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Ambivalence in J.M Coetzee's Novel *The Age of Iron*.

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Abstract

J. M. Coetzee has shown colonial ambivalence in his novel, *The Age of Iron* (1990). Ambivalent position is exposed out from the reverse presence and activity of the state. The protagonist, Mrs. Curren a woman of seventy dying of cancer narrates the story of herself in epistolary writing style to her daughter "you" in first person, central narration. While narrating her story she also narrates the prevalent, the then political scenario and she herself between two political extremes struggling to live normal life under abnormal condition with aesthetic principle and values. But she can't rise above politics and asserts her politically non-committed self. Her position is politically split and torn-between. Through the medium of Curren, Coetzee shows how the media, knowledge, power and truth is manipulatively represented by the apartheid state. While analyzing Coetzee's representation of the character and states' representation of truth in the narrative *Age of Iron* shows the vast disparity between what is claimed to do and what is done. Hence, institutionalized violence of the state to John, Bheki and other rebels taking the base of colonial discourse, ideology, binary opposition, fixity of norms and difference, vague political alignment of Mrs. Curren somewhere supporting state and rebel and somewhere criticizing them then demise of the rebel before achieving their designed goal makes the novel full of colonial ambivalent features.

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I. J.M. Coetzee and His Trend of Writing

This dissertation critically analyzes the representation of oppressive state, its constituents, black people within the boundary of this state, role of media to control the truth. In the course of plot development Currens' conscience also sharpens and penetrates up to get access to see real chaotic living of people. Currens' trip from her home to Gugulethu is allegorically equal to her psychological development from ignorance to versatile knowledge of the South African lives and living under apartheid state. In the course of the representation and unveiling truth Coetzee's main heroine Mrs. Curren has some sort of biased purpose. Such a racial and political biasness is seen in her criticism of black revolutionaries. This sort of idea contaminates her fair representation and reveals her position as ambivalent towards colonialism.

The representation of both black and white characters and their dealing with one another in anarchic circumstantial scenario is the prime focus of this research. Coetzee asserts the figure of seventy years old white widow dying of bone cancer is the protagonist of his novel who can't take firm standing and declare right for the wrong to justice, but whose deeds are guided by sympathy and anxiety rather than solid performance. On the one hand selection of too much fragile old figure stricken by cancer, whose death is upcoming soon as the protagonist instead of energetic and vibrant one and on the other hand her propensity and complicity with the state shows both Coetzee and his protagonist had fascination to European genealogy down in their heart. So, this research tries to problematize the idea that Coetzee's *The Age of Iron* gives the intellectual challenge to retributive violence of apartheid state for the sake of black people.

Mrs. Curren had some aversion towards black rebel group. She can't express any sympathy for revolutionary people. Mrs. Curren on the one hand doesn't prefer violence of apartheid state and on the other hand even dislikes the idea of revolution

of blood cuddling black mass to eradicate that very apartheid rule. While evaluating her standing critically it is found that, Mrs. Curren is in favour of white domination and superiority over the black people but without retributive violence. Subversion of imperial white government for native black people and by the black people to restore peace and harmony is beyond her interest. Bheki and John are the members of rebelling group. These comrades are combative, arrogant and hypocrite in the eyes of Curren. She characterizes their desire as hard as iron full of hatred. Bheki's mother Florence is also like iron, who is full of prejudice. Mrs. Curren detests killing and bloodletting in the name of comradeship and thinks it is so barbarous and rude.

Mrs. Curren extremely hates John, she had no feeling and sympathy for him. While dealing with John she seems racist. She thinks John is align beings. He thinks white liberal good-will as deceptive and suspicious. John had an idea that closing of school to abolish apartheid state is good because school is a mere medium to module children's vacant mind according to apartheid rule. But for Curren, revolution and combat to overthrow the apartheid state and to restore peace can't compensate the closing of school and deprivation of education. In this sense Curren's inner desire is to see the superiority, domination and stereotype of white to be lengthened more. Mrs. Curren's evaluation and judgement is not transparent to her detests for both revolutionaries and states oppression. She is silent and uncertain on the issue regarding what solid step is to be taken forward to settle down such a devastating and anarchaic situation.

J.M. Coetzee has presented William's profession as slaughtering and to pounce on chicken. His slaughtering work is presented in contrast of Dr. Syfrets prestigious profession. Florence's husband's true name is not given, his identity is given no importance. His name is presented as willian, the name by which he is known in the world of his work. Mrs. Curren, a white widow of seventy is presented

as the owner of a house in opposition to her householder Florence, who is out of the reach of property and merely a servant. Florence and her cousin Thabane are presented as lacking mind for critical judgement in the right moment, for the issue to deal with police torture and white liberal good will. Throughout the text the shortcoming and loopholes of white characters are veiled in but the minor mistake of black figure is exposed out then taken as a issue of debate.

Service of doctor, police are presented everywhere not because to ensure the life, liberty and security of everyone but to maintain the oppressive system of law. In the eyes of Bheki police are terrorist, instead of security they spread terrorism. Even the hospital and doctor are biased to black patient. Hospital doesn't keep record of patient so as to dismiss and underground their lives, if necessary. The doctor doesn't properly treat the patient to meet the complete recovery.

J.M. Coetzee's main heroine in his novel, *The Age of Iron*, is nostalgic of her by gone days and tries to live in that very past instead of asserting any way out of present anarchic situation. Mrs. Currens repeatedly praises her daughter for her expatriation to America. By representing Africa as barbaric, uncivilized, rude and land of perversion shows, she is none the less critical of black liberation and peaceful Africa. Her persuasion for John to come out and to confront police, giving him the guarantee of his life is her deception to him. But instead John's killing at her home, her service as a government school teacher, her preference and craze for white police girl as an ideal one, raised as a good girl to be someone's good wife shows her complicity and propensity towards European genealogy.

Mrs. Curren is too much self centered and too possessive. Every time she is found to be anxious of her disease and her upcoming death, then she has concern for other suffering people. Mrs. Curren is too much possessive of her house and car. She Scolds John for hiding in to her car without her permission. Curren is annoyed with

Florence and declared that she can't make the mistake by turning her home into a heaven for all the children running away from their home. Curren had hatred for charity because the spirit of charity has perished in Africa. Charity should be from heart to heart but for Curren in Africa Charity is difficult to lend and to take. She loves unlovable Bheki for salvation of herself but not enough love despite herself. Instead of her self centeredness and deep possession of home, car and her daughter, the demarcation between dangerous outside world and safe sphere of home gets blurred due to killing of John at Curren's home.

Mrs. Curren's idea of freedom and language is quite ambiguous and inferior. She associates Afrikaaner, Hottentot language with hammer hitting the post on the ground out of cadence and full of dissonant sound. She had craze for language of European tongue. She criticizes Afrikaner sound and music from the radio as worse than the tennis ball. While examining Curren's attitude to freedom she herself is unclear and not transparent about it. Taking in consideration the idea of freedom Curren is in favour of status quo. For Curren freedom is only unimaginable and she knows only unfreedom.

British regime as colonial invader in Africa was to civilize the barbaric African, who were incapable to be ruled themselves in colonizers' word. The colonizer first of all needs consent of the people whether brainwashing or making the native people to internalize the superiority of European on them to legitimize their presence. This sort of superiority and legitimacy the colonizer achieved through binary features, difference, stereotypical representation, manipulation of truth, discourse and Western ideology of possessing supreme code themselves. But, when the native people understood the crooked mission of colonizer to blunder, accumulate and exploit the native people resist that very rule to overthrow. Then in the name of peace and proper rule the colonizers conduct a institutionalized violence and show the

barbarism of themselves. This sort of ruling ideology is itself ambivalent by showing disparity between their deed and claim.

In J.M. Coetzee's novel *Age of Iron* institutionalized violence of the state, manipulation of truth through media, genocide and mass murder of native people, interference of peoples private sphere, suspension of peoples basic rights, states constituent parts; hospital, doctor, ambulance being biased for native people raise the question of western rationality, Western civilization and western values. So this sort of role makes Coetzee's presentation of state's representation ambivalent.

Mrs. Curen's role had disjunction on the one hand claiming aestheticism as her prime purpose. But on the other hand involve in the prejudice, hatred, hypocrisy and anger of day to day life. While entering and interfering the peoples day to day life she is trapped between two political extremes and shows her splite conscience and position by her dealing with black and white characters. The state is ambivalent due to exposition of it's barbarism and despotism in the name of civilization. Coetzee is ambivalent regarding his novel *The Age of Iron*. Due to his failure to assert aesthetic principle of the world of reality as he claims instead merely depicting the world full of hatred and wickedness. And attributing his heroine full of worldly features like: hatred, rage, anger, possession and hypocrisy than transcendental aesthetic features.

Dominic Head delivers his view on Coetzee's writing as he stated that "Coetzee's own comments on his ethnic identity shows him to be intensely aware of the slipperiness of his position and of the ambivalence of the state which divides colonial postcolonial experience"(6). Here in these lines by commenting his own ethnicity Coetzee is interested to expose truth and reality negating the institutional discourse of power. Due to his ethnic association he doesn't have capacity to assert him back from the crime committed against Africa by the whites of South Africa. So

in this transitional phase instead of his best wishes for equality, his ethnicity is being threatened.

Patrick Hayes finds Coetzee's connection with politics even if Coetzee doesn't express it clearly. His debates support and challenges are oblique rather than direct. He states that: "Coetzee has made on the relationship between writing and politics. And aside from his refusal to be a herald of community, it is not very clear at all" (7). Coetzee's politics is to expose his propensity and devotion to black people and black liberation brotherhood and the like not directly but in ironic tone.

Disgrace (1999), the novel is set in Kaffraria of Eastern Cape town. This novel deals with the theme of bitter ambiguous legacy of nation, aesthetization of passion, research of human life determinants, deep contemplation of desire and burning of human passion, understanding of compassion and forgiveness, etc. It shows Coetzee's first encounter to the mirror reflection of how life is in post apartheid South Africa. The novel in particular explores the violence, crime, rape, deeper than the sphere of individual life. In Coetzee's account of post apartheid South Africa no state, constitution or law to speak of, only a relentless working out of the governing rural South Africa, as a sump of history. Lucy's rape is the case, however, of paying for the sins not only of the father but also of her own father Lurie, whose seduction of Melanie had a degree of coercion about it. The novel's most intense passage explores the consequences of life-giving and death giving energy that leads to profound research of human determinants where desire and burning are linked intricately. Its central core of selfhood has become othered by history itself, rendered useless and even comic despite the pain of being criminally tortured by being burnt. The temporality of *Disgrace* lies in it's being located after the end of history which was Coetzee's metier in earlier phase of his writing.

Life and Times of Michael K. (1983) is mainly set in the Karoo, a barren Southern slope of Africa. Michael K set off his journey in the search of his mothers' hometown. Roaming from place to place once he arrived in the town of Prince Albert where he sees pale white line of houses, baroque pediments, the church, the jail, the police station and the township ruled and controlled by apartheid. He found husbandry and serfdom system there and rude behaviour of owner to their workers. Coetzee draws on third person omniscience of realist fiction in order to approach Michael K and release this characters' thoughts. Using technique of psychological realism Coetzee brings out the thoughts of Michael K through his meditation. Allegory, allusion, paradox, figure and motif drawn from Derridian deconstruction reinforce the free play of meaning. By portraying Michael K as representative of victimized black people of South Africa, *Life and Times of Michael K* consists of an attempt to speak for a non white protagonist is a kind of interior stage on the way to a more sophisticated postmodernism. Resisting the invitation to offer some interpretation of the motif of resistance in Michael K, Coetzee articulated his discomfort by drawing a clear distinction between the critical and creative arts.

John Maxwell Coetzee's novel, *The Age of Iron* (1990) is set in Cape town, South Africa 1986. The first person narrator, Mrs. Curren, an elderly woman dying of cancer tells her story. The tone of the novel is intimate, brooding and confessional. The entire novel is directed at someone whom she calls "you", that the you she is writing to is her daughter. The literary fiction *The Age of Iron* is written in epistolary style including series of letters Curren has written and addressed to her daughter in America from South Africa. The title of the novel *Age of Iron* shows hatred and hardheartedness of the later generation than Mrs. Curren. Time and again Curren seem nostalgic to her own generation and previous age. Coetzee giving the title of the novel *Age of Iron* tries his best to associate the desire of black rebel as hard as iron.

South Africa was ruled under a system of racial segregation called apartheid, which means separateness in Afrikaans. Apartheid was held in place as an official policy from 1948 until 1994. Under Apartheid the rights of black were severely limited, whites, though minority in terms of numbers, were completely in charge. In fact black were not even considered to be legal citizen of South Africa and they were forced to attend separate public services. The novel is set in 1986, a time in which Apartheid was still in full force but anti apartheid sentiments were getting progressively stronger. A state of emergency was declared in a number of areas of South Africa during 1985, and by 1986 The South African local government fired back imposing curfews censoring the press; and allowing police to crush any protest as they saw fit. *Age of Iron* brilliantly illustrates the tension between citizen and authority that existed during this time. We see the black characters who live in township feel hopeless, unrest and the state tries to enforce order by conducting to extreme violence. By depicting a real historical moment marked by chaos and uncertainty, *Age of Iron* dramatically shows ambivalent features of the state and it's agent.

The novel is divided in four chapters. The first chapter unfolds the story bringing the first person narrator, Mrs. Curren coming to term of her knowledge that her cancer incurble and the very same day, a homeless man starts camping out on her property. Mrs. Curren confronts with Vagrant and permits him to live at her house as her supporter. The second chapter deals with the episode of the return of Florence and her kids into Mrs. Currens' house. Bheki and his friend, John drive Vercueil away by beating him. Mrs. Curren realizes that the police are watching her house. Schools are closed in Gugulethce. While they were cycling, the police trail Bheki and his friend and force him in to having bike accident. John is severely injured and taken to Wookstock hospital but Bhekis' injury is minor. The third chapter contains the climax

of the story. Death of Bheki in Gugulethu and John at Mrs. Currens home are pivotal moments of the story. Mrs. Curren goes to Gugulethu and sees Bhekis' dead body. Soon thereafter, next day the police raid the house of Mrs. Curren and killed John. Since Johns' murder took place in her own home, she feels huge sense of violation. Her home is no longer her home. The fourth chapter includes suspense, denouement and conclusion of the episode in her letter to her daughter. Mrs. Curren leaves her home and falls asleep under a bridge, not caring whether she lives. Vercueil takes Mrs. Curren to her home. Her health continues to decline. Mrs. Curren asks Vercueil if "it's time"? "He gets in to bed with her and holds her in a cold embrace. So as to release her from her respiration process." At the end Vercueil seems like: angel or ghost like figure.

When we look at it as a novel about the psychological development of the narrator, *Age of Iron* is fine example of literary fiction. *The Age of Iron* deals with an unjust political system, racial violence, terminal illness, etc. Even though, that these subjects are what the novel is about at it's core. It seems as though *The Age of Iron* is more about how those horrific things affect the characters both in terms of their relationship with one another as well as with themselves. *Age of Iron* is really about Mrs. Curren coming to term with her own perspective on the world, her changing attitude towards others and her fears about her impending death.

The Age of Iron has received many critical analyses after it's publication in 1990. Many critics, scholars, novelists, reviewers have analyzed this text from multiple perspectives. These multiple perspectives are like: allegory, aestheticism, contextual, nostalgia, irony, intertextuality and the like. But the present researcher will carry out this dissertation into it's complete form, from the perspective of postcolonial literary analysis showing the ambivalent position of the Coetzee's heroine Mrs Curren, and his presentation of the representation of the state.

Analyzing the text *Age of Iron*, Dominic Head argues that Coetzee has brilliantly sketched his heroine so as to expose out the ruined status of society. For him, Coetzee using the allegorical literary troop conveys his idea that, it is must in Africa to maintain check and balance to maintain peace, liberty and brotherhood. He further states:

This impulse towards direct representation sits alongside Coetzee's more usual literary self consciousness in this novel, and this makes for a particular more powerful fusion. The customary debate about allegory is raised by the narrator [. . .], requiring us to consider the extent to which she stands for South Africa, the cancer within mirroring the diseased society without. (67)

In the above given extract, Coetzee's deep concern and anxiety for the degradation of human relation is exposed through the portrayal of cancer ridden seventy years old body of Mrs. Curren.

Another critic Patrick Hayes giving reference to Attridge interprets the novel, *The Age of Iron* as aesthetic one. Patrick Hayes found Curren's aesthetic values, behaviours and norms in contrast to states' barbaric step of institutionalized violence. He further elaborates that:

It is important to notice that Attridge effectively puts the text in the position of what Coetzee called aesthetic "rivalry" His claim is that *The Age of Iron* affirms through its portrayal of Elizabeth Curren, a set of values and behaviours that are marked as "the ethical" and that are implicitly superior to political. Which Attridge describes as a predominantly instrumental discourse of generalizations programs and predications. (132)

Here, Hayes analyzes the superior code of aesthetic values. Aesthetic values are long lasting and permanent but political values can fluctuate and move to and fro to fulfill and gain selfish craze of power and position.

Likewise, analyzing the text *The Age of Iron*, Jane Payner argues, the novel is written during the time of top most conflict between two wills. There is direct confrontation of the majority of stereotyped people with handful of minority rulers of power: He further argues:

The novel addresses Coetzee's own very private response as an anxious intellectual to working under the pressure of an oppressive regime and those of conformity, even conforming to the tenets of progressive left with which he makes clear he sympathizes [. . .]. The narrative maps a tension between public and private entirely relevant to its context, the interregnum of late 1980s South Africa: that period of uncertainty between regimes. (3, 113)

The above given excerpt shows, during the period of 1990 resistance group were powerful and successful. Both the states and the rebel were increasing their inquiry and extermination of opponents. In such a context every rights of people were dissolved and even the boundary of peoples' private sphere of home and dangerous outside world is blurred out.

Another critic John Rees Moore interprets this novel as lamentation of bygone. Curren had nostalgic view up on her childhood and peaceful and harmonious South Africa of that moment. He further states:

"*Age of Iron* laments the death of South Africa by lamenting the death of the notion of childhood." When Mrs. Curren says her daughter will never return to benighted South Africa because "She is like iron," Vercueil responds, "you are like iron too". It is a tribute to Coetzee's

skill that this dismal story is bracing and intellectually engrossing.

(426)

In the analysis of Moore, Currens' distaste for contemporary South Africa is aroused by her comparison of present Africa to its previous condition. Curren criticizes that present Africa has become ugly and savage from peaceful and liberal state of it.

Likewise, David E. Hoeberg regards this novel as intertextual procedures. In his analysis, intertextuality involves both the rewriting and critiquing. First rewriting in the style and form of European trend to develop writerly status and then critiquing them to assert particular indigenous identity and themes. He further states that:

Intertextuality for post-colonial author often involves rewriting and critiquing works of European literature that have been used in colonial educational system as evidence of superiority of European culture [. . .]. Coetzee writes Dante not only to locate us in South Africa rather than in Florence but also to question the nostalgic imperial vision at the heart of Dante's theory of history [. . .] it is characterized by both repetition and difference. (27, 39, 40)

Here in the above given excerpt Hoeberg analyzes Coetzee's intertextuality of *Age of Iron* with *Dante's Inferno* to restore African literatures' specific characteristics by repeating and differentiating.

Though the above mentioned critics, scholars and reviewers have analyzed the text from the perspective of allegory, aestheticism, contextual features, nostalgia irony and intertextuality, none of the critics has analyzed this text from the perspective of postcolonial critical eye. So, the present researcher has taken this mobilization of postcolonial perspective as a point of departure of the research. Postcolonial eyesight penetrates through each and every word and deed of Curren and veils out the buried and hidden intension of Coetzee and his heroine Mrs. Curren and the colonial State.

Stepping on, forward from this departure this dissertation will solve the problem that beneath the surfacial challenge to apartheid and it's retributive violence lies stereotype and hatred for black people.

The researcher's primary source in this research will be the text itself. As secondary sources, the researcher will study the available critical writing on the author, text and theoretical tool. The present researcher will mobilize the ideas of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Ania Loomba, Leela Gandhi, Frantz Fanon and the like to justify the hypothesis and make the research more illuminating and rewarding.

A major element in postcolonial agenda is to disestablish Eurocentric norms of literary and artistic values and to expand the literary canon to include colonial and postcolonial writers. Postcolonial study is the critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of the England, Spain, France and other imperial power. Postcolonial theory was in practice before the particular name was given to indicate this practice. When the culture, language, norms, values, etc of colonizer came to interact with the values of colonized then postcolonial theory came in to being. This theory constantly resists the European trend and reconstructs the body of counter literature. "Postcolonial study involves discussion of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the intellectual master discourse of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics" (Ashcroft et. al. 1995, p.2). According to Ashcroft, postcolonial study has the broader scope that includes all the activities that happened during the period of colonial invasion.

Leela Gandhi argues with the parallel view of Said. Western people associate Non-West with stereotype such as: terrorist, childlike, immature and mystical. Western people have desire to dominate and take authority over non-western people.

In Western discourse Non-Western are presented as what they were not because of colonizers' disguised mission to cheat. Leela Gandhi States that:

Orientalism becomes discourse at the point at which it starts systematically to produce stereotypes about orientals and the orient, such as the heat and dust, the teeming market place, the terrorist, the courtesan, the Asian despot, the childlike native, the mystical East. These stereotypes, Said tells us, confirm the necessity and desirability of colonial government by endlessly confirming the positional superiority of the West over the positional inferiority of the East. (77)

The above given extract shows Non-West ruler are presented as cruel and tyrannical. Non-Western people in Western stereotypical eyes are as: heat and dust, unwanted and valueless. By stereotyping, dominating and blackmailing Non-Western people, Europeans want to maintain their superior position.

Discourse is made by the western, European people to govern, dominate and stereotype Non-Western people. Discourse creates certain ideology and that very ideology serves the colonizing mission. Every colonized people bear the imposition of Western thought, language, lifestyle and culture. Frantz Fanon in his book *Black Skin White Mask* states that:

People in whose soul an inferior complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality find itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation, that is, with the culture of mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adaptation of the mother country's cultural standards. (18)

The above excerpt clarifies the pure, original and undefiled culture of colonized native people is subdued due to the violent and constant impression of European

culture. Western ideology takes credit of uplifting Non-Western people to elevated cultural standard from rude and barbaric native country's cultural standards. But by destroying native people's culture the colonizers impose severe oppression on them. When there comes the resistance of native people it operates brutal suppression of people. That sort of oppression exposes the contrastive claim of the colonizer.

The so-called enlightening ideology of the Western European colonizers exposes its bare and disgusting figure while tackling with the resistance of the native people. The greedy, possessive, accumulative and wicked intention veiled behind the showy civilizing mission comes to the fore front while forcing native people by violence for maintaining their consent to be ruled. Regarding the resistance of despotic ruler Homi K. Bhabha in his book, *Nation and Narration* further argues, "Race, geography, tradition, language, size or some combination of these seem finally insufficient for determining national essence, and yet people die for nation, fight wars for them, and write fiction on their behalf" (49).

Through the medium of Western education itself people understand the real purpose of the colonizer then they begin to start combative rebellion against colonizer and fight wars to overthrow them. But to suppress and dissolve the bond of native people the colonizer brutally exercise its despotic rule through institutionalized violence. That sort of step of the colonizer shows the ambivalence and disparity inherent in colonial mission itself.

This research analyzes how the Western ideology creates the representation of Non-Western people as barbaric, mystic, immature, emotional, irrational and the like. How the black people are represented as helpless, hopeless, refugee, etc. in their own land is the central issue of this project to dig out through postcolonial theory. So, postcolonial theory circles round to assert evidence to prove this core issue and to veil the hidden purpose behind this type of representation of black and white characters.

The present research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents brief outline of the text, elaboration of hypothesis, some major works of Coetzee, postcolonial theoretical analysis according to our title and reviews of various critics. The second chapter is the central part of this research. This chapter will analyze the novel according to considerable length of our research. Analysis of the novel will depend on our application of theoretical modality outlined in first chapter. To clarify the appropriateness of theoretical modality extract from the text will be put forward. Application of postcolonial theory to extracted lines and quotes from the book will be a key evidence to prove the hypothesis of this dissertation mobilized theory, quotation from the text, various reviews will be determinants to lead the string of title to solve the raised problem circling round the proposed hypothesis. The purpose and finding of this research can be judged and will depend on it's tackling of raised problem. Finally, the third chapter will be the conclusion of this research on the basis of the textual analysis in chapter two. The researcher will conclude the explanation and put the arguments forward in the prior chapters and prove Coetzee's in *The Age of Iron* shows the colonial ambivalence of the state while viewing through postcolonial theoretical eye.

II. Ambivalence in *The Age of Iron*

The application of colonialism is itself contradictory in its tendency, ambivalence appears there when the state of split conscience for colonizer and colonized appears simultaneously. Rejection of indigenous to give consent for colonizer internalizing their superiority brings domination of invaders on native people. Such a domination and resistance in the novel, *The Age of Iron* turned the protagonist, Mrs Curren trapped ambivalence between those two extreme forces. She can't choose one for the other and take firm standing but her conscience is divided and she intermittently declares the need of aestheticism and becomes nostalgic of it and suggests to live a normal life under abnormal condition.

The novelist, J.M. Coetzee flees away from social responsibility for the turmoil of the then society while observing him through his novel *The Age of Iron* and analyzing his South African Writers Interview (340-41). In the hard and fast capitalist and exploitative society Coetzee prefers aestheticism then aestheticism and justice transcending law but where, violence, brutality and segregation transcends laws. Coetzee says in his "South African Writers Interview":

I don't believe that any form of lasting community can exist where people do not share the same sense of what is just [. . .] community has its basis in an awareness and acceptance of a common justice [. . .] awareness of an idea of justice, somewhere that transcends laws and lawmaking. Such an awareness is not absent from our lives. But where I see it, I see mainly as flickering or dimmed - the kind of awareness you would have if you were a prisoner in the cave, say, watching the shadows of the ideas flickering on the walls. To be a herald you would have to have slipped your chain for a while and wandered about in the real world. I am not herald of community or anything else [. . .]. I am

someone who has intimation of freedom (as every chained prisoner has) and constructs representation __ which are shadows themselves _ of people slipping their chains and turning their faces to the light.

("South African Writers: Interview", 340-41)

In his interview Coetzee claims himself of not being a informer of society and depicting the content of his novel beyond the world of imitation or ephemeral world. But in practice, regarding his novel *The Age of Iron* his representation is merely a portrayal of colonial history of the then apartheid rule. While presenting the prevalence society of turmoil he gave much more prominence on aestheticism than the way out of that very chaotic scenario. His heroine in the novel, *Age of Iron* has nothing to do with the problem but her role is merely criticizing the clash of two parties and flee from danger for aestheticism. She says, "I still detests these calls for sacrifice that end with young men bleeding to death in the mud. war is never what it pretends to be. Scratching the surface and you find, invariably, old men sending young men to their death in the name of abstraction or other" (149).

Mrs. Curren dislikes the resistance of native black African people to overthrow apartheid rule and establish peace, harmony and brotherhood. Mrs. Curren thinks such a sacrifice for abstraction is vain from this sort of sacrifice peace is not possible for her. For any solid step to put forward she hesitates and thinks herself as an outsider of this problem Her notion is, "please listen to me, I am not indifferent to this [. . .] this war. How can I be? No bars are thick enough to keep it out, I felt like crying; but here, beside Florence, what right had I?" (95).

Curren thinks that this problem of domination, stereotype and brutality upon black people by white people is only a problem of black people. So, she beside, Florence shows her distance from the case. Even though, any step to solve the problem is not done by her, she does not hesitate to show her restless condition due to

the real turmoil of the society. She says describing herself as: "a woman in burning house running from window to window, calling through the bars for help." (170) She compares herself with a woman inside a burning house due to the death of innocent people and expansion of terror. Curren is much more self-centered than she is social worker and charitable. She tries to love and sympathize black rebels not for the wish for them to get victory and maintain brotherhood but for her own salvation. She further says, "I want to be saved- how shall I be saved? By doing what I do not want to do [. . .], I must love, first of all, the unlovable. I must love for instance, this child- He is part of my salvation" (125).

She is against the rebel, she has hatred for them but she is destined to love them to secure her safe position after death in heaven. When she observes the killing and dying in Gugulethu, She "Closing out this looming world of rage and violence" (73) "escapes to her safe house, to her bed of childhood slumber" (100). After seeing the chaotic circumstance in Gugulethu, she is not interested to involve in it and find solution but she flees to the safe place, her home. Curren's concept of negating sacrifice, thinking herself outsider of problem, exposing her fake restless condition, emphasizing her salvation and fleeing from the turmoil to her safe place home shows her complicity with reactionary order. In this regard Homi K. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* says:

However, I do want to make graphic what it means to survive, to produce, to labor and to create, with in a world system whose major economic impulse and cultural investments are pointed in a direction away from you, your country or your people. Such neglect can be a deeply negating experience, oppressive and exclusionary, and it spurs you to resist the polarities of power and prejudice, to reach beyond and behind the invidious narratives of center and periphery. (Bhabha, XI)

Here, Bhabha says people's livelihood in everyday life is disturbed and controlled by oppressive and exclusionary group. They control people's right to survive, to labor and produce things. To maintain peace and harmony such polarities of power and prejudice created by it must be resisted. But such a resistance is negated by Curren. Who feels no problem on continuation of stereotypical domination of white state.

Mrs. Curren has negative attitude towards black rebel group. She detests them. She characterizes these black boys as violent and aggressive as shark whose organs are underdeveloped and unnecessarily twisted she says:

It is the roaming gangs I fear, the sullen mouthed boys, rapacious as sharks, on whom the first shade of the prison house is already beginning to close. Children scoring childhood, the time of wonder, the growing time of soul. Their soul their organs of wonder ,stunted, petrified. (6)

Curren brings he refers physical and psychological deficiency of black children. In the proper time their soul is not grown and physical organs are not developed in proportion to the development of their age. But her concept on white children is affectionate, positive and familiar.

In contrast to their black counterpart white children are taken as angle in angleic bliss. For Curren white children are blond, innocent, soft and angleic. White children who spend their childhood in playing games like cricket, swimming, riding instead of training of warfare and murder. Prison house versus gardens guarded by bulldogs are the places related to black and white children in opposition. Here, Curren is stereotypical while presenting black and white boys. Such a racial difference created by the Western discourse is put forward by Ania Loomba in her book, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. She argues:

By attributing racial characteristics to biological differences such as skull and brain sizes or facial angles, or genes, and by insisting on the connection between these factors and social and cultural attributes, science turned, 'savagery' and civilization in to fixed and permanent conditions. Again, such fixity seems to contradict the imperial claim of civilising the natives: if savagery is a biological condition then improvement by social means pointless. (101-2)

Colonizer attributes biological and physical difference between white and black to the racial denominator. Science, that is put forward to prove biological difference of skull, brain, facial angles or genes to show racial difference is turned in to savagery, and the civilization in to fixed conditions. When savagery of the black people is associated with biological improvement of it by social reformative features is worthless. And that makes contradiction on the civilizing mission. The heroine of *The Age of Iron* brings racial difference between white and black on the basis of physical difference.

Mrs. Curren is against war, while suggesting the rebel boy, John, she says that during the warfare period humanity and human rights get suspended. Curren is professor of classic so she introduces classical philosopher Thucydides for the lesson of aestheticism. She further says, "If you had been in my Thucydides class [. . .] you might have learned something, what can happen to our humanity in the time of war" (73). Mrs. Curren not only advises to the bad effect of war but also induces to Bheki being catalyst of clash between state and rebel. Curren says:

If you don't complain they will go on behaving as they like Even if it gets you nowhere, you must stand up to them. I am not talking about the police only. I am talking about man in power. They must see, you are not afraid. This is a serious matter. They could have killed you,

Bheki. What have they got against you anyway? What gave you and that friend of yours been up to? (60)

In the above given extract Curren advises Bheki to complain about injustice and brutality done up on him by police in the bike accident. For Curren bearing injustice makes easy way for the white ruler to do more domination. But Curren's advice turned ambivalent when she advises for the rebel to put down gun which is raised to fight against the despotic ruler of power. She further says: "why don't you just put down your guns and go home, all of you? I said. 'Because surely nothing can be worse than what are you doing here. Worse for your soul, I mean" (98). It shows that Curren is in favor of white domination and superiority up on black people but without violence and massacre. In this regard A. Césaire in his book, *A discourse on Colonialism* says the colonization had its adverse result due to unlimitation of human greed, possession and strict decision. For him, "Colonization works to decivilize the colonizer, To brutalize in the true sense of a word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instinct, to covetousness, violence, race hatred and morals relativism" (Cited in Gandhi 138). In the given extract Césaire says when the desire of possession and strict decision is not bound with in certain rules and regulation then colonizer involves in violence, hatred manipulation of truth. Colonizer then can't certify their presence to civilize the native but they themselves become barbaric. In the same vein Mrs. Curren also meets reverse outcome due to her fluctuating propensity. Curren tries to reinforce aestheticism taking the idea of political non-alignment but she, somewhere induces native to clash with state and somewhere to put down gun stating that the rebellion is bad.

Another episode of Mrs Curren's ambivalence, contradictory and split presence appears there while introducing John with the detectives. She deceptively

persuades John to open the door and surrender with the police. She doesn't help him to flee or hide to save his life. She asked John:

'Open the door, my boy', I said won't let them hurt you, I promise.' It was a lie. He was lost, I had no power to save him. Yet something went out from me to him. I ached to embrace him, to protect him. 'John!' I called through the coughing. 'Come out! I will not let them do anything to you'. (139)

Mrs. Curren, who already had known that she is not able to protect him calls John outside by persuading and forcing him. Such a deception turned her aestheticism in to mere fantasy. So, in his novel *Age of Iron* what Coetzee wants to transmit through his heroine Mrs. Curren is in broad gap. Leela Gandhi in her book *Postcolonial Theory* asserts the paradox, discrepancy of western rationality during the progress of colonial mission. In the name of civilizing mission, to fulfill vested interest violence is taken as medium and that very terror sweeps away the so called rationality. Gandhi further says:

These nervous queries about the immorality of colonialism uncover a central paradox at the heart of imperialism: namely, the profound discrepancy between the inflated claim of civilizing mission and the harsh reality of colonial violence [. . .] the ethical and epistemological center of western rationality was effectively emptied of its meaning by the harsh progress of the colonial mission. (134)

Here, in the given extract Curren's rationality of following aestheticism and thinking up above from social reality is perverted by her alignment with the colonial mission to shut down the native voice and resistance. What she claims and what she does is very different.

Mrs. Curren somewhere displays her role as if she were an agent of Colonial state involving in the act of spy as a detective of government. But simultaneously she doesn't hesitate to show sympathy for the black people. Her actions are split with her dual conscience. Current further elaborates:

'If you are looking for those boys, I want you to know they have my permission to be here.' 'Which boys, lady?' 'The boys who are visiting here. The boys from Gugulethu. The school boys.' [. . .]. 'No, lady, I don't know anything about boys from Gugulethu. Do you want us to look out for them. (48, 49)

The police who are following these boys are only in suspicion that the boys may be there but Mrs. Curren made them sure that they are there. After all, Curren's such an act induces bloodshed. Even though, Curren philosophically explains the importance of blood. The blood that was shed out from the violence is the great loss because in every drop of blood there remains the possibility of separate existence. Mrs. Curren inducing colonial activity comments of the genocide of Gugulethu as, "And I thought, "Now my eyes are open and I can never close them again" (95). In this regard Bhabha in his book *The Location of culture* argues:

It's predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for a 'subject' people through the production of knowledge in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited. It seeks authorization for its strategies by the production of knowledge of colonizer and colonized which are stereotypical but antithetically evaluated. (100-1)

Mrs. Curren supports the detectives to track down the surveillances by exposing the hiding place of the boys John and Bhiki. Her exposition incited fear in the detectives for their mission. The colonizer try to apply their strategy of civilizing mission to

legitimize their presence and authority. The natives who resist them, are loaded by colonizer a negative attributes and dominate them because colonizer tries to show that native people resist because of their barbaric civilization.

When Vercueil appeared before Mrs. Curren, she analyzes him so strange, align being, a rubbish person with green eyes and bad health. He is presented as derelict beggar deprived from any kind of property, a drunkard. His physicality is presented as like that of puppet, bare and strange. His face is horsy and beaten by the weather due to his living in outdoor, his eyes are glazen and pitiless. She further says that:

A derelict, one of the derelicts who hang around the parking lots on Mill street, cadging money from shoppers, drinking under the flyover, eating out of refuse cans. One of the homeless for whom August, month of rains is the worst month. Asleep in his box, his legs stretched out like marionettes, his jaw apage. An unsavoury smell about him: urine, sweet wine, mouldy clothing and something else too. Unclean [. . .] who go bare and feel no cold. Who sleeps outdoors and don't sicken. Who starve and do not waste. Warmed from within by alcohol. The contagions and infections in their blood consumed in liquid flame cleaners sup after the feast. Flies dry -winged, glazen-eyed, pitiless....a horsy, weather beaten face with the puffiness around the eyes of an alcoholic . Strange green eyes: unhealthy. (3,4,6)

In the above extract Curren describes and perceives Vercueil in total negative gesture. She takes him as an appendage in her property. But when she reaches too near the ending of her life she takes vercueil as if he were her nearest and dearest one of angleic features. She sleeps with him and experiences his mild and moderate touch and affection. Such an observation and experience of Curren presenting other race as

strange and align somewhere and affectionate and familiar somewhere shows her splite conscience. She further states:

'If you want me to help you. I'll help you, 'he said. He leaned over and took me by the throat, his thumbs resting lightly on my larynx, the three bad fingers bunched under my ear. 'Don't, I whispered, and, pushed his hands away. My eyes swam with tears. I took his hands in mine and beat them on my chest in a gesture of lamentation quite foreign to me. After a while I was still. He continued to lean over me allowing me to use him. (169-70)

She is guided by colonial ideology of racial otherness, that it depends on fixity which is central to the colonial discourse. That sort of ideology and discourse is paradoxical mode of representation because while exposing cultural, historical and racial differences the colonizer makes presence of absence. Colonizer assert forward physical difference of shape and size taking the base of science into a cultural and social opposites. Similar kinds of ideas are expressed by Homi K. Bhabha in his book, *The Location of Culture*, he further argues:

An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. Fixity as a sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation, it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and the demonic repetition. Likewise, the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated [. . .] as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual license of the African that

needs no proof, can never really, in discourse be proved. It is this process of ambivalence, central to stereotype. (95)

Bhabha in the given extract says that the stereotype on the people of different race is supported by binary attributes, ideology, and discourse. That very stereotype is made on the fantastic and arbitrary strategy to support ideology of colonizer. Such kind of stereotype is again supportive to construct discourse becomes a source and body of knowledge and identification. Mrs. Curren's observations and experience has basis on discursive strategy to create stereotype on Vercueil then her position is ambivalent when she change her opinion about Vercueil and his presence.

Mrs. Curren shows her hatred and disfavours for Afrikaans Hottentot language and their music. Curren's fondness, due to her such negation shows her link with European culture and European genealogy. Curren further says:

So I turned up the sound, enough for, if not the words, then the cadence to reach him, the slow truculent Afrikaans rhythm with their deadning colses, like a hammer beating a post into the ground. Together blow after blow, we listened [. . .], the scarping and thudding of the music was even worse than the tennis ball [. . .] an inhuman noise, wearing: I wanted to clasp my hands over my ears. (9,41,43)

In the above given extract Curren shows her cultural stereotype of the black culture. Curren puts her own culture on the supreme and guiding code. She othered the culture of different races people. As colonizer she compares her European culture with that of African races and differentiate between them and it is that very difference on the basis of which she claims the superiority of her own culture. Similar notion of colonizer is shown by Bhabha in his book *Location of Culture*. Bhabha further elaborates:

The concept of cultural difference focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority: the attempt to dominate in the name

of cultural supremacy which is only produced only in the moment of differentiation and it is the very authority of culture as knowledge of referential truth which is at issue in the concept and moment of enunciation. (51)

Bhabha had an idea that colonizer' cultural authority is ambivalent because its root basis of supremacy is rooted in the cultural difference. That very difference becomes truth and knowledge of other. But the truth asserted from this difference becomes not absolute but merely referential. Mrs. Curren taking the support of this referential truth differentiate her culture from that of other and shows her biased attitude. Curren not only believes and depends on the representation of the state but, she sometimes goes against the representation of the state. She further states:

Since life in this country is so much like, life abroad a sinking ship, one of those old time liners with a lugubrious, drunken captain and surely crew and leaky life boats [. . .] of trouble in the school the radio says nothing, the television says nothing, the newspaper says nothing in the world they project all the children of the land are sitting happily at their desk [. . .] what I know about events in Gugulethu depends solely on what I can learn by standing on the balcony and peering north-east. (36)

In the given extract the condition of state is shown deteriorative. The ruler are passing their lives in merrymaking and intoxication of power. The media of the country are censored. What media says is not what the real condition of Africa is but what the state permits them to say. So the truth is filtered, diverted, twisted for the sake of the ruler. Monopolistic and cursive representation of the state is put forward by Frantz Fanon in his book. *Black Skin White Mask*. He further argues:

The discursive condition of this psychic image of identification will be clarified if we think of the perilous perspective of the concept of the image itself. For the image- as a point of identification-marks the site of an ambivalence. It's representation is always spatially split- it makes present something that is absent -and temporally deferred. (73)

The state controls the media and makes them supportive to sustain their ideology. Such a diverted and twisted ideology ultimately supports to construct a discourse of colonizer. In Coetzee's text *The Age of Iron* Curren criticizes the state's representation for allowing media only to represent the falsified harmony in the state. The real chaos, brutality and terror is veiled to sustain and prolong their rule. Truth is controlled and made relative.

J.M. Coetzee in his novel *The Age of Iron* shows the ambivalent position of both his heroine, Mrs. Curren and the state. Curren's position is ambivalent in the sense that she cannot take firm standing of whether to support colonizer or colonized. Then the state is ambivalent and contradictory because, the state can't certify its presence to maintain peace, harmony, brotherhood and civilize the native. They claim themselves of being civilized but their brutal, barbaric and despotic presence turned themselves into uncivilized. The present researcher aims to analyze the ambivalence of the state through evaluating Curren's experience and observation of the State. And Curren's ambivalence by critically analyzing her thought and action. Curren's observation of black peoples' comment on the police is:

'We don't want to be involved with the police,' Florence repeated.

'There is nothing you can do against the police' [. . .] 'She had her sons' approval.' [. . .] They aren't after me. They are after everybody. I have done nothing. But anybody they see, they think should be in school, they try to get them. We do nothing, we just say we are not going to

school. Now they are waging this terror against us. They are terrorist.

(60-61)

Florence comments on the police authority that the police are present everywhere not because to ensure the life and liberty of people but to maintain the system of oppression. Police are following everybody to arrest and punish them if they saw fit. Bheki and John are schoolboy from Gugulethu. They reject schooling in order to reject apartheid norms, values and upbringing. So, these two boys are the issue at the hand of police. These police who are following Bheki are terrorist themselves in his eyes. While police themselves turned into terrorist taking the slogan of civilizing mission it is ambivalent. Jenny Sharpe in her book. *Allegories' of Empire (1993)* offers analogous critique of Foucault on the basis of her analysis of the 1857 uprising against the British in India elaborates the same sort of ambivalence of the state. She further states for Foucault:

Modern mechanism of punishment and control are insidious rather than spectacular, the punishment of Indian rebels by the colonial authorities was excessive, ritualized and ceremonial. It was designed to strike terror in the rebellious native and it reduced the rebels 'to the corporeality of their bodies' in the manner out of Europe's own barbaric past. (Loomba 50)

In the above given extract those colonizer who are present in the name of civilizing mission turned themselves into uncivilized while dealing with the resistance of the native people. They spray terror and horror to diminish the prevalent resistance of natives and would be organization against them.

Truth is manipulated by the state in accordance to their colonial mission. To manipulate the truth they need to deprive people's access from the event from where that very truth is originated. Colonizer by taking the help of terror deprive people to

organize group and share their experience and observation of daily life that help them to hide their loopholes and shortcoming. While experiencing the terror of police in the city Gugulethu Curren says: " In Gugulethu there is trouble all the time, and then the police come in and shoot..... The land that is presented to me is a land of smiling neighbours." (49) When Curren experiences the real condition of, Gugulethu, she compares her real observations with the condition presented by the states media. While comparing, she finds vast disparity between real condition and the twisted and controlled representation of the State, in this regard about the representation of the state Bhabha in his book, *Location of Culture* had similar idea on colonizer. He further argues:

Colonial authority requires modes of discrimination (cultural, racial, administrative) that disavowal a stable unitary assumption of collectivity. The 'part' (which must be a colonialist foreign body) must be representative of the 'whole' (conquered country), but the right of representation is based on it's radical difference. Such a double think is made viable only through the strategy of disavowls just described, which requires a theory of the 'hybridization' of discourse and power that is ignored by theorists who engage in the battle for 'power' but do so only as the pursuits of difference. (158)

Colonial authority asserts it's suitability on the issue of difference. Difference is created on the basis of discriminatory principle. While discriminating the indigenous people they first of all shattered the prevalent knowledge of indigenous people. They categorize native people having incapable mind to civilize themselves and create their own history by themselves. By doing so, the colonizer forcibly get consent of the native to rule the land and to civilize them. But Curren's observation shows that the

reality of colonized country is disguised according to the mission of colonizing foreign country. Colonizers such tendency of dualistic feature is ambivalence in itself.

Colonizer while entering into the invaded land, first of all destroys the native peoples prevalent norms, values and virtues replacing them with their values. Colonizers claim their values and norms as civilized but for native the perception may be positive or negative. For Curren's question of black children's brutality, Florence responds to it that it is white people with their crooked interest that taught black children to be cruel and barbaric. Curren asks Florence:

But do you remember what you told me last year. Florence, when those unspeakable things were happening in the township? You said to me, "I saw a woman in fire, burning and when screamed for help, the children laughed and threw more petrol on her." You said, "I did not think I would live to see such a thing." Florence responses to Mrs. Curren question, "who made them so cruel?" It is the whites who made them so cruel! Yes! She breathed deeply, passionately. (43)

Florence says in the name of civilizing the native the white people trained the black children to involve in barbarism, treachery, cruelty and savagery. So, Florence found the contradictory and antithetical claim of white ruler. In this regard, similar sort of ideas with Florence is found in Edward Saids *Orientalism*. Said states that "There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominates; the later must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western Power" (36). How the colonizer occupying land, controlling daily lives of people and accumulating treasure fulfill their interest. So, as Florence found in apartheid South Africa the white colonizer invaded the land Africa, controlled every private affairs of people, fulfill their vested interest on property, deprive people from

their rights, destroy the values of native people and if the resistance of black people appeared anywhere they caused bloodshed. The apparatus which presented there to civilize the native turned itself in to savage. It is the moment of the ambivalent presence of colonizer. Instead of civilizing the native they even destroyed the good virtues of black and taught them barbarism.

Mrs. Curren as designed by Coetzee tries to stay away from her complicity with both sides but in practice she can't do so. Schooling is criticized by native boys as a means to make them fit in to apartheid system. But she tells them that there is no way out or option of going to school. She tells the rebel boys that:

'What is school for? It is to make us fit in to the apartheid system? [. . .]. I said to her. 'I can't believe you want your son out on the streets killing time till apartheid comes to an end. Apartheid is not going to die tomorrow or the next day. He is running his future.'

'What is more important, that apartheid must be destroyed or that I must go to school? asked Bheki, challenging me smelling victory.

'That is not the choice,' She answered wearily. But was I right? If that was not the choice, what was the choice? (62)

Here Curren seems to advise John and Bheki to accept the superiority of white people to black people. She doesn't care about the nationality of Africa. While advising Bheki in this manner, on the one hand she is trying to maintain her so-called aesthetic value but on the other she is entering into the politics of that time and favoring her European genealogy. She doesn't advise Bheki to root out the othered position given by European fantasy of civilizing the native people. Similar kind of colonial ideology is found in Ania Loombas book: *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. She further argues that, "One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it needs both to civilize it's other and to fix them in to perpetual otherness" (145). As per the spirit of

the given extract Curren gives much more emphasis on the learning of apartheid norms and values. These values are valuable for her to fill the empty mind of children as a knowledge. Simultaneously she also advises to stop to resist against the ruler means that she wants the longevity of white superiority on black people. That sort of superiority had its root in racial difference and this difference is achieved when the native are kept in continuous othered position. Curren's such propensity draws towards her ambivalent position between two extreme political forces instead of the celebrator of aestheticism.

J.M. Coetzee's novel *The Age of Iron* shows the lack of original self of people due to interference of colonizer on the private sphere of people. The colonizer considering the norms and values of native people as uncivilized tries to erase all of them by replacing them with their civilizing attributes. Same sort of seizure of original self of personality is experienced by Mrs. Curren. Curren further says: "I have intimation older than any memory, unshakeable, that once upon a time, I was alive, was alive and then was stolen from life. From the cradle a theft took place: a child was taken and a doll left in its place to be nursed and reared, and that doll is what I call I." (100)

Here, in the given extract Curren's comment on the colonizer that, "once upon a time" when Africa was not under colonization and at that time she remembers that she "was alive" means her real self was with her but now after colonial invader's presence she is like a "doll" out of her real sense and self. Colonizer had a desire to celebrate the application of power upon the native people to control them. By the mutual co-ordination of power and knowledge, colonizer control the people and tries to fulfill his presence meaningfully. Similar sort of concept is discussed in Homi K. Bhabha's novel *The Location of Culture*. He argues: "The colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the title of power is enacted on the site of

desire, making it's object at once disciplinary and dissemination or in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency" (160).

While digging beneath the colonial hybridity the ambivalence of colonial presence and mission is exposed out. The colonizer celebrates the exercise of power. Centrality of power in their own hand in the desire of colonizer. The colonial mission instead of providing knowledge for people is crucially centered on the accumulation and selfish exploitation of native people. Curren found colonial presence is only purposive to the well-being of themselves. They had nothing to do with the native people except blackmailing and deceiving them.

Mrs. Curren who claims herself of leading the aesthetic principle but she is too much accumulative, greedy and uncharitable. Her concern on property is no less rigid than that of colonizer. She has less concern for the suffering people than she has with her property. She has large building, car and householder. If she wished she can give shelter to numbers of people but towards the ending of her life she is too much greedy. Her possessive deeds are exposed further through this extract:

‘you told me; I said , that I should turn this house in to a boarding house for students. Well, there are better things I could do with it. I could turn it in to a haven for beggars. I could run a soup- kitchen and a dormitory. But I don’t. Why not? Because the spirit of charity has perished in this country. I hear you and your friend have been sleeping in my car. Why don’t you ask my permission ? [. . .]. ‘I can’t turn my home haven for all the children running away from the township.’
(19,49,58)

In the given extract we find that how the colonizers civilizing mission becomes ambivalent due to their exposition of terror. Instead of releasing herself from the crooked and devilish possession near the ending of her life, she more and more

becomes greedy. In this regard, similar sort of possession and accumulative desire of colonizer is found in Frantz Fanon's book, *The Wretched of The Earth* (1963). He further argues:

When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out of the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic the economic sub- structure. The cause is the consequences; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. (32)

Here Fanon draws the exploitation of black people from the white with the help of colonial power and knowledge. All the property is centered in the hands of white people. White people gain property not by the rules and steps of production but directly accumulating. Currens' large amount of property relates her with reactionary group and her deep possession diverts her so- called aesthetic virtues in to ambivalent gesture of futile fantasy.

When Mrs. Curren goes to Gugulethu she sees the savage brutality and terror conducted by the authority. While witnessing the real condition of the city she found disparity between representation of these events by the State and the reality of what really happened there. Mrs. Curren further argues that:

'These are terrible sights'. I repeated, faltering. 'They are to be condemned. But I cannot denounce them in other peoples' words. I must find my own words, from myself. Otherwise it is not the truth [. . .]. Now I was on the ground where people were revealed in their true names. (91, 93)

Here in the given extract Curren shows her suspicion and disbelief in the state's representation. For her to believe and take as real she needs to observe the event

hersells by her lived experience. When she reaches Grgulethu she gets a chance to understand people with their true nature.

Not only this, while reaching Gugulethu she even observes the effects of terror caused by colonialist rule. Due to the presence and control of colonizer, in the native people frustration, hatred, alienation, depression haunted them. The severe domination destroyed the culture of people and emptied their norms and values. While observing and introducing with Thabane she further says, "His look had grown uglier. No doubt, I grow uglier too by the day. Metamorphosis, that thicken our speech, dulls our feelings, turns us in to beasts. Where on these shores does the herb grow that will preserve us from it?" (95).

After seeing the dead bodies of five black rebels including Bheki in Guguluthu by the military control and suppression, Thabane feels deep gloom and frustration. His bitter feeling and expression is seen on his face. Curren' comments on the presence of colonizer and their forcible imposition of degraded culture is that diminishes their love and co-operation, destroys their affectionate feeling for others, that subdue each and every human values and turns the human in to beasts. Such kind of swiping away of native values ultimately destroys the potential rising of humanism. Same sort of view is described in Cornel West's book *The New Cultural Politics of Difference* (1993). He argues, "Colonialism, like racism; is a condition where the dominated races lack power 'to present themselves to themselves and to others and thereby the power to contest the bombardment of negative stereotypes put forward by white supremacist ideologies" (17).

By destroying the culture of native people in the name of various negative stereotypes colonizer seeks to prove their presence meaningful. Black people lacked power to present themselves and to deconstruct their othered position. They are understood by the way how they are presented by the white ruler. Due to such reason

Curren declared her view that, she doesn't believe anything from other people's presentation, she needs to be herself an eye witness of the incident. Mr. Thabane who is from dominated races lacks the power to sweep away the stereotype and contest with white. So he is forced unwillingly to accept their crooked representation and becomes frustrated and hopeless. This sort of reverse result of the state makes them ambivalent while ruling in Africa in Coetzee's book, *The Age of Iron*.

Mrs. Curren criticizes the state's operation of military control and violence. In the name of maintaining peace and harmony the apartheid ruler conducted murder of people if they saw fit. The colonizer and their detectives are out of feelings for whom killing, destroying and brutalizing the people is no strange thing. Living or dying, freeing or captivating of native people is less concern for the apartheid state than their focus on the merrymaking for themselves. Mrs. Curren further criticizes the state as:

Television [. . .] the parade of politician every evening [. . .] their message stupidly unchanging....Their feet, after years of etymological meditation on the word, to have raised stupidity to a virtue to stupefy: to deprive of feeling. From stupor to be stunned, astonished. A gradient from stupid to stunned to astonished, to be turned to stone [. . .]. A message that turns people to stone....Boars that devour their offspring.
(25, 26)

Colonialism is conducted for economic purpose to exploit and accumulate property. To fulfill such a mission they put evangelical fantasy of civilizing mission in the forefront to maintain consent of people. This sort of ideology is guided by political and military force. Regarding this issue Pramod K. Nayar in his book *Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction* argues:

It is the concept the purpose, the conquest of newer regions for the sake of economic exploitation. Imperialism is often a political theory

behind colonial conquest. It originates from European centers of political, military and economic power and spreads outward to take a whole earth. It justifies conquest in the name of evangelicalism (uplift of the pagans), economic (for the economic good of the European nation). It situates the non-European region on the periphery and controls it mostly through economic measures (slave, labor, capitalism, trade, restriction) but may be accompanied by political and military control. (5)

The given extract certifies Curren's criticism of the ruler. These colonizers keep Africa and African people to the periphery of Europe in othered position. They differentiate African people attributing negative values from those of European. The colonizer controls the native people by the means of slavery, capitalism, trade and lavish restriction of them for what to do and what not to do according to their mission. To control and maintain their presence the colonizer tries to keep black people on perpetual other. If the native people resist the values and rules they imposed up on them the colonizer uses the military means to control them and fulfill political ambition. When the colonizer turned the native people to motionless stone accusing them of resisting civilization the ambivalent stance of the state appears there.

Even if J.M. Coetzee in his novel *The Age of Iron* tries to show the supremacy and maintenance of aesthetic values in contrast to political desire, his heroine, Mrs. Curren seems racist and purposive without purpose. Mrs. Curren bitterly criticizes the black boys and shows her hatred for them. Their ambitious desire of sacrifice for the sake of liberty and nationalism is merely barbaric comradeship for her. She is unwilling to judge how deeply the suppression of colonizer gave them torture. She doesn't want to penetrate deep down the problem of black people. She further says:

I did not like him. I do not like him. I look in to my heart and nowhere do I find any trace of feeling for him. As there are people to whom one spontaneously warms. So there are people to whom one is, from the first cold.....'you do not believe in words. You think only blows are real, blows and bullets-But listen to me: can't you hear that that words I speak are real? Listen! They may only be air but they come from my heart from my womb. (71, 133)

Here in the above given extract Currens' disgust for the rebel boy, John is expressed. She is cold up on him from her first meeting with him. For Curren his rebellion of the State gives more torture. Her dislike of rebellion is aroused here while dealing with John not because of her aesthetic principle but because of her complicity with the white people. She further says while commenting on the white girl detective in much more affectionate and fascinating way, " No sign of disgust at my legs, my feet. A good girl, reared to make someone a good wife" (141). This line exposes Curren's inner conscience out instead the girl, who is presented to suppress the people and to brutalize them, she gets Curren's praise. But the resistance of such a mission by native through establishing bond gets detest of her. Curren further says:

He is old enough and self willed enough to do what, what he will do. 'But as for this killing, this bloodletting in the name of comradeship, I detest it with all my heart and soul. I think it is barbarous. That is what I want to say' [. . .]. Comradeship is nothing but a mystique of death, of killing and dying, masquerading as what you call a bond. I have no sympathy with this comradeship. (136-7)

The given extract exposes that Mrs. Curren had detest for the bond between John, Bheki, Thabane, Florence and other black people to overthrow the white despotic government with it's stereotype, domination and severity on black people. While

analyzing the above given extract the present researcher draws the idea that if the bond of comradeships is for only "Killing", "dying" and "masquerading", What it is the patrol of the military in every house and city of the country for? It shows that deep down inside the heart of Curren she has too much craze for her white genealogy. Curren further states, "White our colour, the colour of limbo, white stands, white rocks, a white light pouring down from all sides. Like an eternity of lying on the beach, an endless Sunday among thousands of our own kind, sluggish, half asleep, in earshot of the comfortable lap of the waves" (85).

Mrs. Curren is proud of her 'white' race among black African people. She associates her 'white' race with "the colour of limbo." She creates an ideal representation of her ethnicity by bringing the metaphor of "white rocks", "white light", "beach", and "waves". Similar kind of racist ideology of white is exposed by the Critic Pramod K. Nayar in his book, *Post Colonial Literature: An Introduction*. He further states: "Whiteness and its concomitant development racism, enable the poor whites to see and project themselves as part of the dominant group. It gave them identity in opposition to the other, the black" (16).

Including Mrs. Curren, white people who are there in Africa are in less number in comparison to the black people. But to maintain and sustain their superiority over the black people they need to other the black people in the name of difference and an insufficient knowledge and skill to be self ruled. The white people assert their so-called supreme identity by comparison of binary opposition. Hence, Curren's propensity on her genealogy turned her position ambivalent.

Mrs. Curren's critique of Thabane and Florence seems some sort of racial prejudice. For Curren Thabane and Florence lacked mind for proper judgment and analysis of the circumstance. For Curren they can't take decision, what is to be taken in right moment. Curren further says:

Opinion must be heard by others, heard and weighted, not merely listened to out of politeness. And to be weighted they must have weight. Mr. Thabane does not weight what I say. It has no weight to him. Florence doesn't even hear me. To Florence what goes on in my head is a matter of complete indifference, I know that. (148)

The day when Bheki was killed Mrs. Curren told Florence and Thabane that the result of the rebel became the same as she declared in previous days. While advising Florence and Thabane she reveals her stereotypical attitude towards them. Such a stereotypical view of white on black people is elaborated by V.G. Kiernan's observation about the African experience of colonialism are generally revealing. He further argues:

The notion of African as minor [. . .] look very strong hold. Spaniards and Boers had questioned whether native had soul: modern Europeans cared less about that but doubted whether they had minds capable of adult growth. A theory came to be fashionable that mental growth in the African ceased early, that childhood was left behind. (Gandhi 32)

Now the above given passage discriminates and stereotypes the African of taking their childhood up to their maturity, and possessing mind of not adult growth then ceasing their mental growth during the period of their childhood. Curren in the novel applies this view on Thabane and Florence. By interfering the affairs of black people and associating herself with a reactionary group, she makes her position ambivalent.

While going through Curren's genealogy, background, history and ethnicity and her present consciousness, she seems as if she were an agent of colonization. While advising Thabane and Florence she tries to forcibly get consent of them by asserting her association with the state and drawing on power relations with them. Curren further says:

'Yet who am I, who am I to have voice at all? How can I honorably urge them to turn their back on that call? What am I entitled to do but sit in a corner with my mouth shut? I have no voice; I lost it long ago; perhaps I have never had one. I have no voice, and that is that. The rest should be silence. But with this- whatever it is -this voice that is not voice, I go on. ON and on' [. . .]. A crime was committed long ago. How long ago? I do not know [. . .]. It is part of my inheritance. It is part of me. I am part of it. [. . .]. Though it was not a crime I asked to be committed. It was committed in my name. (149)

The given passage reveals Curren in her true name, that she inherited the connection with the reactionary group due to her genealogy. Due to such connection she plays the role of the agent and vehicle of the power circulation of the state. She tries to prove that due to such condition and association her voice should be heard by the state and the native. "The rest should be silence" shows her transmitted power and authority from the state. Leela Gandhi in her book, *Postcolonial Theory* argues the same application and circulation of power in the state in analogous line with Foucault:

Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organizations. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position on simultaneously undergoing or exercising this power. They are not like its inert or consenting target; they are also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are like vehicles of power, not its points of application. (14)

These quoted lines of Foucault clarify Curren's position and her role. If Curren exercises power and shows her connection with the state and its brutal domination, what sort of aestheticism she is leading on? It is the question that draws her towards her split position in J.M. Coetzee's Novel, *The Age of Iron*. Curren plays a role to

transmit the centralized power of the State to individuals. While exercising this power she sometime criticizes black people, sometime white people. But sometimes she shows her detest for both political mission and observing from above their level with pure aesthetic virtue.

Mrs. Curren speaks with Thabane in some ambiguous manner to withdraw them back from their rebellion to overthrow apartheid state. Mr. Thabane, a teacher, who through the education acquired by him judges critically Mrs. Curren's hatred for comradeship. He further says:

Good. Then let me say, Mrs. Curren, I don't think you understand very much about comradeship.' 'I understand enough, thank you.' 'No you don't he said, quite certain of himself. 'When you are body and soul in the struggle as these young people are, when you are prepared to lay down your lives for each other without question , then a bond grows up, that is stronger than any bond you will know again. That is comradeship. I see it every day with my own eyes. My generation has nothing that can compare. That is why we must stand back for them, for the youth. We stand back but we stand behind them. That is what you can't understand, because you are too far away. (136-7)

The above given extract shows that Curren is observing comradeship and rebellion of black people without penetrating deep down the experience and suffering of black people. She is out of the experience of what it feels to be black being controlled under despotic state and practice of terror and barbarism upon them. Thabane's response to Curren seems to judge that very purpose which made Curren to step forward and suggest Thabane to negate comradeship. Similar relation of colonizer and colonized is found in Pramod K. Nayar's book, *Postcolonial Literature*. He argues, "In the cultural realm, colonialism subverted established traditions by interfering with local

custom, setting up norms of conduct, rejecting native beliefs as superstitions and, finally, ensuring that the native himself believed all this through the medium of Western Education” (39). Mr. Thabane a former school teacher critically observes and experiences the presence of colonizer, their rules and regulation, their restriction and imposed taboo for black people. He saw how invader destroyed the native norms, values, and civilization stereotyping these values as savage, barbaric and superstitious and try their best to impose their values replacing them.

So, the colonizers who are presented to civilize the native they themselves brutalize the native and Curren’s so-called claim of aestheticism is dominated by politics and these disparity renders her position ambivalent.

Mrs. Curren's view on black people is derogatory, she associated black people with barbarism and savagery. She found black people full of hatred and hard heartedness towards white people. Curren says that:

When I walk up on this land, this South Africa. I have a gathering feeling of walking up on black faces. They are dead but their spirit has not left them. They lie their heavy and obdurate, waiting for my feet to pass, waiting for me to go, waiting to be raised up again. Millions of figures of pig-iron floating under the skin of the earth. The Age of Iron waiting to return. (115)

The above given extract shows Curren's privilege and power upon black people's oppression. She attributed black people as heavy and stubborn creature. While walking up on the land on the one hand she feels satisfaction of burying black people under the ground and walking up on them by trodding them, on the other hand she fears because of the raising up of millions of "pig-iron" struggling figure to overthrow the despotic state. Dreaming on millions of black soul rising with hatred and rudeness she is hunted by anxiety. Frantz Fanon in his book. *Black Skin, White Mask* elaborates

the deterministic power of the Negro people. In this regard, he further argues, "There is quest for Negro, the Negro is a demand, one cannot get along without him, he is needed, but only if he is made palatable in a certain way. Unfortunately the Negro knocks down the system and breaks the treaties" (114).

Here by attributing negative and simplistic features to the Negroes and making them easily persuading and non-critical colonizer asserts their essence to lead them. White peoples' superiority depends on their difference with black people. But transgressing beyond the under estimate of white people, the Negro's genuine determinism uproot the despotism. Same sort of genuine step to uproot the despotic government is guided by Mr. Thabane, to which mission Curren shows her hatred. For Curren this sort of resistance is nothing more than conducting violence. This step of Curren brings her to the active agent of power network.

Colonial mission depends on the discourse and ideology constructed from the difference which ultimately takes foundation on the deterministic and fixed features set up by the colonizers. In the name of creating difference and othering culture, language and land that is distant from them is characterized as mystery. Such kind of mystic reference of Africa is drawn from Mrs. Curren from the book of English woman. Curren says:

By some trick of perspective the illustrator had given to moonlit encampments, desert crags, ruined temples and air of looming mystery. No one has done that for South Africa made it in to a land of mystery. Too late now. Fixed in the mind as a place of flat, hard light, without shadows, without depth. (76)

In the above given extract Curren presented South Africa as the land which is difficult to understand. She contrasted South Africa presenting it as a simple, naturalistic, transparent, out of developed conscience of modern era, with developed and

cultivated Europe. By presenting Africa with natural scene and associating African with natural upheavals she asserts her capitalist and industrial superiority on them. By othering, differentiating, constructing discourse and ideology the colonizer forms its contesting identity. All these formations are rooted in the fixity. Fixed attributes of European discourse Homi K. Bhabha explains in his book, *The Location of Culture*. Bhabha further argues:

The stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is simplification because it is an arrested, fixed form of representation, that in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the other permits), constitutes a problem for the representation of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations. (107)

The given extract connotes South Africa's fixed features given by the European as land of mystery. The colonizer negating the understanding of African of their own land and culture, they themselves loaded stereotypical features on Africa as Africa is what the European knew about it. The Europeans twist and turn the reality as per their mission. This sort of twisted representation brings contest between colonizers and native people's social and psychic relation. The diversion, twist and turn of reality by the European in the name of teaching, enlightening and leading is itself contrastive.

J.M Coetzee in his novel shows the ambivalent position of the rebel. These rebel boys claim themselves of abolishing apartheid State for the sake of freedom, liberty and brotherhood. They dream of bringing peace, harmony and ensure life. But in the name of nationalism they themselves, die before experiencing and declaring the freedom that they claim to establish. Coetzee by showing the demise of the rebel tries to expose the partial and premature state of call for nationalism. Coetzee shows the war for anti-colonial movement is merely a loss of lives is never what it pretends to

be. It is nothing more than grown up men sending young men to their death in the name of some abstraction or other. Mrs Curren says, "Bheki is dead. He was killed last week while you were in hospital. He was shot [. . .]. Against the far wall, shielded from the worst of the rain were five bodies neatly laid out [. . .] they were wheeling the body, covered in blanket, down the drive way, and loading it abroad" (94,123,143).

The above extract shows the death of Bheki, John and other rebel. These rebels claim that they fought war for nation and people to establish and continue their pre-colonial culture and image of country for their nationality. But they meet their ending before reaching their assumed destination. This sort of nationalist view is expressed in Hegel's book, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1910). Hegel states:

In this scheme of things, the non-west is consigned to the nebulous prehistory of civilization and, thereby of the completed and proper nation-state. Thus, nationalism outside the West can only ever be premature and partial-a threat to the enlightened principles of the liberal state and, thereby, symptomatic of the failed or 'incomplete' modernity. (108)

The given extract clearly shows that the originating point of the civilization is west. The non-west to be civilized should follow the trend of west because modernity travels west. When the native people fight for nationalism they only get vague and partial enlightenment from their premature history. So, by associating the rebel with nationalism and ending their struggle in death Coetzee seems to be showing discrepancy between their aim and achievement. Coetzee's attempt in his novel, *Age of Iron* problematizes the sacrifice of rebel in the name of abstraction of the leaders.

Principle of colonization is antithetical to its mission. Antithetical in the sense that it's foundation lies in binary characteristics of colonizer with colonized.

Colonizers claim themselves of having positive and progressive characteristics then imposed negative, narrow and uncivilized characteristics to black or colonized people. To prolong colonization, again colonizer had antithetical challenge to get favour and consent of colonized then to control them simultaneously. Colonizer first of all loaded native inhabitants with negative attributes and controlled them. After control of native with in the hands of colonizer, they legitimize their presence to civilize them. Hence, colonizer creating binary oppositions, controlling native people, more or less brainwashing and asking consent legitimize their colonial mission in the name of civilization.

Colonizer while invading the foreign country and ruling there first of all emptied the native soul from their norms and values. They replace the indigenous peoples' cultural values by replacing them with their perverted and curved logic. In the name of othering the native people and creating difference the colonizer even destroys the history of native people. When the colonizer distorts and disfigures the past the native peoples' self and their glory transmitted from a long time subdues. Frantz Fanon in *National Culture* says, "Colonialism is not only satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native brain of all form and content by a kind of perverted logic. It turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts and disfigures and destroys it" (Ashcroft 78). The colonizer disrupts the culture of native people in the name of enlightening them which is opposite of their claim. That sort of contradictory work of the colonizer is ambivalent in itself.

The rationality of colonial theory depends on it's creation of binary opposition. By creating bianrism and then attributing negative and stereotypical qualities to the black people they try to establish their superior position. By standing on superior position they claim to civilize the barbaric other. Leela Ghandhi in her book, *Postcolonial Theory* shows that. "Colonial discourse typically rationalizes itself

through rigid oppositions such as maturity/immaturity, civilization/ barbarism. developed/ developing/ progressive/ primitive" (32). When the colonized people are presented as childlike, immature, uncivilized then their inability for self govern comes to the fore. When the native people seem as incapable, the essence of white ruler on their land legitimizes itself for colonizer. So binarism, difference are inseparable part of ideology and discourse. That sort of ideology and discourse is must for colonialism to exit.

To sum up, J.M. Coetzee in his novel *The Age of Iron* (1990) shows the ambivalent position and criteria of the state. Coetzee represents the South African apartheid State creating terror and horror among people. Interfering the private affair of people by using military force depriving black people from their basic rights and twisting, turning and manipulating the truth the state has shown it's lechery and treachery. The state had censored the media and transmitted news as per their mission. Due to such brutality in the name of civilization the states' position is ambivalent. The protagonist of Coetzee, Mrs. Curren, taking the mission and creed of aestheticisms enters into the politics and interferes the peoples' affair, so, she is also ambivalent. The African rebels who claim themselves of leaving school and involving in the resistance of the State to abolish it and live a life of liberty but they dies before they achieve this goal so their claim is contradictory. J.M. Coetzee who claims himself of judging the then politics staying distant from it with aesthetic principle. But regarding his novel *The Age of Iron*, he involves and interfere the politics but in quite vague, chaotic and irresponsible manner.

III Coetzee and Colonial Concern

J.M. Coetzee one of the prominent novelists of realism in South Africa shows ambivalence inherent in colonialism through the portrayal of black and white characters under apartheid rule. While presenting the apartheid state he simultaneously exposes the representation of the people by the state. To expose the ambivalent presence in colonialism, he uses his heroine Mrs. Curren as an observer of the incidents. Mrs. Curren a first person central narrator claims her detest for both combative comradeship and institutionalized violence of the state. She assumes herself leading a life of aestheticism and observing the chaotic scenario staying above this political level. But her attempt of living a life of non-alignment totally diminishes and she happens to support the one for the other parties according to nearing circumstances. That sort of her alignment makes her position split between colonialism and resistance of it and that ultimately dissolves and erases her so-called aesthetic values and principles. All these things are shown from her letter to her daughter and exposition of the political upheavals she lived in.

J.M. Coetzee lived under a chaotic political control of his country. Intellectual figures like: Coetzee were in intense torn-between position. If they support the rebel they bear danger of censor on them and if they align with state equally there was danger from native insurgents. The novel *Age of Iron* (1990) is the product of this time phase. Intelligently he tries to raise, up the aesthetic purpose dominating the political hostility and maintain his position as politically non-committed. But aestheticism in solidarity is not practiced here in his novel, *Age of Iron*. So like purposiveness without purpose he enters into the politics and his tackling of hostile condition results into vagueness.

J.M. Coetzee's characters most of them black seem frustrated, terrorized, depressed, homeless, tortured hopeless, helpless and egoist. Under the state of

emergency people's rights were seized. They are stereotyped by the State as if the colonized were beasts. Their private sphere was robbed. The demarcation between private sphere of home and outside world of terror was blurred. The colonizer were applying their discourse by othering the colonized. Colonized black characters were compelled to bear, "those terrifying stereotype of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy which are the signal points of identification and alienation, scene of fear and desire" (Bhabha, 104).

Bheki and John reject schooling due to their unwillingness to be trained in apartheid rules and regulation, to be fit in apartheid system. Colonizers' norms, values, taboo and prohibitions on colonized people were there in westerner ideology and the, "Discourse a term used frequently in contemporary critical writing is the context in which knowledge is produced. It identifies the limits of what can be said and what is prohibited" (Pramod, 10).

In Coetzee's novel *Age of Iron* police were presented everywhere not to ensure life liberty and happiness of the people but to operate the brutal system of law. The hospital was also biased on black people they wouldn't keep record of black patient. There wasn't record of John in "Woodstock hospital" when he was admitted there after the bike accident. The television, newspaper, magazine were also censored. The media transmits news not just as what it is but how the state permit them to broadcast. The reality is twisted and turned as per to support their mission and to fulfill their vested interest. Truth is not truth but it is manipulated referential truth. By manipulating truth the colonial State gets power with it's interdependence with knowledge. The novel thus examines:

The apparatus is thus always inscribed in a play of power, but it is also linked to certain co-ordination of knowledge which issue from it but, to an equal degree. Condition it. This is what the apparatus consist in:

strategies of relations of forces supporting and supported by types of knowledge. (Foucault, 196)

As Foucault had said due to the combination and co-ordination of power and knowledge the ideology and discourse of colonialism is created. That sort of the ideology gets the consent of people for the colonialism to sustain further.

In this way, Mrs. Currens' hatred of black homeless boys, detest and contempt for comradeship, her derogatory attitude towards Afrikan language, her craze for white detective girl, her deception to John, etc, shows her alignment with the reactionary order but at the same time she even does spy like gesture to rescue the black people from the states' oppression. Curren helps to rescue Bheki after bike accident, she prefers the right of black People. Eventhough, Currens' interference in politics and her divided self between two political extremes shows the dissolution of her so called aesthetic claim, her position is ambivalent. The State by conducting continuous terror by the presence of police, by seizing the rights of people, by manipulating media to twist and turn the truth , by conducting institutionalized violence, by overstepping the law and constitution shows it's barbarism in the name of civilizing mission and enlightenment. So, the state is ambivalent.

The colonial state can't fulfill its meaningful presence of enlightening the native due to it's brutality and turning itself in the barbaric intrusion. The rebel party who met their end before experiencing the liberty they wished, abolishing the despotic government, so, their position is ambivalent. Mrs. Curren who claims herself to be leading aesthetic life but enters in to politics and interferes people's affairs being dual supporter of both state and rebel. In this way the state, and Coetzee's heroine Mrs. Curren shows the discrepancy between their claim and deed.

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