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Redefining Pastoral and Gender in J. M. Coetzee's Disgrace

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The racial and sexist dynamics of the apartheid system in South Africa resonated widely even after its formal end by the 1994 election. Resentment at being brutally mistreated by the whites continued among the black citizens whereas fear of black retribution hunted the white citizens. Social ills inclusive of injustice, robbery, rap, violence, vandalism and so on remained rampant across the country obstructing transition to peace. James Maxwell Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace* (1999) encapsulates the troubled Post-apartheid South African context. This paper analyzes *Disgrace* to examine how it problematizes that condition and depicts a transformative way ahead. Drawing on ecofeminism in align with the concept of pastoral, the paper focuses its analysis on the role of the central character David Lurie and finally comes to a conclusion that he ultimately accepts the sociopolitical transformation despite his initial reluctance. Lurie, a white professor, initially perpetuates apartheidism through sexual violence against many black women including his own student, Melanie Isaacs. However, his perspective gradually changes through the interactions with his daughter after his disgraceful exile to the countryside. His seduction of women, reluctance to admit his wrongdoing, aggression towards the black boys, and unwillingness to shift land ownership authority to Petrus (a black man) reveal his racist, sexist and androcentric ideologies. Contrarily, his repentance to Isaacs's family, realization of his daughter's mature outlook towards the blacks and pregnancy, and service to animals prove his transformation into a practitioner of stewardship with biophilic and ecofeminist sensibilities. Additionally, psychological transformation that helps redefine pastoral and woman. Reading the novel from this perspective will contribute to the understanding of the novel's call for the exigency of transformation in Post-apartheid Africa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the political change in 1994, South Africa still faced the stringent racial ideologies of apartheid. Social ills such as violence, injustice, prejudice, and so forth culminated from both races. South African author James Maxwell Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* (1999) captures such troubled situation of immediate Post-apartheid South Africa and draws attention to the exigency of transformation through the central character, David Lurie. This paper analyzes how Lurie transforms from a loyal apartheidist to an openminded man with biophilic understanding to accept sociopolitical changes.

Lurie, a white twice-divorced professor at the Technical University of Cape Town, is a womanizer in the initial part of the novel. He indulges in sex with several women including his own university student, Melanie Isaacs. Isaacs files a case against his sexual misconduct at the university. But out of his white supremacy, he denies to admit his wrongdoing in front of the authority. This denial forces him to resign from the post and leave disgracefully for the countryside to his daughter's farm where he encounters further disgraceful experiences such as the local black young boys rape his daughter, kill her dogs, take her land, and nearly kill himself. Initially, he resists to accept the ongoing sociopolitical change, but gradually his moods change after his interactions with his daughter. His daughter has already accepted the change. She agrees to hand over the land to her black assistant, Petrus; refuses to abort the child conceived out of the rape by blacks; and asks her father to be compassionate to women, blacks and animals. Lurie's transformation takes a trajectory from a womanizer and practitioner of apartheid to an egalitarian man who begins to acknowledge the societal changes. He begins to sincerely respect woman and nature.

Lurie's seduction of Melanie Isaacs and other women, violent attack and subsequent rape of Lucy by the young blacks, ruthless killing of the dogs by the black, and ravages on the land depict an extreme form of harms and exploitation done upon women, animals and nature. All of them experience the similar predicament of the exploitation under the long existing patriarchal ideologies. However, Lurie's psychological transformation towards the end of the novel depicts an alternative to such prevalent ideologies. The transformation destabilizes the conventional oppressive hierarchical frameworks that construct land and woman as property to be owned, controlled and (mis)used.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The novel, *Disgrace,* has received reviews, critical interrogations, and commentaries since its publication in 1999. It has been studied, debated, researched, and discussed in a large scale. The thematic aspects of the novel have drawn a number of literary reviewers and literary studies readers to talk and write about it such as post-apartheid guilt, consequences of apartheid system, muting gender, forgiveness, internal turmoil of colonizers, reconciliation, subsequent victory of the colonized, feminist and the postcolonial critiques.

The novel presents David Lurie as the central character, who acts out his sexual desires with different prostitutes and even with his own younger students. His sexual affair with his black girl student, Melanie Isaacs, is brought into the university committee as a serious case. Despite initial reluctance, he finally admits his guilt announcing he has become a victim of 'servant of Eros' and resigns from his post. After this, he moves to the village in Eastern Cape to live with his daughter. There, his life changes dramatically: he is intertwined with natural rhythms of landscape, respects women, and befriends animals.

Shaimaa Mohamed Hassanin (2021) has analyzed the novel from postcolonial feminism. Hassanin puts forward her view as:

> In *Disgrace*, the idea of 'hybridity' is represented when Lucy is assaulted and raped twice. She becomes pregnant with a black-unborn-baby. Such 'ambivalence' decenters the authority from its position of power as it may become hybridized and inflected by other cultures when placed in a colonial context. Sexual assault is also practiced due to social and psychological problems as in David's case or resulting from a person's need for money as in Soraya's. (p. 299)

The novel, as Hassanin claims, carries the theme of hybridity. It is represented through the subsequent pregnancy of Lucy after her violent rape by black men. The black unborn baby in a white class daughter dismantles the concept of colonial race as a distinct one. Petrus who is called the dog-man 'Kaffir,'

works for Lucy on her small farm. He might have known the three black assailants who rape Lucy, but he keeps it secret. It is interpreted as a hatred of the black against the white race people.

The objectification of women is a common theme in the novel according to Mike Marais (2006), who states, "At the outset of *Disgrace,* David is depicted as being totally self-absorbed in his dealings with others. In fact, he routinely reduces women to the status of objects with which to gratify his desires" (p. 76). David Lurie is a womanizer who reduces women to the status of useful commodities. For him, they are the sources of sexual pleasure. Marais points out the similarity between the two rape cases: Melanie Isaacs's rape by Lurie and Lucy's rape by three black assailants. Isaacs is a black girl whereas Lucy white. Both are raped parallelly. Marais presents his observation as: "The gang rape of David's daughter, Lucy, which serves as a structural parallel in the novel to David's rape of Melanie Isaacs, is the mechanism through which Coetzee challenges his protagonist's assumption of autonomy and the careless freedom with which it invests him" (p. 76). Marais's reading of the novel is that it destabilizes the colonial autonomy and freedom of Lurie.

Nora Hamalainen (2013) has discussed how Lurie's disgrace progresses towards grace by the interactions with his daughter Lucy. After his disgraceful escape from the city due to sexual assault on Isaacs, he expects to find solace and peace on Lucy's smallholding in the countryside. But ironically, as Hamalainen notes, he finds the reality "tougher than he could imagine, strained by the deep conflicts between black and white, man and woman, and also human and animal" (p. 235). Nevertheless, later, out of regular conversations with Lucy, he realizes a sense of grace. Hamalainen states:

> Lucy is indeed the one with whom David has his most earnest conversations and from whom he is first prepared to take what could be described as moral criticism. . . . Lucy lives with grace because she tries to be without vanity, fear, or self-aggrandizement. She represents grace for David (although he would never describe it thus) because she is the most reliable and constructive part of David's life, his guiding star. (p. 238)

Lucy has lived with grace by assimilating with the newly developed socio-political changes. Out of this qualification, she becomes a guiding star in the life of Lurie to progress from disgrace to grace. She helps to prepare him to accept the criticism of his immoral deeds he committed in the past against the women.

Dominic Head (2009) reads the novel as a response to colonial practice which Lurie is carrying in hidden form by. Head views that there is a parallel between Lurie, a member of the former colonizers and the girl's rapists, members of former colonized. This is the reflection of the shift of power. Head explains: "It is impossible for the reader not to draw a parallel between the sexually predatory Lurie and his daughter's rapists; and this suggests a depressing lesson in the legacy of colonialism, as power shifts and Petrus's expansionist designs on Lucy's land mirror the careless acquisitive habits of the colonizer" (p. 77). The novel shows a challenge to colonial legacy because power changes form Lucy to Petrus—Lucy's helper, and co-proprietor of the land Lucy owns.

Lucy's pregnancy due to violent rape is a significant issue for Aparna Mishra Tarc (2009). Tarc contends that the unborn child that Lucy is carrying due to violent rape helps Lurie change and make himself different. It changes him from an anthropocentric man to a nature lover. For Lucy, the rape of her body to produce a child is what she had expected because the unborn baby in her body implies two important things: her joy of motherhood and the mixing of races. Tarc puts her view as: "The mixed-race child conceived by violence and marked by history, metaphorically and tragically, holds the novel's only tangible sense of hope for the future" (p. 208). The scene's force of violence articulates a suggestion that the whites must be subjected, Tarc continues, to "a vengeance-driven retributive violence" due to an apartheid past although "there is an implication that some form of redress towards black society is necessary" (p. 209). The novel consists of a conflict between the white and the black races, and withdrawal of the white from their position of dominant race.

Susan Smit-Marais and Marita Wenzel (2006) observe the anxieties of white people over their relation to the indigenous land. They posit their view: "*Disgrace* draws on the tradition's anxieties about

the rights of (white) ownership, but within a post-apartheid context" (p. 25). The anxieties related to the land ownership of the white people in post-apartheid context are the sources of strength for the black people. Smit-Marais and Wenzel further remark that the novel, "satirizes the feudal values traditionally ascribed to the South African pastoral, as it is Petrus, a black man, who takes over from his white mistress to become the feudal landowner" (p. 28). Petrus's possession of the land from Lucy is the challenge to the existing white values.

Hassanin's reading of the novel from postcolonial perspective, Marais's analysis exploring the objectification of women, and Head's reading of the novel as a reaction to colonial legacy clarify how the novel explores the theme of sexism, racism and postcolonial subject. Lurie's understanding of women and blacks as subjects equal to him towards the end of the novel is a result of profound transformation which also applies in the case of the farm that he prefers to settle at last. This aspect has yet to be explored in a significant way, which the present study endeavors to do.

3. PASTORAL AND ECOFEMINISM

Pastoral landscape literally stands in contrast to the urban landscape. While discussing literary tradition of pastoral, Lawrence Buell (1989) refers pastoral to "all literature—poetry or prose, fiction or non-fiction—that celebrates the ethos of nature/rurality over against the ethos of the town or city" (p. 23). Terry Gifford (2009) discusses three uses of pastoral in literary tradition, out of which, one relates to the literal meaning that "refers to any literature that describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban" (p. 2). It is the celebration of the rural in contrast to the material reality of the urban. In it, the natural world is not a "land of dream" but a "bleak battle for survival" (p. 124). This is anti-pastoral for him. His first use of pastoral refers to the descriptions of an idealized rural location whereas the third refers to the description of nature but accommodated with human responsibility towards it. Gifford terms it the post-pastoral and defines it as an "account of the urgent need for responsibility and, indeed, advocacy for the welfare of Arden [idealized pastoral], informed by our current and updated best judgements of what should be" (p. 149). The modern transmutation of pastoral with ecological dynamic has been acknowledged by Lawerence Buell as well: "As this ecocentric repossession of pastoral has gathered force, its center of energy has begun to shift from representation of nature as a theater for human events to representation in the sense of advocacy as a presence for its own sake" (*Environmental,* p. 52). The concept of pastoral has gone through different transmutations in course of time.

In colonial context, pastoral was an anti-pastoral. It was "a site of barbarism and degradation" which the colonizers sought for "pastoral values and romantic myths" (Huggan and Tiffin, p. 113). Indeed, the rise of colonization intensified the European imagination of appropriating the pastoral land for their service. Ramachandra Guha (2000) highlights this issue: "Although it [pastoral] had been successfully practiced for generations, and sustained the economy of hill communities" the colonizers took it as "indolence, instability and especially wastefulness" (p. 30). The colonizers in the pretension of making better use of such land, removed the natives and took possession of it. Consequently, the colonial intervention erased the pastoral tradition of the indigenous people which as Michael Bollig and Anja Schulte (1999) show, is "built up around the around the interaction between the herds and visitation" (p. 493). The concept of pastoral as empty and wild to take possession of functioned as a colonial discourse, which the postcolonial subjects want to dismantle. In Coetzee's *Disgrace*, Petrus's land acquisition from the white Lucy counters the colonial myth of pastoral.

Lurie's journey from the city to the countryside and his intersectional adjustment there with animals, blacks and women suggest the ecofeminist element of the post-pastoral. In Gifford's analysis of the post-pastoral, ecofeminism is one of the six elements of post-pastoral with a "realization that the exploitation of the planet is one the same mindset as the exploitation of women and minorities" (p. 164).

Ecofeminism as a political movement and intellectual critique of the anthropocentric and androcentric ideologies emerged out of feminism and environmentalism in the late 1980s. Ecofeminism

argues the oppression of women and exploitation of the natural world are the consequences of patriarchy and capitalism which have to be eradicated. Carol J. Adam and Luri Gruen (2022) argue that ecofeminism equates "the domination of 'nature' to "the dominations of 'women' and struggles against both "dominations" (p. 1). Greta Gaard (1993) contends the patriarchal ideology is the root cause of all kinds of dominations: "The ideology which authorizes oppressions such as based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppressions of nature" (*Ecofeminism,* p. 1). Similarly, Salleh et al. (2017) acknowledge ecofeminism as "a holistic approach" to fight "all forms of domination—sex, race, species—not just a particularistic campaign for women's own advancement" (p. 163). Ecofeminism analyzes all aspects of discriminatory and othering beliefs of androcentrism and suggests for cultivating alternative modes for ecologically favorable practices among all the flora and fauna. Coetzee's *Disgrace* as a post-pastoral text operates in this line calling for the ecofeminist sensibilities to fight all kinds of white ideologies.

4. SOLIDARITY WITH NATURE AND WOMEN: TRANSFORMATION IN DAVID LURIE

David Lurie's views on women are biased, manly, and androcentric until he goes to the pastoral. His observation of women and land as pastoral is 'anti-pastoral' and 'anti-feminist' as suggested by Huggan and Tiffin. As a twice divorced man, Lurie fulfils his sexual passions with different prostitutes and even with his own young students. For him, women are required to share their beauty with men: "Because a woman's beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it" (p. 16). Lurie seduces Melanie Isaacs, a black female student, for relation by blackmailing. Critics have read this seduction as rape. The narrator also has the same opinion: "Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core" (p. 25). Despite the event being an undesired one, Isaacs cannot resist Lurie due to the power he exercises as a professor. The event of sexual molesting continues one after another. The narrator reports, "He makes love to her one more time, on the bed in his daughter's room. It is good, as good as the first time; he is beginning to learn the way her body moves" (p. 29). Lurie neglects her feeling and emotion. He merely evaluates her body movement and beauty. His examination of nature and women as objects with lesser value is what Richard Kerridge (2009) mentions as patriarchal and anthropocentric beliefs that legitimate the oppressions of "women" and environmental "degradation" (p. 538).

Lurie compares Isaacs with a poor little bird. The narrator describes Lurie's perspective on Isaacs as: "Today, looking thin and exhausted, she sits huddled over her book. Despite himself, his heart goes out to her. Poor little bird, he thinks, whom I have held against my breast!" (p. 32). This shows his gendered feeling of superiority over female gender. Lurie further evaluates the pastoral in the similar way to the women. The pastoral land is poor like Isaacs: "Poor land, poor soil, he thinks. Exhausted. Good only for goats. Does Lucy really intend to spend her life here? He hopes it is only a phase" (p. 64). He does not understand nature of nature: "A cool winter's day, the sun already dipping over red hills dotted with sparse, bleached grass" (p. 64). Land, winter, soil, hills, sun all serve to fill the gap in pastoral which he does not understand at all.

As an apartheidist, Lurie perceives himself superior and powerful as if nothing is going to disarm him. The narrator elaborates this as, "But nothing will stop him. He carries her to the bedroom, brushes off the absurd slippers, kisses her feet, astonished by the feeling she evokes. . . . Strange love! Yet from the quiver of Aphrodite, goddess of the foaming waves, no doubt about that" (p. 25). Lurie continues harassing and seducing girls, but never with any feeling of bond. He is precisely a womanizer.

Lurie satisfies his needs with Isaacs in the same way that he had slept with a prostitute named Soraya. His company with Soraya is mentioned as: "He has been on her books for over a year; he finds her entirely satisfactory. In the desert of the week Thursday has become an oasis of *luxe et volupte*. In bed Soraya is not effusive. Her temperament is in fact rather quiet, quiet and docile" (p. 1). Lurie finds Soraya entirely satisfactory owing to her simplicity and docility as he expects. He takes advantages of her: "The first time Soraya received him she wore vermilion lipstick and heavy eyeshadow. Not liking

the stickiness of the makeup, he asked her to wipe it off. She obeyed, and has never worn it since. A ready learner, compliant, pliant" (p. 5). Soraya's obeyance to Lurie establishes him as a man in command to abuse girls.

Lurie purchases women's body and their feelings either with token of gifts or cash. This is evident when he buys a bracelet to Soraya. The narrator describes it as, "He likes giving her presents. At New Year he gave her an enameled bracelet, at Eid a little malachite heron that caught his eye in a curio shop. He enjoys her pleasure, which is quite unaffected" (p. 5). By offering the enameled bracelet as a gift to Soraya, Lurie takes advantage from her body in return.

After Lurie's affair with Isaacs gets into the public, he is required to present clarification in front of the college committee. But he outright denies it claiming himself to be "a grown man" who requires no "counselling" (p. 49). This claim of maturity marks the perpetuation of androcentric and anthropocentric ideology in which, as Val Plumwood (2005) claims, men are mistakenly "stereotyped as active agents" p. (103). Nevertheless, finally, Lurie admits the guilt pretending to have fallen to Eros: "I was not myself I was no longer a fifty-year-old divorce at a loose end. I became a servant of Eros" (p. 52). Then, he resigns from the post and resorts to his daughter's farm in the country side in the Eastern Cape.

As a white lady, Lucy has the ownership of an isolated farm (alternatively colonial pastoral) in the countryside, where a black boy named Petrus provides his service. During the course of time, the pastoral turns into antipastoral because of the black boys' desire to take share of it. The blacks wage violent attacks on him, rape his daughter, ruthlessly kill her dogs, and even make her pregnant. Because of these unexpected activities, Lurie begins to experience an internal change of perspectives on his relation to animals, nature and women. From the violator of seduction, he becomes a victim of a violent attack and a witness to his daughter's rape. His daughter's disagreement to him in a number of cases shows the contrasting views men and women on the one hand, and nature and culture on the other hand. Thus, when Lurie calls the land a farm, Lucy objects it saying: "Stop calling it the farm, David. This is not a farm, it's just a piece of land where I grow things—we both know that. But no, I'm not giving it up" (p. 200). For Lucy, the farm reminds of the colonial gaze on the natives' pastoral, which the colonizers snatched away. Lurie's uncomfortable situation due to active role of Petrus is intensified when Lucy declares Petrus her co-proprietor: "Petrus is my new assistant. In fact, since March, co-proprietor. Quite a fellow" (p. 62). It suggests the blacks' repossession of their pastoral home which is of high significance in the post-apartheid context.

The pregnancy of Lucy through the violent rape becomes a major conflicting issue between the father and the daughter, Lurie and Lucy respectively. He asks Lucy whether she loves the unborn baby: "Do you love him yet?" (p. 216). His question creates doubt in him whether it was a right question to ask. Lucy's reply is meaningful from eco-feminist perspective, ". . . child? No. How could I? But I will. Love will grow—one can trust Mother Nature for that. I am determined to be a good mother, Lurie. A good mother and a good person. You should try to be a good person too" (p. 216). Love and affection, in Lucy's views, grow out of hatred. Lucy has a strong faith in Mother Nature: "It will be, after all, a child of this earth. They will not be able to deny that" (p. 216). The future relation of the child to the land and Lucy's conviction to give birth indicate the exigency of co-existence of races. This event becomes a turning point in Lurie's transformation from an apartheidist to an openminded man.

Lurie's sense of love to animals is realized when he wants to graze the goats which Petrus has brought for party purpose. He has both sympathy and empathy for the sheep. The sheep are tied by Petrus but Lurie unties them and tugs them in the abundant grass. He argues with Petrus: "But even if the sheep are for the party, don't you think they could graze?' An hour later the sheep are still tethered, still bleating dolefully. Petrus is nowhere to be seen. Exasperated, he unties them and tugs them over to the dam side, where there is abundant grass" (p. 123). The grazing of the sheep in the abundant grass is the combination of nature and creatures which Lurie establishes in the novel. He has thought of releasing the sheep from Petrus by "buying" but Lurie reflects, "Petrus will only use the money to buy new

slaughter-animals, and pocket the difference" (p. 126). Though Lurie cannot stop the slaughter of the sheep, he has developed ecofeminist sensibilities. He has extended a bond to sheep and dogs: "A bond seems to have come into existence between himself and the two Persians, he does not know how" (p. 126). His extension to caring animals is extended to the love to the wounded dogs. He caresses the dogs: "Come, he says, bends, opens his arms. The dog wags its crippled rear, sniffs his face, and licks his cheeks, his lips, his ears. He does nothing to stop it. 'Come.' Bearing him in his arms like a lamb, he re-enters the surgery" (p. 220). Close connection between dogs and Lurie is realized when he is involved in the surgery of dogs and dog's licking "his cheeks" (p. 220). His love to animal is his return to the pastoral.

Lawrence Buell observes pastoral as a subject similar to "the idea of (re)turn to a less urbanized, more natural state of existence" (p. 31). Pastoral is a natural state where grazing of animals, river flowing, and natural processes are conducted. However, pastoral is also constructed ideologically: "This identification had an ambiguous impact on pastoral representation, opening up the possibility of a more densely imaged, environmentally responsive art yet also the possibility of reducing the land to a highly selective ideological construct" (p. 32). Ideological construction of pastoral through capitalism and colonialism is problematic. The settlers' perception of pastoral is different from that of shepherds. Lurie's perception of land as 'bare soil' echoes the settlers' perception of the pastoral in the colonial period. Similarly, his observation of Isaacs as 'poor bird' reflects his androcentric mentality. He naturalizes women, and simultaneously feminizes nature. For ecofeminists, liberating nature and women from patriarchal beliefs is essential because "[b]eliefs that legitimate the oppressions of women also legitimate the environmental degradation" (Kerridge, p. 538). nature and women are subjects of domination for a culture that highlights the masculine principle.

Ecofeminists see the predicament of nature and women similar. As discussed somewhere above, ecofeminism is one of the elements of post-pastoral which asserts "the exploitation of the planet is of the same mindset as the exploitation of women and minorities" (Gifford, p. 164). Removal of all kinds of exploitation is necessary for a healthy planet. In *Disgrace*, Lurie's objectification of Isaacs and Soraya as well as growing industrialization and capitalism of Cape Town are the results of masculine patriarchal ideologies that are damaging the health of the planet. However, Lurie's realization of treating nature, women and animals respectfully is significant regarding ecological consciousness.

The novel's earlier projection of Lurie as the master figure in subjugating women is similar to what Plumwood calls domination of female through master model: "Men are stereotyped as active, intellectual . . . while women are represented in terms of the complementary polarity as passive, intuitive, emotional, weak and submissive" (p. 103). Lurie has been portrayed as strong and active whereas quite contrarily Isaacs is presented as emotional and submissive. This master model continues, in Greta Gaard's word, to create value dualism and value hierarchies that justifies: "the inferiority, subordination, and colonization of indigenous people, people of color, animals, and natural world as well as women" (*Critical,* p. xxiv). Master model is the root cause of the imbalance in the biodiversity and the physical surroundings. Plumwood is of the opinion of reclaiming the identity through continuity and diversity. She advises to overlap and counter polarization so that men can be emotional and care children the way women do: "Men can be emotional and do childcare, women can be rational, gay or straight" (p. 103). Lurie's subsequent change into the position of an ethical being that begins to respect women and animals is significant for ecofeminists. His respect to land, women and animals shows his realization of biophilia. Without entirely eradicating the all kinds of exploitation on the earth, the social justice cannot be maintained as Huggan and Tiffin aver: "There is no social justice without ecological justice" (p. 37).

Lurie internalizes the transformation in course of time. He regrets his sexual harassments against Isaacs so he thinks of visiting her house for repentance. Earlier, in the same case, he outright denied "counselling" (p. 49). Back in the countryside, he begins to work with black people in the farm, takes care of dogs, and helps Bev Shaw in the animal clinic. Dismantling colonial notion of pastoral as

a site of exploitation, he embraces ecofeminist sensibility there which ties him with nature releasing him from the frustration and anxiety of the city.

Ecofeminist reading involves redefining traditional understanding of pastoral and women (gender). It denies objectification of both nature and women. In *Disgrace*, female's vulnerability to both white and black men is transferred into female subjectivity. Isaacs uses the event of rape to put Lurie in disgrace, whereas Lucy uses it as a signpost for co-existence. Lucy's determination to give birth to a child conceived through the rape by black men shows her ecofeminist awareness that transcends gender and racial boundaries. In this regard, Ian Glenn considers the attempt of rape should not be taken as a revenge by blacks to white in post- apartheid South Africa. He states, "Nor should it be thought that the issue of black South African hostility to the novel has ceased" (p. 81).

Lurie's perception of the pastoral turns into post-pastoral towards the end of the novel. After the disgraceful exile from the city, he acquires comfort and tranquility through the farmland (pastoral) and the lady (his daughter) in the countryside. His daughter's companionship and his work in the farm help him forget the most traumatic scene when his daughter was raped in communal level as indicated in gang rape by black boys. This forgiveness is indication of embracing post-pastoral spirit. Thus, along with Lucy, Lurie's ecofeminist sensibilities appear towards the end of the novel. His guilty feelings of seducing a black girl at college surrounding are seen when he goes to the family of Isaacs for forgiveness. He does not only ask for forgiveness of the guilty deeds he committed, but he also gives forgiveness to others. This is an example of care ethics in a board sense as suggested by Plumwood:

> The very heavy, and often exclusive, emphasis academic philosophy has given abstract and formal questions of value is an impoverished approach for issues and contexts that call for a wider and richer range of specific ethical approaches such as virtue ethics, care ethics, solidarity and friendship ethics, ecological and food web ethics of reciprocity, and communicative ethics. This suggests a broader way to interpret the concept of respect than in terms of economically co-optable concepts. (p. 188)

The issues of virtue ethics, care ethics, solidarity and friendship ethics, ecological and food web ethics of reciprocity, and communicative ethics are the principles of ecofeminist essence. This is seen in the characters of Lurie and Lucy. Lurie loves farming, cares dogs and respects other people while Lucy likes to give birth to a baby conceived by a gang rape by black boys.

Lurie acknowledges his daughter's assimilation into black culture when he finds her becoming ready to give birth to an unwanted baby. It is her motherly feeling both for the baby and the post-apartheid South Africa. Carolyn Merchant highlights the nurturing quality of nature as: "Not only did the image of nature as a nurturing mother contain ethical implications but the organic framework itself, as a conceptual system, also carried with it an associated value system" (5). Nature doesn't only resemble a mother with nurturing qualities, she is also an organic framework with value system. The way nature yields production for sustenance, Lucy agrees to give birth to a child for co-existence. This brings Lurie to the point of accepting the urgency of transformation.

Lurie understands the maturity his daughter has gained to adjust with the changing sociopolitical context. He also understands the nurturing qualities and value system of nature. With this understanding, his transformation begins from an androcentric subject into an egalitarian one. Finally, by dismantling the conventional meanings of women and pastoral, Coetzee's *Disgrace* redefines both from post-pastoral ecofeminist perspective.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper has read James Maxwell Coetzee's *Disgrace* as the subversion of the colonial vision of the pastoral and woman as materials to be possessed by the masculine capitalist culture in the post-apartheid South Africa. This subversion has taken place from the transformation of the main character David Lurie whose position of a womanizer in Cape Town shifts into an admirer and well-wisher of nature and woman with biophilic and ecofeminist sensibilities. He acknowledges the pastoral and woman as the matters of glory and respect not something to take hold of and exploit. His daughter's

maturity to understand the sociopolitical reality of the postapartheid period has been the root cause of his transformation.

Initially, Lurie's idea of female beauty is that it does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world with a responsibility to share. Later, this perspective dims when he begins to respect women, animals and nature. Earlier, he regards Isaacs as a poor little bird, but later he begs sorry to her. Lucy is determined to be a good mother and is happy to deliver the child conceived through rape. It resembles Lurie's sense of love to animals which he realizes the moment he wants to graze them instead of killing. He loves the dog, which in turn wags its crippled rear, sniffs his face and licks his cheeks. Lurie responds the dog with the same act. Similarly, Lurie initially perceives the land as 'bare soil' in the same way that the settlers did in the colonial period. However, his perception changes over time. Later, he respects the land, woman, and nature with a realization of unified whole among all. Thus, after the physical journey from the city of Cape Town to the pastoral on the Eastern Cape, Lurie's psychological journey begins that ultimately allows him to redefine the pastoral and behave the females on the equal footing to the males. Finally, this study will contribute a new perspective in the reading of Coetzee's *Disgrace* as a post-pastoral text that envisions a transformed Post-apartheid South Africa.

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