

I. Introduction to Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* as an Allegory

The present research is an inquiry into J.(ohn) M.(axwell) Coetzee's (1940-) novel *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), where the situation of the author parallels to the situation of the protagonist in the novel. Through the different events like the death of a son, the returning of a writer from another country and revolutionary situation in the home town of the protagonist, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky in Russia and his obligation to write on contemporary situation are parallel to Coetzee's own situation under a repressive regime in a politically conflicted South African apartheid society. It will specify on the allegory as theoretical modality deployed in *The Master of Petersburg* and show how and why the writer has used such allegorical technique to elaborate the situation that he experienced in apartheid South Africa.

Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* presents the fictional biography of a Great Russian writer, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, the main protagonist of the novel. As a bereaved father and writer he returns to St. Petersburg in Russia through Dresden in Germany after getting the message of his step son Pavel's mysterious death from his friend Appolan Mayakovski. The protagonist of the novel Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, a great writer and bereaved father is not the narrator, but rather he is presented as the third person, 'he' who introduces himself as Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky. When the protagonist goes through the investigation and inquiry of his son's death, he returns to Russia with a false name as "Isaev" in his passport. While being a lodger in the city of St. Petersburg in Russia, he takes a shelter at the apartment of a black widow named as Anna Sergeyvna who has been residing with her only daughter Matryona or Matryosha, fortunately at the same apartment that was taken by Pavel.

The novel is divided into twenty chapters, which is fully presented by the protagonist of the novel, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky who has an inquiry and conversation with the different characters like Anna Sergeyvna, Matryona or Matryosha, Maximov a counsellor and Sergei Gennavervich Nechaev, a revolutionary leader. The plot of the novel is divided into three parts. The first part is the story of a grieved father and his effort to find out the mystery of the death of his step son, whereas the second part is the conversation between the protagonist, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky and a revolutionary leader Sergei Gennavervich Nechaev. The final chapter is about the repressed regime and the revolutionaries. He is compelled to write the perversion of truth which tastes like a gall in his mouth.

In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, Dostoevsky tries to investigate the death of his step son through different mediums. At that time Petersburg was highly suppressed and repressed by the authority and political power. So, the sources avoid telling truth, instead Pavel's death was accused as the suicide case. It shows that, the highly repressive, autocratic political power affects in the personal life. It creates the anxiety and frustration in any individual's life. He suffers from the authority and political power of the society. At the end of the novel Dostoevsky finds out that the death of Pavel was not suicide but a murder by Nechaev's group.

This research will show the allegorical use for political purpose. Here the political and national situation of the contemporary resembles with the apartheid community of the African society. It shows the subversion of domination of the local people in Russia which allegorically stands for the situation of South Africa. In the present novel Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky is dominated and suffered by the then society. He is fragmented by the untimely death of his step son Pavel. It also shows the satiric purpose of the authority in which people have been suffered a lot. Not only

the protagonist of the novel but all the people of the society suffered from the domination of the then authority. Actually, it shows the situation under the repressive regime in a political conflicted South African apartheid society. It shows the political repression of the then society. Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky represents the whole society which was suppressed by the authority. It also shows the aggression in the public sphere.

Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* is a novel written in South African apartheid context. In this context, we can say that it is a novel which is guided by contemporary political ideology. As we know literature is not independent of contemporary socio- economic and political condition, the present novel too is not an exception. No one can separate a text from a particular condition of time and place, as its interpretation. In *Coetzee's The Master of Petersburg*, the fictional Dostoevsky and his situation in the regime of Russia has been illustrated as the parallel situation to Coetzee's own politically conflicted apartheid South African society where most of his works were censored and accused of giving prominence to the petty bourgeoisie.

Though *The Master of Petersburg* is set in a particular place and time (apartheid) South Africa, one should not make a mistake by treating the fiction and its characters as in a purely social document. However, the socio-political circumstances portrayed within the fictional world cannot be ignored. As a writer, Coetzee is aware of the role of the reader for the interpretation of the text in the socio-political circumstances and the characters' role in it.

While doing research on Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*, it is found that this novel has elicited host of criticism since its publication in 1994. Many scholars, critics and novelists have analysed this novel from various perspectives like deconstructionist, existentialist, psycho-analytical, new historicist and linguistics. The

approaches have no matter, whether they are author-oriented or reader-oriented or language-oriented, have tried to interpret or invest it with meanings like the one. The theoretical concept of present research is de Manian allegory.

Patrick McGrath, an influential literary critic emphasises upon the structure of the novel and appreciates Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* as a novel written in a new form, related with the human condition in revolution. Commenting on it, he says:

Mr. Coetzee has gone directly to the source. He has imagined Dostoevsky returning to St. Petersburg from Dresden after the death of a step son, Pavel. It is Mr. Coetzee's grimmest book yet, and suggests a new degree of darkness in an outlook that has yet to find much to celebrate in the human condition [...] and like South Africa that has provided the setting of most of his novels, this is a Russia poised on the brink of upheaval. (22)

Here, Patrick McGrath focuses on the pessimistic side of the novel, *The Master of Petersburg* in which, according to him, Coetzee has given more emphasize on the dark side of South African apartheid society. For him, though it arouses the serious issues which are more inclined towards the pessimistic line rather than capturing the celebration in the present human condition.

Critics Margaret Scalan, another critic opines that Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* is the rewriting of Dostoevsky's *The Demons (Devils)* and quotes it as an argument between writer and a revolutionary character, Sergei Nechaev by exploring the personal details of Dostoevsky in a simple narrative structure. In this sense, he writes:

In *The Master of Petersburg*, making Dostoevsky as fictional character as Nechaev allows Coetzee to bring the argument between writer and revolutionary into his own text and addresses it more explicitly than he has done elsewhere. In order to do so, he pulls the biographical Dostoevsky, who in *Demons* so artfully conceal himself behind[...] he explores the private and psychological sources of Dostoevsky art and politics. (464)

That is, Margaret Scalan focuses on the psychological aspect of Coetzee's novel *The Master of Petersburg*. He also gives more emphasize on its explicitness and directiveness. According to him, Coetzee here succeeds to capture the essence of the then existing social context. There is the direct link between the private and the public events which are inter-related with each other.

Gary Adalmon compares Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* with Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* and says that this novel is no more than a biography of Dostoevsky which dramatizes on the relationship between the fathers and sons in connection with life and death and quotes it as:

The Master of Petersburg is not a biography any more than *The Possessed* a social realistic text. It rivals biography dramatics the broken filial connection, the gulf between fathers and sons in a period of revolutionary change which might as well be gulf between life and death it creates a dialogic texture. (353)

In the given extract, Gary Adalmon analyses the text from the perspective of parallelism between the writer of the text and his protagonist. The protagonist of the novel too is a famous writer. Mostly, he writes about the Russian upheaval in the revolutionary context. According to Gary Adalmon, Coetzee's *The Master of*

Petersburg raises the issues of relationship between son and father in the politically changed scenario and the philosophical description between life and death.

Similarly, a famous Nepalese critic Manjushree Thapa comments on the writing skill of Coetzee and says that he is a writers' writer whose works are for enjoyment and filled with great skill and knowledge. His basic concern which portrays the past with historical circumstances resembles with the present condition. Here, in this very context, Thapa argues, "Coetzee is a writer someone to read not solely for enjoyment but also to learn and craft. His obsession for the past to examine the present which constitutes writer's work" (4). Here, Manjushree Thapa argues that Coetzee writes not only fictional issues but his text resembles the realistic issues of the contemporary society. He has the ability of linking the realistic past with the present.

In the same way, another critic, Bert Beynen, emphasises upon the pre-revolutionary Russia and South Africa has dozen of an anti-apartheid activities and quotes. Here he captures the main ethos of the text. There is the resemblance between the protagonist of the novel and other characters in the than existing apartheid condition of the South African.

Here we have an event that suggests the Coetzee is writing about South African, or it seems: dozens of anti-apartheid activists died in police custody when they jumped supposedly, to their death from windows or stairs. The pre-revolutionary Russian police did same to see through the police's South African fabrication, does not believe the official version of his stepson's death accuses the police. (448)

According to Bert Beynen, the pre-revolutionary situation of Russia symbolically stands for African apartheid situation. The subject matter of almost all of Coetzee's novel is the white domination upon the native African people and their marginalized

condition within their own country. The Russian police are not responsible for the death of Mikhailovich's son. The revolutionary group wants to establish their own rule in their country but the fascist rule of the Tzarar dominates them mercilessly and excludes them from their right of equality and freedom.

Moreover, another prominent critic David Coad analyses the text on the basis of the father son relation. For him, the present text captures the depressed psychology of a father after losing his son. He writes:

The novel recounts Dostoevsky's guilt over Pavel and his sexual urges and also the novelist's fight with the authorities to get back Pavel's effects and his consorting with the People's Vengeance, Nechaev, and his clan. 'Truth? What is the truth? Cries Nechaev in chapter 16. This might well be Dostoevsky's and Coetzee's central concern. The police, the official administration and the insurrectionists all claim to represent truth, meaning and authority. This is dramatized in the novel by the conflicting accounts of Pavel's death-was it suicide or execution?

(207)

Here, David Coad surveys the overall text and argues that the present text includes the different incidents that happen in the life of a Russian novelist named Dostoevsky. For him, the novel captures the father-son relation and the depressed psychology of a father who recently loses his son. The protagonist or the father of Pavel is now in Russia to search for his son's murderer and he finds that the government authority is not responsible towards its citizens. That is, for David Coad, this novel revolves around the question whether Pavel's death is suicide or murder.

From the above critical analysis, it becomes clear that the novel has been analysed from various perspectives. Some critics have criticized *The Master of Petersburg* being departed from the allegoric conviction and other has supported it as a pure allegory. But showing departure from the critics, who have not presented this novel as a critique of isolation, suppression of the authority until now, the researcher attempts to do dissertation on the significance of allegory in this novel and wants to prove that the writer has used allegory to show the suppression and domination pervaded authority in the society.

The word allegory means fictional literary narrative or any other artistic expression that conveys a symbolic meaning parallel to but distinct from and more important pun, the literary meaning. That is in the text, the major characters, plot, settings and other narrative elements stand for another characters, context or situation. So, allegory is a literary technique which resembles one incidents and situations to other incidents and situations.

Allegory, as a literary device, appears as the product of the nineteenth century. Allegory has been used widely throughout the history of art and in all forms of art work. The reason of this is that allegory has an immense power of illustrating complex idea and concepts in a digestible, concrete way. In allegory, a message is communicated by means of symbolic figures, actions or symbolic representation. It is a demonstrative form or of representations conveying meaning other than the words that are spoken.

American deconstructive materialist Paul de Man developed the theory of allegory in his essay "The Rhetoric of Temporality" (1969). He not only develops the theory of allegory systematically but also deconstructs the Romantic valorisation of symbol over allegory. In other word, he valorises allegory over symbol for allegorists'

insistence on materiality and temporality unlike symbolist's focus on deceptive organic unity, sublimity and eternity. Symbol is feature of an art which attempts to transcend, avoid or deny the inescapable fact of temporality in embodied human existence. Allegory, according to Paul de Man, not only attempt to avoid temporality but it also highlights human finitude. Allegory is an acknowledgement and linguistic embodiment of temporality, antiterrocity and posteriorities, difference, deferral and finitude; thus allegory for Paul de Man is authentic.

De Man goes to a discussion of irony, which redefines the relationship within consciousness between two selves. He emphasise, however, that this relationship is not an inter-subjective relationship between, it is not a relationship between two subjects but a self-conscious relationship of the subject itself. In this sense, talking about the irony and allegory, Paul de Man argues:

The temporal void that reveals is the same void we encountered when we found allegory always implying a unreachable anteriority. Allegory and irony are thus linked in their common discovery of a truly temporal predicament. They are also linked in their common demystification of an organic world postulated in a symbolic mode of analogical correspondence or in a mystic mode of representation in which fiction and reality could coincide. It is especially against the regression in critical sight found in the transition from an allegorical to a symbolic theory of poetry would find its historical equivalent. (222)

Here, in this extract, de Man minutely analyzes the relation of irony and the allegory and their use in the modern context. In past mostly irony and allegory were used in the romantic poetry equivalent with the symbol but in the present time, even in the post-colonial period, the use of the irony and allegory is shift towards the post

colonial context. Later the use of irony and the allegory is based on the historicity rather the poetic use.

De Man refers irony as a doublement, a capacity of the activity of a consciousness by which a man differentiates himself from the non-human world. The capacity for such duplication is rare but belongs specifically to those who like artist or philosophers, deal in language. Language function divides the self into two selves: that which differentiates and signifies through language and that which is differentiated and signified. The noetic is that part of the self which is most real and fundamental in its ironic existence, while the neomatic is dependent and strictly speaking, unreal and quite unironic which is perceived and constituted, as it is perceived by the perceiving and ironic self.

De Man links the ironic division of the subject into multiplicity and a fall. The element of falling introduces the specifically comical and ultimately ironical ingredient. At the moment that the artistic or the philosophical, that is the language determined, man laughs at himself falling, he is laughing at himself falling, he is at a mistaken, mystified assumption he was making about himself – ‘The ironic twofold self that the writer or philosopher constitutes by his language seems able to come into being only at the expense of his empirical self, falling (or rising) from a stage of mystified adjustment into the knowledge of his mystification. The ironic language splits the subject into an empirical self that exist in a state unauthenticity and a self that exist only in the form of a language that asserts the knowledge of this unauthenticity. Irony is a consciousness of absolute separateness, fragmentation and difference. In this way, irony is connected to allegory.

Allegory and irony are linked in their common discovery of truly temporal predicament. Both are determined by authentic experience of temporality which see

from the point of view of the self-engaged in the world, is a negative one. Allegory was considered to be anachronism and was dismissed from being non-poetic. The Marxist theorist, Walter Benjamin develops his critical theory of dialectical image and equates the allegorical method. Allegory, for him, is not a playful illustrates technique but rather a' form of expression just as speech is expression and indeed just writing is, Benjamin opines that both symbol and allegory become debased concepts in the hand of those sought to elevate the former over the latter.

Supporting Benjamin's ideas on allegory, American deconstructive materialist Paul de Man in his essay "The Rhetoric of the Temporality" (1969) goes further to redefine allegory and deconstructs the poetics of the symbol that has been interpreted the literary history since the late Eighteenth Century. In other words, de Man develops the theory of allegory systematically that has been revealed by Benjamin in the late 1920s while deconstructing romantic notion on the symbol, he valorises allegory over symbol. According to de Man, allegory is topological devices: "We find in Coleridge what appears to be at first sight, an unqualified assertion of the superiority of the form; in the world of symbol, life and form are identical; such as the life is such in form"(191).

"After showing problems in romantic overselling of the symbol and underselling of allegory, de Man analyses the politics of the Romantic poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge behind such unqualified and biased poetic principles. Paul de Man finds totalizing tendency of the Romantic writers like Words Worth and Coleridge "Symbol leading to a total, single and universal meaning. This appeal to the infinity of totality constitutes the main attraction of the symbol as opposed to allegory" (188). Paul de Man criticizes every tendency to totalize literature or language, to see unity, where there is no unity, ideology of organic symbol refers to

the desire for totality, and therefore, such tendency is guided by politics of totalitarianism" (4).

In their book, Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define allegory as the post-colonial devices to represent the post-colonial situation. For them different writers has used the term allegory in different context but based on the colonial and post colonial situation. Becoming more specific, they have given the reference of the use of allegory in Coetzee novel. For them Coetzee has used the allegorical elements to links them with his own national politics. In this very sense, Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin write in their book *Key Concepts in Post Colonial Studies*:

Thus in the Coetzee text, for example, the life of a magistrate isolated on the boundaries of an unnamed empire, and his peaceful relations with the people beyond the boundary, is disrupted when they are re-classified as 'barbarians' by the visit of an egregious secret policeman. This causes the magistrate to realize for the first time the full truth about the society in which he lives. Although such texts do not deal directly with specific colonial situations, they present a powerful allegory of underlying colonial ideology. (10)

Here, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin give an example of the use of allegory in the text of the Coetzee. For them, Coetzee has used the allegorical device to comments on the biased ideology of the colonial power towards the local native people.

The novel *The Master of Petersburg* is the example of the historical allegory in which Coetzee has used the national as well as individual context of allegory along with the irony. In the national level, the setting and the political scenario of the pre-revolutionary Russia resemble to the late twentieth century apartheid South African

society. And in the individual level, the protagonist of the novel and his son allegorically reflect Coetzee himself and his son who died in his youth.

The present research work has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter includes the general introduction to the Coetzee and his novel with the reference of the allegory and irony. The second chapter of the thesis is the textual analysis which critically explores the novel from the perspective of the allegory and irony. In this case, the researcher has taken the title, setting and characters of the novel to show the allegorical implication. The last chapter of the novel is the conclusion which includes the total frame-work of the novel and its findings.

II. The Politics of Allegory in J.M Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*

This research work is an analysis of J.M Coetzee's novel *The Master of Petersburg* through the perspective of the allegory in which the title itself and other elements such as setting, characterization, plot and technique are used allegorically. The protagonist of the novel, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky is a well known novelist who resembles with the writer Coetzee. The setting of the novel is the late eighteenth century pre-revolutionary Russia which allegorically reflects the apartheid South African society where the blacks and other marginal people are excluded from the mainstream politics and other political and social rights. By means of the satirical allegory, Coetzee reflects his concern on the contemporary South African apartheid society.

On the surface, J.M Coetzee's novel, *The Master of Petersburg* portrays the fictional history of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky during the late Czarist regime of Russia in 1860s and his obligation to write on contemporary situation. The novel *The Master of Petersburg* is an account of a grieved father and writer who is now inquiring upon the mysterious death of his son Pavel. In the beginning, the plot of the novel goes through the death of the protagonist's son, who has been murdered, becomes the center of investigation and inquiry to the incident. The protagonist of the novel Dostoevsky returns from Dresden to St. Petersburg in Russia and goes on thorough investigation and inquiry. With all these references Coetzee must have drawn a parallel incident of his own son's death at the age of 23 and his returning from New York to apartheid South Africa.

The setting of the novel is Russia where the protagonist Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky goes to Russia from Germany to inquire about his son's death. At that time Russia faces a revolt against the excessive domination from the absolute

authority. So, police of the Petersburg dominate and victimize local people excessively. Mikhailovich is a well-known literary figure as like the writers of the novel *The Master of Petersburg*. His son Pavel is dead in Russia but reason behind his death is still unknown. The fictional historical biography of the protagonist and other incidents are resembled to the realistic condition in the contemporary apartheid South Africa. That is, by using the allegorical technique Coetzee tries his best to show the hierarchical social status between the whites and blacks who are excluded from their own country.

An allegory is a symbolic, figurative mode of representation of abstract ideas and principles. It is generally treated as a figure of rhetoric. Though it is similar to other rhetorical comparisons, an allegory is longer and more detailed than a metaphor and often appeals to the imagination. Allegory is one of the most popular narrative forms in literature, philosophy, and various other areas. Throughout the history, it has been used as the means of literary technique. For example, Plato has used allegory to interpret the role of philosopher in the ideal nation. Similarly, in the modern history too, it has become an influential literary technique even in the postcolonial context too. Walter Benjamin and Paul de Man are the two influential theorists who talk about the use of allegory in the literary text. In this sense, in his essay “The Rhetoric of Temporality”, Paul de Man argues:

Since the advent in the course of the nineteenth century, of a subjectivistic critical vocabulary, the traditional forms of rhetoric have fallen into disrepute. It is becoming increasingly clear however, that this was only a temporary eclipse: recent development in criticism reveal the possibility of a rhetoric that would no longer be normative or descriptive but that would more or less openly raise the question of the

intentionality of rhetorical figures. Such concerns are implicitly present in many works in which the terms mimesis, metaphor, allegory or irony play a prominent part. (188)

Here, Paul de Man argues that the traditional account of rhetoric is disrupted and new kinds of techniques are developed in the field of literary analysis. The new kind of rhetorical terms are developed in the nineteenth century such as allegory and irony.

In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, J.M Coetzee has used the allegorical technique to show the realistic condition of the native Africans who are excluded from their own country. The white ruler of the South Africa constructs the legal discrimination between the black and white and behaves with the blacks as the secondary human beings. Such kind of condition of the apartheid situation of the South Africa has been reflected through the allegory of *The Master of Petersburg*.

We can analyze the allegorical technique by means of the title of the novel itself. Generally, the title of the novel *The Master of Petersburg* refers to a teacher of the town of Petersburg. But the term “Master” signifies the hierarchal relations among human beings. In the colonized country, the white colonizers create the hierarchal relationship between the blacks and whites and attributes all the negative images to the black people. Here, in the novel word “Master” ironically refers to the white people who consider themselves as the master of the black people. That is, on the basis of such hierarchal relation, white rulers create the apartheid rule in South Africa. In this sense, the narrator of the novel *The Master of Petersburg* says:

‘Why did he want to go to France?’ She asks and now she is addressing him alone. ‘What is there in France?’ ‘France? He did not want to go to France, he wanted to leave Russia’, he replies. ‘When you are young you are impatient with everything around you. You are

impatient with your motherland because your motherland seems old and stale to you. You want new sights, new ideas. You think that in France or Germany or England you will find the future that your own country is too dull to provide you with'. (15)

Anna Sergeyvena Kolenkina is a local woman of Petersburg who lives with her only daughter Matryona. Mikhailovich Dostoevsky's son also lived in her apartment.

When he arrives in her apartment, they talk about Pavel who wanted to leave Russia, his native country because it is not friendly for him. It seems old and stale for him. Here, Russia stands for South Africa. Coetzee ironically calls motherland as stale and old.

On the other hand, Petersburg stands for the home town of the writer where there is the pervasive apartheid rule and regulation. The local native black people are behaved as if they are the late comers. The white rulers construct the discriminative laws and rule over them. So, it looks like strange and unfriendly to them. In this sense, Coetzee further writes:

There is something liquid about her, something of the young doe, trusting yet nervous, stretching its neck to sniff the stranger's hand, tensed to leap away. How can this dark woman have mothered this fair child? Yet the telltale signs are all there: the fingers, small, almost unformed; the dark eyes, lustrous as those of Byzantine saints; the fine, sculpted line of the brow; even the moody air. (13)

Here, the given extract exposes different allegorical incidents together. Firstly, Anna Sergeyvena Kolenkina is a black woman of Petersburg who bears a lot of difficulties as a widow. She is victimized and dominated sexually, mentally and physically by the "Master" of the "Petersburg". That is, *The Master of Petersburg* refers to the

autocratic rulers of South Africa and where native Africans like Sergeyvena suffered a lot.

Paul de Man is one of the most noticeable literary figures and the literary theorists who scientifically defines allegory and establishes it as the important literary device. According to him, allegory precedes over symbol, whereas the former one is recent term and the second one is limited term and quite traditional. Paul de Man valorizes allegory over symbol, principally on the ground that the symbol holds out the false hope of compatibility, while allegory admits its arbitrariness. In this sense, in his essay “The Rhetoric of Temporality”, he argues:

One has return, in the history of European literature, to the moment when the rhetorical key-term undergoes significant changes and is at the center of important tensions. At first and obvious example would be the change that takes place in the latter of the eighteenth century, when the word “symbol” tends to supplant other denominations for figural language, including that of “allegory”. (188)

In this way, we can generalize from the given extract that the form and use of the literary devices are in constant change. Here, he gives the example of symbol and allegory and valorizes the use of allegory over the symbol in modern age. In the present time or after the colonization, the writers use allegory as a means to delineate the post-colonial situation of the society. In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg* Coetzee uses the allegorical and ironical technique to explore the apartheid condition of the South Africa.

The protagonist of the novel *The Master of Petersburg* is the popular writer of his time in Russia as Coetzee in South Africa. He wrote different novels and books. Here, the protagonist is allegorically stands for the writer himself in various ways.

After hearing the death of his step son Pavel, Dostoevsky returns from Germany in Petersburg, Russia: “October, 1860. A droshky passes slowly down a street in the Haymarket district of St. Petersburg. Before a tall tenement building the driver reins in his horse” (1). Like the protagonist of the novel, the writer himself returns from U.S.A to his home town South Africa.

Another similarity between the author of the present novel and his protagonist is that both of them lose their sons untimely. The only son of the Coetzee dies in a mysterious cycle accident. Similarly, the son of the Mikhailovich Dostoevsky is killed by an unknown force in Petersburg. So, he goes there to search for his son’s murderer. In this context Coetzee writes:

He has no wish to speak about his son. To hear him spoken of, yes, yes indeed, but not to speak. By arithmetic, this is the tenth day of Pavel being dead. With every day that passes, memories of him that may still be floating in the air like autumn leaves are being trodden into the mud or caught by the wind and borne up into the blinding heavens. Only he wants to gather and conserve those memories. Everyone else adheres to the order of death, then mourning, then forgetting. If we do not forget, they say, the world will soon be nothing but a huge library. (14)

According to him, the memories of his son are going away like the trodden leaves by the wind. The narrator philosophically informs the reality of the death. It comes compulsory for all and it is a harsh reality. So, one must forget his better reality and should be engaged for the betterment of the future. Here, allegorically the death of the Dostoevsky’s son represents the death of the son of the writer himself.

The protagonist of the novel is the previous revolutionary figure in the Russia. For his literary career, he leaves his homeland Russia and goes to Germany. At that

time, Russian people are suffering from the autocratic rule of the king. In the past, he involves in the revolution against the absolute power of the contemporary ruler. So, at present too, he is in the target of the Russian police. He is suspected for the involvement in the revolution. Dostoevsky says, “Because it is the weapon of the Russian people, our means of defense and our means of revenge” (41). This analogy of the protagonist reflects Coetzee himself. He is well known about the pathetic condition of the native blacks of Africa who are excluded from their own country by the biased rule and regulations of the whites. Like his protagonist, he is against the absolute rule and the apartheid rule in South Africa.

In his essay “The Rhetoric of Temporality”, Paul de Man further discusses about the historical development of allegory and irony. In the beginning, such rhetorical devices are considered as only the poetic references rather than the historical uses. In this sense, he writes, “Nevertheless it is in the use of allegorical diction rather than of the language of correspondence that the medieval and eighteenth- century sources converge” (203). But, according to him, at present, allegory is used in the post-colonial context, to define the situation of the post colonial country and the sufferings of the people in the present day. Talking about the historical development of the irony, symbol and allegory, he further argues:

In the case of irony one cannot so easily take refuge in the need for a historical de-mystification of the term, as when we tried to show that the term symbol had in fact been substituted for that of allegory in an act of ontological bad faith. The tension between allegory and symbol justified this procedure: the mystification is a fact of history and must therefore be dealt with in a historical manner before actual theorization can start. It is the historical fact that irony becomes increasingly

conscious of itself in the course of demonstrating the impossibility of our being historical. (211)

In the given extract, de Man analyzes the historical development of the concept of allegory and the irony. For him, in the past there was the constant tension between the concept of the symbol and the allegory but in the span of time allegory becomes the more popular device to reflect the realistic situation of the society. That is, for him the poetic use of these devices gradually shift to the historical uses.

In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, the revolutionary history of Russia allegorically stands for the apartheid condition of the South Africa. The Russian people suffered a lot by the Czarist rule. They raise their voice against the tyranny of the king of Russia. After release from the colonialization, the native Africans had also the hope of the political freedom and emancipation from the long term domination and victimization by the white colonial power. But the situation is not as they hoped.

The government of the South Africa goes in the hand of the white people who considered them as the true representatives of the former colonial power. They make the apartheid laws and imposed upon the black native people. That is, the political instability of Russia in the novel reflects the crisis of humanity in South African apartheid society. In this way talking, about the political situation of Russia, the narrator of the novel *The Master of Petersburg* says:

It was in the autumn of 1867. The meeting was organized by the League for Peace and Freedom as the body calls itself. I attended openly, as a patriotic Russia, to hear what might be said about Russia from all sides. The fact that I heard this young man Nechaev speak does not mean that I stand behind him. n the contrary, I repeat, I reject

everything he stands for, and have said so many times, in public and private. (35)

Here, the above mentioned extract explores the history of Russia and its political situation which is not in favor of the common people. The authority has imposed the absolute power upon the helpless people who are compelled to endure what the governor said. On the other hand, it exposes that the local people are gradually conscious for their rights and freedom. They establish different organization to fight against the then existing exploitative government. Nechaev is one of them who has established the revolutionary group to fight against the tyrannical behavior of the king.

Such situation of Russia reflects the contemporary apartheid condition of South Africa. The white African creates a boundary between black and white and excludes the black native people from using their right of freedom and getting equal opportunities in their own country. Their own country becomes strange and biased for them. In this way, the situation of Russia as presented in the novel allegorically, represents the real situation of the South Africa.

After getting freedom from the colonial situation, the native people of South Africa face a lot of sufferings and domination by the so-called apartheid system. The apartheid system invited racial war, violence, poverty, lack of security and lack of peace in South Africa. Moreover, apartheid was a system established by the whites for ruling, by constructing the hierarchy between whites and blacks. During the regime of apartheid government, blacks are segregated in the different spheres of the society such as education, public serves, and religious places and from other opportunities. In this sense, talking about the apartheid condition, Bill Ashroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin write in their book *Key Concepts in Post Colonial Studies*:

The policy of segregation extended to every aspect of society, with separate sections in public transport, public seats, beaches, and many other facilities. Further segregation was maintained by the use of Pass Laws which required non-whites to carry a pass that identified them, and which, unless it was stamped with a work permit, restricted their access to white areas. The racist basis of the policy was nowhere more apparent, and nowhere more bizarre in its application, than in the frequent redesignations of races conducted by the government, in which individuals were reclassified as Black, Colored, Indian or White.(16)

For, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, apartheid rule is constructed by white people to dominate and discriminate black people in different sectors of the society. They categorize the local people in black, white and Indian and behave accordingly. That is, to explore such situation, Coetzee uses the roundabout way of allegory in which the situation of Russia reflects South African condition.

The concept of historicity of the text arouse because of the thinking that sought to connect a text to the social, cultural and economic circumstances of its production. The text is not to be read with the motto of art's sake. It is but to be read in connection with all discursive practices and power relations expressed in it by the language that is, as argued by new historicists, necessarily dialogical and materially determined. Similarly, the idea to textuality of history came as a jolt to the age- old search for metaphysical spirit that was said to be all pervasive throughout the historical movement. This was because new historicists tended towards less fact and event orientedness. This may be perhaps because they realize that truth about what really happened could never be purely and objectively known.

In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, such concept of historicity can be observed in which Coetzee has used the allegory to include the historicity upheals of his country South Africa. For this purpose, he tells the story of the pre-revolutionary Russian political scenario which allegorically reflects the South African apartheid context.

After meeting with the local police councilor Mr. Maximov, Mr. Dostoevsky asks paper related to his son. But the police councilor denied to return the Pavel's paper. In this sense, Coetzee further writes:

I came here only to fetch Pavel's papers, which are precious to me in ways you will not understand. It is the papers I want, nothing else. I ask again: will you return them to me? They are useless to you. They will tell you nothing about why intelligent young men fall under the sway of evildoers. And they will tell you least of all because clearly you do not know how to read. (46)

Here, apparently, the given dialogue of the Dostoevsky simply shows his request for some paper related to his son Pavel. But the paper allegorically represents the laws and constitution which the white people have captured and used according to their will. But black native people want their rights: the right of equality and freedom which they lack since the time of colonialization. In this sense, the demand of paper by Dostoevsky allegorically represents the demand of laws and constitution of their own by the black and other marginalized people in South Africa.

Literature cannot be separated from the reality of the society, rather it reflects the images of the society and especially literature represents any specific era and the political movement. Some literary pieces include it directly and some others are affected by its negative or positive impacts. In his novel *The Master of Petersburg*,

Coetzee has used the means of allegory to depict the vivid image of the African apartheid society. In this context, the most influential literary theorist Walter Benjamin talks about the historicity of the work of art. In his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, he remarks:

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence. This includes the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its ownership....Changes of ownership are subject to a tradition which must be traced from the situation of the original. (249-50)

Here, the above mentioned extract shows the historicity of the text. For Walter Benjamin, a text is the history which is determined and the reflection of the history though it is in constant change.

Anna Sergeyvena Kolenkina is an influential character in the novel *The Master of Petersburg*, she lives with her daughter in Petersburg, her husband died untimely and she lives a pathetic life in the white dominated patriarchal society. Here, her pathetic condition resembles the situation of children and females in South African apartheid society. In this sense, the narrator of the novel says:

Something flashes from his eyes towards her; she turns away in confusion and presses against her mother. Back to the nest! A terrible malice streams out of him toward the living, and most of all toward living children. If there were a newborn babe here at this moment, he would pluck it from its mother’s arms and dash it against a rock. (9)

The above mentioned extract shows how the females and children suffered from the ideology of the white brother arrogance. The main targets of the white rulers are females and the children. Matryona is Anna's daughter who is afraid from strange people in her home. When she sees Mikhailovich, she becomes afraid because she is guided by the repressed psychology. Though it is the incidents of Russia, it represents the contemporary apartheid society of the South Africa where the black people are considered as inferior and weak. So, they were excluded from the different opportunities in the society.

Benjamin's understanding of allegory is the view of contemporary ruin and non progressive characters of human history. In the *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin advances his theory of the fragment or ruin in the context of a through going analysis of allegory. For Benjamin, allegory depends on the removal of elements from their organic context. In the allegory, the image of the ruin has predominated. Peter Burger notes that Benjamin's study outlines a fourfold concept of allegory. He argues:

The allegorist pulls one element out of the totality of the life context isolating it, developing it of its function. Allegory is therefore essentially fragment and thus the opposite of the organic symbol: in the field of allegorical intuition, the image is a fragment, a ruin. The false appearance of totality is extinguished. The allegorist joins the isolated reality, fragments and thereby creates meaning. This is posited meaning, it does not derive from the original context of the fragments.

(69)

Here, Benjamin defines allegories as a part not a whole. For him, it is removed from the totality rather it more focuses on the fragment and it opposes the organic symbol.

Seemingly, the novel *The Master of Petersburg* delineates the story of revolutionary Russia and the attempts of the native people to establish the freedom and liberty from the absolute power. By interpreting the late nineteenth century Russian political instability, Coetzee shows his concern in the late twentieth century apartheid South African situation. That is, the resistance of the local people for establishing their own government and the freedom stands to revolution of the black people of the South Africa.

The protagonist of the novel, Mikhailovich Dostoevsky goes to Russia from German for the investigation of the death of his stepson whose murder is still unknown. When he arrives in Petersburg he goes to the local police station but the commissnor of the police Maximov is not ready to investigate on the murder of Dostoevsky's son Pavel. In this sense, Coetzee includes the dialogue between Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, the father of Pavel and Maximov, the police councilor:

‘Yes. It has been a deception, a mistake, stupid but harmless, which I regret’... ‘Hm, I see here he was twenty one, getting on for twenty-two, at the time of decease. So, strictly speaking, the writ of guardianship had expired. A man of twenty one is his own master, is he not? A free person, in law.’ It is this mockery that finally rouses him. He stands up. ‘I did not come here to discuss my son with strangers,’ he says his voice rising. ‘If you insist on keeping his papers, say so directly, and I will take other steps.’(34)

Here, the police of the city of Petersburg are not ready to accept the writ of the Mikhailovich Dostoevsky about his son's death. The police argue that he is not right person to take guardianship of his son. The police charge Pavel for involving in the people's war in the Petersburg. It shows how the authority of the Petersburg is

irresponsible towards the local people. It creates the anarchy and sees all the people from the perspective of the rebellion. The logical demand of the people becomes the nonsense activity for the government.

After releasing from the long term colonial domination, the native African could not get any chance to be ruled by them. The rules and regulations of the country are handed over to the white people. The black people are excluded from making rules and regulations and rule on their country. As a politically conscious citizen of the South Africa, Coetzee is sincere of the future of his country. So, he uses the analogical technique to shows the realistic images of the apartheid condition of the South Africa.

Allegory, in the modern literature, is mostly used in the post-colonial context. In his essay, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," Paul de Man defines allegory as the way of presenting the fragment issues in the age of enlightenment. The post-colonial context is given indirectly by means of the figurative technique like allegory. In this context, he writes:

Allegory appears as the product of age of enlightenment and it vulnerable to the reproach of excessive rationality. Other trends, however, consider allegory as the very place where the contact with a superhuman origin of language has been pressed. Thus the polemical utterance of Hamana against Herald on the problem of the origin of language are closely related to Haman's considerations on the allegorical nature of all language, as well as with his literary praxis that mingles allegory with irony. It is certainly not in the name of an enlightened rationalism that the idea of a transcended distance between

the incarnate world of man and the divine origin of the word is here
being defended. (189)

Modern use of allegory is different from the traditional use of allegory in the modern context. He further argues allegory lies on the use of language and its meaning. So, in the figurative use of language, there are two levels of language; one is surface level or the grammatical meaning of language and the underlying or the symbolic meaning of language.

After the denial of police to notice his writ about the death of his stepson, Dostoevsky goes to meet Nechaev, a revolutionary warrior in the Russia. Nechaev is a leader of the nihilist group who wants to liberate the country from the clutch of the tyranny. In this context, the narrator of the novel says, “Nechaev is no student hothead, no youthful nihilist. He is the Mongol left behind in the Russian soul after the greatest nihilist of all has withdrawn into the waste of Asia. And Pavel, do all people, a foot soldier in his army” (60). This extract clarifies that Pavel is also the member of the revolutionary group. These youths are on the way to establish freedom and people’s rights in their country.

Such reference from the novel, allegorically stands for the real situation of the South Africa. Coetzee, as a commentator of the apartheid rule of the South Africa, expects the need of such revolution in the South Africa. So, the movement of the Russian people for their rights and freedom allegorically resembles the movements of African people against the so- called apartheid rule.

Nechaev, the revolutionary leader of the Russia, tries his best to convince Dostoevsky about their revolution. For him the ruler of the contemporary Russia exclude majority of people from the main stream socio-political rights. So, it is the

government that compels them to be united against the government. In this sense, the narrator writes including the voice of the Nechaev:

‘Do you think we are not all in danger? Do you think I want to creep about in disguise in my own city, the city where I was born? Do you know what it are like to be women by yourself on the stress of Petersburg?’ His voice rises, anger taking him over. ‘Do you know what you have to listen to? Men dog your footsteps whispering filth such as you cannot imagine, and you are helpless against it’. He collects himself. ‘Or perhaps you can imagine it only too well. Perhaps what I describe is only too familiar to you’. (102)

According to Nechaev, a revolutionary character, common people are lived like the life of dog in the city of Petersburg. They feel insecure from the government police themselves. So, the innocent people are helpless to do something. He requests Dostoevsky to overthrow such autocratic government of the Russia. He says that they should not accept such unnatural behavior upon them. He further says, “Yes even Pavel. You suffered in your generation, and now Pavel has scarified himself too. You have every right to hold you’re heard up with pride” (110). Here, Nechaev’s idea is that his father’s generation suffered a lot by the white people rule and their artificial laws and order but for his generation should not endure such domination from the authority. He tries to convince Dostoevsky comes in their mission to overthrow the government and establish the government of the people.

Here, Coetzee tactfully creates a world of people who stand collectively or singularly in the South African apartheid context. He creates an imaginary writer and links him with a revolutionary character. Pavel has become the mediator between

Dostoevsky and Nechaev, the writer and the revolutionary as an unpublished writer of fiction intended to support the revolution.

The simplest definition of allegory is a 'symbolic narrative' in which the major features of the movement of the narrative are all held to refer symbolically to some action or situation. Allegory has been a prominent feature of literary and mythic writing throughout the world, but it becomes particularly significant for post-colonial writers for the way in which it disrupts notions of orthodox history, classical realism and imperial representation in general.

Allegory has assumed an important function in imperial discourse, in which paintings and statues have often been created as allegories of imperial power. Consequently, one form of post-colonial response to this has been to appropriate allegory and use it to respond to the allegorical representation of imperial dominance. Talking about the historical development of the allegorical writing, Paul de Man writes:

We are led to a historical scheme that differs entirely from the customary picture. The dialectical relationship between subject and object is no longer the central statement of romantic thought, but this dialectic is now located in the temporal relationships that exist within a system of allegorical signs. It becomes a conflict between a conception of the self seen in its authentically temporal predicament and a defensive strategy that tries to hide from this negative self knowledge. On the level of language, the asserted superiority of the symbol over allegory. (208)

Here, de Man analyses the use of allegory in past and in the present situation. In the past, allegory is mostly used in the romantic poetry. After the change in world

politics, the use of allegory has also changed and it is used in the new form of literature i.e. it is used in the post colonial context. Paul de Man also remarks the use of allegory in the period of romanticism and in present period. For him, in romanticism, the dialectical relationship between subject and object is not existed. But, in the post-colonial context the difference between subject and object is existed in allegorical signs.

Coetzee applies the allegorical tool to capture the essence of the socio-political scenario of the South Africa. So, in his novel *The Master of Petersburg*, he creates an imaginary event which resembles more or less his own experiences and idea. Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, the protagonist of the novel is a writer and goes to Russia to inquiry about his son's death. When he comes in contact with the leader of the revolutionary group, he somehow agrees with him and sees the possibility of their freedom from the long term domination and victimization by the absolute power in Russia. Here, such event allegorically reflects the situation of Coetzee in South Africa.

In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, there are various reference of the involvement of the Mr. Dostoevsky in the revolution against the Czarist government in Russia. Nechaev time and again explain the death of the Dostoevsky's son for the sack of national freedom. So, for him, Dostoevsky must be for his son's sacrifice for the country. In this way, Dostoevsky is positive towards the struggle, and he realizes that they should be united for the sack of people and their emancipation from the long term domination and the marginalization. In this way, Coetzee makes his protagonist conscious about the pathetic condition of the people in the country. He encounters a writer with a revolutionary man and makes Dostoevsky take part into the people's war. Ironically, Coetzee satirzes the so called intellectual scholars who are not aware

about the pathetic condition of the black and other marginalized people in the Africa.

In this context, the narrator of the novel *The Master of Petersburg* writes:

Very well, let me tell you about your son. The official verdict will be that he killed himself. If you believe that you are truly gullible, criminally gullible. Were not you a revolutionary yourself in the old days, or am I mistaken? Surely you must be aware that the struggle has never ceased. Or have you made a separate peace? Those in the forefront of the struggle continue to be hunted down and torture and killed, I would have expected you to know this and write about it. Particularly because people will never read the truth about your son and others like him in our shameful Russian press. (103)

The given extract spoken by the revolutionary character Nechaev with the protagonist clarifies different things at a single time. The local police claim that Dostoevsky's son Pavel kills himself but the revolutionary group charges police as the murderer of their friend. Nechaev requests Dostoevsky to write about the death of his son and their struggle against the tyranny of the king. He further argues that the so-called media not in the favor of the people's war. So, as a reputed writer Dostoevsky should write truth for the innocent people.

Coetzee uses the allegory of the Russian pre-revolutionary scenario to reflect the realistic condition of the South Africa. In the time of apartheid rules, the local people are unknown about the truth happening in the country because the main stream media were in the favor of the government. So, for the people's awareness press plays the vital role.

Another theoretical device to analyze the present novel is irony. Irony is a literary device in which there is the gap between what is said and what is mean. In

literature to express the reality the irony is used. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary*, irony is the “amusing or strange aspect of a situation that is very different from what you expect” (822). Irony is mostly used in satirical work to say something indirectly. But in later period, irony is used as the post-colonial context to express the satirical tone against colonial and imperial ideology of western. In this sense, talking about the irony, Paul de Man argues:

It obviously does not suffice to refer back to the descriptive rhetorical tradition which from Aristotle to the eighteenth century, defines irony as saying one and meaning another or in an even more restrictive context as blame by praise and praise by blame. This definition points to a structure shared by irony and allegory in that, in both cases, the relationship between sign and meaning is discontinuous involving and extraneous principle that determines the point and the manner at and in which the relationship is articulated. In both cases, the sign points to something that differs from its literal meaning and has for its function the thematization of this difference. (209)

In the above mentioned extract, from Paul de Man’s essay, the traditional and the broad definition of the use of irony in the literature is clear. Traditionally, it was used as the saying one and meaning another. At the span of time in the modern post-colonial context, its meaning and definition has quite changed. Paul de Man argues that the meaning which the sign refers is literal meaning and the deviated or contextual meaning is the irony, in the use of literature.

In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, there is the deeply use of irony. Coetzee has use irony as a literary device and criticizes the system of apartheid existing in the contemporary South Africa. The South African people are

marginalized and excluded from their right of ruled by themselves. They are behaved as if they are not human being only the supplementary of the white people who create a boundary between the black and white. The black people are not allowed in the different sector of the society, where white are free to do and to go anything and anywhere. By seeing such discriminative laws between black and white, Coetzee comments such apartheid rules by using the technique of allegory and the irony. That is, he creates the imaginary plot, setting and characters to reflect the realistic situation of the South Africa. The setting of the novel pre revolutionary Russia, in the novel, refers to the apartheid South Africa.

In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, the revolutionary character Nechaev compares human being with dog. It shows that the black people in the South African apartheid society are living like the life of animal. Their emotion, feeling and sentiments are not valued rather they are used as the secondary object. In the novel Coetzee writes:

Don't you become like someone called in from the street, a beggar, for instance, offered fifty kopeks to dispose of an old blind dog who takes the rope and ties the noose and strokes the dog to clam it, and murmurs a word or two, and as he does so feels a current of feelings begin to flow, so that from that instant onward he and the dog are no longer strangers, and what should have been a mere job of work has turned into the blackest betrayal- such a betrayal, in fact, that the sound the dog makes as he strings it up. When he strings it up, haunts him for days afterwards. (98)

When the protagonist of the novel, Dostoevsky and the revolutionary man Nechaev meet each other, they talk about many things. They discuss on the situation of the

local black people in the South Africa. In this context, Nechaev compares the local people with the dog because their condition is not better than then dog in the street. As the dog in the street, they also beg something with the white people to fulfill their basic needs. For this purpose, Coetzee uses the irony to illustrate the condition of the local people in the African society.

The most of the modern critics use of the term irony, there remains the root sense of dissembling, or hiding what is actually the case, not however in order to deceive, but to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effect. The ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of the attitude or evaluation, but with indication in the overall speech situation that the speaker intends a very different, and often opposite, attitude or evaluation.

In his essay “The Rhetoric of Temporality”, Paul de Man deals with the concept of irony and its use in the work of art. According to him, the irony is most used in romantic poetry by the romantic writers. Later, it is used in the post-colonial context too. The post colonial writer like Coetzee uses the allegory and irony simultaneously in the post- colonial context.

Paul de Man marks the tension between allegory and irony and focuses on the parallel use of these two devices. He says, “In these entire instance a more or less systematic theory of figural language with explicit stress on allegory, runs parallel with an equal prevalent stress on irony” (209). For him there is equal existence of these two terms in the literary analysis. In this context, Paul de Man quotes Peter Szondi:

The subject of romantic is the isolated, alienated man who has become the object of his own reflection and whose consciousness has deprived him of his ability to act. He nostalgically aspires toward unity and

infinity; the world appears to him divided and finite. What he calls irony is his attempt to bear up under his critical predicament, to change his situation by achieving distance towards it. In an ever-expanding act of reflection he tries to establish a point of view beyond himself and to resolve the tension between himself and the world on the level of fiction. (219)

In this extract Peter Szondi delineates the application of irony in the field of literature. For him, romantic irony is quite isolated from the history or the society and focus on the alienated condition of the human being. In this irony an individual becomes his own reflection rather than the representative of the society. But according to him, the contextual use of irony should go beyond the periphery of the individual towards the world or the society. That is, the subject of the irony should be the social context and the individual should reflect the societal reference.

In the novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, there is the use of national irony or the historical irony. The characters, events or the setting of the novel reflect any specific historical context or events. In other words, the ironical remarks of the characters reflect the historical context and the national importance. In the novel, Nechaev uses the ironical remark very beautifully. Sometimes, he compares human being with dog which indicates that a human value is as less as the dog in apartheid South Africa. Sometimes he comments on the role of god and says god became dumb in the case of poor of the society because he never listen their cry for equality and dignity. In this very context, Coetzee further writes:

He smiles an ugly, crooked, bearded smile. Who know? Perhaps God does not like to be tempted. Perhaps the principle that he should not be tempted is more important to him than the life of one child. Or perhaps

the reason is simply that God does not hear very well. God must be very old by now, as old as the world, or even older. Perhaps, he is hard of hearing and weak of vision too, like any old man. (75)

The given extract is very beautiful piece of irony spoken by the revolutionary man in the novel. According to him, God too is biased towards them (black people). The white people make a lot of discriminative rules and imposed upon them hegemonically. The black people raise their voice against it but neither ruler nor god listen their cry for equality and freedom. He also comments the world also silent about their pathetic conditions in the South Africa.

Here, the writer uses Nechaev as his mouth spoke. He is in the favor of revolution against the Czarist government. So, he is in the mission of freedom and liberty and wants to establish the free and developed Russia having not any discrimination among the people. He united people in the favor of the mission. In this sense he says: "The people know who their enemies are, and the people do not waste tears on them when they meet their end! As for us, at least we know what has to be done and are doing it!" (104). Nechaev tries his best to convince Dostoevsky in the favor and he assure him that his son does not kill himself rather he was murdered by the police in the name of terrorist. In this way, the present novel *The Master of Petersburg* is the allegory of South African apartheid society in which Coetzee uses for the pre-revolutionary Russia as the allegory to represent his home country.

III. Critique of South African Apartheid Regime in *The Master of Petersburg*

This present thesis is the allegorical study of J.M Coetzee's novel *The Master of Petersburg* in which the characters, plot, setting so on stands for the other events and situations. The present novel is based on the pre-revolutionary Russia where Nachaev and other characters struggle against the absolute power of the king of Russia. Apparently, the novel is related with the political instability of Russia but allegorically all the incidents and the events occurred in the novel resemble the realistic situation of the late twentieth century South African apartheid condition where the blacks are discriminated and excluded from the mainstream politics and other social roles and responsibilities. That is, by means of the allegory, Coetzee tries his best to criticize the inhuman behavior of the white rulers upon the blacks and other marginalized group in South Africa.

The novel begins when the protagonist and a reputed writer arrives in Russia from Germany where he lives in self exile and continues his literary career. He comes to Russia to investigate the murder of his step-son Pavel who died some days before by the unknown force. This incident resembles the arrival of the writer from America to South Africa. Another similarity is that as Dostoevsky's son Coetzee's son also died in the by-cycle accident. Such incident shows that Dostoevsky, the protagonist of the novel, is the writer himself who wants to liberate South Africa from the clutch of the artificial rules of apartheid made by the white people.

In Russia Dostoevsky meets the local police councilor and inquires about the death of his son Pavel. But the police Councilor Maximov denies his help to search the murderer of the Pavel rather he charges him as the terrorist and according to him Pavel killed himself. His behaviors towards Dostoevsky indicates how the

government is irresponsible on the lives of the local people. Common people are considered as only the secondary entities and like animals in the street.

After receiving the cold response from the police councilor, Dostovsky goes to meet Nechaev, the local leader of the revolutionary group. Nechaev is in revolution against the autocratic rule of the government. For him, they should overthrow the government and establish people's rule which will terminate all the discrimination among the human beings. He also discloses that Pavel is the active member of their revolutionary group and killed by the police in the name of terrorist. All these incidents and the characters are allegorically used. By means of allegory Coetzee tries to explore the pathetic condition of the black people and the tyranny of the white ruler upon them. By giving the encounter between the writer Dostoevsky and the revolutionary man Pavel together, he demands the necessity of the collaboration among all the sector of the society.

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