

## Chapter I

### Introduction

The present research is an inquiry into the traumatic experiences of the characters, especially the protagonist, John in the novel *Youth*. Studying trauma in *Youth* reveals the construction of personal and national history on the basis of gaps and disruptions.

Colonial violence, postcolonial resistance and the conditions of being refugee as well as diasporas enclose the characters to face a historical trauma. The protagonist's story reveals that the history is constructed by the traumatic experiences.

There was a political instability in 1950s and early 1960s in South Africa. Due to the greater consciousness of their race, the blacks have motives against the white regime. Though South Africa was declared as independent country in 1910s from British Colonization, the immigrated whites were still ruling the country. There was apartheid policy, which remained till 1990s. After WWII, the greater racial conceptions make the blacks revolt against the whites. In this context, J. M. Coetzee presents his protagonist, John as the victim of racism and political instability in South Africa being himself a White South African. Moreover, the great expectation of John to fulfill his dreams in the Metropolis pushes him for London. But his degrees in English and Mathematics become futile in his search for job and unwillingly does the work as computer programmer. The soul-destroying job casts the series of his failures in London. His humiliating failure and futility in his attempts to be an artist, a renowned writer and a true lover leads him in the traumatic memory of the past. Anxiety and alienation remain as personality issues after his escape from South Africa to England. Then, the flashbacks, memory of past events and cultures in South Africa along with his nostalgic feelings entrap him into a trauma.

The emotionally blighted youth expects to gain artistic and psychosexual fulfillment in London, which he sees as an idealized center of modernism. But after his arrival in London, his anxieties entrap him in a cold insensitivity toward the women and men he meets and inhabit his attempts to define himself as a writer. The youth, John's anxiety concerning his identity can be seen from the opening of the novel where he identifies himself as a "Library Assistant" though he is a college student with part-time job. Concerning his anxiety, the critic Donald Venouse comments:

The youth's experiences in England do not lead him toward a personal and liberation from anxiety. In fact, in England as a foreigner, he discovers a deeper personal loneliness [. . .] Coetzee's anxiety is not simply a coldness or gloomy moroseness derives from his artistic aspirations or from the emotional inhibitions derived from his family. It is, in addition, a generational experience. (6)

Donald, here relates the experiences of the youth with Coetzee's personal life. *Youth* is also an autobiographical novel like Coetzee's another novel *Boyhood*. The protagonist, John suffers from loneliness in England. John's escapes from South African as well as his family are responsible to his anxiety and dispossession. The loss of cultural, generational and literary certainties as well as his emotional needs makes the youth distress and anxious in London. The British social environment contributes to the youth's entrapment in a false self which he developed from childhood fears. It reflects the author's own anxiety and loneliness after his departure from South Africa. Having abandoned the Cape Town, the protagonist has great expectations with London. But, instead of fulfilling the dreams, it pushes the immigrant into deeper loneliness.

*Youth*, the memoir of J. M. Coetzee opens with Coetzee (as John) at a university in Cape Town, but within 40 pages he has decamped for England. It evokes the most ambitious ambition of the protagonist. In relation to it, Randy Keehn writes, “Coetzee gives us a dose of immature reality and teaches us about ourselves through the improper and unrealistic expectations of a narcissist” (4). In *Youth*, Coetzee raises the issue of human suffering because of unrealistic expectations. John, without any background, has great hope to be an artist, a poet, a renowned writer and a true lover within a short span of time in England. It ultimately keeps him in tortuous hopelessness and greater fragmentation along with his failures to achieve these objectives. The life he dreams of is out of his reach. In relation to his failed life, Margaret Lenta writes, "He cannot take what London offers the average young colonial". He has spent the obsessed life in London. Concerning to his traumatic situation in London, William Deresiewicz analyses in this way:

He is tormented by self loathing and everywhere he looks he sees the sophisticated beauties of London ignoring him, its bohemians disdaining him, the life he dreams of out of reach. He fantasizes about passing as English but knows he never will yet is determined to sever all ties with the homeland he disdains. [. . .] *Youth* covers that period of a man's life when he is most repulsive both to himself and others. (10)

Having disdained the homeland and living as an expatriate in England do not give the solution to the protagonist, John. It further intensifies his problems into a wide range. London has severely tormented him rather than completing his hopes. Being a white South African, he has hoped that he works there as an English. But, it is flashbacked only

in his fantasy. Being unsuccessful in every step in London, he is so alienated that he has been attracted with nobody, even with himself. Instead, he is haunted by the memory of his homeland. In the same manner, Pankaj Mishra described the character's suffering with nostalgia. He writes, "Youth does begin to appear a surrender to nostalgia, the kind of thinly functionalized memoir of long-surmounted bitterness that well-felted novelists are prone to write in comfortable middle age" (50). The nostalgic feelings keep the character to his homeland in fantasy. Then, the flashbacks of the events, he faced in Africa come in his mind. It traumatized him and he does outlet it with story writing based on South Africa.

J. M. Coetzee, a Nobel prize winner in literatures in 2003, is a writer who is strongly influenced by his own personal background of being born and growing up in South Africa. In spite of being a white writer in South Africa during Apartheid, he strongly opposes any kind of colonialism imposed by Europeans and America to other writers with strong anti-imperialistic feeling. Instead, his writing is said to be influenced by the postmodernist writers of Europe and America. His personal experience and assumption can be analyzed in his writing. The memoirs *Boyhood* and *Youth* are strong proofs of it. He vehemently raises the issues of postcolonialism in relation to the detachment, solitude, alienation, loneliness and absurdism. He strongly criticizes the indirect colonialism of whites to blacks in South Africa in the name of Apartheid policy. In relation to his writing, Cowley writes:

All of Coetzee's writing are similar in that they often center on a solitary character. No direct moral is ever given, but rather situations are set up for

the reader to think about. Coetzee's aim is not to provide solution, but to highlight problems and have the reader their own conclusion. (2)

In his first biography, *Boyhood* (1997), Coetzee states his sense of alienation from fellow Afrikaners whereas in *Youth* (2002), he talks about his alienated self from the foreigners in the foreign land, England. He also describes in his biographies and his novels about the laws that divided himself and others into social categories that served to further alienate him. In *Youth*, talking about the havoc situation created by Sharpeville Massacre and protest marches. Coetzee symbolizes Apartheid policy imposed in South Africa and increasing dissatisfaction of blacks against it.

Born in South Africa in 1940, J. M. Coetzee studied at the University of Cape Town and the University of Texas. Then he taught at the State University of New York. He is the author of numbers of fiction and non-fiction. He is awarded by the numbers of prize. He was awarded the Nobel Prize of literature in 2003, Booker Prizes for the fictions; *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) and *Disgrace* (1999). He immigrated to Australia in 2002, where he has an honorary position at the University of Adelaide. Much of his writing reflects either directly or indirectly on recent events unfolding within South African Society. His writing is an easy correspondence between fictional representation and the rapid, traumatic changes that have transformed and continue to transform South Africa.

J. M. Coetzee raises the issues of colonialism and post colonialism in his novels. His novel *Disgrace* illuminates two of the key concerns of his work; the historical motivations behind colonialism and its legacies in the post colonial era. In Coetzee's view, the postcolonial does not signal the formal disintegration of empire, but rather a

new, and in many respects more insidious phase of colonization. In *Dusklands*, there are two novellas that evoke apparently discrete historical events, one colonial and the other post-colonial. The very different protagonists of both of these narratives turn out to be involved in strikingly similar forms of oppression. *Youth* also follows his basic theme. Though South Africa was already said to be an independent country, there is still white dominance in it. J.M Coetzee, in *Youth* talks about the new form of colonization or imperialism in South Africa.

*Youth* catches the issues of new colonization, even in the postcolonial era.

Apartheid policy has oppressed the blacks. Blacks have very limited rights in comparison to white Africans. Racial colonization is imposed to blacks in South Africans. It enraged black South Africans against whites. So, they unitedly opposed to the white's supremacy to their primitive land. The novel describes the pathetic condition of the character John after his flee to Britain from South Africa after Sharpeville Massacre.

The story of the novel is divided into twenty units. The principal character John is in South Africa up to four unit and then it describes his situation after his decamp for London till twenty. John seems tormented from the beginning. He has to pay the rent in time because he has given his occupation as Library Assistant (in which he is engaged only with part-time job), not as student.

The fitful affair with Jacqueline begins his series of failed affairs. The pregnant case with Sarah further symbolizes it. John is envious of better familial relationship of his best friend, Paul because he uses to avoid the parents. He is fascinated with the artists Ezra Pound, Chaucer, Flaubert, Henry Miller etc. He imagines a perfect world (London) to fulfill his dreams. The political instability further provides him better pretension to

shift for London. Wherever he goes, he is followed by his unstable mind and he does the work directed not my mind but my emotion. So, he is claimed to fail even in London.

John finds himself miserable in London. He, unwillingly has to work as Computer Programmer at IBM which is killing him day to day. The greater indifference of girls towards him shatters his will to get a perfect beloved. He is completely alone even among the people. He has failed to have the better relationship with anybody. The reunion of John with Caroline does not lessen his pain but more embarrasses him “London is a gallery of novelties and pleasures and amusements” for Caroline because he has already adjusted there within a short-time but John's ambition to master over London is beng weakening continuously. He is away from fun.

Sexual failure with a girl further pushes him to a painful trap. His expectation to get away from American music, American fads becomes futile even in London. His relationship with Caroline, Astrid, another girl does not give him solace but more intensifies his pain. He has hardly a few time for writing but unable to have money for buying books. So, his aim of becoming of good writer is not going to be fulfilled. His every attempt to ensure him to experience life to its full intensity and transform it into art becomes futile. Then, he has spent monotonous life as a computer programmer along with loveless affair which give no relief.

In this context of the novel, the critics have analyzed novel from different perspectives. Some of them have taken the issues of pain and sorrow in their analysis. But they have failed to delve into depths so that the issue of trauma is untouched at all. The researcher, here has aimed to apply the theory of trauma to analyze the text.

The memory of the violence of South Africa and the cultural shock befalls him in traumatic situation. It is not a simply pain but a trauma which psychologically torments him. His unfulfilled desire to have a better beloved remains in his fantasy so that he happens to fall in love with the unreal character, Monica Vitti. Likewise, the monotonous life of London makes him write a story basing its subject on South Africa. His regrets for fleeing in London is flashbaced in the story. Along with it, different such issues can be found in the text. So, the theory of trauma is most appropriate to apply in the text.

The research is divided into four chapters: Introduction, Theoretical Tool, Textual Analysis and Conclusion. The general way to prove the application of the tool is given in Introduction along with the some critic's view on the text. In the second chapter, the general introduction of the theoretical tool, Trauma Theory and the opinions of different theorists are included. In the third chapter, the application of the tool in the text is shown to be proved citing different statements from the text and comparing them with the tool. In the concluding chapter, the basic finding of the research is mentioned in relation to above mentioned three chapters.



## **Chapter II**

### **Reading Trauma Theory**

The term "trauma" refers to the action shown by the abnormal mind to the body which provides a method of interpretation of disorder, distress and destruction. Trauma is a medical term of Greek origin denoting a severe wound or injury and the resulting after effects. Trauma becomes problematic when it is reflected in the repetitive action. Trauma theory as a privileged critical category includes diverse fields with its specific focus on psychological, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic questions about the nature and representation of traumatic events. Its thrust lies on its fruitful enigmatic survival of problems and destruction as a metaphor of unpredictability. It exposes not only a phase of destruction but a enigma of survivals a metaphor of existence.

Trauma theory synthesizes resources from a number of critical schools. Freudian psychoanalysis provided a model of traumatic subjectivity and various accounts about the effect of trauma on memory. Feminism generated not only the crucial political context but also a model of community for speaking out about forms of physical and sexual abuse that has been borrowed by subsequent 'survivor' groups. New historicism, fascinated by the ideological omissions and repressions of historical narratives developed a mode of dissident or countervailing recovery of what had been silenced or lost in traditional literary histories. Finally, deconstruction particularly in American Yale School version redirected its concerns with reference, representation and the limits of knowledge to the problem of trauma.

Trauma theory intersects with other critical vocabularies which problematize representation and attempt to define its limits- discourses of the sublime. The sacred, the

apocalyptic and the other in all its guises. It destabilizes language and demands a vocabulary and syntax in some sense incommensurable with what went before.

Relating to the Medic, *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines trauma as “a serious injury or shock to the body, as from violence or an accident” and relating to psychiatry, the dictionary defines trauma as “an emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to the psychological development of a person” (1439). Trauma has now crossed the boundaries of psychiatry and medicine and has shown an increasing insistence on the direct effects of external violence in psychic disorder. This happened after the multi-culturalists' 'celebration' of 'decenters' and 'meaninglessness.' Multiculturalists and post-colonial critics share an interest in demystifying and dismantling those institutional mechanisms that reinscribed and power structure that favored the interests and continuing privilege of certain groups and nations.

The critics such as Shoshana Felman and Geoffrey Hartman turned from work on the undecidability of interpretation in literature to publish work on Holocaust memory and witness in the early 1990s. Cathy Caruth's definition of trauma as the limit of knowledge was a continuation of the Yale project. Trauma may create many problems such as multiple personalities, anger, and paranoia and sleep problems; tendencies towards suicidability, irritability, mood swings and odd rituals; difficulty trusting people and difficult relationships; and general despair, aimlessness and hopelessness. Post-Traumatic stress disorder happens when one's mind and the body are found in numbed state due to traumatic experiences.

In the field of literary studies, trauma theory hasn't come as a surprise. As Caruth points out in her introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, "the issue of trauma

emerged from an originally fragmented (psychiatric, psychological and sociological) discourse on reactions to catastrophes in the wake of the Vietnam war" (333). It received its more solid status as topic of inquiry at the moment of the codification in 1980, as PTSD ('Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) by the American Psychiatric Association. Yet this recognition does not seem to have produced a more complete understanding of the phenomenon. On the contrary, the category of trauma has triggered a "fundamental disruption in our received modes of understanding and of cure, and a challenge to our very comprehension of what constitutes pathology" (355). Instead of generating a rigorous scientific discourse and clear-cut pathology, the recognition of PTSD and the subsequent pathological practices have led to a veritable epistemological crisis, challenging the boundaries between academic disciplines by radically questioning the very limits of our understanding. And this is not surprisingly, where literature comes in.

The phenomenon of trauma has seemed to become all-inclusive but it has done so precisely because it brings us to the limits of our understanding: if psychoanalysis, psychiatric, sociology and even literature are beginning to hear each other anew in the study of trauma, it is because they are listening through the radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience. Cathy Caruth identifies the 'surprising impact' of trauma as the dislocation of traditional disciplinary boundaries and calls for its acknowledgments as an unsettling force that urges us 'to rethink our notions of experience, and of communication, in therapy in the classroom and in literature, as well as in psychoanalytic theory' (4). Trauma's surprising impact thus generates a challenge as well as a promise; the various disciplines are beginning to hear each other a new, intent on the question of

how to respond to this disruption and to the insight makes possible and compelled 'to speak to each other through the new ignorance that trauma introduces among us' (4).

Traumatic Memory may involve belated temporality and a period of latency between a real or fantasized early event and a later one that somehow recalls it and triggers renewed repression, dissociation, or fore-closure and intrusive behavior. But when the past is uncontrollably relived, it is as if there were no difference between it and the present. In a particularly intriguing statement, Caruth is led to indicate ways in which understanding and working through entail what she sees as losses:

The trauma requires integration both for the sake of testimony and for the sake of cure. But on the other hand, the transformation of the trauma into a narrative memory that allows the story to be verbalized and communicated, to be integrated into one's own and others' knowledge of the past may lose both the precision and the force that characterizes traumatic recall [ . . . ] Yet beyond the loss of precision, there is another, more profound, disappearance: the loss, precisely, of the event's essential incomprehensibility, the force of its affront to understanding. (154)

The civil rights, woman's and gay liberation moment of the 1960s and 1970s gathered strength from a radical questioning of federal authority to which the protest against the Vietnam war had given vent and which contributed to the conception as a "national trauma." In this regard, critic James Berger writes:

A theory of trauma in addition suggests ways of reconceptualizing important directions in critical theory itself. In particular, the recent crisis in post structuralist thought brought on by the Heidegger and de Man

controversies seems to require a way of thinking about how events in the past return to haunt the present. More fundamentally, it may be useful to look again at the rhetorics of poststructuralist and postmodern theory – their emphases on decentering, fragmentation, the sublime and apocalyptic and explore what relation they might have to the traumatic historical events of mid-century. This question becomes more immediately relevant when we see thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Hayden White writing explicitly about the Holocaust in the 1980s in ways that seem uncannily to echo earlier work of theirs which, while full of rhetorics of catastrophe, contained no references to that history. (573)

Berger talks about Holocaust linking with trauma. 'Holocaust Studies' is an interdisciplinary field that attracts not only scholars committed to pursuing research relating to the perpetrators and victims of the final solution, but also cultural critics interested in the hermeneutics and politics of memory more broadly conceived.

Sigmund Freud finds the dynamics of trauma, repression and symptom formation as the matter of hysteria. Freud held that an overpowering event, unacceptable to consciousness, can be forgotten and is revealed in the form of somatic symptoms of compulsive and repetitive behaviors. Studying the trauma theory related with Freud, James Berger comments on the relating matter of neurotic symptom with the repressed drives:

[. . .] initial theory of trauma and symptom became problematic for Freud when he concluded that neurotic symptoms were more often the result of repressed drives and desires than of traumatic events. Freud returned to the

theory of trauma in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle, a work which originated in his treatment of World War I Combat Veterans who suffered from repeated nightmares and other symptoms of their wartime experiences. (570)

The traumatic event and its aftermath become central to psychoanalysis. Freud shifts his emphasis biological urge toward equilibrium which he then theorized as the 'death drive.' Freud's elaboration of the concept of 'latency' of how memory of a traumatic event can be lost over a time is a challenging task of symptomatic event. Berger defines the term 'latency' as “memory of traumatic events which can be lost over time but then regained in a symptomatic form when triggered by some similar events” (3). If repression, in trauma, is repeated by latency, this is significant in so far as its blankness – the space of unconsciousness – is paradoxically what precisely preserves the event in its literality.

All Freud's thinking on trauma manifests the ambivalence regarding the significance of the historical events. Freud talks about 'sexual trauma' in *Studies in Hysteria* mentioning sexuality and sexual abuse as the causes of trauma. He also talks about 'war trauma' relating it with World War I. Freud's early theory that historical women suffered from memories of sexual abuse did match the traumatic phenomenon of soldiers who too suffered from memories of an overwhelming event that they had been unable to cognitively register at the time it happened. Freud's most significant, and most complete views of trauma can be found in *Moses and Monotheism* a great study of Jewish history which focuses to the link between the inexplicable traumatic void and the nature of historical experiences comparing the history of the Jews with structure of a trauma. The return of the event after a period of delay is the striking for Freud regarding the late

20<sup>th</sup> century time; the world is indeed defined by historical catastrophe. The different types and sizes of war have led the turmoil's of all kinds. The world develops according to the upcoming challenges and the changes. The trauma based upon Freudian interpretation of mind, is somehow developed by the inner psycho of mankind. The result of trauma has become as a tool of literacy and cultural analysis.

The trauma theory has aroused a vivid interest among the cultural and literacy theorists. We can look at a popular culture and mass media obsessed by repetitions of violent disasters to find the reason behind the beginning of trauma theory to drag the attention of theorists.

The search for the reasons about the popularity and inevitability of trauma theory makes us look at the preoccupation with family dysfunctions-child abuse, incest spousal abuse in the media, most strikingly on the talk show circuit. The family is taken as a hope for curing all social ills which can be damaged beyond hope. According to James Berger, along with the interest in family breakdown and violence comes the interest in the enigmatic figure of the survivor, the one who has passed through the catastrophe and can tell us what it is like. The survivor is a kind of living "black box," a source of final knowledge of authority.

Trauma can also be divided into mimetic trauma and antimimetic trauma. Traumatized subject is like the hypnotized subject and to an extent subjugated by the aggressor or event in mimetic trauma. But, conversely the trauma is also seen as antimimetic too. The antimimetic theory also tends to make limitation basic to the traumatic experience, but it understands imitation differently. The antimimetic theory facilitates to the idea that trauma is a purely external event that befalls fully cultivated

subject. In contrast to the mimetic theory's assumption of identification with the aggressors, the antimimetic theory depicts violence as purely and simply an assault. In contrast to the labile subject of mimetic trauma, the subject, in antimimetic trauma remains intact and removed from the scene, a spectator. These two models of trauma correspond to the traditional way of reading story.

Cathy Caruth explores the principles of trauma and its narrative history. In the book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Caruth sketches the theory of trauma as instigator of historical narrative through an analysis of Moses and *Monotheism* which describes the intersections of traumatic narrative. The book is principally concerned with questions of reference and representation; how trauma becomes text, or how wound becomes voice. She outlines a theory of reference as the imprint of catastrophic face in a discussion of de Man and ends with a reading of Lacan's gloss of Freud's interpretation of the dreams of the burning child (a sequence of interpretation that itself highlights issues of traumatic transmission). In which she proposes testimony as providing an ethical relation to trauma. Caruth's focus of trauma lies in the incomprehensibility of trauma as it first occurs – as “the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refused to be simply located” (8). Then the narrative of trauma is strongly referential, but not in any simple or direct way. Caruth presents her arguments on pain and language, the relation between its narrative, historical and ethical dimension. She becomes the critique of Paul De Man as well as defense of decompartment methods of interpretation.

Berger cites Caruth where he claims that the historical narrative arises from traumatic repetition. In relation to the De Manian theory of language, Caruth argues and



proceed to a quite difficult discussion of “how events be fall authors, how language falls short of perpetual reality while producing reference through this fall and how reference ultimately registers in language, the impact of an event” (74). In this discussion, Caruth points out the author oriented trauma reflected a text. Hence, Caruth makes a comment on De Manian interpretation that blurs at the end into an implied apology for de Man's who is unable to describe the implications of wartime writings. Caruth's elegant analysis of trauma, further brings the lessons of deconstruction to bear on reflection about the conceptual status of trauma in Freudian psychoanalysis. Rather than arbitrarily separating history and theory. Caruth employs in order to read their conjunction as the outcome of the shock of experience and the belatedness of its realization in discourse and understanding.

The article “Parting Words: Trauma, Silence and Survival” examines an enigma at the heart of Freud's work on trauma: the surprising emergence from within the theory of the death drive, of the drive to life, a form of survival that both witnesses and turns away from the trauma in which it originates. Caruth’s analysis basing on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* of Freud, of his two primary examples of trauma: the repetitive nightmares of battle suffered by the soldiers of the World War I and the game of the child faced with the loss of its mother, who plays fort and da (there and here) with his spool. Caruth, in this regard writes:

My own understanding of Freud's insight did not emerge, however, simply through a reading of his text but began, in fact, in my encounters with a real child in Atlanta, a child whose best friend was murdered in the street and who is interviewed by the friend's mother. I thus read together the

language of the nightmare and the language of the child in Freud's text, and then attempt to understand how Freud's text and the language of the real child shed light upon each other. (1)

To the extent that the life drive moves us away from the direct line of argument that leads from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to *Moses and Monotheism*, or from individual to collective history, the imperative for survival could be understood as taking place within a language of the life drive that is neither simply individual nor simply collective in the sense of those terms that preceded the death drive/life drive analysis. Cathy Caruth in the essay "Violence and Time: Traumatic Survivals", too deals with destruction. She relates, here destructive force with the past and the survival force with the future. She, in this regard comments:

Trauma is constituted not only by the destructive force of violent event but by the very act of its survival. If we are to register the impact of violence, we can't, therefore, locate it only in the destructive moment of the past but in an ongoing survival that belongs to the future. It is because violence inhabits, incomprehensively, the very survival of those who have lived beyond it that it may be witnessed best in the future generations to whom this survival is passed on. (25)

We construct our world in terms of "dimensions of security" (Physical, emotional-psychological and interpersonal spiritual) and that the destruction of a single dimension constitutes a trauma. Trauma permanently changes a person. Trauma is somehow different from stress: In contrast to a stressful experience, which challenges an individual's capacity to cope, trauma destroys multiple dimensions of security and

exceeds the limits of human capacity to process and integrate horrible experiences into a coherent perception of self and self-in-relationship to others and the world. Trauma destroys the basic organizing principles by which we come to know self, others, and the environment. The challenge to the meaning of life created by traumas finally makes us search for meaning in life.

Dominick LaCapra in *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory and Trauma*, talks about two related goals: to intervene in and clarify some of the recent public controversies regarding holocaust representation and to elaborate a theory historical trauma and its transmission. LaCapra's contribution to the trauma theory and its cultural transmission is extraordinarily lucid and insightful. His theory of trauma focuses on three psychoanalytic topics: the return of the repressed, acting out versus working through and the dynamics of transference. A traumatic historical event as LaCapra argues, tends to be repressed and then to return in form of compulsive repetition. LaCapra is concerned primarily with the return of the repressed as discourse, rather than with physical returns such as the genocidal repetitions in Cambodia and Bosnia. LaCapra focuses more in trauma's nature which denies compulsively fixated but accept the role of paradox and 'aporia'. In this regard, Berger opines:

LaCapra wants to create a position that avoids redemptive narrative and sublime acting out. He sets out to describe a way to work through trauma that does not deny the 'irreducibility' of loss or the role of 'paradox' and 'aporia' but avoids becoming compulsively fixated. (575)

The main concern of LaCapra is transference. Transference in psychoanalysis is itself a return of the repressed, a rather a more conscious summoning of the repressed;

transference repeats or acts out a past event or relationship in a new therapeutic setting that allows for critical evaluation and change transference is the occasion for working through the traumatic symptom. It is imperative therefore to recognize the symptoms and the trauma as one's own, to acknowledge that the trauma still is active and that one is implicated in its destructive effects.

LaCapra describes two important implications of his view regarding the historical trauma. First, trauma provides a method of rethinking postmodern and post-structural theories with the historical context. LaCapra views, “the postmodern and the post-holocaust become mutually intertwined issues that are best addressed in relation to each other” (490). Secondly, LaCapra provides an original rethinking of the debates over the literacy canon suggesting that a canonical text should not help permanently install an ideological order. Each text would be, in effect a site of trauma with which the reader would have to engage. But, LaCapra does not examine the relations between historical trauma and any literacy text although literature can be the site of acting out or working through.

LaCapra in “Trauma, Absence, Loss” talks about historical trauma and structural trauma in relation to the conflation of absence and loss. In terms of absence, one may recognize that one can not lose what one never had. The terms can be used with the term, lack, too. Structural trauma is related to trans-historical absence (absence of/at the origin) and appears in different ways in all societies and all lives. Everyone is subject to structural trauma. And, historical trauma is related to particular events that do indeed involve losses, such as, the dropping of the atom bomb on Japanese cities. The Holocaust, slavery or apartheid – even suffering the effect of the atom bomb in Hiroshima or

Nagasaki can become a founding trauma. Historical trauma is specific and not everyone is subject to it. LaCapra in relation to it, opines:

The belated temporality of trauma and the elusive nature of the shattering experience related to it render the distinction between structural and historical trauma problematic but do not make it irrelevant. The traumatizing events in historical trauma can be determined while structural trauma (like absence) is not an event but an anxiety producing condition of possibility related to the potential for historical traumatization. (725)

The terms: acting out and working through are interrelated modes of responding to loss or historical trauma. Mourning might be seen as a form of working through and melancholia as a form of acting out. With respect to traumatic losses, acting-out may well be a necessary condition of working through, at least for victims.

Jenny Edkins in "Introduction: Trauma, Violence and the Political Community" of his book *Trauma and the memory of Politics* talks about the reckoning that comes in the aftermath of a war of catastrophe to clarify the same fact of LaCapra. He, explaining about what happens after a catastrophe is over, says that the dead and the missing are listed, families grieve and comfort each other and memorials are erected. Victory pervades remembrance and war museums "tell of glory, courage and sacrifice" (1). Private grief is overlaid by national mourning and blunted or erased by stories of service and duty. When there is a mismatch between expectation and event, we have what is experienced as a betrayal or in other word, as traumatic.

The book of Edkins explores the connections between violence, effects of trauma that it produces and forms of political community. The state possesses power (and can

use violence) because the people legitimize its authority. Giving focus on the practices of trauma and memory, Edkins argues that “trauma can be very much influenced by dominant views that is by the state” (11). In his discussion of the practices of trauma, Edkins says that after traumatic events, there is a struggle over memory. Some forms of remembering can be seen “as ways of forgetting; ways of recovering from trauma by putting its lesson to one side, refusing to acknowledge that anything has changed restoring the pretence” (16).

He examines in the book, the connection between trauma, violence and political community by looking at how traumas such as wars or persecutions are inscribed and re-inscribed into everyday narratives. Edkins, in this regard, describes:

This takes place in practice of remembrance memorialisation and witnessing. It also takes place in political action. All these practices are the site of struggle. For example, the temporarily and inexpressibility of trauma makes the role of the witness an almost unbearable one. Despite this, there is an imperative to speak, and a determination to find ways of speaking that remain true to the trauma. [...] We can't try to address the trauma directly without risking its gentrification. We can't remember it as something that took place in time, because this would neutralize it. All we can do is 'to encircle again and again the site' of the trauma 'to mark it in its very impossibility'. (15)

Geoffrey H. Hartman argues in "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies" that trauma theory introduces a psychoanalytic skepticism which does not give up on knowledge but suggests the existence of a traumatic kind. The theory holds that the

knowledge of trauma is compared of two contradictory elements; one is the traumatic event and the other is a kind of memory of the event. Trauma theory throws a light on figurative or poetic language and perhaps symbolic process in general. Trauma studies provide a more natural transition to a real world, often falsely split off from that of the university. Traumatic and artistic kinds of knowledge conspire to produce their own mode of recognition. The shift of knowledge from epistemological baffles to an underconsciousness leads to an unsentimental acknowledgement of the human condition, and a view of art as at once testimony and representation. The force of that acknowledgment tempers our tendency to find a final explanation for trauma. Hartman further writes, with respect to traumatic knowledge and literary studies:

In literature especially, shock and dreaminess collude. Where there is dream, there is trauma. Winnicott's observations that "the mother is always traumatizing" is fundamental here: he means that within the child's framework of basic trust, or idealization of a nurturing presence, there are infinite chances to be hurt and the greater the idealization, the greater the vulnerability. (546)

Tom Toremans presenting views of different critics like Paul de Man, Cathy Caruth, Geoffrey Hartman, Shoshana Felman etc. about trauma says that the passage from trauma to theory presents itself as a passage to be read as the performance of a theoretical discourse involved in and driven toward the impossible transmission of its object in "Trauma Theory: Reading (and) Literary Theory in the Wake of Trauma". A passage which can only be read as it occurs as a repetition, necessitating an

acknowledgement of the irreducible singularity of trauma-theoretical studies. Toremans, in this regard, further explains:

Trauma's double gesture of triggering and contaminating theory simultaneously charges the concept with an outspokenly literary agency; yet what is at stake in this double gesture is performative undoing in a discourse simultaneously establishing and resisting itself as theoretical, calling upon the literary to account for its inevitable excess of signification. This calling, the charging of the literary is always at risk of foreclosing the critical impact of theory of giving way to the temptation to avoid reading in the service of anything but itself. (351)

Roger Luckhurst in "Mixing Memory and Desire: Psychoanalysis, Psychology and Trauma Theory" cites different critics; Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Sigmund Freud, Ian Hacking, Hartman, LaCapra and Ruth Leys to talk about trauma in relation to psychoanalysis, psychology along with memory and desire. Cathy Caruth provides psychoanalytic studies of trauma through the filter of Paul De Man's literary theory. Felman presents a study of the difficulties of testifying to the traumatic memories of the Holocaust. Freud gives a key early theory about psychical trauma, with the compelling case histories and reflections and the method of the 'talking cure'. Hacking provides crucial background regarding the emergence of the disease of memory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Trauma theory is explored principally in relation to Romantic theory in Hartman's essay. LaCapra's essays explore how to turn to trauma refashions cultural theory. And, Ruth Leys provides a historical survey of origins of trauma theory through Freud, Shell-Shock, and recent neurobiological approaches. Luckhurst, citing such views concludes that the



exposition of trauma could have remained within the field of cultural theory, satisfied with regarding the emergence of trauma theory as a set of refinements internal to psychoanalytic or deconstructive approaches. Luckhurst, in this regard, further says:

I began by suggesting that trauma theory can be understood as a place where many different critical approaches converge [...] Trauma theory tries to turn criticism back towards being and ethical, responsible, purpose discourse, listening to the wounds of the other. But if it is truly to do this, this point of convergence also needs to be the start of a divergence of an opening out of theory to wider contexts. (506)

He taking references of different approaches, picturizes trauma theory as the new output after the convergence of those critical approaches. Trauma affects a range of disciplines and cultural expression. Freudian psychoanalysis provided a model of traumatic subjectivity and various accounts about the effect of trauma on memory. Feminism generated not only the crucial political context but also a model of community for speaking out about forms of physical and sexual abuse that has been borrowed by subsequent 'survivor' groups. New historicism, fascinated by the ideological omissions and repressions of historical narratives developed a mode of dissident or countervailing recovery of what have been silenced or lost in traditional literary histories. Finally, deconstruction particularly American Yale School version redirected its concerns with reference, representation and the limits of knowledge to the problem of trauma.

Geoffrey Hartman in his work "Trauma within the limits of literature" considers trauma within the limits of language and literature. He argues, "Theory should not insist in particular, on the psychic wound being located in a single biographical event, a wound

occulted by literary device that must be cleared away as if they were defensive structures.” He, here tries to show the multidisciplinary character of trauma.

To a nutshell, trauma is intrinsically multidisciplinary. Trauma happens due to horror, terror, discrimination, hate and biasness which is preoccupied in the mind of the person. Politics may be the prominent factor to create trauma. The real trauma may not be accessible because the state (which has power, legitimized by people and can use violence) attempts to unveil the real traumas of people. Colonization, which is itself politics plays greater role for traumatization. Both psychical and physical trauma happens because of colonization and its politics, too. Colonial effects may haunt for a long time in the period of postcolonization. The following chapter will analyze trauma from the perspective of colonial politics/effects and the postcolonial resistance. It is the colonization and postcolonization embedding the trauma of traumatized in *Youth* in the postcolonial world that my study attempts to unravel.

### Chapter III

#### Traumatic Experience in J.M. Coetzee's *Youth*

J. M Coetzee's *Youth* is a story of an African adolescent after 1950s. The novel picturizes the traumatic experiences of the character along with his alienated, fragmented, melancholic and disrupted self. The political instability and the racial conflict pushes the protagonist, John to London from his native land, South Africa. He has false belief over the superiority of European civilization and its culture which also leads him towards London. He has a dream of being a good writer, an artist and a good lover in London which are out of his grip. His ambition of being a economically prosperous person also dooms to fail when he has only a job as computer programmer at IBM. But his mind becomes occupied with the imaginations all of which cause his trauma and hallucination. The tormented state of his mind happens to remember the violence created in South Africa after the strikes and protest marches of Blacks against racial colonization which takes him into a severe trauma.

The protagonist, John is a victim of the conflict between the Blacks and Whites' government in South Africa. Having escaped from the Africans who want to press- gang him into their armies and the Blacks who want to drive him into the sea (Blacks' slogan was 'Drive the Whites into the sea'), John arrives to London. But he is followed by the traumatic memories of the violence. The Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa after the protest marches and strikes of Blacks largely haunts him. Coetzee states as flashbacks of the event as, "He thinks of young Nikolai Rostov on the battlefield of Austerlitz, watching like a hypnotized rabbit as the French grenadiers come charging at him with their grim bayonets. How can they want to kill me, he protests himself- me, whom everyone is so

fond of?" (85). It echoes the typical accounts of his traumatic experiences in South Africa. He does not just remember the horrible scenes, he re-experiences it being in London. The turmoil state of his mind is the result of the non-erasable effect of the violence. The almost unconscious movement also reflects the cause of his flee for London from his native land, South Africa.

His first love with Jacqueline begins his series of love affairs. Having mistresses is part of an artist's life in his thought. His great fascination towards the great artist like Picasso, Ezra Pound parallels with his love affairs. The scene of his numbers of affairs imitating the great artist ultimately reaches him into a traumatic life. J. M. Coetzee narrates representing the tormented state of his mind as:

Jacqueline will not believe him for the simple reason that he does not believe himself. He does not know what he believes. Sometimes he thinks he does not believe anything. But when all is said and done, the fact remains that his first try at living with a woman has ended in failure, ignominy. He must return to living by himself and there will be no little relief in that.(10)

The relationship between Jacqueline and John ends within a short span of time. His first attempt to have a true love dooms to fail. Then the traumatic memory of the fitful affair spoils the normal state of his mind that weakens him psychologically.

The youth's sense of a contingent relationship to his mother may contribute to his inability to understand or accept any woman's expression of interest or affection for him. He believes in the worth of love and art in life, yet when an specific and actual woman such as Jacqueline, Sarah, Caroline, Marianne or Astrid shows interest in him, he can not comprehend why she might seek his company. Fearing the motifs and encroachments

upon his freedom by his lovers, he nonetheless believes that in encountering the woman of his destiny, he will be able to achieve passionate maturity as a man and as an artist. Such fantasy of a magical escape from himself represents his traumatic ridden life. Coetzee, signifying his search for perfect beloved and his lasting damaging effects of it describes as:

The woman is Monica Vitti. With a perfect legs and sensual lips and abstracted look, Monica Vitti haunts him, he falls in love with her. He has dreams in which he, of all men in the world, is singled out to be her comfort and solace. There is a tap at his door. Monica Vitti stands before him, a finger raised to her lips to signal silence. He steps forward, infolds her in his arms. Times ceases: he and Monica Vitti are one. (48)

Monica Vitti is not a real character. She being a perfect woman in a film arouses his passion. His unsuccessful love affairs with the number of women turns his attempt to have a true love into futility. Then the frustrating state of his mind attracts towards such imaginary character of a film as his almost unconscious movement. The unfulfilled desires of John leads him to such illusion which momentarily satisfies him but finally reaches him into a trauma. Coetzee writes:

The youth's flight from South Africa parallels his flight from his family. Both escapes are responses to anxiety and dispossession. As a result of the historical and violence of apartheid, he loses his connection to the land and the history of his family home. He identifies the brutality of the Sharpeville Massacre and he describes the tremendous throng of PAC

marchers as defining a movement when South Africa's "history is being unmade". (39)

The racial conflict and the unemployment situation of South Africa has made John hopeless with his native country and has allured towards England for its prosperous culture and economy. The remarkable effect has seemed after his pathetic situation in London against his belief. Coetzee showing his traumatic situation writes:

In fact, as the weeks pass, he finds himself more and more miserable. He has attacks of tanic, which he beats off with difficulty. In the office, there is nothing to rest the eye on but flat metallic surfaces under the shadowless glare of the neon lighting, he feels he is very soul to be under attack. The building, a featureless block of concrete and glass, seems to give off a gas, odorless, colorless, that finds its way into his blood and numbs him. IBM, he can swear, is killing him, turning him into a Zombie. (47)

This extract shows the plight of John, the protagonist. His great fascination and attraction for London begins to be dwindled with the soul-destroying job at IBM devoid of his academic qualification, degrees in Mathematics and English. It begins to create love-hatred, attraction-repulsion orientation towards colonial and nascent post colonial essentialities which pushes the character to the corner of trauma. The recurring memory of his own situation tortures him so severely that he becomes unable to experience reality. He sees everywhere that everything is attacking him in London.

Fascinating with the western culture, John makes an affair with Jacqueline, the sister of Elinor. But, "the energy and laughter and boldness of their first meeting have dwindled to nothing" (7). It begins to his series of fitful affairs with women "It was not

his idea to begin the affair nor his idea to continue it” (15). He is guided by the false belief that to be an artist, one has to fall in love with women which ultimately debunks his mind. John is distressed with his job at IBM. He can't be familiar with London. “He has not mastered London. If there is any mastering going on, it is London mastering him” (63). London is falsifying his dream so that he is detaching with London. But, on the other hand, he is still being fascinated with the Western artists. Coetzee, stating his mental manipulation says:

[ . . . ] In their unique ways. Eliot and Stevens and Kafka suffered no less than Poe or Rimbaud. There is no dishonor in electing to follow Eliot and Stevens and Kafka. His choice is to wear a black suit as they did, wear it like a burning shirt, exploiting no one, cheating no one, paying his way. In the romantic era artists went mad an extravagant scale. Madness poured out of them in reams of delirious verse or great gout of paint. That era is over; his own madness, if it is to be his lot to suffer madness, will be otherwise-quiet discreet. (60)

The previous great artists make him follow them. He is so mentally manipulated that he tries to follow them blindly. His attempt to imitate them completely makes him failure to his ambition to be an artist that pushes him into traumatic situation.

John suffers from misery. “Misery is his element. He is at home in misery like a fish in water” (65). At home, he is detached with the family. At the pretension of Sharpeville massacre, he emigrates to London with great hope. But, with the job of computer programmer, he begins to be alienated in London. John falls in a capitalistic trap of postcolonizer country, England. Girls pay no attention to him to London. He is out

of conversion with the girl at IBM feeling a certain resistance from them. But, “other men flirt with them in a jolly, coaxing English way. They respond to being flirted with, he can see that: they open like flowers” (74). He is envious of those men and wants to talk with the girls. But, at the meantime, he does not want to be known as a poet among the IBM girls. He is inbetweenness condition which gradually alienated him. His great aspiration is for a French girl higher than English girlfriend, Swede or Italian. “If he had a passionate affair with a French girl, he would be touched and improved, he is sure, by the grace of the French language, the subtlety of French thought” (74). He attempts to learn the French vocabulary for it. But his efforts have got him nowhere. His futile attempt to have a true beloved in England as like his thought puts him into such fantasy where he has a French girl as his beloved. It is the result of the traumatic memory of his ambition to get a true love with the entrance in England. But on the background, the violence created due to Apartheid and racial colonization in Africa is mostly responsible for such trauma.

Though South Africa is afflicted with the racial colonization of white South Africans who have Britain as their origin, there are greater influences of America culture. The growing power of America after the World War II had influenced to South Africa. He is distressed with it. And, he has thought that he will be away from cultural imperialism of America in Britain. But conversely, he has the similar type of encroachment of American culture in England, too. The cultural shock causes his trauma. Coetzee in this respect exemplifies:

In Britain, he had expected to get away from America, from America music, American fads. But to his dismay the British are no less eager to ape America. The popular newspapers carry pictures of girls screaming



their heads off to concerts. Men with hair down to their shoulders shout and whine in fake American accents and then smash their guitars to pieces. It is all beyond him. (90).

The above mentioned extract shows the painful experiences of John. His journey to London leaving his native land to get away from America seems here useless. His love for Britain is not only for fulfilling his dreams of prosperous life but also for its own autonomous culture. But, both of them are converted as his illusion. Now, the question about the use of his journey haunts him.

At university in Johannesburg Coetzee's character, John has read Ezra Pound as part of his preparation for the rich life awaiting him in London. He has also read Flaubert, who makes him want to go to bed with Emma Bovary. This makes him suspect despite his reading, there is "something rotten" (25) in his sensibility. And sensibility is all-important to John: because he wants to bum, like many others before him, with a picturesque, hard, gemlike flame; lives life as he expects artists in the past have, with passion and anguish and then transmute the experience into art. But, life in England of the 1960s turns out to be mean. John's ambition to create a new character for himself remains unfulfilled. He drifts in and out of his job as a computer programmer at IBM. His literacy ambitions go no further than such unfortunately lines of verse as the waves of incontinence. After a brief infatuation he grows indifferent to Henry James, "who wants one to believe that conversations, exchanges of words are all that matters" (65). He decides that the novel of manners is not for him. He also gives up on Ford Madox Ford, after struggling with one of his more unreadable novels. He suffers the confusions about art: how is it made? Does one have to live first? What about women and sex? Do they

hinder to encourage the artist? There are no answers in *Youth*. His greater fantasy traumatizes him.

John falsely believes to suffering, madness and sex for burning with the sacred fire of art. He concludes into it taking references of the previous great artists. He does not attempt to be creative to be an artist. His false belief on these elements and his attempts to follow it, finally give a great torture to him. The following extract shows his false belief:

Suffering, madness, Sex: three ways of calling down the sacred fire upon one self. He has visited the lower reaches of suffering, he has been in touch with madness; what does he know of sex? Sex and creativity go together, everyone says so, and he does not doubt it. Because they are creators, artists possess the secret of love. The fire that burns in the artist is visible to women, by means of an instinctive faculty women themselves do not have the scared fire. [. . .] In their lovemaking, artists and their mistresses experience briefly, tantalizingly, the life of gods. From such lovemaking the artist returns to his works enriched and strengthened, the woman to her life transfigured. (66)

He has already suffered with getting his expectations in vain in London. It has pushed to some kind of mental disturbance. And, his attempt to search for the true love reaches him to the series of fitful pleasureless affairs with the women. Then, rather than being an artist, he is surrounded by the piles of sufferings. He is being far away from the reality with such feelings. When John comes to the state of painful realization after he has passionless sex with the women being led by the above mentioned belief, his entire life begins to be trembled on the verge of traumatic explosion.

From the very beginning of the novel, there is something lacking on communication between John and his mother. After his immigration in London, too, John does not feel deep respect for his mother. “Each week a letter arrives from his mother” (98). But, he does not reply every week. Being the elder son, he has the great responsibility towards his family. He wants to be “new forgotten one” (99) from his family so that he will be free “to make his own life” (99). But, the letter of his mother pulls him on the burden of loving her. The following extract shows his longing for free life out of any responsibility upon family, especially mother as:

That is the trap she has built, a trap he has not yet found a way out of. If he were to cut all ties, if he were not to write at all, she would draw the worst conclusion, the worst possible; and the very thought if the grief that would pierce her at that moment makes him want to block his ears and eyes. As long as she is alive, therefore, his life is not his own. He may not be reckless with it. Though he does not particularly love himself, he must, for her sake, take care of himself. (100)

The conflict between his real interest and his daily life puts him in existential crisis. Trauma has destroyed his capacity to process and integrate horrible experiences into a coherent perception of self and self-in-relationship to others and the world. There is not his own life. Everything he does, it is for his mother. Neither he can go away from his responsibility to his mother nor he does it heartily and respectfully. He is on ‘no where’. He does not have self respect. Trauma destroys his basic organizing principles by which he comes to know self, others and the environment. The destruction of his emotional and psychological dimensions constitute his extreme trauma.

The other characters in the novel, John's friend Paul, his lover Jacqueline, his IBM colleagues and bosses, his “Indian neighbors, his later lovers Sarah, Caroline, Marianne, Astrid or his friend and colleagues at international computers Ganapathy, are sketched only lightly. We know that he senses what the right thing to do is, and also that he senses that the right thing is the antithesis to art. We also know that often John does the wrong thing. He is cold and disconnected with his friends and associates. He is awkward with his neighbours and unable to reciprocate their dinner invitation. He is cruel and detached with Sarah and Marianne. He also makes juvenile and appalling judgments in his mind about art, artists and women. The author, in relation to it writes:

[. . .] artists have to live with their fever. Whatever its nature, good or bad. The fever is what makes them artistic; the fever must be kept alive. That is why artists can never be wholly present to the world: one eye has always to be turned inward. As for women who flock after artists, they can't wholly be trusted. For just as the spirit of the artist is both flame and fever, so the women he yearns to be licked by tongues of flame will at the same time do her best to quench the fever and bring down the artist to common ground. Therefore, women have to be resisted even when they are loved.

(31)

These mental illuminations are full of clinched and trite sentiments. So, adolescent in fact that one suspects that they are meant to be taken as tongue in cheek. This is confirmed by other elements of humour throughout the book. At one point, John is reading Ford Madox Ford on provence and decides to buy fish fingers instead of Sausages in deference to Ford, frying them in olive oil and sprinkling them with garlic salt. Another point in the

novel, John reveals that his highest aspirations were for a French girlfriend. There is contradiction between his action and his thought which reaches him to the traumatic situation.

It is John's elevated dream that life becomes a paradise in England. He anticipates to make much of his career in England. All the expectations on the part of John disappear leaving nothing behind it when John finds himself as an odd. All John dreams previously that England will accept him nicely. It is his anticipation that he will imbibe and assimilate the British culture. In the English community he thinks that he will be treated respectfully. Besides all these anticipations, it is also John's anticipation that he will undoubtedly be appreciated in the circle of British Girls. But, none of these dreams remain intact following the resurgence of the awareness that he is rejected, neglected and jilted man in this new English atmosphere. When there is a mismatch between his expectation and the event London, he has what is experienced as traumatic.

John has to deal with his complicated feelings towards South Africa “a wound which bleeds within him” (116). He arrived in London not only as a foreigner from South Africa but as an artist-to-be. He has come to London to do what is impossible in South Africa. He aims to establish a different identity being in London. His such dream puts him into a trauma:

He has come to London to do what is impossible in South Africa: to explore the depths. Without descending into the depths, one can't be an artist. [. . .]. At least the episode is closed, closed off, consigned to the past, sealed away in memory. But that is true, not quite. A letter arrives postmarked Lucerne. [. . .] 'Dear John, I thought I should let you know that

I am OK. Marianne is OK too. [ . . . ] I hope you don't treat all your girls like that even in London. Marianne is a special person. She doesn't deserve that kind of treatment. You should think twice about the life you lead. Your cousin, Ilse.' (131)

The vision of life in the metropolis, of the romance and exaltation of art, pulls him to London. He wishes to forget his native land, South Africa. But, the letter in Afrikaans reaches him to South Africa. His thought of breaking relationship with Theodora and Merrington is mocked by his cousin's letter. The letter terribly brings back him in South Africa which haunts him too much.

Hoping to bring coherence and order to his fragmented schizophrenic selfhood, John begins to adapt himself to the new climate of England. He begins to imbibe the liberal English culture of physical love. In an attempt to achieve successful orientation to the English culture of physical love, John has to encounter extremely humiliating experience. While attempting intercourse with an English girl, John is pushed away berating with his delayed action. Feelings of bitter humiliation following his sexual failure overwhelm him. The following extract describes John's traumatized sexual adventure:

She allows him to undress her. [ . . . ] Naked they lie in each other's arms, but there is no warmth between them; and warmth, it becomes clear, will not grow. At least, the girl withdraws, folds her arms across her breasts, pushes his hands away, shakes her head mutely. He could try to persuade her, induce her, seduce her, he might even succeed; but he lacks the spirit of it. She is not only a woman, after all, with a woman's intuitions, but an

artist too. What he is trying to draw her into is not the real thing. [. . .]

After this episode, he stops going to the poetry society. He has never felt welcome there anyway. (73-74)

He has lost the sexual virility. Fixation on the sense of loss renders his psycho entirely traumatic. His failure to get adapted to the new climate of England makes him estranged and alienated. John becomes suffered from memories of the overwhelming event of his debility in sex.

John departs with South Africa with the wish to engage as an artist with South Africa only after being a Londoner for some years. His mother dares not write to him about South Africa “because he has made its plain he is not interested” (98). But, he discovers the impossibility of his becoming a Londoner, or of becoming a Baudelairean artist he has no small talk; he can't feign interest; he hates mess of all kinds, including unpaid bills. Sex of the kind available to him will not transform or inspired him. His sad remark, “some of us are not built for fun” (77), is a recognition that he can't take what London offers the average young colonial. The miserable English winter arouses his longing for South Africa which hits him: “In South Africa it is summer. If he were there, he could be strandfontein beach, running after mile of white sand under a great blue sky” (102). Months later, John is exhausted by the struggle with his MA thesis. He is haunted by the diasporic feelings of South Africa when he is at reading room:

On days when sitting in the great, domed reading room, he finds himself too exhausted or bored to write any more, he allows himself the luxury of dipping into books about the South Africa of the old days, books to be found only in great libraries, memoirs of visitors to the cape like Dapper

and Kolbe and Sparrman and Barrow and Burchell, published in Holland or Germany or England two centuries ago. It gives him an eerie feeling to sit in London reading about streets [. . .] it is his country, the country of his heart, that he is reading about. (136-137)

John, at the time of arrival in London seems hating to his homeland. But, the unfamiliar and tortuous environment of London to the colonial makes him distress to love in London. Then, he is haunted with the feelings of love and memory of the homeland. Having Shaken the dust of the ugly new South Africa from his feet, he is yearning for the South Africa of the old days when Eden was still possible. The increasing distress with London seems as a forms of acting out and his study about South Africa seems as a form of working through. He is within a traumatic memory.

According to Cathy Caruth, trauma is incomprehensible by nature. Although it is incomprehensible it is referential as well. Caruth claims that truth, unknowingly reveals certain personal truth. Focusing on the referential nature of trauma, Caruth says:

Trauma is not experienced as a more repression of defense, but as a temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment. The trauma is a repeated suffering of the event but it is also a continual leaving of its site. The traumatic re-experiencing of the event thus collapse of witnessing, the impossibility of knowing their first continued it. (Caruth, 10)

Caruth maintains that the personal truth revealed by traumatic victim can be extended to the level of cultural and historical level. In relation to it, the traumatic experiences of John in London is referential to the transitionality between the colonization and the



decolonization. There are protest marches, strikes against the British regime. “He cannot fail to see the country him is in turmoil” (37). On the background of unstable Africa, he flees to London. But, the movement of decolonization in Africa even follows to London. The people of London behaves to John is in insulting ways. The following extract is one example:

[. . .] an English woman whose cool eyes take his measure and find him wanting. This is a European house, her eyes say: we don't need a graceless colonial here, and a Boer to boot. It is not a good time to be a South African has declared itself a republic and promptly been expelled from the British common wealth the message contained in that expulsion has been unmistakable. [. . .] They certainly do not want forlorn South African Whites cluttering do not want forlorn South American Whites cluttering their doorstep like orphans in search of parents. (86-87)

The passage shows the terrible mentality of Englanders upon the Africans. It may only be a terrible mentality of John. He sees everywhere that everything is against his favor. John, here seemed to be followed by the independent movement of South Africa tortuously. Moreover, after declaring republic South Africa being away from British commonwealth. Britishers, in worse, begin to hate to the Africans. The act continually gives torture to him. He thinks that Astrid, with whom, he has begun to be friend, will be informed that he is not a desirable. It may obstruct their relationship. John, like this, is regularly traumatized by the African independent movement and the colonial vision of Britishers to the Africans in London. It pushes him as forlorn into the corner.

Having met Caroline, a girl he had begun an affair with in Africa. John's life is astonished in London. Caroline has a flat with three other girls and has made contact with several drama agents. He is amazed at how soon she has made herself at home in the city. The act arouses his displeasure at his inability to make any fruitful relationship since several months. Their affair is difficult from the start. She works as a waitress at a night club, and she expects him to meet her at the flat, to which he has no key because of the other girls. Sometimes she arrives by midnight; other times be out of the flat by seven before the other girls wake up. The woman alone is setting all the rules in their affair. His masculinity is in under-erasure in their relationship so that he is inwardly traumatized. But, he can not break off the affair though the affair is not harmonious. In relation to his affair with Caroline, Coetzee writes:

Caroline's mind is elsewhere. Worse, than that: with his glooms and his sulka, he is fast becoming a burden to her, he can feel that. If he had any sense he would break off the affair right now, clear out. But he does not. Caroline may not be the mysterious, darkeyed beloved he came to Europe for, she may be nothing but a girl from Cape town from a background as humdrum as his own, but she is, for the present, all he has. (70)

John is living a traumatically empty life. His life looms as an ash heaps of utter vacuities and futilities. Caroline is not such girl for which he has come to London. But, oppositely, he is becoming a burden to her. Likewise, at the leaving of South Africa, he seems hating Africa. But, now he seems loving cape town, a city of South Africa. He is in transitionality that creates trauma to him. The extract evokes his traumatic ridden life in a far more subtle way. Acute sense of loneliness haunts his life. His life is with the

burdensome of traumatic alienation. He is unable to make an affair as his wish in London. Girls pay no attention to him. "In the trains the eyes of girls slide over him or glaze with disdain" (71). So, he is fragmented and hopeless in London. There is still colonial biasness upon him. It makes him difficult to adjust in London. He sees that it is almost impossible to get true love as his wish. So, he seems in compulsion to continue his affair with Caroline though it is not well as it was before. At one point, Caroline is getting away from him being familiar to London within the short time, Perhaps diverting her mind on other. On the other, being unfamiliar and difficulty to have true beloved, he seems burden for Caroline. The conflict between the attraction and the repulsion upon each other pushes him in traumatic vacant life.

Since his arrival in London, he begins to search for job. He curses himself for accepting the job of teaching social studies and swimming. So, he writes: "Unforeseen eventualities make it impossible to take up my duties. Please accept my sincerest apologies." (42). At first, he is overjoyed when he is accepted as a junior officer at an experimental agricultural station; then he is informed he can't commute from the city; he will have to live near the station. He thinks that being at the job, he can't live the life of a poet, meets other artists and have love affairs. He has not come to London to analyze the plant growth. So, he declines this job too. He has locked the solidity. He has thought of job. The inability of getting a job as his degrees in English and Mathematics suffers him too much. There is no correlation between his expectation and the reality he has faced which traumatizes him.

The novel opens with the false self of John. Although he is a college student supporting himself with part-time job, he identifies himself as a 'Library Assistant' in

order to be seen as more mature, reliable and respectable. Likewise the fire of longing a true beloved which never happens to him, makes him think as:

Sometimes he imagines a beautiful girl in a long white dresses wandering into the reading room and lingering distractedly after closing time: he imagines showing her over the mysterious of the bindery and cataloging room, and then emerging with her into the starry night. It never happens to him. (2)

This depiction of John's imagination is significant to know behavior. He wants to live in out of the any responsibility to the family. "He is proving something: that each man is an island; that you don't need parents" (3), being an artist and having a true love. He wants to be away form the parents. But, there is vast gap between his imagination and the reality. Getting a true beloved and emerging with her into the starry night only remain in his imagination, not in his real life. His living standard is also not well managed in Cape Town. His inaccessible dream in Cape Town gradually deviates him from South Africa. For changing his dream into reality, he begins to attract towards the colonizer country, England. But, out of his expectation, it also never fulfills his dream. It reaches him in the traumatic ridden life.

J. M. Coetzee presents the character, John who makes the most ordinary thing so hard for himself. One evening, he has the meal in South Indian family agreeing their invitation. But, he is astonished thinking that how else he returns the hospitality. He suffers from moral sickness. His inability to invite them for a meal makes him away from them. He is self-tortured. "He feels more and more embarrassed. He begins listening at his door in the mornings, waiting for the engineer to leave for work before he steps out on

to the landing” (95). He is at some sense of loss and regret. He enters into the burden by so minimal matter. He is one of the introvert who does not express his feelings and thoughts with others. The unexpressed desires, feelings and thoughts make his sufferings vague.

Unsatisfactory affair with Caroline exhausts him. He does not seem liking to continue the relationship in the later days. But, after her telephone, he unwillingly continues the affair, even after the breaking off the affair. On one hand, he believes in the transfiguring power of passionate love. But on the other, he has only amatory relations which devour his time, exhaust him and cripple his work. He has been fascinated by the beauty of women, by their air of mysterious unattainability since his sixteenth year. He was in a continual fever of lovesickness as a student. But, he has yet not been satisfied by his affair and the sexual relationship. So, he is himself in doubt at his own sexuality. The following abstract shows his passionless sex as:

Is that homosexuality? Is that the sum of it? Even if there is more to it than that, it seems a puny activity compared with sex with a woman; thick, absent-minded, devoid of dread but also devoid of allure. There seems to be nothing at stake: nothing to lose but nothing to win either, a game for people afraid of the big tongue; a game for losers. (79)

He is anxious of his passionless sex. When he offers nothing in return after a man touches him through his clothes, he is more serious about his sexuality. The sexual affair has been passed in quick with absent-minded without any satisfaction. He has never excited for the intercourse though he has been doing with several women. There is no warmth in sex. The coolness in his sex pushes him to think about whether he is homosexual. The

worries about his sexuality along with his internal and external conflict with psychological danger evokes his big traumatic feeling at all.

Initially, he is absorbed by the job search which eventually land in the IBM as a computer programmer. He clearly struggles in the IBM to find a logic in the routine clerical mess he is landed himself into, he experiences his first major conflict between his id (his primitive instinct to become a world renowned poet) and his superego (which tells him that he dare to give up far failing would be too much like his father). Being unable to balance these extremes, his ego shrinks and he finds refuge in self-justification and self criticism. The constant rebuke from his conscience about his social origins keeps accentuating his isolation making his preconceived notions about people around him wilder and vaguer. Lonely and adrift, even his search for true love cumulates into random, hurried, even downright embarrassing affairs. His dream of being an artist and renowned writer is also swayed away from him. No destiny takes place in his life as his wish and hope in London. The author comments about his great expectation and the reality he has in London as:

Destiny would not come to him in South Africa, he told himself; she would come (come like a bride!) only in London or Paris or perhaps Vienna, because only in the great cities of Europe does destiny reside. For nearly two years, he waited and suffered in London and destiny stayed away. Now, having not been strong enough to bear London, he has beaten a retreat into the country-side, a strategic retreat. (165-166)

Coetzee has presented the character as traumatic survivor. The reign of alienation, exploitation, the unachievement of the dream are the factors to the realization of

traumatic ridden life. The struggle for a nearly two years to achieve the aim is his traumatic struggle which ultimately pushes him to the countryside. He has gained no dreams in reality which shocks him excessively.

Anything and everything that matters in the book happens in John's mind and there is so much caution and irony with which his psychology is dealt with that one can't help empathizing with John as one witness him groping for answers, he faces every time with a new situation leaving him even more nonplussed, even more mystified. His innocent faultfinding at the mechanized society, when he says:

Is this indifference to the world, a consequence of too much intercourse with machine that gives the appearance of thinking? How were he to fare if one day he has to quit computers and rejoin a civilized society? [. . .] the more he has to do with computing, the more its seems to him like chess: a tight little world defined by made up rules, on that sucks in boys of a certain susceptible temperament and then returns them half-crazy, so that all the time they deludedly think they are playing the game, the game is in fact playing them. (149)

It shows the mechanized society which alienated and disintegrates the people. The IBM and international computers engage John as computer programmer which alienates him from the society that sucks his creativity and falls him into traumatic life watching gaps between what he wanted to achieve and what he finally achieves widen watching his conflicts climax in self-justifying affirmations observing him falling back on self-sophistry each time he is criticized or laughed at. John is degenerated slowly into an

inactive, psychotic being trapped in his own questions and explanations and fallacies realizing his blurred thought process for a moment.

John and Ganapathy are two sides of the same coin. Ganapathy also works on international computer. Ganapathy is cut off from Mother India like John who is away from Mother South Africa. Ganapathy is locked into an attenuating endgame, playing himself, with each move, further into a corner and into defeat. They both have unachievable targets who suffers from self-criticism.

The continuous failure in London has badly shocked him. The recurring memory of futility in London spills out in his story. The setting of his story in South Africa that shows his greater anxiety for London. He writes:

A nameless young man all too like himself who takes a nameless girl to a lonely beach and watches while she swims. From some small actions of hers, some unconscious gesture, he is suddenly convinced that she has been unfaithful to him; further more, he realizes that she has seen he knows and does not care. That is all. (62)

The repressed desires of John are expressed here. His growing suspicion over Caroline and his will for disconnection any relationship with her can be realized in his writing. He is debunked psychologically with the memory of his unwilling affair with Caroline which has outlet in his story. The sense of absence/loss of his native land structurally traumatizes him so that he reconceptualizes his origin, South Africa.

J.M. Coetzee signals a representation of character that owes to the development of the narcissistic personality which is increasingly defining the individual of today – in cultural, sociological and psychological terms. The protagonist is deeply involved in his



deliberate effort to free himself from the pang of trauma. His traumas are revealed in his interests. Being in the colonizer country, the sense of inferiority and humiliation has intensified his traumatic experiences. He has used all his effort to change his imagination into reality and to land his dreams. Then, he suffers from traumatic experiences so that he is in traumatic struggle. He leaves sufficient and plenty of traces of trauma resulting from the vacuum among the colonization and the revolution for decolonization and postcolonization. He is always in the loss, disintegration and alienation with his traumatic ridden life. Hence, the researcher explores the traumatic experiences of the protagonist in the text *Youth*.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Conclusion**

The study shows the historical trauma caused mainly by the colonial violence, postcolonial resistance and the sense of diaspora. John becomes victim of the violence caused by racial colonization and apartheid policy that forces him to flee from South Africa. The traces of colonial mentality in the Postcolonial era, too makes him fascinate for the journey of London. The sense of superiority for England, John has a dream of being an artist, a renowned writer and a good lover in England. Trauma resides in a dream that where there is dream, there is a trauma. John has London quite opposite of his dreamland that befalls him into a trauma. The challenge to the meaning of life created by traumas finally makes him search for meaning in life. The debacle affairs with numbers of women and his futile attempt for artistic and economic prosperity debases his journey for London. Sharpeville Massacre has killed numbers of people in South Africa. Then, it further enflames to the protest marches against whites in the country. Being scared from the event, John enters to London expecting prosperity in his life in London.

The wave of post colonization also makes South Africa free from colonial debauchery of England in 1910s. But the cunning England prevails its coloniality bringing white South African in the supreme power. It forces the blacks to spend the deadening life for numbers of years even after its decolonization. The greater dissatisfaction with their debilitating life pushes blacks revolt against the deception in 1950s. It reaches the protagonist to London. The indoctrination about the superiority of London within himself leads him to London. Conversely, the dejected life out of his expectation descends him into a trauma.

Trauma time is inherent in and destabilizes any production of linearity. Trauma has to be excluded for linearity to be convincing, but it can not be successfully put to one side: it always intrudes, it can not be completely forgotten. So the memory of the horrible scene haunts him severely. His present memory of his failure in London torments him too much that he sees everywhere that everybody is attacking him. He is in abnormal mind. The perfect heroine visualized in a film triggers his extreme desires for a perfect beloved and his unfruitful search for it. As a result, he falls in love with such imaginative character Monica Vitti being fed up with his search for the real beloved. The mismatch between his expectation and the event he has in London traumatizes him. Thus, John exists in the ceaseless presence of trauma as he has the unattainable dream and the memory of horrible scene of violence. Racial colonization and the post colonial era are equally responsible for his trauma. Coetzee, therefore, is successful to explore the traumatic figure of the character in the novel *Youth*.

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