

**IMPACT OF COLONISATION AND LOSS OF HUMAN DIGNITY IN J.M COETZEE'S
'DUSKLANDS'**

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Abstract:

South African literature is incomplete without European colonization, the Apartheid era and post-apartheid writings. Many authors tried to depict contemporary South Africa and the loss of human values. J.M. Coetzee as a prominent writer create an embodiment of injustice, corruption, loss of human identity and racism that existed in contemporary society. His novel Dusklans 1974 is an eye opener to the world, it put forth the idea of 'injustice' and bypassing the values of a society can cost the other way round and may come back as a curse in your own life. The novel represents South African colonization, exploitation and contemporary lifestyle with racial injustice, atrocities, and loss of human values in the society.

This paper is an effort to comprehend the pain of natives who experienced colonization, dominance, and racial attacks.

Key Words: *Colonization, Racism, Dominance, Apartheid, Exploitation*



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Introduction:

John Maxwell Coetzee is a South African writer, who migrated to Australia and is well known for his literary contribution, which shook the world with the question of introspection on various parameters. He has been brilliant on society, culture, colonization, and the absurdity of development. Since he does not claim to fall into a particular ideology it's an injustice to apply particular theoretical lenses. He is the recipient of the Booker prize twice and received the prestigious Noble prize in literature. Coetzee was born in Apartheid South Africa and brought up as a witness of transition, racial segregation, and colonization, though he doesn't claim to be one, his ability to make you think and aware, creates an atmosphere of injustice, exploitation and dominance of white over black people in initial years. But in later writing, we could also see power politics, which develops the absolute sense of dominance in the human mind and its aftermath.

Dusklans (1974) was his first notable novel, portraying two different time periods, the first part is all about the USA's military operation against Vietnam and the second part picture the colonization and exploitation of natives of South Africa.

Objectives:

1. To theories the chosen text for apartheid and post-apartheid power structure.
2. To explore the time of apartheid and post-apartheid time in South Africa and its impact on people, culture, and contemporary power politics.
3. To critically analyze the discourse on the pain of war and its impact on society.



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4. The idea of segregation and exploitation on the racial ground should be understood and analyzed with the oppressed.

Methodology:

The present research paper concentrates on the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid era in South Africa, The novels of J. M. Coetzee and exploitation as the main concern of discourse. The secondary resource is used and followed the library strategy to review. The paper sticks with subjective and qualitative exploration methods.

Discussion:

Dusklands is written under the shadow of the Apartheid regime, so it has all the experience of racism, hegemony, exploitation and greed to dominate another civilization. Coetzee has been succeeding to offer a parodic treatment in both the novellas, where he criticizes postmodern pain in the society of South Africa and connects land with tribal identity and the contemporary United States of America.

The novel is divided into two novellas, *The Vietnam Project* and *The Narratives of Jacobus Coetzee* describe two completely different worlds and periods, but on common understanding connect with a motif and experience, loss of human dignity, exploitation etc. It also creates an image of social atrocities against the weaker section and observes absurd race in development, domination, and destruction through violence.

In the first section '*The Vietnam Project*' the protagonist is on a mission to prepare a report on the American psychological war in Vietnam, it also has all allegorical associations between Eugene Dawn and the USA, as paternal imperialism in the state of Vietnam and considers oneself as 'unnatural father' in the novel. It depicts the picture of aggressive material exploitation, violence, dominance and evidence of a crime.

Dawn's fantasy to control and penetrate colonial domination through technological advancement reflects US imperialism and post-modern adversities in the world.

The first novella begins with protagonist Eugene Dawn's narration and assigned work related to a special report on propaganda studies during Vietnam War. His report is the focal point of discussion, where his superior Coetzee suggests some changes and mould as per the imperialistic ideology and justifies with war requirements. He must do moral justice with wartime violence as the necessity of a soldier mindset and make it suitable for American ideology. Coetzee's suggestion to rewrite the report disturbs Eugene's creativity and creates extra pressure on his mind, unfortunately at the same time he was experiencing tension in his personal life too.

My life with Marilyn has become a continual battle to keep me pois of mind against her hysterical assaults and the pressure of my enemy body (12)

In the progress of the novel, we also come to know about dissatisfied family life of Eugene. His wife is a very demanding lady, who does not have any respect for his work. She feels that her husband should always lure her, Eugene even thinks that she might have an extramarital affair. The novel further has a description of some of the pictures, which shows U.S. soldiers' atrocities in the Vietnam War. Though Eugene is part of American imperialism his inner self is convinced about the war and the magnitude of violence, exploitation, and attack on a weak society

Eugene also considers the U.S. U.S.the ' father voice' and how it controls the surrounding countries. In one of the incidents he kidnaps his son and hides him in a motel but somehow Marilyn, his wife comes to know about the location. she carries the local police to rescue her son but in a physical struggle, Eugene accidentally kills his son. The novel ends with Eugene's psychological rehabilitation treatment as if there is less human dignity for all who served the superpower.



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A diagnosis of stress tells little. Why should stress have driven me to a nearly fatal assault on a child I love and not to suicide, for example, or to alcohol? We are presently investigating the hypothesis that my breakdown was connected to my background in warfare. I am open to this theory, as I am open to all theorizing, though I do not believe it will turn out to be the true one” (74)

The second novella *Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee* begins with an introduction of protagonist Jacobus Coetzee, who takes six Hottentot on an expedition of hunting and collecting material wealth. He encounters difficulties and local tribes like Hottentot and Bushmen, he calls them rustic, uncivilized and must be dominated by blue eye civilization. In the advancement of the expedition, he gets trapped in the situation and has to live at the mercy of the natives, but his superior ego doesn't allow him to see the kindness and help offered by the natives. Surprisingly he does take the food, but the doubt about every help remains in his mind. In one of the incident, some children take a dig and ridicule him, it disturbs his ego deeply as a white clan and the results were shown in the second expedition, where he mercilessly kill all the natives. His racial eyes couldn't find anything good in the native society and fed the unending hatred for natives with no palace of respect.

The protagonist Jacobus is depicted as a proponent of white power and supremacy, who want to explore the land for wealth and establish supremacy. His attitude towards local Hottentot and Bushman people can be understood by the power statement he made about the 'gun'. The advancement of European civilization created the heavy use of weapons, which later become one of the prominent signs of dominance. The typical colonizer considers it as a right to rule and establish dominance on the land.

The gun stands for the hope that there exists that which is other than oneself. The gun is our last defence against isolation within the travelling sphere. The gun is our mediator with the world and therefore our saviour. The tiding of the gun: such and such is outside, have no fear. The gun saves us from the fear that all life is within us. (122)

Conclusion:

Colonization disrupted the sense of harmony in the world, the greed for power, dominance and race in arms production disturb the beauty of the social milieu. The world is divided into two parts colonizers and colonized, though democracy prevailed in most of the parts memories still lingered in the havoc of the colonization process. The era was known for the loss of human dignity and values. Humans were treated as rustic animals and exploited on racial grounds. This paper is an effort to understand the war situation in two different time periods and its impact on society, interestingly oppressor and oppressed both suffered on different parameters.

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