

Apartheid Lingers: Sadism and Masochism in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*

Maryam Beyad and Hossein Keramatfar*

University of Tehran, Street No.16, Karegar Shomali St, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

Coetzee's *Disgrace* narrates the plights of individuals in their attempts to cope with the existential and social forces to maintain their precarious existence. Driven by the imperative to sustain their sanity and to achieve a sense of belonging, these individuals attempt to break free from their isolated existence and relate themselves to others. In fact, relating one to others and transcending one's separateness is one of human being's existential needs that has to be satisfied. This paper suggests that this existential need combines with social realities of South Africa and all the attempts to satisfy this existential need never result in a healthy attachment. This study argues that the individuals in post-apartheid world of *Disgrace*, in their attempts to transcend their isolation, reveal sadistic and masochistic aspects of themselves in their interpersonal relations. Their ontological insecurity, rooted in structural inadequacies of the society, compels them to establish unhealthy dependence on others. As they tie their survival to some unproductive ways of relatedness to others, they turn into what Coetzee calls deformed individuals. Therefore, sanity, which depends on productive satisfaction of existential needs, becomes absent, insanity and deformity prevails, and the prospect of a sane society recedes.

Keywords: Deformed individual, existential need, masochism, ontological insecurity, sadism, sanity

INTRODUCTION

While South Africa's first democratic election, following the collapse of apartheid regime, had been held in 1994 and the extensive report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been presented to President Nelson Mandela only in 1998, the publication of Coetzee's *Disgrace* in 1999 created considerable

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 15 January 2017

Accepted: 19 January 2018

Published: 28 September 2018

E-mail addresses:

msbeyad@ut.ac.ir (Maryam Beyad)

h.keramatfar@ut.ac.ir (Hossein Keramatfar)

* Corresponding author

controversy due to the largely negative image of the new democratic society presented in the novel. Critics and commentators were divided as to how *realistically* the novel captured the hopes and worries of a people in a fledgling democracy. Concerned with the adverse implications of the novel for post-apartheid society, African National Congress regarded the novel as an example of racism in the media through perpetuating the stereotype of black men as natural rapists; a supposition that was based on depicting the rape of a white woman by black men in the novel. In other words, there was much debate about the nature of engagement of Coetzee's novel and its implications for the future of South African society after overthrowing the dehumanizing apartheid regime. Attridge (2000) summarized this controversy by raising the question that "does the largely negative picture [*Disgrace*] paints of relations between communities hinder the steps being made toward reconciliation?" (p. 99) and noted that the "the bleak image of the "new South Africa" in this work [is] hard to take."

Moreover, Attridge (2002) argued that

Coetzee was either praised (implicitly or explicitly) for unblinkingly depicting the lack of progress South Africa has made towards its declared goal of a non-racial, non-sexist democracy ... or condemned for painting a one-sidedly negative picture

of post-apartheid South Africa, representing blacks as rapists and thieves (p. 317).

In other words, the basic question is whether the novel depicts realities of democratic South Africa or whether it is a gloomy unrealistic picture, skeptically portraying sexual and racial transgression and violence.

Almost all the adverse reactions to the novel turn around the question of interpersonal–interracial relations in the time of truth and reconciliation. Indeed, *Disgrace* is Coetzee's vision of human condition in the new culture; a vision that posits an underlying violence at the heart of human relations in new South Africa, a violence that persists from apartheid era. This paper suggests that informed by Coetzee's deep understanding of human nature, human relations, and the interaction between the society and the individual, *Disgrace* portrays the social realities and existential complications involved in the transition from apartheid period to post-apartheid era, pointing toward the fact that the wounds of apartheid regime would not heal easily. In other words, the representation of "blacks as rapists and thieves" and the submission of the whites in *Disgrace* is not an *inherently* negative or racist image; it is rather an attack on the workings of apartheid structure that long manipulated and distorted the existential needs of South African people and gave rise to antagonistic

relationality, the result of which is the continuing interpersonal and interracial violence in democratic South Africa.

Jolly (2006) argued that ANC's focus on racism in the novel allowed it to gloss over the widespread rape and abuse of women in South Africa. She also criticized ANC's "desire" to encourage and promote literary works that would produce only a "positive image" of the society (p. 149). In fact, the novel should be viewed as a critique of the utopian belief that social apartheid could simply and smoothly be substituted by a *sane society* predicated on equality, genial coexistence of races, and humanistic values. The bleak image of the novel, then, was a gesture toward the fact that the end of apartheid does not "magically solve all social, political, and economic problems in South Africa" (Booker, p. 151). Rather, *Disgrace* is Coetzee's exploration of the continued presence of apartheid in the new culture since post-apartheid era, despite TRC's objectives, was not only the time of "political reform", but also "of revenge" (Barnard, p. 33).

Attwell (2015) similarly argued that post-apartheid is not a sudden and complete rupture with apartheid. He believed that in *Disgrace* Coetzee is concerned with the "social and psychic toxicity" that existed in the new South Africa (2015, p. 191). But, what is the nature of this "toxicity"? What consequences does it have? And what is the way out of this toxicity? Drawing upon Erich Fromm's social thought, this paper finds the answers in "pathological

attachments" or "deformed" relationality and absence of love which are the legacy of apartheid era.

Erich Fromm on Human's Needs and Sanity

Erich Fromm believes that humans' needs are of two kinds, *instinctual* and *existential* needs. Man's instinctual needs are bodily, physiological needs like hunger and thirst. Existential needs, on the other hand, are the needs that arise from the very specific conditions of human existence, such as the need to be related to others and the need to be effective. Indeed, human's life depends on satisfaction of both these needs. Fromm (2008), moreover, argued that while the satisfaction of instinctual needs, lower needs, was imperative and in fact ensures an individual's (physical) *survival*, the individual was threatened by *insanity* if his or her existential needs were left unsatisfied; that was, survival was tied to satisfaction of instinctual needs and sanity to satisfying existential needs. Maslow (1970), whose classification of humans' needs into "lower needs" and "higher needs" corresponded to Fromm's instinctual and existential needs, also believed that the satisfaction of growth or higher needs depended on and follows full gratification of safety needs and if humans' higher needs were not gratified, "neurosis" was inevitable.

Avoiding loneliness and relating oneself to others is one of the existential needs that needs to be satisfied. Fromm (2008) stated that "the necessity to unite with other

living beings, to be related to them, was an imperative needs on the fulfillment of which man's sanity depends. This need was behind all phenomena which constitute the whole gamut of intimate human relations" (p. 29). Fromm (1974) also stressed this need: "man, aware of his separateness, needed to find new ties with his fellowman; his very sanity depended on it. Without strong affective ties to the world, he would suffer from utter isolation and lostness" (p. 233). Becker, for whom "the most terrifying burden of the [human] creature was to be isolated" (171), similarly believed that isolation was not compatible with sanity.

Meanwhile, there is an important point about existential needs that differentiates them further from instinctual needs. While instinctual needs are satisfied in an almost straightforward way (thirst is gratified by drinking, hunger by eating), this is not true about existential needs. That is, they could be satisfied in a variety of ways, from some healthy, life-affirming ones to utterly destructive ones. Accordingly, in order to gratify the existential need of relating oneself to others, one may attach oneself to one's fellow beings in different ways: "man can relate himself to others in various ways: he can love or hate, he can compete or cooperate ... but he must be related in some fashion." (Fromm, 2003, p. 58). Fromm (2001) emphasized this point as well (with a reference to the significance of satisfying this need): "the kind of relatedness to the world may be noble or trivial, but even being related to the basest kind of pattern is immensely preferable to being alone" (p.

15). The *noble*, productive way of relating oneself to the world is "love" where one does not lose his or her integrity in such a relation. The *trivial* way of satisfying the need to overcome one's separateness is "symbiotic attachment" (Fromm, 1956); that is, individuals seek "to escape ... painful and practically deathlike aloneness through the forging of symbiotic bonds with others" (Chancer, 2000, p. 34). It is a state that Maslow calls "neurotic dependency." Symbiotic attachment is the polar opposite of Fromm's notion of love; it means to attach oneself to others in a way that one's self is dissolved. Obviously, for Fromm what distinguishes love from symbiotic attachment is the integrity of the individual; love, while an answer to a person's need, preserves his or her integrity, but symbiotically attached person loses it.

Two specific manifestations of symbiotic relationality were *sadistic* and *masochistic* orientations. Here, the individual's relations became relations of power in which he or she gave his or her self-up by fusing with and becoming submerged in another person. The individual related to others "by becoming part of them or by making them part of himself. In this symbiotic relationship he strived either to control others (sadism), or to be controlled by them (masochism)" (Fromm, 1973, p. 233). Sadism and masochism were, then, "strategies for relating to others" whereby the need for "social security" was satisfied "either through dominating others or being dominated by them" (Chancer, 1994, p. 15–16). The individual, in other words, either

“swallows” the other or let himself or herself be “swallowed” by the other (Fromm, 2003). Masochism, the desired to submit in order to overcome isolation and gain security was the passive form of symbiosis and sadism, striving to dominate others, was the active form of symbiotic orientation. The essence of symbiosis, then, was a willed dependence of self on the other because such a dependence yields a psychological relief from unbearable isolation; it was an escape “from existential anxieties and insecurities” (Chancer & Watkins, 2006, p. 118).

Therefore, in addition to his physiological needs whose satisfaction ensures his survival, man has to deal with another kind of needs, his existential needs. They have to be satisfied, otherwise man is threatened by insanity. These existential needs can be gratified in healthy or unhealthy ways. Prior among these needs is the need to overcome loneliness and relate oneself to others. Love is the healthy way of achieving this unity while symbiosis is the unproductive way. In order to overcome isolation, individuals are likely to unite themselves with others symbiotically; they may attempt to gain control over others, sadism, or they may be willing to submit themselves to the authority of others, masochism. Lurie, Lucy, and Petrus in *Disgrace*, driven by the existential need and faced by the social experiences of South Africa, reveal such sadistic and masochistic tendencies.

Disgrace is the scene of Frommian sadists and masochists. The characters driven by the need to relate themselves to

others, get entangled in sadistic–masochistic relationships that strip them of their true individuality and humanity. The world of *Disgrace*, in other words, is the world of existential needs unproductively and symbiotically satisfied. This paper suggests that Fromm’s ideas about people’s sadism and masochism correspond to what Coetzee, in his Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech (1987), calls “deformed” and “stunted” individuals; individuals that was the products of “deformed and stunted relations between human beings” under apartheid (Coetzee, 1992, p. 98). Coetzee saw himself no exception to this deformity of character.

Accordingly, individuals with “stunted and deformed inner life” dominate *Disgrace*, experiencing the basic “unfreedom” of South African society. Although Coetzee’s Jerusalem Prize speech was delivered about the life under apartheid regime and was written a few years before *Disgrace*, its insights still hold true in the post-apartheid world of *Disgrace*. In fact, it seems that Coetzee re-expresses the concerns of his speech in a fictional form. Watson (1996) who studied Coetzee’s fiction in the context of colonialism argues that his earlier novels was basically concerned with “the human relationship” that was necessarily “one of power and powerlessness ... a combination of sadism and masochism” (p. 14). This study then argues that the deformed characters, whose deformity and stuntedness was defined in Fromm’s sense of sadistic and masochistic tendencies, was the products of apartheid social order and will not leave the South African scene rapidly

or as Durrant (2004) said “the deformed relations of apartheid ... linger on in post-apartheid South Africa” (p. 123).

Drawing upon Raymond Williams’s idea, it can be said that apartheid continues to have its *residual* presence in post-apartheid South Africa. Williams believed that in any historical process or culture, there was not only the *dominant* movement or tendency but also “the ‘residual’ and the ‘emergent’, “which in any real process, and at any moment in the process, are significant both in themselves and in what they reveal of the characteristics of the ‘dominant’” (p. 122). By *residual* Williams mean the elements persisting from the previous historical process or culture and by the *emergent* “new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship [that] was continually being created” (p. 123). Elleke Boehmer et al. (2009) reiterated this point by stated that Coetzee’s “novels, both before and after the end of apartheid, demonstrated his continuing preoccupation with the recalcitrant presence or residue – particulars, bodies, realities – of South Africa” (p. 4). Therefore, in the *dominant* post-apartheid culture of *Disgrace*, apartheid still has its *residual* presence in the form of deformed, sadomasochistic characters.

Deformed Individuals in *Disgrace*

Coetzee’s notion of deformed, stunted relation between individuals is evident in the relations between Lurie, Lucy, and Petrus. Such deformity and stuntedness of personality can be identified with the individuals’

sadism and masochism brought about by unproductive satisfaction of existential need of relatedness. Sadomasochistic relatedness is the manifestation of symbiotic attachment or what Coetzee, in his prize speech, calls “pathological attachments.” Such unproductive ways of relating oneself to others require unhealthy dependence on others and loss of self and have a lot to do with dehumanizing structures of South African apartheid. In a racist society, in the words of Fanon, the individual was “deprived of the possibility of being a man” and robbed of “all worth, all individuality” and was told to be “a parasite on the earth” (p. 73). In other words, apartheid encourages dependency and a parasitic life in the form of symbiosis or pathological attachments.

As a white, male professor of the apartheid social order, David Lurie has long been used to satisfying his existential needs in sadistic ways. He is a sadistic character who extends his power over those around him and brings them under his control. That is why he is so disturbed when, early in the novel, Soraya refuses to act as his powerless, obedient prostitute any longer. Before leaving the university, his sadism was manifested mainly in his sexual relations, it was only after he was in the country with his daughter that his desired to have others under his control found other outlets and he experienced “crisis of authority” (Poyner, 2009). With Soraya gone, Lurie had to replace her with a new object for his sadistic strivings, that was, with his student Melanie Isaacs. His desired to have sadistic control over others was given a voice when in his

relation with Melanie he felt satisfied since “to the extent that they were together, if they were together, he was the one who leads, she the one who follows. Let him not forget that” (*Disgrace*, P 27). Not surprisingly, by appealing to liberal views and calling himself the “servant of Eros”, he denies that he took advantage of his position as a teacher to bring Melanie under his control; he believes that his experiences with others, especially with women, just “enriched” him (the idea of others existing only to “enrich” him sounds sadistic enough though).

After having to leave Cape Technical University as the result of the affair with Melanie, the twice-divorced Lurie is filled with the existential need to re-relate himself to others, to the world, that is, to establish some new sadistic ties. With his position of social dominance gone, Lurie, in need of new relations, turns to his daughter where he, as a father, may well be able to satiate his sadistic tendencies, since a father is *naturally* supposed to love and to have his daughter under his control. He became the “benevolent sadist”: “the benevolent domination which often masquerades as “love” is an expression of sadism too” (Fromm, 2003, p. 108).

However, he found out that extending his power over his daughter was next to impossible. Lucy, who had long lived in the country, had gone through what Fromm (2001) called the “process of individuation,” since she has already separated from her parents. A child grows up within a protective network of relations that the parents provided. These “primary ties”

gave the child the security and comfort it needed for physical, emotional, and mental development. Yet, this was a “pre-human” existence and the child needed to free itself from these primary ties in order to become an “individual.” Lucy has already disentangled herself from the primary ties. However emerging from these primary ties was synonymous with losing the sense of security. Once one has left primary ties behind and had become an individual, he or she started to experience an acute sense of insecurity because those ties gave him or her the security. Fromm (2001) argued:

The other aspect of the process of individuation was growing aloneness. The primary ties offered security and basic unity with the world outside of oneself ... This separation ... created a feeling of powerlessness and anxiety (p. 24).

This was a critical moment in one’s development as an individual since this acute sense of aloneness creates unbearable anxiety that had to be dealt with. Falling back on primary ties could relieve the anxiety and bring back some sense of security. Lucy, then, in order to overcome the anxiety of isolation can return to primary ties. And this was what Lurie wants. He wished to drag Lucy back into this former helpless state of pre-human existence where he could exercise his control over her but Lucy resisted:

David, I can't run my life according to whether or not you like what I do.

Not anymore. Well, contrary to what you think ... I am not minor. I have a life of my own ... I am the one who makes the decisions. (Disgrace, p. 198)

Therefore, in rejecting her father, Lucy in fact rejected getting re-entangled in “primary ties” that was a decisive step in completing the process of individuation, in becoming an individual. As an individual, she tried to keep her integrity in a father–daughter love relationship rather than losing it in a symbiotic relationship: “I cannot be a child forever. You cannot be a father forever. I know you mean well, but you are not the guide I need, not at this time” (Disgrace, p. 161). She told her father, the *benevolent sadist*. However, there is an important point here. Although Lucy refused to return to her helpless position, this was hardly a step toward genuine independence. By stating that she needed a “guide,” Lucy revealed her willingness, her readiness to submit herself to an outside power.

Lucy’s words were a hard blow to Lurie making him contemplate in a sadistic tone that as a child Lucy had been under his control and dependent on him but now she was “*Coming out of his shadow* (Disgrace 89; emphasis added).” Such a frustration of Lurie’s sadistic tendencies awakened another existential need in him. He found Lucy impenetrable, unwilling to submit herself to his authority. Lurie was driven to Lucy by the existential need to relate himself to others after his university affair. Yet, Lucy’s

rejection of his sadistic approaches pushes to foreground another existential need in Lurie. He became tormented with “the sense of being condemned to ineffectiveness- i.e., to complete vital impotence (of which sexual impotence is only a small part)- [which] is one of the most painful and almost intolerable experiences, and man will do almost anything to overcome it, from drug and work addiction to cruelty and murder” (Fromm, 1974, p. 237). From the beginning of the novel, Lurie had been troubled by this sense of approaching ineffectiveness even when he was still teaching at university. Old age and sexual impotence were two manifestations of ineffectiveness whose specters disturb Lurie. That was why when Lurie was still at university, he was worried that “he [Lurie] ought to give up, retire from the game. At what age, he wonders, did Origen castrate himself? ... ageing is not a graceful business” (Coetzee, 2000, p. 9). Moreover, after his night with Melanie, uncertain about her motives for asking to stay at his house, and uncertain about what he himself wanted, Lurie examined his situation only to conclude that the affair was “a last leap of the flame of sense before it goes out” (Coetzee, 2000, p. 27).

The existential needed to be effective was the “needed to experience that there was someone who would react, someone on whom one could make a dent, some deed that would made an end of the monotony of daily experience.” (Fromm, 1974, p. 251). In the past, Lurie did not sense *ineffectiveness* deeply. Since there were strong ties between

the need to be effective and the need to relate, his need to be effective was satisfied by his sadistic relations. However, when he was in the country and after Lucy rejected his sadistic advances, he started to feel *ineffectiveness* intensely. He found himself face with the bitter fact that he no longer had any power over his daughter. He started frequenting Animal Welfare League where he could regain some kind of sadistic control through his affair with Bev Shaw. Moreover, as “killing is one way of experiencing that one is and that one can produce an effect on another being” (Fromm, 1974, p. 251), he also finds killing dogs satisfying. He thinks “Why has he taken on this job? To lighten the burden on Bev Shaw? ... For the sake of the dogs? ... [No] For himself, then” (Disgrace, p. 146).

Lurie's turning to dogs has been discussed by different critics. The underlying debate is that if this turn to animals is an indication of a change in Lurie's character, of a moral growth, of an expansion of sympathies. Some critics believed that a positive change happened in Lurie and he improves morally: Head (2009) talked about Lurie's “partial moral growth”; Herron (2005) argued that through the novel we witness a “transmutation” in Lurie which was the result of “reciprocity and exchange with animals”, in other words, “in being close to animals, in looking after them (even when they are dead), in learning from them, and in dwelling amongst them, David's capacity for sympathy was broadened to a remarkable degree” (p. 480); and Poyner

(2009) believed that Lurie, after his affair with Melanie and had to leave university, went through “some kind of reinvention” and argued that through his dealings with dogs, Lurie “struggles for atonement.” Poyner, moreover, argued that Lucy's rape was “an event which forces Lurie to reassess his own relationship with women” (p. 152). One may have to pause here and ask in what terms Lurie reassessed his relation with women. Did the same man not get involved in an adulterous affair with Bev Shaw soon?

On the other hand, some critics argue that Lurie did not grow morally. Patrick Hayes (2010) argued that Lurie did not change in the story and believed that “it is a mistake to look to David for any supposedly redeeming change of heart... he was not a character who develops, but one who was wrongheadedly entrenched in a certain discursive construction”(p. 218). Attridge (2000) did not believe in redemptive power of Lurie's dog affair either and argues that it was a “misreading” to think that “he [Lurie] is taking on an existence of suffering and service as expiation for his sin” (p. 116). Attridge (2002) also argued that Lurie's devotion to Bev Shaw's dogs “obeys no logic and offers no comfort.” Analyzing Lurie's motivations for entangling himself with the dogs and Animal Welfare League, Attridge (2000) concluded that Lurie's involvement with dogs was “ultimately grounded in a profound personal need.” This “profound personal need” was the existential need to be effective, “the need to reassure himself that he was *by being able to effect*”

(Fromm, 1974, p. 236; italics in original). Being a sadistic character type and rejected by others, particularly by Lucy, Lurie sought to satisfy this need by killing and beating dogs and also in his affair with Bev Shaw; it was a lust for his lost domination.

At the same time, although Lucy refused to become the object of his father's sadistic approaches, she was troubled by a deep sense of insecurity, by the need to be related. She had to satisfy this need or she would be facing insanity. Yet, she cannot relate herself in a productive way and reveals her masochistic side. This was because she was very well aware of post-apartheid conditions where a new order was in place.

In a conversation with Lurie, Lucy, while explaining her situation, revealed her true concerns by saying that "objectively I am a woman alone... To whom can I turn for protection, for patronage? ... there is only Petrus left...he is big enough for someone small like me" (Disgrace, p. 204). Lucy was experiencing what Laing referred to as "ontological insecurity". In the state of ontological insecurity "relatedness to other persons [has] a radically different significance and function... In the individual whose own being is secure in this primary experiential sense, relatedness with others is potentially gratifying; whereas the ontologically insecure person is preoccupied with preserving rather than gratifying himself" (p. 42). This was particularly true about Lucy. She was "a woman alone" who had to overcome her existential isolation and unite herself with the world. Although

she refused to be lured back into a symbiotic relation with her father, she proved unable to establish a healthy, productive relation with Petrus. Her ontological insecurity drove her to escape freedom and seeked safety and protection; all she wanted was to be "allowed to creep in under his [Petrus's] wing". This relation with Petrus did not bring Lucy any joy, it only helped undermine her sense of aloneness; it helped her avoid insanity, it helped her survive. She told her father:

Go back to Petrus ... Propose the following. Say I accept his protection. Say he can put out whatever story he likes about our relationship and I won't contradict him. If he wants me to be known as his third wife, so be it. As his concubine, ditto (Disgrace 204).

Lucy's masochism, her longing for subjection to Petrus, in other words, is the longing for belonging, for "social existence." She accepted subordination because it "provided the subject's continuing condition of possibility" (Butler, p. 8). For Butler, power was both subordinating and producing the subject, that was, the "subject is initiated through a primary submission to power" (p. 7); therefore, by submitting herself to Petrus, Lucy is initiated as *a possible form* of post-apartheid subject. Her words to her father about her relation with Petrus indicate her desired for social existence in post-apartheid society" [Petrus] wants to remind me, I am without

protection, and i am fair game... That I would find it altogether safer to become part of his establishment (*Disgrace*, p. 203).

Lucy understood the new social order in which Petruses were no longer the powerless entities they used to be socially and tried to adjust or as Attridge (2000) stated "she seeks a new accommodation". Yet, she was the subject that "achieves [her] own social adjustment only by taking pleasure in obedience and subordination. This brings into play the sadomasochistic impulse structure both as a condition and as a result of social adjustment" (Adorno et al, 1950, p. 759). Under apartheid, the social order consisted in the domination of the white minority over the black majority; now it is claimed that there is equality of races. Attridge (2000) argued that in post-apartheid period "the distribution of power is no longer underwritten by racial difference, and the result was a new fluidity in human relations, a sense that the governing terms and conditions can, and must, be rewritten from scratch" (p. 105).

Petrus's relation with Lucy and Lurie might be the embodiment of this "new fluidity in human relations". In Coetzee's novel, however, this fluidity is not particularly promising. Nor is the question of racial difference wholly gone. The *dominant* sadism of apartheid social order continues to manifest its *residual* presence in *Disgrace*; Lurie's sadism arising from apartheid time has to go only to be succeeded by Petrus's post-apartheid sadism, which is summarized in his plan "to reduce Lucy to a condition of dependency" (Attridge, 2000) where Lucy

accepts to live with "no dignity... like a dog" (*Disgrace*, p. 205). In other words, Lucy's desire for social existence and her urge to satisfy her existential need of relating herself combine with social realities of South African society give rise to her masochism, resulting in "eventual exchange of positions between Lucy and Petrus" (Graham, p. 142).

Meanwhile, Lurie was also coming to admit these new facts: "in the old days one could have had it out with Petrus. In the old days, one could have had it out to the extent of losing one's temper and sending him packing and hiring someone in his place.... It is a new world they live in, he and Lucy and Petrus" (*Disgrace*, p. 117). Attridge, attempting to illustrate that how *Disgrace* makes references to and portrays post-apartheid conditions of South Africa, discusses this passage to indicate how Lurie was forced to reconsider his liberal views and accept the facts of this time and this place of the "new South Africa". Yet, this passage is also a valid reference to the sadistic character of Lurie who was lamenting the loss of his power over others. *Disgrace* indicated that although Lurie learns to push his sadistic tendencies to background and redirect them (toward dogs), the lingering spirit of apartheid manifests itself in the sadistic tendencies of Petrus.

In other words, while apartheid regime constructed sadistic character types like Lurie's, the novel suggested, the bitter memories of apartheid period linger and give rise to a *new sadism* with the rationalization that "I have been hurt by others and my

wish to hurt them is nothing but retaliation” (Fromm, 2001, p. 124). The post-apartheid blacks, like Petrus, were still haunted and troubled by the injustices of the preceding period and saw the new society a time for revenge.

CONCLUSION

Before the collapse of apartheid, Coetzee said that South Africa’s long-standing problem of unfreedom was the result of “a failure of love.” This paper, accordingly, argued that this unfreedom is deeply rooted in South Africa’s interpersonal symbiotic/pathological attachments where there exist only mutual dependency and hostility without any enduring emotional bond. The unavoidable result of such deformed relationality is individual deformity that continues to be present in post-apartheid era. This paper, moreover, suggested that in *Disgrace* Coetzee fictionalizes his belief that the dehumanizing structure of apartheid system rendered “horizontal intercourse” among people impossible, sanctioning only “vertical intercourse.” While vertical intercourse implies hierarchical relationality, power struggle, and ignoring full humanity of others, horizontal intercourse is the true embodiment of love, care, responsibility, and equality. In other words, Coetzee’s *Disgrace* depicts a world of pathological attachments, of symbiotic dependencies; it is an *insane society* where love is almost impossible and where individuals in their attempt to overcome their existential needs become subjected to the authority of others.

Vertical intercourse is the symbiotic relationality that contains violence as the result of the insoluble conflict between the sadist and the masochist. As an example of symbiotic dependency, Petrus-Lucy arrangement contains a basic antagonism that is bound to erupt, as it erupted in the cases of Soraya and Meanie. The violence latent in these pathological or symbiotic attachments, which infest new South African scene and come from apartheid era, underlies Coetzee’s bleak picture in *Disgrace*, constituting its “toxicity”. It is a menace right under the surface and *Disgrace* is the novel of this menace.

However, that is not to say, as some critics say, that the novel excludes the prospect of a civilized understanding or that the novel’s conflicts cannot be resolved at human level. Rather, it is Coetzee’s warning against the utopian belief in a smooth unproblematic transition from apartheid regime to a democratic society, against the violence and unfreedom that pathological attachments contain, and against apartheid’s legacy, failure of love. It is in absence of love and prevalence of sadistic and masochistic symbiosis, *Disgrace* reveals, that the prospect of a *sane society* based on mutual understanding and equality diminishes and apartheid lingers.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D., & Sanford, N. (1950). *The authoritarian personality*. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.
- Attridge, D. (2000). Age of bronze, state of grace: Music and dogs in Coetzee's *Disgrace*. *Novel*, 34(1), 98–121.
- Attridge, D. (2002). J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*: Introduction. *Interventions*, 4(3), 315–320.
- Attwell, D. (2001). Coetzee and post-apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27(4), 565–567.
- Attwell, D. (2015). *J.M. Coetzee and the life of writing; face-to-face with time*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House LLC.
- Barnard, R. (2007). *Apartheid and beyond: South African writers and the politics of place*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Becker, E. (1973). *The denial of death*. New York, NY: The Free Press: A Division of Macmillan Publishing.
- Boehmer, E., Iddiols, K., & Eaglestone, R. (2009). *J. M. Coetzee in context*. New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Booker, M. K. (2009). The African historical novel. In F. A. Irele (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to the African novel* (pp. 141–157). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Chancer, L. S. (1994). *Sadomasochism in everyday life: The dynamics of power and powerlessness*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Chancer, L. S. (2000). Fromm, sadomasochism, and contemporary American crime. In K. Anderson, & R. Quinney (Eds.), *Erich fromm and critical criminology: Beyond the punitive society* (pp. 31–42). Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Chancer, L. S., & Watkins, B. (2006). *Gender, race, class: An overview*. Malden and Oxford: by Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Coetzee, J. M. (1992). *Doubling the point: Essays and interviews*. (D. Attwell, Ed.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Coetzee, J. M. (2000). *Disgrace*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Durrant, S. (2004). *Postcolonial narrative and the work of mourning: J.M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris, and Toni Morrison*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks* (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). London: Pluto Press.
- Fromm, E. (1956). *The art of loving*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Fromm, E. (1974). *The anatomy of human destructiveness*. New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Fromm, E. (2001). *The fear from Freedom*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fromm, E. (2003). *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fromm, E. (2008). *The sane society*. London and New York: Routledge Classics.
- Graham, J. (2009). *Land and Nationalism in fictions from Southern Africa*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hayes, P. (2010). *Coetzee and the novel: Writing and politics after beckett*. Oxford and New York: Oxford university Press.
- Head, D. (2009). *The Cambridge introduction to J. M. Coetzee*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Herron, T. (2005). The dog man: Becoming animal in Coetzee's "Disgrace". *Twentieth Century Literature*, 51(4), 467–490.
- Jolly, R. (2006). Going to the Dogs: Humanity in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*, *The Lives of Animals*, and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In J. Poyner, *J. M. Coetzee and the idea of the public intellectual* (pp. 148–171). Athens, Ohio: Ohio State University Press.
- Laing, R. D. (1990). *The divided self: An existential study in sanity and madness*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Poyner, J. (2009). *J. M. Coetzee and the paradox of postcolonial authorship*. Farnham Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Watson, S. (1996). Colonialism and the novels of J.M. Coetzee. In G. Huggan, & S. Watson (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on J.M. Coetzee* (pp. 13–37). New York, NY: St Martin's Press, Inc.
- Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and literature*. New York, NY: Oxford university Press.