Only the father wanted son the heir of the family not the daughter.

Magda's father does not regard her in his personal and family matter. There is a dearth of mutual understanding between father and daughter, and they have no co-operation at all. Without considering the future of her daughter her father proceeds his every task according to his own will. He makes Magda alone forever, taking his new wife. So, she expresses:

I was not watching my father bear his bride home across the flats because I was in my room in the dark west wind beating my heart out and bidding my time. I should have been standing ready to greet them with smiles and offers of tea, but I was not. I was absent. I was not missed. My father pays no attention to my absence. To my father I have been an absence all my life. Therefore, instead of being the womanly warmth at the heart of this house I have been a zero, null, a vacuum towards which all collapses inward, a turbulence, muffled, grey, like a chill draft eddying through the corridors, neglected, vengeful. (2)

From these lines of the novel we can state that in front of the father Magda, the central character is ignored and not paid attention. He does not have any concern of her and she seems as absence to him. Being the central character in front of her father Magda is null or zero. This shows that female has no value in the family. Therefore, according to

this extract we can say that the females are marginalized and neglected. So, the females are the subaltern.

Having the feeling of melancholy, she wants to revolt against her own father, and the traditional ideas that impose the bad rules over the youngster like her. She opines: "With cunning and treachery, if necessary, I fight against becoming one of the forgotten ones of history I am a spinster with a locked diary but I am more than that" (4).

Likewise, subalterns are inferior in every sectors of life. Even the dolls for the children to play and language to speak also differ from the children of masters to servants. Magda utters the given dialogue as:

I grew up with the servants' children. I spoke like one of them before I learned to speak like this. I played their stick and stone games before I knew I could have a dolls' house with Father and Mother and Peter and Jane asleep in their own beds and clean clothes ready in the chest whose drawers slid in and out while Nan the dog and Felix the cat snoozed before the kitchen coals. With the servants' children I searched the veld from khamma-roots, fed cowsmilk to the orphaned lambs, hung over the gate to watch the sheep dipped and the Christmas pig shot.(7)

The masters' children do not want to play with the servants' children who played with the sticks and stone but they want to play with the dolls as well as they do not want to speak like them. They do not want to feed cowsmilk to the lamb and so on which are done by the servants' children. This shows that servants' children are living the rural life and masters' children are living the urban life. So, this extract shows that the subalterns are living the life rural and animalistic life.

Similarly, when Anna, Hendrik's wife is raped by Magda's father, Magda performs her brutal role instead of giving sympathy: "Well, come on, what you are going to do now? What are you going to say to your husband of what are you going to say to him about last night? Come on, speak up, what are a you going to tell your husband? What have you been up to here in the house? You slut! You filth!" (8).

Furthermore, Anna, the female servant is also used by Magda's father. Instead of making the servant, he makes her his mistress. Though, Anna cannot speak against him. On the other hand, Anna is treated badly by Magda because she does not accept her physical relationship with her father. Here, Anna is doubly victimized by the master on the one and by Magda on the other. So, Anna is proved as the subaltern in the novel.

Magda does not feel any kind of liberation from her own father: "I like inside a skin inside a house. There is not act I know of that will liberate me into the world" (10). Magda, though being the daughter of the master, does not have any freedom and liberation from the father himself. This is due to the patriarchal concept of the father she has to suffer on the one and due to her own hypocritical nature on the other.

Magda's family belongs to the white and bourgeoisie which cannot understand the feeling of black servants. When Hendrik arrives at the door of her in search of the job, her father exhibits the dominating role upon the black which is evident in his this dialogue:

What kind of work can you do? Can you work with sheep?

Yes, I know sheep, baas.'

'How old are you? Can you count?'

'Are you by yourself?'

'Yes baas, I am by myself now'.

'Do you know the people on my farm?'

'No baas, I know no one around here'

'Now listen carefully, what is your name?'

'Hendrik, my baas'. (22)

So, the dialogue also shows that how dominating and brutal role Magda's father plays. He wants to know each and everything about Hendrik who represents the marginal character as 'other'. On the other hand, Hendrik, the black servant, has a timid role who articulates the term like 'Yes baas', 'No baas' and 'My baas'. The marginal character cannot speak more than that in front of their masters. In this dialogue, the working class people or the blacks can be taken as the subaltern.

Similarly, as Hendrik comes to Magda and asks for job for his wife Anna, she also plays an important role of master. She says, "Look at me, Anna, don't be shy. Would you like to come and work in the house"? And "come on, child, speak, I won't eat you up" (32).

Although belonging to the same gender, Magda is not hesitant to show her inhumane behavior. Her languages signify that how she will behave with Anna? She says child, don't be shy and so on to her which shows the supremacy of whites upon the blacks and masters to slaves.

Magda wants to introduce herself with Anna and says, "Come, Anna, there is nothing to be afraid of. Do you know who I am?" (32). But, Anna becomes afraid and her mouth is trembling and she did not answer. Again, Magda asks, "Well, who am I? "Miss is the miss" (32). After asking twice the same question, then only Magda replies telling

“Miss is the miss”. She did not say any more to her. This shows that the subalterns cannot speak properly and directly with their masters when needed too. They even tremble and cannot look straightly on the face of their masters. This is how the discourse is created on the subalterns. Even the subalterns cannot reply the necessary questions asked by their masters. Therefore, we can say that subalterns cannot speak as the theorist Gayatri Spivak said.

Magda imposes on Anna several works. She wants Anna to do many works for her: “Now listen: give her a mug of tea, then, she can get down to work. Show her where the things for scrubbing are kept; I want her to scrub the kitchen floor first of all. And you, Klein Anna, you must see to it that you bring your own mug and plate tomorrow. Will you remember?” (33). Similarly, the working class people cannot share the same mug for drinking and plate for eating. They are behaved as animal.

But, her character cannot remain in beauty and gentleness as usual. Her virtues do not remain within the certain boundaries. Guided by the family history she shows her hypocritical impulses by showing attraction toward the black servant Hendrik and his wife Anna. When her father takes Anna to his bed, she wants to kill him by shooting through the window with his rifle. In the aftermath of the event, drawn out by the father's slow death, she tries to achieve some intimacy with Hendrik and Anna.

Magda shows her hypocritical nature in the novel. Whatever sympathy she shows upon Anna that is not heartly and appropriate. When her father lures Anna to fulfill the sexual interest giving a brown paper packet which is full of candies and diamonds, she does not revolt against the ill treatment of her father. Rather she views all the activities of

her own father with Anna. Besides, Magda is entirely disturbed and discarded by her own father. She feels;

Whatever way I turn I am blocked. In a month's time I can see it, I will be bringing my father and my maid breakfast in bed while Hendrik lounges in the kitchen eating biscuits, flicking his clasp knife into the tabletop, pinching my bottom as I pass, My father will buy new dresses for her while I wash out her soiled underwear. He and she will lie abed all day sunk in sensual sloth while Hendrik tipples jackals devour the sheep, and the work of generations falls to ruins. (54)

Magda's murderous fantasies give place of melodrama of sexual politics. As her father gets Anna and entices her to have physical pleasure, Magda, too, relents Hendrik for the fulfillment of sexual desire at any cost. These lines show that the working class people or the servants are dehumanized badly. They want to utilize the servants sensually and morally. They are not in credit either they accept them or to deny them. The politics of their masters is so hypocritical that they are between the two stones. Always the voiceless people have to suffer from such type of miracle played by the so called voiced people.

Thus, to challenge her father and his illegal relation with the servant, Anna, she also creates a sexual politics. She gets involved in the physical relation with Hendrik. She repeats the same mistake her father has committed:

My freedom is at risk, I am being worked into a corner by forces beyond my control, there will soon be nothing for me but to sit in a corner weeping and jerking my muscles. It makes no difference that the corner

presents itself to me at this moment as a long walk on the open road at the end of it I shall discover that the earth is round: corners have many shapes.

(69)

This extract shows that Magda can utilize her freedom only through the distraction from her father and having a good relation with the servants. For the sake of balance, she chooses Hendrik as her sexual partner and fulfills her own desire. She uses Hendrik for her pleasure as she wants saying that her freedom is at risk. This shows that how the whites or masters take the working class people. Though, they are used on the behalf of their interest but also they are not satisfied. Therefore, marginal people do not have mutual relations with others as well as they are double victimized by the whites.

Like her father, she also entices and enforces Hendrik to come and approach her especially for the fulfillment of her sexual desire. When Hendrik opposes, she makes different tricks to adopt him: "I begin to hurl things at Hendrik, a kettle handfuls of spoon and knives, plates" (72). She also accuses him of stealing: "Where is the bottle? Tell me! Where is the brandy? Where did you get the brandy?" (72) Despite lots of efforts, Hendrik hesitates to come nearby her. At that time she expresses her anger, "You sot, you filthy sot, you're finished here, I swear it! Pack your things and get out! I don't want to see you here again" (72).

The servant named Hendrik cannot come in touch with Magda for the physical fulfillment. But, Magda enforces him to come and embrace her. She accuses him as the thief and warned him to leave her home if he denied. This shows the hypocritical nature of Magda because she does not accept her father's illegal relation on the one but she wants to put illegal relation on the other. This is the bitter reality that the marginal people

neither can do something nor cannot deny anything by their will. They are forced to do illegal works without their will.

Magda, once again, confronts Anna commanding her to return to Hendrik. She notes about her use of language of power: "It comes of itself one need no lessons, only meek folk around one and a grudge against them for not speaking back" (74).

Magda's efforts are enough to adopt Hendrik. She replaces her father with the black servant as she says:

Hendrik is embarrassed by my diligent hands and eyes, my dutiful hands and eyes, but all the same my woman's hands and eyes wandering to near this pale unprotected manhood. I am aware of his embarrassment, and turn and smile the first frank smile I have given him today, or perhaps in all the years I have known him he lowers his eyes. (75)

This extract says that Magda has illicit relation with Hendrik but she again says that Hendrik lowers his eyes at that moment. At this moment too Magda feels superior to Hendrik because of being white as well as mistress.

Besides, Magda again tries to subvert the hierarchy, and to relinquish her position with history. So, she kills her father once in her mind and once apparently in reality. But she comes to understand very slowly that the destruction of the old order, symbolized in her father will not allow any subversion of the ideology of power because that ideology is already encoded into language. Indeed, immediately after killing the father, Magda finds that she must reverse the hierarchy of the master/slave or self/other discourse with both Hendrik and his wife Anna. After having asked Hendrik twice to help her with the compose of her father, and after two refusals, Magda confronts Hendrik with a rifle, and

finally gets his consent, she concludes: "When one truly means what one says, when one speaks not in shouts of panic but quietly, deliberately, decisively, then one is understood and obeyed. How pleasing to have identified a universal truth"(68).

Thus, the conflict between both father and daughter could not be resolved in the entire narrative because of their own self interest and different polarities. Even in the same family and the same race the reconciliation cannot be achieved because of their hubris, i.e. self-centeredness, racist and patriarchal norms and values.

Here, Magda expresses her mastery over a servant Anna, and takes a way to show her grudge and jealousy. Besides, Hendrik, the servant, is also victimized by Magda's threats and domination. She shows her power to engage in any kind of job or to dismiss her from the job. She argues: "Because, Hendrik. I am telling you here and now, if you give trouble I wash my hands of both of you, you can get out today. I want to make myself quite clear. What happens between you and Anna is none of my business; but if she comes to me and says you have been cruel to her, beware!" (81).

On the basis of narrative, Magda wants to take help from Hendrik to quench her thirst though he belongs to the poor and black family. Anyway, she wants to adopt Hendrik lacking the rank, position and status of her. So that she would get chance to get mastery over the sexual partner. She argues:

I stumble backward, let go by Hendrik, who turns away from me to the girl, who is gone. I fall heavily on my backside, my palms are scorched by the gravel, my skirts fly in the air, I am dizzy but gay and ready for more, perhaps what has been wrong all these years is simply that I have had no

one to play with. The blood thuds in my eyes. I close my eyes: in a moment I will be myself. (83)

Magda's inability to explain her difference from the law stems from the fact that the laws fill language. Any attempt to speak this difference must remain silent. Although Magda clearly attempts a real subversion of the ideology of power encoded into language, she begins to realize that for such a subversion to occur from outside of history means that the subversion can never be spoken, can never be communicated to another. Indeed, at one point she feels that she has based on the white/black, master/slave or self/other discourse: "The words have come out without premeditation I feel joy. That must be how other people speak, from their heart"(87). Magda again says, "I grew stronger as he grows weaker and order Hendrik and Anna to sleep in her house" (87). The language of the heart cannot communicate.

In addition, Magda, the protagonist cannot run the sheep farm as done by her father after his death. Her father had run the farm smoothly. He had paid to the servants. But, when Magda becomes alone she could not pay to the servants. When the workers ask for money, she says:" I have no money. You don't work anyway, so why should I give you money?" (105). As a result they left the farm. Magda too leaves the farm. She could not become the heir of the farm. This saying of Magda proves how cruel and dominating the masters are to the servants.

Furthermore, the servants are treated as animals in the novel. They even do not need proper beds to sleep. The given dialogue clarifies the fact as:

'Don't you want to sleep in a proper bed?'

She is bewildered.

'Don't you want to sleep in the bed in the guest-room?'

'No, miss.'

'What! Do you prefer to sleep here on the floor?'

'Yes, miss, on the floor.'(109)

According to the conversation, the servants don not want to sleep neither on the beds nor in the guest room. They want to sleep on the floor. They even cannot speak properly with their masters. Though they want everything that others want but due to many reasons as power, status, money and so on they have to suffer from such cases. This proves the actual condition of the servants.

Magda tells Anna about her name as “Tell me, Anna, what do you call me? What is my name? What do you call me in your thoughts?” ‘Miss?’ Anna replied ‘Yes;but to you am I only the miss? Have I no name of my own?’ Again Anna replied ‘Miss Magda?’(111) The given conversation also proves that how the subalterns are behaving with their masters. They even cannot tell their name directly. They use polite and respected words for their masters.

However, the servant's names are surnamed as Klein, Little and so on. They are not called with their original name. But when Magda tells Anna to call her with her only name as “I was once also Little Magda. But now I am just Magda, and you are just Anna. Can you say Magda? Come, say Magda for me”. In reply Anna said, “No, miss, I can’t” (111). According to the theorist Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak”? The subaltern cannot speak with others until and unless they get agency. The above dialogue proves the fact.

The conversation between the servant and master also proves the relation of subalterns with others. The given conversation also proves their relation as “Goodnight, Anna” but in reply Anna said “Goodnight, miss”(111). Anna even cannot say goodnight miss Magda even Magda urges Anna to say that. Though the subalterns can speak but due to many reasons as economy, color, class and so on they cannot speak. They are voiceless having the voice.

In *In the Heart of the Country*, the pressure of Hendrik's otherness finally prompts an extraordinary outburst of questions from Magda:

What more do you want? Must I weep? Must I kneel? Are you waiting for me to become your white slave? *Tell me! Speak!* Why do you never say anything? [. . .] How can I humiliate myself any further? Must the white woman lick your backside before you will give her a single smile? Do you know that you have never kissed me, never, never, never? Don't you people ever kiss? (118)

It is also clear that Hendrik visits Magda regularly during the night, and she is doing her best to learn the ways of physical love. During the physical love Magda time and again asks Hendrik different questions but Hendrik do not reply. The language used in the extract is fully biased. Magda puts herself on the top as white slave, white woman and so on. But on the other side Hendrik does not speak a single word to Magda. She urges to speak but he does not. This extract clarifies that subaltern cannot speak until they get agency.

Magda says Hendrik and Anna to sleep in her house because she is alone in the house after her father's death. Magda is getting nervous when she is alone. Though

Magda is getting nervous due to loneliness and urging Anna and Hendrik to sleep in her house but the domination lies in the given line uttered by Magda as, "I'll give you proper beds, you won't have to sleep on the floor again"(119). This line also clearly states that before this they used to sleep on the floor. They did not get proper beds too. The servants are deprived of getting proper beds as well as they have to sleep on the floor. The marginal class people are dominated by various facets by the masters.

The servants' consciousness is also not trusted. Though they can have a better level of consciousness but that is under question. They are not believed due to the hegemonic discourse. The given extract proves the fact as:

It is the slave's consciousness that constitutes the master's certainty of his own truth. But the slave's consciousness is a dependent consciousness. So the master is not sure of the truth of his autonomy. His truth lies in an inessential consciousness and its inessential acts. (141)

The master's discourse upon the slaves is very dominating. Their consciousness is called dependent consciousness. Even the master is not sure of the consciousness of the servant. Their truth lies in an inessential consciousness. This shows the condition of the servants in the novel.

The subalterns can only speak with the masters or whites when they have access on the base structure of the society. The base structure includes food, education, money, clothes and so on. According to the Marxist thinker Karl Marx, the society is composed of two groups i.e. Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. Here, the Proletariats do not have access to money, education and so on. As a result, they have to be hegemonized ideologically and economically. Therefore, the subalterns cannot go beyond the interest of their masters.

It shows that how cruel Magda as an employer. She does not take any interest to know the other. She does not try to understand how others are living in miserable condition. So, she depicts her characters and behaviors as an exploiter, cruel and immoral. She always lacks the moral responsibility towards the others i.e. blacks and working class people.

So, through this novel, *In the Heart of the Country*, Coetzee clearly depicts Magda as a hypocritical woman who seems helpful and co-operative, whereas the servants like Hendrik and his wife are portrayed as untrustworthy, insensible and unkind people. In other words, Magda's narrative attempts to present herself as a reliable white woman, whereas the subaltern or marginalized people are presented as unreliable people. In appearance, Magda seems to be a reliable character but in reality she turns to be a unreliable. She tries her best to provide image of herself through self justification and misreads other because of her ethical ignorance. She misunderstands others as a white lady and focuses as if she knows everything. Thus, her boastful and proud nature directly shows that she is superior to others, blacks and workers. In this way, we come to know that Magda, who is unable to understand the blacks, is untrustworthy, insensible, unreliable and upholder of racist ideology. It shows why Coetzee's novel demands ethics and morality for the proper understanding of the novel. Therefore, Coetzee tactfully presents his narrator ironically to show the clash between the appearance and reality of the white character as well as the domination done upon the marginalized people.

Coetzee and the Problem of the Subaltern

J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* exposes the subaltern problem in South African white writing. Through the depiction of Magda, the white spinster, and her father, the writer shows the relations of subaltern with other people as well as their hypocritical behavior. They exercise their authority, religion, power and politics to other low class people. But, Coetzee remains far from these practices. In *In the Heart of the Country*, Magda forgets her position, power, race, ethical values and widens the gap in her relation with others such as Hendrik and Anna because of her self-centeredness, racial prejudice and hypocrisy. At first, she herself was neglected and dominated by her father when her father brought a new wife at home. Her father too engages with immoral activities. He physically, mentally and morally exploits the servant Anna in order to fulfill his physical desire. Though, Anna's husband and Magda's mother was with them. In this case both of the women are victimized by male which proves the subalterns position. Here, we can say that women are subalterns.

J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* has inserted different dominant representation of human kind to other human kind. The context of this novel is understood according to a particular established model of South African reality. The segregation of South Africa has direct impact on every sphere of society. Literature especially fiction also cannot remain far away from that impact because of racial discrimination. The narratives of J.M. Coetzee especially in *In the Heart of the Country* shows the racial, gender and class conflict and depicts exploitation, hypocrisy and brutality of whites, masters, males upon the blacks, females or servants. Therefore, Magda, the white spinster or narrator, is presented ironically. Her evaluation of herself

and others cannot be taken at face value. Rather her perception in broad sense should be taken with suspicion. In appearance she seems to be a reliable narrator but in reality she forms to be an unreliable one. It is because Magda confidently justifies her own action and rationalizes the actions of others.

Magda tries her best to provide positive image of herself through self justification and misreads others because of her ethical ignorance in terms of race, gender and sexuality. She has racial and gender illiteracy. Being westernized, rationalist and ex-colonizer, she is haunted by apartheid crime and acts. She misunderstands others but pretends as if she knows everything. It is because she considers herself to be superior to others.

Coetzee depicts Magda as untrustworthy, unreliable, insensible, neo-oriental and upholder of racist ideas who misunderstands not only the marginalized people like Hendrik and Anna but also her own father and herself. It shows that In *the Heart of the Country* demands humanity, ethics and morality for the proper understanding of the life. Until and unless we provide humanity, ethics and morality for this novel, the understanding of the self and others remains incomplete. We should provide them through the perspective of the others, only then, we understand them. Her narration is deception and self-deceptive and seems to be an effort for justifying her relation with Hendrik and Anna. However, her words in fact allow her to distance herself from them. Through narration Magda subtly advances her own interest. Magda is racist who is ignorant of her own image and identity. She is haunted by her hypocritical behavior and her seduction of her own servant. Her perception is self-serving and her sympathy upon the victims of apartheid is just like 'crocodile's tear'. As a result, she can neither

empathize others nor she can provide true love to others. She is responsible for her own downfall and falls in disgrace because of her own faults. It is because racism generates inhumanity, domination, exploitation, marginalization and ethical crisis in South African society.

According to Coetzee, Magda's self-centered and self-representation shows her hypocritical nature and remarkable capacity to exploit/dominate others. The assumption of different roles suggests the self-referential nature of the universe in which she acts. As a result, there is strengthening of the tension between imagination and reality. For that purpose Coetzee parodies Magda and her father in *In the Heart of the Country*. They exercise their authority, religion and politics upon others. But Coetzee remains outside from these practices. He entirely discards the history and false narration.

Likewise, Coetzee clearly shows that the subalterns are dominated, exploited, used and abused by their masters or white people. The masters or white people also have ethical problems in their behavior. In the novel, at first females are shown subalterns but in the later phase of the novel the servants or the working class people are shown as the subalterns. When Magda's father brought second wife at home at that time he neglected Magda. Magda was absent but she was not missed. Her father pays no attention to her absence. To her father she is absent in her life. Similarly, Magda's mother lived and died under her husband's thumb signifies that females are marginalized or dominated by the males. Likewise, Magda's father wants son to be the heir of the family. This also symbolizes that the females are subalterns in the novel. Female cannot be the heir of the family according to the novel.

Similarly, in the later phase of the text, the working class people or the blacks are shown as subalterns. Hendrik and Anna are exploited, dominated and tortured by their masters. Anna, the female servant is physically used by her own masters whereas Magda's hypocritical behavior always tortured Hendrik and Anna both. When Anna is exploited by her master neither Hendrik nor Anna speak against him. Anna's name is also changed to 'Klein-Anna' as well as she is called 'Little-Anna' too sometimes but the master is called only 'baas' and mistress is called 'miss'. Their even name is also not called. So, the novel says something about the quest for love, about the relation between master and slave and between white and black. The distance between the masters and servants is shown wide which proves them as the subaltern.

Therefore, we can say that females and blacks or working class people are subalterns. According to the theorist Gayatri Spivak, "Can the subaltern speak?" The subalterns cannot speak. They are voiceless. Their voices are muted by the power of the center people. Until and unless they are powerful, they got agency they cannot speak.

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