

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Women as Commodity in J. M Coetzee's *Disgrace*

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By

Murari Prasad Sharma

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Women as Commodity in J. M Coetzee’s *Disgrace*” submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus by Mr. Murari Prasad Sharma has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of Research Committee

.....

(Rudra Paudel)

Supervisor

.....

External Examiner

.....

Rudra Paudel

Associate Professor and Head

Department of English

Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus

Date:

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Murari Prasad Sharma

Abstract

J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* depicts the mentality of Professor David Lurie, lecturer of Romantic English poetry at the University of Cape Town. Fifty-two-years old David is twice divorced; however, his taste for women has not subsidized. His attitude towards female is such that he is not content with anyone of them, and keeps searching for new sexual partners. He visits several prostitutes and is also engaged in relationship with one of his female students. Upon the complaint of the girl, David is required to write a formal apology letter to the Disciplinary Committee of the University. However, he rejects the idea and quits his job because his male attitude does not allow him to apologize.

This chauvinist attitude of David is largely cultivated from dominance because in his eyes women are nothing but consumable commodity. His mentality has been shaped by this arrogant attitude and does not want to apologize with the females. He takes females for granted and that proves women are mere machines to address the male sexuality. To him females are merely a sexual commodity; however, when similar tragedy befalls on his daughter, his notion of viewing females undergoes a big change.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Contextualizing *Disgrace*

This present research is an inquiry into South African novelist and scholar John Maxwell Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999). The plot of the novel is centered on David Lurie, a professor of Romantic poetry in University of Cape Town, South Africa. He is twice divorcee and is accused of molesting one of his female students. The disciplinary committee of the University seeks an apology for his action, which he does not. In his opinion the female student is equally responsible for the infamous scam. Taking this attitude of Prof. David, the present research will look into the male mentality that takes females as an object based of Feminist perspective.

Feminism is a school of thought which tries to dismantle the patriarchal social norms and values to liberate women against the natural law of equality. As a movement, it assumes that women are also human beings like men. It raises the voices against the inadequacy, as well as ideologies of the males. Therefore, feminism is complaint against patriarchal monopoly and is a commitment to eradicate the ideology of domination to establish a healthy and equal society for both male and female. As such, feminism is a movement for the creation of new society in which there are any forms of discrimination and this society cannot be separated from the process of its making.

J. M. Coetzee, born in 1940 is a South African novelist and scholar who has been awarded with the Nobel Prize in literature in 2003. Coetzee's novels often use feminism to explore the allegory of apartheid regime — and post-apartheid transition — of South Africa, and to explore the resulting effects of these policies on individuals and society. *Disgrace* exudes a cycle of prejudice, discrimination, brutality, exploitation, domination and marginalization of female, based on the experiences of the central character David.

Through the character of David, the novel evaluates the patriarchal universal discourse that defines female as supplement to male and takes women as biologically subsidiary creatures to the male.

The patriarchal society's infrastructure, as well as, norms and values take female as the object of sex, pleasure, fulfilling male desires, serving males and just as the domestic animal that bears the children and does the household activities. David Lurie, the protagonist regards female as the thing of fulfilling sexual desires and believes that women are made to be subjugated by male. As an agent of patriarchy, Lurie's latent mentality is guided by the patriarchal gender roles. Believing in the male discourse, he performs as the superior being and regards female as the object of getting satisfaction and pleasure. Sexist ideology prioritizes the traditional gender roles that justify the inequalities and inferiority of women as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision making positions. In every domain of patriarchy, women are other and she is defined only by her difference from the male norms and values.

The inferior position long occupied by women is not because she is biologically so, but it is courtesy of male created hegemony. The global society is created in such a way that females are taken as culturally and socially weaker, and their role is limited to the household chores and rearing babies. It is produced because the gender roles are just myths that are constructed by men to hegemonize the female are inferior being. In the context, Rebecca West in "Women and Commodity" opines, "Females are complex in the psyche of men. So, the gender is cultural propaganda created by society rather than by nature, that categorizes human being as feminine or masculine" (119). As such, the psyche of David finds Melanie and, other females a complex creature. He does not understand them, largely because his mentality is overshadowed by supremacy of male psyche.

Disgrace has generated a series of critical commentaries; several critics belonging to various backgrounds have ventured to interpret and analyze it from diverse angles and point of views. While commenting on J.M Coetzee's *Disgrace*, Eric Bryant views the novel as containing the sense of critiquing the patriarchal myth of gender roles and as subverting the binaries of male and female with the dramatization of female's commodification. In this regard he argues:

But just as this idyllic life begins to bore David, he sees its uglier side. Lucy convinces him to help her friend, Bev, at the local animal clinic. David is a no great animal lover and does not find himself face to face with the suffering of the innocent dogs born into a world that wants them nor has the means to support them. Bev's role is more executioner than veterinarian. (9)

Then, he and Lucy are attacked by three Africans, and he is helpless to prevent her being raped. Their peaceful co-existence destroyed, David struggles to understand why Lucy insists on remaining on the farm and reconcile himself to the, for him, unbelievable dynamic between her and the neighboring Africans.

Similarly, critiquing Coetzee's patriarchal ideology Bryant takes female as the object of fulfilling sexual desires and as the commodity of satisfying the passions. He is, even at his best, a man of "moderated bliss" (16). So, when he seduces Melanie Isaacs, a lithe student from his poetry class. In his words, "she (Melaine) does not resist. All she does is avert herself" towards his sexual encroachment (17). He believes her to represent the final object of his desire, his last act of lush, romantic desperation. And then he is found out. This not uncommon outrage earns him a dismissal and censure from the university committee he refuses to cooperate with in hopes of saving his job.

Similarly, Jason Cowley, another critic, views that Coetzee strongly attacks the patriarchal norms and values that define female as the subsidiary to the male existence. Cowley in “A Review of Coetzee’s *Disgrace*” in *Magil’s Literary Annual* opines that “. . . the protagonist performs the role of male patriarchal society and legitimizes the ideology of patriarchy through his aggressive and daunting mannerism” (27). David is a typical male who prefers prostitute but, does not feel sense of remorse when is over with their body and mind. He is more like mechanical, sans humane feelings.

Set in post-apartheid South Africa, J.M. Coetzee’s searing novel tells the story of David Lurie, twice divorcee, a fifty plus professor of Communications and Romantic Poetry at Cape Technical University. Lurie believes he has created a comfortable, if somewhat passionless, life for himself. He lives within his financial and emotional means. Though his position at the university has been reduced, he teaches his classes dutifully; and while age has diminished his attractiveness, weekly visits to prostitute satisfy his sexual needs.

Critic Charles Sarvan focuses on David’s geocentricism and his gender race illiteracy in which his male character remains at the domain of every happening and somehow his actions are justified. When he seduces Melanie Isaacs, one of his romantic poetry students, he remains arrogant to defy his actions. Somehow, the readers are made to believe that his act was justified under the impression that the college girl did not resist the temptation and stood against what was happening. Sarvan comments:

The novel employs free indirect discourse to such an extent that it is in effect, a first person narrative, entirely from David’s point of view. David, trapped in a selfish, egocentric subjectivity, fifty two years old Prof does not know the thoughts feelings and motivations of the other characters, and its implication in their mentality. (26)

It is as such that David does not want to recognize other world than his, and from his own point of view. It is here that females boundary which

Coetzee gives a rhetorical signal to the canny readers in the deeper level ironically and as a result, he distances the implied meaning of the novel which has to be just the opposite of the surface meaning. As the protagonist is presented ironically his evaluation of himself and others cannot be taken at face value. Rather, his perception in broad sense should be taken with critical eyes. If one deeply analyzes the novel s/he comes to notice the contrast between David's appearance and his reality. His appearances delete that of a gentleman, but he is someone who does not see the meaning of life beyond sex.

Coetzee is one of the best writers who write in English. He has written many Bookers prize winning novels. At the publication of *Disgrace* in 1999, he received scores of criticisms from different walks of people. Different critics view it from different perspectives like racial, historicist linguistic, cultural and so on. These perspectives, in one way or another tried to see a meaning in the novel. This research differs from those in a sense that it will be different than those meaning created out of the text.

Similarly, critic Derek Attridge in *The Johannesburg Times* takes *Disgrace* as the depiction of post 1990s South African Society. He understands it thus:

Stating the opposition badly, Coetzee is either praised (implicitly or explicitly) for unblinkingly depicting the lack of progress South Africa has made towards its declared goal of a non-racial, non sexist democracy or condemned for painting a one sided negative picture of post-apartheid South Africa representing blacks as rapist and thieves and implying that whites have no option but to submit to their assaults. (317)

To him, *Disgrace* is the depiction of the ugly side of South Africa in the transitional era, i.e. 1990s. The whole system is collapsed condition as shown in the novel, rapes, burglary and other crimes are dominant in the society and the security force is insufficient.

The novel takes part in two divisions: the first part in Cape Town, and the second, in Salem, a place of historical values around twenty-five kilometers from Cape Town. According to Gareth Cornwell in “Land of *Disgrace*,” the novel is a violation of historical values. In his opinion:

Among the two parts of the novel, the first what exactly is intended by the description of Lucy’s conduct in *Disgrace* as an ‘Ideal.’ Solution to the historical issues of wrong and reparation raised in the novel. Second in the light of the novel what kind of rehabilitation can white South African reasonably expect to achieve. (55)

However, through this violation, Cornwell finds this novel as a realistic picture of post war solution can be to remain silent as Lucy does, so that racial violence will end.

Similarly, David Atwell argues that *Disgrace* is a novel that takes female mere as an object for the male to climb to the apex. According to him:

The struggle of political, material and sexual power has reduced females to scapegoat on which the male climb to the apex. The novel thus takes on the question of what it takes to come to terms with a traumatic history of terror and subjugation both from the perpetrator’s and the victim’s point of view. (342)

The concept of *Disgrace* lies at the heart of the character that undergoes a drastic turn from the sexual perpetrator to the victim of sexual violence in post apartheid South Africa. As

such, it is the story of a politically superior male that takes females ‘no’ for a ‘yes’ and finds an excuse in the pretext that she did not say no.

Coetzee, born in Cape Town, South Africa was from an educated family of father, a lawyer, and mother a teacher. Although Coetzee spoke Afrikaans (the language of a majority of the white population in South Africa) with relatives, he grew up in an English-speaking household and attended English-language schools. He graduated from the University of Cape Town in 1961 with degrees in literature and mathematics, and in 1962 he left South Africa for England, where he worked as a computer programmer. In 1965 Coetzee went to the United States, and four years later he received a Ph.D. degree in linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. While he was completing his dissertation in 1968 and 1969, Coetzee began working as an assistant professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He returned to South Africa in 1971. Coetzee became a lecturer at the University of Cape Town in 1972, an assistant professor in 1980, and a professor of general literature in 1984. In 1986 and again in 1989 he taught at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Coetzee’s next book, *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), was the story of a man’s physical and psychological journey through a country at war. The novel won the Booker Prize, Britain’s highest literary award. Sixteen years later Coetzee became the first writer to win the honor twice with *Disgrace* (1999), which tells the story of a man coping with dismissal from his college teaching job and the brutal gang rape of his adult daughter. The book aroused controversy in South Africa, with some critics denouncing it as racist.

Similarly, critic Judith Chettle writes about the response of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) after the publication of the novel “Though *Disgrace*, a novel of post-apartheid South Africa won the Booker Prize it was harshly criticized by the ruling

ANC for its truthful if unpalatable portrayal of current realities Coetzee has subsequently immigrated to Austral” (Moral thinker and Myth Maker 1996-1997). *Disgrace* is also a historical witness to the persistence of racism among white South Africans. In it they claimed, Coetzee reported on the still pervasive child, a version of white distinguished profession of Literature and Director General of the president’s office under Nelson Mandela, express dismay at “the novel’s portrayal of the almost barbaric post colonial claims of black Africans, at its representation of mixed raced characters as whores, seducers, complainers, conceited accusers” (qtd. in Peter McDonald 325).

Disgrace is a novel but, at the same time, is a book of history, as well where feminine issues are handle by male mentality. Although it is set in a particular place and time-South African of 1990s one should not make mistake by treating the fiction as purely social document. However, socio-political circumstances portrayed within the fictional world cannot be ignored. These aforementioned critics call Coetzee a racist white man. Likewise, Herlad Luesmann insists on negative picture portrayed by Coetzee in *Disgrace* by calling him an enigmatic writer.

The publication of *Disgrace* caused irritation among number of members of the governing ANC and controversial debated in parliament. The picture Coetzee had painted of port apartheid state was too dark and negative. In the eyes of the old regime he was an enemy of the state, clothed in a poet’s robe while for his black readers he wrote in a style considered to be too white. To this day the issue remains as a topic of controversy.

For Eric Bryant *Disgrace* portrays a negative picture of South Africa Society. He suspects whether Coetzee does so intentionally. According to him:

The author, Coetzee and David, the lead character goes on to portrays a dark aspect of humanity. The novelist colludes in David’s self justification so that

the novel merely becomes a part of the darkness it describes. . . . the novel as containing the sense of critiquing the patriarchal myth of gender roles and as subverting the binaries of male and female with the dramatization of female's commodification. (36)

The novel is about David who goes on to justify his deeds, however, which is not digesting to rest of the people, other than him. Professor David is self-asserted on his honesty; however, which simply is an immoral act. To entice one's own student for sexual retreat cannot be taken as a justifiable act but the male psychic of David finds an escape in his arrogant nature. This is one of the common ways of dominating females, in almost all parts of the world.

Robert Bell in "A Subversive Salvo" talks about Coetzee's critiquing the patriarchal ideology that takes female as the object of fulfilling sexual desires and as the commodity of satisfying the passions. He is, even at his best, a man of moderated bliss. So when he seduces Melanie Isaacs, a lithe student from his poetry elective she does not resist. All she does is avert self from him. However, David believes her to represent the final abject of his desired, his last act of lush, Romantic desperation. And then he is found out. This not uncommon outrage earns him a dismissal and censure from the university committee he refuses to cooperate with in hopes of saving his job which he thinks is his male ego not to go down. He thinks of not sacrificing his male ego that remains intact. He prefers his mental supremacy rather than the concept of

Jason Cowley in his review says that Coetzee strongly attacks the patriarchal norms and values that define female existence as the subsidiary to the male existences. One of the strongest issues rose in the novel is nobody understands each other in the novel; and the condition of the female is horrible, in the context. To the novel's whites the black

inhabitants are essentially a threat justified by history. Because whites have historically oppressed blacks, it's being suggested we must now accept that black will oppress whites. So, there runs a sense of vengeance in the blood of the Black who assumes any harm to the White is justice done.

As such, the present work will inquire into the patriarchal society's infrastructures and its norms and values that take female as the object of sex and pleasure for fulfilling male desires. To fulfill male's desire is the prime work of female for the orthodox male who take female mere as an object. David Lurie, the protagonist regards female as the thing of fulfilling sexual desires and believes that women are made to be subjugated by male. As the agent of patriarchy, David Lurie's latent mentality is guided by the patriarchal gender roles. Believing in the male discourse, he performs as the superior being and regards female as the object of getting satisfaction and pleasure. Sexist ideology prioritizes the traditional gender roles that justify the inequalities and inferiority of women as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision making positions. In every domain of patriarchy, women are other and she is defined only by her difference from the male norms and values.

In the context, the position of women has long been inferior in the society, and similar is continued in the novel. The inferior position long occupied by women in male dominated society has been culturally, not biologically, produced because the gender roles are just myths that are constructed by men to control the female is the real evil existent in the society. It is further strengthened through the sense that female are biologically inferior and, it is male who protect and safeguard them.

Thus, the present research will inquire into the male mentality that take female for commodity. For doing so, the present researcher will take 'Marxist Feminism' as the tool to dismantle the male hierarchy.

The term 'feminism' has many different uses and its meanings are often contested. For example, some writers use the term 'feminism' to refer to a historically specific political movement in the US and Europe; other writers use it to refer to the belief that there are injustices against women, though there is no consensus on the exact list of these injustices. Although the term feminism has a history in English linked with women's activism from the late 19th century to the present, it is useful to distinguish feminist ideas or beliefs from feminist political movements, for even in periods where there has been no significant political activism around women's subordination, individuals have been concerned with and theorized about justice for women. So, for example, it makes sense to ask whether Plato was a feminist, given his view that women should be trained to rule.

These literary contributions, as well as, interventions in mainstream philosophical debates are covered by the feminist movement. Entries covered under the rubric feminism, topics concern philosophical issues that arise as feminists articulate accounts of sexism, critique sexist social and cultural practices, and develop alternative visions of a just world. Marxist philosopher deals on topics that arise *within* feminism; however, focusing on providing more economic rights.

Although there are many different and sometimes conflicting approaches to feminist philosophy, it is instructive to begin by asking what, if anything, feminists as a group are committed to. Considering some of the controversies over what feminism is provides a springboard for seeing how feminist commitments generate a host of philosophical topics, especially as those commitments confront the world as we know it.

Chapter II: Commoditization of Women

Feminism: An Overview

Feminism is one of the most widely used terminologies in recent days. It refers to wide varieties of concerns in regards to empowering female, and also in exposition of male mentality that dominates females and undermines their sufferings. However, the use of 'feminism' has a long history and goes as far as latter years of nineteenth century.

According to Simon Blackburn in *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*:

The term feminism was first used by the French dramatist Alexander Dumas in 1872 in pamphlet "I" to designate the emerging movement for women rights. The term 'I' gradually emerged to be world-wide cultural movement to secure a complete equality of women within the enjoyment of all human rights in moral, social, religious, political, educational, legal, economic, and many others equalities. (123)

From then onwards the term has been widely used in various fields in regards to empowerment of women, around the world. In the recent days, it stands almost near to the sense that feminism is a movement that is an attempt to safeguard female rights and voices.

It studies the domination of women in many fields from different perspectives thereof. In this regard, Rosemarie Tong states, "Feminism is not one, but many theories or perspectives and that each feminist theory or perspective attempts to describe women's oppression to explain its causes and consequences and to describe strategies for women's liberation" (16).

Feminism is a school of thought which tries to dismantle the patriarchal social norms and values to liberate women against the natural law of equality. As a movement, it assumes that women are also human beings like men. It raises the voices against the

inadequacy, as well as ideologies of the males. Therefore feminism is complaint against patriarchal monopoly and is a commitment to eradicate the ideology of domination to establish a healthy and equal society for both male and female. As such, feminism is a movement for the creation of new society in which there are any forms of discrimination and this society cannot be separated from the process of its making.

The major focus of feminism is on political, economical, physical, psychological and religious equality. It opposes gender stereotypes and discrimination against women based on the assumption that women are passive weak and physically helpless. British author and critic Revecca West has following opinion on feminism:

I myself have never been able to find out preciously what feminism is . . . I only know that other people call me a feminist, whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a door mate or prostitute to that of a woman of voice and status. To be called feminist is okay, but what actually it stands for, is a challenge that has been a query to me. (219)

Feminism has often focused on what is absent rather than what is present, reflecting concern with the silencing and marginalization of women in patriarchal culture, a culture organized in the favors of men unlike the other approaches for their false assumptions about women.

Feminism is a reaction to the unfair treatment imposed upon women. It raises voices against the commoditization of women. Lois Tyson, one of the leading scholars on the necessity of feminist movement comments on the necessity of the feminist movement, as:

Women are not the objects used for the conveniences of men. It's a question made by women to break all oppression and restriction. It's a struggle against patriarchy and its ill treatment of the female race. Patriarchy

continually exerts forces that undermine women's self-confidence and assertive, then points to the absence of these qualities as proof that women are naturally, self-effacing and submissive. (85)

Feminism wages wars against all kinds of myth-making tendency of men. It challenges the foundation of male norms and assumption and questions heliocentric ideologies which mean the patriarchal attitudes and male interpretation of literature, economics, politics, religions, etc.

Marxist Feminism

The Marxist feminist movement is concerned with the representation of women in literature and position of women in society. The primary aim of the movement is to free women from oppressive restraints, especially the cultural restraint of society which fixes the women's identity within narrow boundaries. The main strain of feminist movement strongly refuses the cultural definition of women which attempts to fix women's identity within the male-dominated canon. According to Lois Tyson, "Marxist feminist criticism examines the way in which literature and other cultural production reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social and psychological oppression to empower the women on the way the male want them to be" (81).

According to Marxist theory, the individual is heartily influenced by the structure of society, which in all modern societies means class structure. Marxist feminists see contemporary gender inequality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. Gender oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression, which is minted (like racism) because it serves the interest of capital and ruling class. Marxist feminism is the belief that women's situation cannot be understood in isolation from its socio-economic context, and that any meaningful improvement in the

lives of women requires that this context be changed. In regards, Althusser opines, “We live in a class society that is also structured by gender, which means that men and women experience class in different ways” (258).

For Marxist feminists, gender oppression in class oppression and women’s subordination is seen as a form of class oppression. To analyze women’s situation in society understanding of socio-economic context is the prime requisite. Marxist feminism connects the oppression of women to Marxist ideas about exploitation, oppression and labor. Marxist feminists see women as being held down as result of their unequal standing in both the workplace and the domestic sphere. Prostitution, domestic work, childcare and marriage are all seen by Marxist feminist as ways in which women are exploited by a patriarchal system which devalues women and the substantial work they do. Marxist feminists focus their energies on broad change that affects society as a whole rather than on an individual basis. They see the need to work alongside not just men, but all other groups as they see the oppression of women as a part of larger pattern that affects everyone involved in the capitalist system. Feminism tries to find out the root cause of women’s oppression in society and way-out from that oppression. Marxist feminism is a sub type of feminism, which sees the oppression of women and seeks its resolution from Marxist point view.

Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* depicts how the industrialized Europe of the eighteen century worked against the married bourgeoisie women of the time. She was an advocate of educational and social equalities for women. Wollstonecraft compares the women to that of the caged birds, who can sing but cannot, claim to do so in the natural habitat. Women, can claim their supremacy in traditional works like giving birth and looking after the children, added by the house-hold chores.

Thus, Wollstonecraft attacks the sentimental novels of her time for their harmful influence on women's intellectual development. In the context, she writes, "Feminine weakness of character often produced by confined education is a romantic twist of the mind, which has been very properly termed sentimental" (385). As such, the sale of emotions of women was the subject matter of sentimental novels.

Marxists critics search their root of feminism in the writings of various writers, including Virginia Woolf. The sentimental novels always has remain in the centre of love affairs and feelings *A Room of One's Own* is a book by Virginia Woolf where she discusses the privacy and economic independence to develop and write text as male writers. Due to the lack of right to freedom and property, women are being prevented from realizing their creative possibilities by patriarchal society. She hopes to achieve a balance between a male self realization and female self annihilation. The tradition of women's writing is affected by male's tradition. She also makes a survey of the women writers from the seventeenth century to nineteenth century. However, Woolf was a feminist who disliked the word 'feminist,' as this word represented feminine attitude of weak mentality and submission. She wanted boldness and decency in the society, so as to deal with the problems on her own. By being what male wanted them to do, there was no escape from the traditional sense of male domination on the females imposed on them, since ages. This is the outcome of the male mentality, which has guided and motivated by the sexist nature of male.

Facing different cross currents like the Suffrage Movements, Civil Rights Movements and Liberation Movements of 1960s of twentieth century feminism took shape as an organized movement only after 1960s. It was launched as one of the effective literary movements after this. This ferment of the 1960s provided feminism with its ideological core, vitality and impetus. The early feminists during the first half of the twentieth century

were ultimately successful in gaining the suffrage in 1919 and were instrumental in the enactment of protective legislation for women workers in the 1920s. These women, who were concerned with reforms to improve the status of women within the separate sphere, have been termed 'social feminists.' At the same time, they were challenged by a group of more outspoken feminists who rejected protective legislative as inherently discriminatory and worked for equal rights legislation. These are often described, as the 'radical feminists.' They questioned patriarchal authority in such a radical manner that the social feminists accused them of being anti-family.

During the 1960s and 70s, new wave feminism came with an attempt to break down the barriers between the male and female spheres. In a social context, where patriarchy disseminated the idea that to be women in this society is to be "feminine" and to be a feminist is to be "neurotic," this movement of feminism flourished much with the writings of twentieth-century feminist writers Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir who made a great contribution in the field of feminist theories with their world famous works *A Room of One's Own* and *The Second Sex* respectively.

Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) writes, for example, about how women are imprisoned within the domestic premises and are prevented from realizing their productive, creative possibilities. The social and economic obstacles extended before them always obstructed women's creativity. She believed that these obstacles often stood as hurdles before their literary ambitions. In her essay "Professions for Women," Woolf discusses the disabling nineteenth century ideology of womanhood. She also claims that the literary genres were made by men for their own use. Only the novel gives women a workable space, but still their form has to be reworded for its new purpose expressing the female body.

A Room's of One's Own) beautifully depicts the pain of being a woman. She creates a character called Judith, sister of William Shakespeare, the greatest English dramatist. Judith too, was equally talented as Shakespeare in her childhood. However, unlike Shakespeare, she never was sent to the Grammar School. She, however, managed to study Latin, Ovid, Virgil and Horace, and the elements of grammar and logic. And just as Shakespeare had fled to London to accomplish his dream to work in theatres, Judith too, fled to London.

But on her arrival to London, she found that the women were not permitted to act in theatres, as at that time, the female role too, was performed by the males. And so, she stood outside the theatres caring the horses, while people tried to take undue advantage of her beauty and innocence. She then had only two opportunities, either to surrender to her rapists, or to follow a so-called gentleman, who had taken pity, on her taken her to look after his children; who knows, as a wife or a maid. Her brother, Shakespeare, by contrast had an opportunity to turn into small and part time actor in the theatres, and later had chance to flourish his skills and became the famous dramatist, Shakespeare the great. However, similar could not have taken place, had there been the sister of Shakespeare, in his place.

The whole episode shows how the genius of women is often discarded because they are born up in a society that is male engineered and pioneered by males. Muna, the lonesome damsel in distress, too was like Judith; a woman who was left alone to survive in an uncaring society, though she had to bear the responsibility of her mother-in-law, as well.

There is strong affiliation between Marxism and Feminism. Both of them attack social injustice and discrimination. Marxist feminism is a sub-type of feminist theory which tries to dismantle the capitalism as a way to liberate women. Economic inequality,

dependency, political confusion and the unhealthy social relations between men and women come into existence due to the concept of private property. So, private property is the root of women's oppression in the current social context, which is the main concern of the Marxist feminist.

In capitalist system, the relation between employer and employee is similar to the commodity and its owner. Capitalists have everything but proletarians have nothing except their labor. This is a way for their emancipation when proletarians come to know that they are exploited, they are not getting proper wage, they try to find out where and how they are exploited. Then they revolt against the exploitation imposed upon them. The class-consciousness inspires them to revolt against every kind of justice. Proletarian revolt freely because they have nothing to lose but bourgeoisie have everything to lose. They establish classless society, which is a society of every people where both men and women get equal chances. Then non-hierarchical society emerges as result of class-consciousness.

The capitalists, also represent patriarchy, exercise to create false consciousness to establish their empire. They try to hide all kinds of discrimination and injustice. For Marxist feminists gender oppression is class oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression. It believes that women's situation in the society cannot be understood in isolation from its socio-economic context. As the Marxists see the alienation of labor from work, self, human beings and nature women are also alienated from sex, self, children and from whole surroundings. In capitalism labor is treated as a commodity which can be sold and bought. Capitalism intensifies alienation and generalizes it throughout all level of society.

Except housework women have to perform their natural works. One of them is childbearing which women's unquestionable task is. But in patriarchal society childcare is

also women's essential work. They give birth and bring up the baby but male members do not take it as a vital work and if any woman does only child caring in the house is called workless. But the father or may be so called father takes away the child when he wants. This Injustice is in patriarchal society. As Friedrich Engles's says, "women give birth, the mother of any child is always known. However, the identity of the father is never certain because a woman could have been impregnated by a man other than her husband" (qtd. Tong 49). Later this child, if male, tries to control mother.

Marxists feminists argue that in class society rights can benefit only a few middle class women; like most men, will remain oppressed until the capitalist economic system is replaced by communism. Women's liberation is their entry into the paid labor market and their participation in the class struggle; it is only in communist society that the economic dependency that is the basis of women's oppression will disappear, and communal child care and housekeeping free them from domestic drudgery and allows them to participate fully in productive life. Such change cannot be achieved simply by demanding justice, for they are the product of a particular stage of economic development; sexual equality cannot therefore be achieved at will, but only in specific historical circumstances.

According to Marxists, feminist share ideas with radical feminists, desire for revolutionary change; they seek the establishment of communist society. A society where the means of production will be commonly owned, they believe gender inequality will disappear. There is no clear cut division between Marxist and socialist feminists; they share much in common. Marxist feminists tend to give more credence to the possibility of capitalist societies gradually moving towards female equality.

Marxist feminists argue that women position in society primarily benefits capitalism and capitalist rather than man. In regards, Margaret Benton argues:

Capitalism benefits from a large reserve of labor force of women to keep wages down and profits up. In their roles in secondary breadwinners, married women provide a source of cheap easily exploitable labor because women have been socialized to comply and submit, they form a docile labor force that can be readily manipulated and easily fired when not required. (7)

Compared to male workers, women are less likely to join unions to go on strike or take other forms of militant actions against employers. Even when women join unions, they often find themselves in male dominated organization where according to Barron and Norris, men often do not share the interest or outlook of their fellow female unionists. Some Marxists also believe that women benefit capitalists and the capitalist system in their capacities as mothers and housewives by reproducing labor power at no cost to employers.

Capitalist social system is main cause of women's oppression in society and its way out is to dismantle this capitalistic social system. Capitalism gives rise to economic inequality and dependence. Marxism can be used to help us understand, how patriarchal law and custom to have manipulated economic forces. In the context, Engles says "If wives are to be treated be emancipated from their husband, women must first become economically independent of men" (qtd. in Tong 49). For that dismantle of capitalistic economic system is needed where the exploitation of labor is working very strongly. By this reason women are suffering from the adjective like weak, passive emotional in patriarchal society. As such, Tyson writes, "Women economically, politically and socially oppressed as an underclass" (93). Marxism which is used to understand the feminist issues, economic political and social, is called Marxist feminism.

Thus, one of the primary tasks of Marxist feminism is to create the kind of world in which women experience themselves as an integrated person rather than fragmented or

sophisticated beings. Gender inequality is a product of capitalism and determined by the capitalistic mode of production. For the elimination of the oppression of women, the capitalistic economy should be dismantled, which also dismantles the patriarchal social system because it is based on a capitalistic system where workers are alienated from their families and their surroundings. Women do not get their proper place because the working class men have succeeded in protecting their own interests at women's expense. They have been able to do this because the dominant attitude labels any work done by women as inherently inferior to that done by men.

Women are paid less because of the interest and self-protection of male superiority that evaluates women as if they are a commodity because of their different sex. Women take on domestic responsibilities, and outward work is generally supposed to be carried out by their male counterparts. In turn, it is generally supposed that the outward work (outside the house) is hard and tough. As such, women are treated as weak creatures capable of carrying out domestic responsibilities, which are less troublesome. Therefore, women's interests, capacity, vigor, etc. are neglected as men term women as a commodity and suitable for inferior activities.

The status of women in proletarian and bourgeois families is almost similar. A woman in a proletarian society is defined by Marxist feminist mentality. It is the father or male member that rules and dominates and enjoys the total economic control. And, the role and status of a wife in a bourgeois family is similar to that of a woman in a proletarian family. As such, in all societies, women are being exploited in the society on the basis of patriarchal norms and values, which are a construction of economic power positions. In the context, Tong writes:

Women are the victims of men's control and men's control of women is rooted in the fact that he not only controls her property, but also commands her,

mentally and physically, as well. It has its basic in the belief that the household works are of inferior importance and outward are of superior importance. The oppression of women will cease only with the dissolution of the institution of private property. (49)

This mentality, in turn becomes a weapon to suppress the female. It further helps, in practice, to restrict women's freedom and desire. Their needs and feelings are condemned so they are suppressed because property is in the hand of patriarchy, which believes that there is no desire of woman that is different from that of men.

Women's exploitation is everywhere. Before and after marriage women become the victim of sexual exploitation. Marxist feminist compares sex to work. Capital to men and worker to women, thus making women and sex as a commodity to satiate the male sexual desire. There is no place for women's sexual desire in society. If a husband or boy friend wants to have sexual relation then that is the desire of wife/girl friend also. Tong brings the concept of Marx and Engle's and sees marriage as a form of prostitution. Marx and Engle implicitly accepted the services that can be prostituted are not limited to sexual services sold by the prostitute wife. Therefore, in patriarchal society husband-wife relationship is unequal relation, which is similar to bourgeoisie proletarian or employer –employee relationship.

Heidi Hartmann in *Women's Oppression Today* compares the situation to a marriage in which the husband represents Marxism, the wife represents Feminism, and it is the husband who has all the power. She says, "The marriage of Marxism and feminism has been like the marriage of husband of wife as in common law where two different legal perspectives join together" (607).

In terms of the Marxist theory women appears insignificant; they sit on the sidelines of the grand struggle between capital and labors. Marxist explains capitalism, in terms of exploitation of commodity, which in turn are women. As such, it is capitalist who take advantages on double ground; as domestic exploitation and also sell their wages. She opines, “The capitalists take double advantage; by domestic exploitation and depending on their wages, as well” (73). She points out that working class men can benefit from the labor of their wives as well as capitalists.

Hartmann and Baret in *Women’s Oppression Today* accept that Marxism can play an important part in explaining gender inequalities; however they believe that feminism must be fully incorporated into any adequate theory. Both these writers attempt to comment a marriage between Marxist and Feminist theory. Following radical feminists, Hartmann argues that patriarchy provides the key to explaining the sexual division of labors. She believes that patriarchy has a ‘material’ base which is not directly related to biological differences to men and women. Men largely deny access for working women to jobs that pay a living wage.

They further, force women into financial dependence on husband and thereby control the labor of women in their capacities as mothers and housewives. Because of men’s dominance within the family they also control women’s bodies and sexuality; women who are married become almost their husband’s property. She ensures that capitalism and patriarchy are very closely connected, termed as ‘intertwined’ but she does not believe that the interest of men may benefit from increasing numbers of women entering the labor force, whereas working class men may prefer their wives to stay at home to perform personal services for them. Hartmann accepts that the increasing participation of women in work today has made them slightly less depended on men. There are more

opportunities for women to become independent. She claims, women's wages allow every few women to support themselves independently and adequately.

In *Women's Oppression Today*, Barrett, as a Marxist critic believes that it is necessary to go beyond Marxism in order to explain women's oppression. Like Hartman she sees the origins of women's oppression today as lying in the 19th century, and she argues that a coalition of men and capitalist led to women being excluded from work and being forced to take on primarily domestic role. In this process women's oppression became lodged in what she calls the family- household system.

In 20th century, the family household system became an entrenched part of capitalism, although there is no inevitable reason why capitalism needs women to do the unpaid household, the capitalist class do benefit politically from this division of labor. According to Barrett, the working class is divided by the family household system; husband and wives, men and women, fight each other instead of uniting to fight capitalism. Most feminist believe that the position of women in the labor market is and importance source of female disadvantages. Some radical feminist see lack of employment opportunities-as one but only one- one of many sources of gender in equalities. Marxist feminists with their greater stress upon material and economic factors, generally lend rather more importance to employment opportunities.

Marxist feminist approaches to women and employment stress the relationship between the economics system and women's work. Marxist feminism tries to combine with those of radical feminists to explain the disadvantages experienced by women in the labor market. They argue that the disadvantages experienced by women in the labor market. They argue that the disadvantages are consequences of both the operation of capitalist economy and attempt of men to maintain patriarchal control. As Tyson puts it:

The capitalist tries to hide all kinds of discrimination and injustice existing in the society through emotional blackmail to woman. Workers work very hard for the production in the factory and produce a large quantity but none of them bore which name or any other mark of their individual contribution, out of which the product gets its recognition. (58)

So the workers are alienated from the production itself. They are alienated from themselves also. When they are alienated from the product they find the work unpleasant but are bound to do their work, when the potential as the capitalistic economy system. Therefore, the most important aspect for elimination of alienation is the eradication of capitalism.

Due to the unequal power relationship females are compelled to do what men want them. Men use women whenever and wherever they want. Women are just like commodity for men in patriarchal society because men can buy women easily, as a capitalist can buy work. So, women are made victims of male supremacy and capitalistic power under which women keep on graying into the social roles assigned to them.

According to Marxist theory, the individual is heavily influenced by the structure of society, which in all modern societies means a class structure that is people opportunities, wants in all modern societies means a class structure that is people opportunities, wants and interest are seen to be shaped by the mode of production that characterizes the society they inhabit. Marxist feminist see contemporary gender inequality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. Gender oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression, which is minted (like racism) because it serves the interest of capital and ruling class. Marxist feminists have extended traditional Marxist analysis by looking a domestic labor as well as wage work in order to support their position. A vital principle of Marxist feminist is the belief that women's situation cannot be understood in

isolation from its social-economic context, and that any meaningful improvement in the lives of women requires that this context be changed. As it is clear, we live in a class society that is also structured by gender, which means that men and women experience class in different ways.

Chapter III: Representation of Female

Female as a Commodity in *Disgrace*

Disgrace is the story of a fifty two years old divorcee, Prof. David Lurie, once a renowned and loved lecturer of Modern Languages at Cape Town University. But this gentleman could not maintain his ethics in regards to treatment towards female student and fell to disgrace. This is the story of fall of human mentality that with the change of the times and administration, he is now Adjunct Professor of Communication. He is also limited in the courses he offers. Other than the mandatory Communication 101 and 201, he is allowed to offer only one elective or special-field course. This year he offers a course on Romantic poets. Lurie is apathetic toward the material he teaches and rarely engages his students. He no longer teaches out of passion or conviction but only to make a living.

Over the past twenty-five years the professor has published three scholarly books from opera, to William Wordsworth's influence on history, and revelations of erotic nature of Richard of St. Victor, and on. Yet, his true desire is to write a chamber opera entitled *Byron in Italy* is yet to materialize. Every Thursday Lurie travels to a prominent gated community, enters a well-furnished apartment, and sleeps with Soraya, a prostitute that he chose from a catalogue at Discrete Escorts under the category of exotic.

Prof David Lurie teaches Romantic poetry at the University of Cape Town. At the start of the novel he is visiting a prostitute for a weekly session. However he starts an affair with one of his students, 30 years his junior. He is intoxicated with her. She however turns sour and her boyfriend threatens David. She then makes an official complaint about David. There is a Committee of Inquiry at which David admits his guilt but refuses to apologize. This is the crux of male mentality that takes female for granted and her desires are mere abstract to the passion of male.

Thus, David is publicly condemned and loses his job. He then goes to stay with his lesbian daughter Lucy on her small holding in the Eastern Cape. There he hopes to continue with the writing of his long cherished dream – an opera on Lord Byron. For a while everything is peaceful and David volunteers at an animal welfare refuge. However one day they are visited by three men who rape Lucy and set fire to David and rob them of their car and valuables. This horrific attack changes their relationship. Lucy withdraws and David fails to understand why she does not bring rape charges against the men. David takes over the running of the small holding with the help of Petrus, Lucy's hired hand.

It turns out that one of the attacker's is a brother of one of Petrus' wives. Petrus says the boy is innocent though. When Lucy discovers she is pregnant from the rape Petrus offers to marry her in exchange for the small holding and his protection. David cannot comprehend how Lucy can consider marrying Petrus and he offers to pay for her to go to Holland to escape the situation. David also visits the parents of the student he had the affair with and apologizes for his behavior, thus, creating sense of repentance towards his feminine attitude that took them for granted.

Disgrace is Coetzee's first book to deal explicitly with post-apartheid South Africa, and the picture it paints is a cheerless one that will comfort no one, no matter what race, nationality or viewpoint. David Lurie is a man broken down almost to nothing before he finds some tiny measure of redemption in his forced acceptance of the realities of life and death. But Professor David Lurie, the protagonist of *Disgrace* has farther to fall than Michael K, an unsophisticated Cape Town gardener. And the clarity David comes to at the end grows largely from his accepting an ever-increasing portion of pain. "One gets used to things getting harder; one ceases to be surprised that what used to be as hard as hard can be grows harder yet," he reflects (183). That sentence also describes Coetzee's notion of life in

the new South Africa, where, as he portrays it, brutal tyranny has been replaced by brutal anarchy.

The activity of a middle aged divorced scholar of Romantic poetry, David would have undoubtedly been a pathetic figure under the old regime -- one imagines an ineffectual white liberal teaching Wordsworth to bored Afrikaners while largely ignoring the atrocities perpetrated in his name. But in the Mandela era, David has become a victim of great rationalization. His university has been remade into a technical college, and he teaches courses in communication skills that he finds nonsensical. He is such a nonentity that the prostitute he patronizes weekly -- and for whom he has begun buying gifts -- stops receiving him. He imagines her and her colleagues shuddering over him "as one shudders at a cockroach in a washbasin in the middle of the night" (13) and wonders if he can ask his doctor to castrate him as one neuters a domestic animal.

After David unexpectedly sees Soraya in public with her children, he becomes distracted during their lovemaking. Perhaps because she senses the awkwardness, Soraya announces that her mother is ill and so she can no longer see him. Lurie tries another prostitute also named Soraya but she is young and inexperienced. Having grown bored, he sleeps with a married secretary, Dawn; her enthusiasm in bed repels him and he makes sure to avoid her at work. Frustrated and even briefly but not seriously considering castration, Lurie calls Soraya at her home. She is horrified and demands that he never call her house. His response to her reaction is a cool observation, "What should a predator expect when he intrudes into the vixen's nest, into the home of her cubs?" (10). As such, it is witnessed that professor Lurie is one who is guided by ideology that takes female for granted.

Without his Thursdays with Soraya, Lurie is terribly bored until he spots a young student in his Romantics course. Melanie Issacs is thin with dark eyes and hair and broad

cheekbones. He first sees her by the college gardens and invites her to his house for a drink. Melanie is not an exceptional student and does not share his passion for Wordsworth or literature; she is a theater major and hopes to have a career in stagecraft and design. After dinner and a movie, Melanie inquires whether or not he is married. He replies he has been married twice and then proceeds to invite her to sleep with him. When she asks why, Lurie responds, "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). She seems to be momentarily intrigued until he quotes Shakespeare. Melanie is turned off and makes an excuse to leave.

However, David does not give up his animalistic desires. Based on this animalistic desire, the plot of the novel could be divided into two parts. The novel centers around two rape scenes; first by David, and second, to Lucy. In the journal of *Southern African Studies*, Lucy Valerie Graham express sexual issues are the center especially rape to both Lucy and Melanie in different forms she states:

If *Disgrace* is half coupon novel, each halves of it revolves around the two places in the novel; city and country with similar theme of sexual offence upon the women. They reveals the power dynamics in each setting . . . Lurie's Misusage of Melanie exposes power operating at the level of gender and at an intuitional level" (438).

When Lurie has power as a professor, he controls and misuses women and Lucy is there to face blacks as they are in the same position in the country. Likewise, she found further argues, "When they laugh at Melanie's Line, he cannot resist a flash of pride. Mine! He would like to say to them as if she were his daughter" (438). So, subject of women especially women's body persists in the novel. Female characters such as Melanie, Lucy, Soraya, and Bev Shaw are taken as males possessions. For an instance whoever goes

through David's life he finds them as his own. This is not his mistake alone; it is the deep rooted fault in the established heterosexual patriarchal system.

Instead of withdrawing his advances, Lurie pursues her more intensely. He looks into her records at the university to obtain her home address and telephone number, which he uses to invite her to lunch. Taken aback, she agrees but is clearly uncomfortable throughout the lunch date, not eating or talking much. They return to his house and have sex. She is passive throughout the act but he finds the act pleasurable and passes out on top of her. As soon as he awakes, she makes an excuse to leave. When Melanie comes to class the next day Wednesday, Lurie lectures on Wordsworth's *Prelude*. Melanie looks up from her book for the first time just as he is re-envisioning their sexual encounter; she at once understands and looks down.

Lurie continues his predatory behavior. He secretly watches her at a play rehearsal where Melanie is playing a hairdresser. The next afternoon, he goes to her apartment unannounced. He carries her to the bedroom even though she says that she does not want to have sex. Lurie says, "She does not resist. All she does is avert herself: avert her lips, avert her eye" (25). When it is over she asks him to leave because her cousin Pauline will be back soon. He watches her from his car and sees her immediately take a bath.

On the other side, Melanie does not come to class for an entire week. She is depressed after what her teacher has done to her. She misses her mid-term and Lurie falsifies her record, giving her grade 'C' until she retakes the test. Sunday night, the next week, Melanie arrives at his door tired and disturbed, wanting a place to stay. He prepares his daughter's old room for her. Initially he is not prepared for the idea but after a little consideration likes the idea of having her available to him on a consistent basis. Yet, he is disturbed when she seems to be using the situation as leverage for her missing so many

classes. The narrator says, "But if she has got away with much, he has got away with more; if she is behaving badly, he has behaved worse. To the extent that they are together, he is the one who leads, she the one that follows. Let him not forget that" he thinks of her (28). This is the presence of male mentality that finds his presence supreme and it is the female who is the cause of all chaos and disturbance.

Besides, the shameless attitude of Prof. David is witnessed when he has sex on his daughter's bed. However, David is soon to have tough times because of his reckless attitude. A young man - Melanie's boyfriend - visits Lurie unexpectedly in his office that afternoon. He threatens Lurie with disclosure of the relationship. That night Lurie's car is vandalized and Melanie does not come to his house. Monday, Melanie reappears in class with her boyfriend but by then she is determined to have David pay for his doings.

Ironically, David's scheduled lecture for that day happens to be Byron's *Lara* referencing in which he has to give a lecture on the notorious love affairs of poet Byron. The class is unusually hushed. The boy answers a question about Lucifer with a knowing smirk saying, "He does what he feels like. He does not care if it's good or bad. He just does it" (33). After class Lurie speaks to Melanie in his office asking the boy to wait outside. He demands that she come to class more regularly and retake the test, all the while understanding her unspoken protest. When Melanie finally speaks, she does not commit to taking the test she missed and says that she has not read the material. As such, there is rebellion of Melanie to the attitude of David.

Even though *Disgrace* is written in third person, David Lurie's language, thoughts and perceptions dominate the text. Every character the reader experiences is filtered through the intricate understanding of David. Yet access to Lurie's interior does not produce intimacy so much as it reveals his isolation. This is most apparent in his relationships with

women. Within the first few chapters of the novel, the reader is introduced in detail to two of Lurie's lovers: Soraya and Melanie. These women vary in age, ethnicity, and education. The only thing they have in common, really, is David's his inability to connect with them.

Lurie's relationship with Soraya, the prostitute, is founded on money. The novel opens, "For a man of his age, fifty-two, divorced, he has, to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well" (1). His solution to his problem appears to be clear-cut, without any complications. However, as Lurie describes his relationship, we realize that the reason his relationships are so uncomplicated is that Lurie does not allow them to be. He keeps them strictly superficial. Soraya, for instance, is a complicated Muslim woman. Lurie, however, knows nothing at all about her. He does not know where she lives, whether or not she has children, how old she is, or even what her real name is. When Soraya claims to hate nude beaches and beggars, Lurie does not probe the inherent contradiction between her opinion and her occupation. Moreover, Lurie fails to act on his recognition of the injustice of Soraya's employment at Discreet Escorts. Lurie considers paying Soraya directly, cutting out the Escort service, but he dislikes the possibility of having to see her in the morning.

Lurie's relationship with Soraya epitomizes his brazen disregard for the law, societal rules, or ethics. It is utterly selfish. Therefore, it is not completely surprising when Lurie crosses another boundary and has another wholly selfish sexual relationship with a student. Coetzee suggests that his pursuit of Melanie is predatory in nature. He first sees Melanie in the University gardens, a metaphorically rich location connoting love, desire, and fertility. The garden also resonates with the Bible as the place where Eve was seduced by the serpent. At every turn, Lurie has reason to believe that his advances are inappropriate. He and Melanie do not even share interests. As they watch the Norman McLaren movie, Lurie wants Melanie to be captivated, yet Melanie watches passively. She is passive, too, during

sex. Lurie ignores every indication that Melanie is repulsed by him, instead choosing to interpret her behaviors through his own desires. For instance, when Lurie forces himself on her at her cousin's house, Lurie notices, "She does not resist. All she does is avert herself: avert her lips, avert her eyes. Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core" (25). However, the thing a man of professor status should understand is, avert does not mean 'yes' of the girl. Instead it is a clear indication that she is not willing with the relationship. But, for David, females are mere pleasure and, there is 'no' from them.

David thus equivocally justifies his action with slippery language. Melanie does not resist but rather averts; the act is not rape but undesired to the core. He defines his act with his own language, never calling it what it is: rape. Lurie (and the reader along with him) is locked in his own utterly selfish hermeneutic of desire.

As such, it is the male created discourse to dominate the females. When the conditions are restrained, the process is communication regarding discourse. In the context M. H. Abrams narrates:

. . . the discourse of an era, instead of reflecting pre-existing entities and orders, bring into being the concepts, oppositions, and hierarchies of which it speaks; that these elements are both products and propagators of power or social forces, and that as a result, the particular discursive formations of an era determine what is at the time accounted knowledge and the truth as well as what is considered to be humanly normal as against what is considered to be criminal, or insane, or sexually deviant. (107)

Feminist discourse is created in any forms, either in verbal as myths or in written texts, which may seem to present or reflect an eternal reality in fact consists of what are called representations that means, verbal formations which are the 'ideological products' or 'cultural

constructs' or the historical conditions of a specific era. All these concepts are mere instruments created by the male to impose their supremacy over the females. Such representations are conditioned to be true to those who are under the system of ruling power who has the privilege to create the discourse as truth that is created to impose impositions to females.

David seems to possessing animal like passion, as when he compares his female student with the prostitutes, he visits. Coetzee presents his characters in extreme situations that compel them to explore what it means to be human, and before this novel is over, David must endure both psychological abasement and physical torment. But Coetzee has never before asked so clearly what it is not to be human. Later in the novel, after David has fallen into disgrace and fled Cape Town for his daughter Lucy's remote farm, she tells him, "This is the only life there is. Which we share with animals" (137).

As if a self imposed punishment David is reduced at times almost to an animal existence and finally to becoming a caretaker for dying animals, it is the mendacity of language that leads him there. Toward the end of the story, he reflects that his attitude towards female and others has become "tired, friable, eaten from the inside as if by termites" (187) and that he, an If David is reduced at times almost to an animal existence and finally to becoming a caretaker for dying animals, it is the mendacity of language that leads him there. Toward the end of the story, he reflects that the language he and others use has become "tired, friable, eaten from the inside as if by termites" and that he, an expert practitioner, is also hollow, "like a fly-casing in a spider web" (197).

Similarly, when he is hauled before an academic tribunal after a misbegotten affair with a student, he refuses to defend himself against charges of sexual harassment. At first he resists the spectacle of public "prurience and sentiment" the committee expects. When he

finally blurts out an apology, members of the tribunal refuse to be satisfied, demanding to know whether it reflects his sincere feelings and comes from his heart.

Disgrace is about a discourse of male who take female for mere objects. This mentality is depicted in the form of the aged professor Lurie who does not feel sorry for whatever has happened. Upon the inquiry team's query, he offers that "I am no longer a fifty-year-old divorcee at a loose end. I became a servant of Eros" (37). David's arrogance and his conduct with Melanie is almost rape but, he does not take that for consideration.

Judging David might be easier, if understood from the mean male mentality. He is a student of Romanticism whose unrealized ambition is to write a chamber opera about Byron's life in Italy. And, Lord Byron is famous as a notorious love maker in the English history. David point always has been clear and precise, as if he genuinely believed "his passion for Melanie was the real thing, the flame he had been waiting his whole life to feel, then how could he not pursue her avidly" (126). As such, it is clear that female for David occupied a place not more than mere object of pleasure. He was always sure of what he wanted from his female students, and others, as well.

Coetzee's fiction laid on the stark and beautiful South African countryside has always played a half-allegorical role as both a destructive and a regenerative environment. He certainly cannot be accused of sentimentalizing rural life; shortly after David goes to live with Lucy, a stolid lesbian who, like him, seems to have been abandoned by the world, they become victims of a vicious criminal assault that may not be as random as it first appears. Their relations with Petrus, the African farmer who is their nearest neighbor, become increasingly troubled and ambiguous. In the aftermath of the rape of Lucy, Petrus prefers to remain silent, as he thinks she is David's daughter. His perspective of viewing Lucy is centered on the notion that Lucy and David are no different.

On the other hand, David volunteers to work for Bev, a friend of Lucy's who runs the local veterinary clinic, and comes to realize that Bev's primary role, in this impoverished land, is not to heal animals but to kill them with as much love and mercy as she can summon. This is against the feelings of David who finds thing not in his favor. He was accustomed to enjoy female with passion but, here he is trapped in a world where even the feelings of the animals are considered with respect.

Since time immemorial, women always have been subjected to harsh domination of their male counterparts. Let it be mother, or wife or daughter in all forms, she has been ruled by the males. This subjugation is not only in east or west, but in all parts of the world. While there are tales of females being the rulers and mightier than men, such narratives are limited to myths with no specified versions to prove them. This, however, does not mean that the women have not raised their voice against male domination.

Details concerning women's subjugation of female by men go far back to the ancient myths and scripture. Jewish myth says that Lilith, who was Adam's first wife considered herself equal to him. Unlike Eve, she was created from the dust, just as Adam was created. Adam demanded Lilith's submission but she rejected such proposal and claimed that she was equal to him. When Adam repeatedly insisted her submission, she rudely disrespected him and flew to the lap of nature, to the edge of Red sea. God threatened Lilith to come back, or to lose a hundred of her demon children daily to death. The presumptuous Lilith preferred punishment to patriarchal submission. For this crime of disobeying the authority, she was excluded from the human community, and was condemned to the excessively painful punishment to kill her own children. This western story is a stark example of the male domination; as the God, too is male and created by men. However, the daring defying of

Lilith shows that women were not just submissive, but powerful enough to revolt against the domineering male authority, even in the ancient period.

In the same line of the Gods is Prof. David who is like an Oedipus. In the wake of the outrages committed against him and his daughter, David still struggles with language. His angry demands for justice get no response from the overstretched police, and his attempts to confront one of the assailants -- whom Petrus is apparently protecting -- produce only stony silences and bald faced lies. This is one of the bitter facts of being a dislocated human who was once a womanizer and, now is trapped in his own canoe.

His daughter, Lucy seems to understand what David cannot live where she lives. She must tolerate brutalization and humiliation and simply keep going, largely because of the crime of her father. The poor female is again the target of patriarchal domination. She tells her father, her pain of being a female, as "Perhaps that is what I must learn to accept" (167). She further compares her situation as an animal that is starting afresh: "To start at ground level. With nothing . . . no cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity . . . like a dog" (167). So, Lucy like Melanie is another victim of male dominancy of age-old mentality that takes females sufferings for an object.

If, David actually reclaims some dignity by the end of *Disgrace* it is only because he gives up everything, gives up more than a dog ever could -- his daughter, his ideas about justice and language, his dream of the opera on Byron and even the dying animals he has learned to love without reservation, without thought for himself. So finally there seems some respite for women whom he ever molested and harassed.

From all these above conditions, we can witness that feminism comes with political, cultural and social awareness but the male ideology and discourse is still there in the culture and society to distort feminism making the women culturally silent and enduring, thus

making their thinking culturally erroneous. Thus, the novel ends with David putting down his favorite dog at the animal refuge. It indicates the phases of difficulties through which David is going through, and however, which are just because he took female mere as an instrument, until the tragedy fell on him, in person.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

Fall of Hypocrisy

J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* is the story of fall of Prof. David Lurie who falls from a dignified status of professorship to the status like a dog because of his freak attitude towards females. The novel is the depiction of mean mentality of male who takes female for mere an object of no feelings and sentimentality. Prof. David is a Lecturer of Romantic Poetry in Cape Town University, but his relationship with prostitutes and with a female student invites disgrace to him.

Prof. David is a twice divorcee, and even at the age of fifty-two his sexual thirst is far from content. He desires and meets several prostitutes, but is not satisfied with them. Then, he ultimately falls for, Melanie, one of his female students. But Melanie who is thirty years junior to him does not want any relationship with him, and remains away from him. However, David follows her to the apartment and maintains sexual relationship despite her wish. Then, the tragedy befalls on him, as he is threatened by the girl's boyfriend. Besides, the Disciplinary Committee of the University sits to make an inquiry upon the charges against David.

The Committee finds him guilty and, sets a condition that he seek a written explanation followed by regret of his act from David. However, David insists that he is not to be blamed solely for the act, as the girl was not entirely 'disapproving.' David, guided by male ego and sexist mentality prefers to quit his job to regret. This is an extreme of male psychic mentality that does not regard the feelings and sufferings of female. David does not want to accept that he is a sexist male who has nor regards for his victim of sexual harassment. He represents the psychic tradition in which male take females mere as toy to satisfy their wants and desires.

After quitting his job from professorship, he moves to stay with his daughter, Lucy, in Salem, rural South Africa. Here, a tragedy befalls in which Melanie's friends rape Lucy, and David is left to suffer the irrevocable loss. David here realizes the pain of being a female, and a father of a young girl. He wants to take revenge but his daughter does not want any such actions, and instead decides to rear the child, an inborn of rape. David is left in lurch to remember his past events, and finally he is remorseful of his past. He seeks apologize from his victims.

Thus, the sexist mentality of David comes to an end, and he realizes how it feels like being a female, and a male taking over her without consent. Females for ages have been taken by males like David who see their utility in mere sex and ignore their internal sufferings and pain. However, fall of David to the status of almost like a street dog, shows the value of females in the society.

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