

Colonial Violence as Trauma of Racial Denigration: A Post-Colonial Reading of Coetzee's Selected Novels

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Abstract: *This article examines representations of colonial violence and racial trauma in selected novels by J.M. Coetzee through postcolonial and trauma theory. Focusing on *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Boyhood*, *Youth and Disgrace*, the study analyzes how racial hierarchies generate physical and psychological trauma and how these narratives expose colonial domination, dehumanization, and resistance. The article argues that Coetzee critiques racialized violence as a structure of imperial power while revealing its traumatic effects on identity and subjectivity. Colonial violence is perceived as a powerful weapon used by the colonizer to shape their supremacy over the colonized. The study contributes to debates on trauma, race, and postcolonial literary representation.*

Keywords: J. M. Coetzee; postcolonial trauma; racial violence; Colonial discourse; Othering; South African Fiction

1. Introduction

The relation between human beings is sometimes marked by intense period of conflicts which results in violence leading to racial atrocities. Racial trauma seems to be the immediate cause of this fact, which consequences are denounced by South African Authors. These novelists wrote extensively about apartheid, exposing its injustices and brutality through novels, plays and exploring themes of identity, race, and human dignity. Nadine Gordimer in *The House Gun* (1998), tackles the aftermath of racial violence and explores legal and social challenges in a new South Africa. As for *A Question of Power* (1973) of Bessie Head, it powerfully explores apartheid's psychological and social devastation, focusing on mixed race individuals like Elisabeth who flee to Botswana seeking freedom but grapples with internal and external oppression, revealing the dehumanizing effects of racism, power dynamics. All these authors have in common themes like the effects of apartheid and racial hierarchies in South Africa.

The period known as colonization was marked by division and conflicts resulting in the domination of Africans. During the conquest of territories, they were taken as savage, uncivilized and barbarians by the British colonizers. Among these people, some were killed and others were made prisoners. The massive killing of Africans by colonizers is what leads to colonial violence. The term violence is commonly defined as an event in which there is a lot of destruction and during that period, many people are killed. Those who are victims of this destruction are traumatized by the effects that it causes. Coetzee's novels under study are replete with traumatic scenes. Coetzee portrays this aspect in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. In fact, the British Empire through colonel Joll considers the nomads, the fisherfolk and the peasants living at the frontier as barbarians. For them, these Barbarians are planning to attack them. They capture and torture them by making them prisoners. This postcolonial trauma is known as colonial violence. Colonial violence as mentioned in this title refers to Ricoeur's (2004) stance of "mass atrocity ... crimes of state committed by regimes"

(p.323). In this wake, racial atrocity is perceived by Coetzee as a destruction committed by the colonizers in order to stay at a position of hegemony. This fact is the outcome of race denigration perpetrated by the British Empire. The dominant point unveils here, is colonial violence that engenders racial misrepresentation. The study leads us to analyse the traumatic acts that provoke the distinction between races. From these views, the following questions emerge: How does Coetzee portray colonial violence in his fiction? What does it bring about? Why is colonial violence considered as a trauma of racial denigration?

The theoretical framework analyzed in this research work are post-colonialism and trauma theory. Post-colonial theory will be used to decode the myth of the Negro and trauma theory to unveil the traumatic events known as colonial trauma. Taking these theoretical perspectives as basis of our reflection, the study focuses on two main aspects: The myth of the Negro and physical trauma and altered race and psychic violence. This reflection conducted on these parts of our work, will certainly help shed light on genocidal violence as a sign of racial trauma that Africans face during the advent of colonialism and imperialism in South Africa.

2. Myth of the Negro and Physical Trauma

The myth of the Negro owes its origin to F. Fanon's concept of colonial "myth of the Negro, the idea of the Negro" (Fanon, 1967, p. 204). These aspects are analyzed in J. M. Coetzee's novels as western politics of denigrating, disgracing and subordinating Blacks. In the novels, racial misrepresentation brings about trauma to the different communities in South Africa. The key aspects studied here are: blacks as barbarians: state of racial annihilation, apartheid and white minority domination and blacks as subordinate and power reversal.

2.1 Blacks as Barbarians: State of Racial Annihilation

By racial annihilation, we mean the physical and violent destruction of Blacks in South Africa as portrays by the novelist. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the black in South

Africa that the Empire considers as barbarians are the nomads and fisherfolk. The imperial army leads by Colonel Joll considers the aboriginal people as Barbarians, savage and uncivilized people. For that reason, Colonel Joll takes a lieutenant and other conscripts to go to the hunting of the aboriginal people in order to make them prisoners. This imperial attack against the aboriginals gives rise to the annihilation of the conscripted soldiers. The Magistrate as a narrator mentions:

There is news of the lieutenant's two deserters. A trapper has come upon them frozen to death in a rough shelter not far from the road thirty miles east of here. The lieutenant is inclined to leave them there. 'Thirty miles there and thirty miles back in his weather: a great deal for men who are no longer men, don't you think?' (Coetzee, 1980, p. 74).

Colonel Joll's consideration of the Empire as civilized as the Magistrate puts it concerning himself and Colonel Joll, "throughout a trying period he and I have managed to behave towards each other like civilized people" (Coetzee, 1980, p. 33), is what leads Colonel Joll to take the lieutenant and other conscripts to capture the nomads and fisherfolk. Such untruth reality causes the death of the two conscripts. They froze to death in a rough shelter. The frozen death shows the difficult condition in which they die. The fact of believing that the fisherfolk are barbarians, makes Colonel Joll to physically annihilate them. He captures them for imprisonment. He does not torture his prisoners by taking into account facts and reasons that blame them but rather on the tone of their voice. The Magistrate as the first-person narrator mentions that as he asks Colonel Joll that what if the old man and the sore boy that he tortures are innocent, Colonel Joll tells him that he is a professional in detecting the tone of the truth. The Magistrate narrates:

When I see Colonel Joll again, when he has the leisure, I bring the conversation around to torture. 'What if your prisoner is telling the truth,' I ask, 'yet finds he is not believed? Is that not a terrible position? Imagine: to be prepared to yield, to yield, to have nothing more to yield, to be broken, yet to be pressed to yield more! And what a responsibility for the interrogator! How do you ever know when a man has told you the truth?'

(Coetzee, 1980, p. 9)

The torture inflicted to the fisherfolk by Colonel Joll because they are Barbarians is revealed when the Magistrate qualifies Colonial Joll's politics of discovering the truth to relate pain to truth. Colonel Joll is trained by the Empire to inflict pain to the members of the colony because the Empire does not believe in them. For Colonel Joll and the Empire, the aboriginal people are liars. They cannot believe that an aboriginal person can tell the truth. As the Magistrate asks Colonel Joll to know if he can pick up the tone of truth in everyday speech or in his speech, Colonel Joll replies:

'No, you misunderstand me. I am speaking only of a special situation now, I am speaking of a situation in which I am probing for the truth, in which I have to exert pressure to find it. First I get lies, you see – this

is what happens – first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth. That is how you get the truth.' (Coetzee, 1980, pp. 9–10)

Colonel Joll holds a myth of the Negro. He perceives the fisherfolk as constructed by the Empire. He takes them for liars. It is such a perception that brings him to set the fisherfolk in violent torture. Such a physical violence results in their death. As Colonel Joll tortures the captured sore boy and the old man, this leads to the death of the old man. Being a responsible official in the service of the Empire, the Magistrate visits the granary to witness the incidence that produces the death of the old man. As he does so, he discovers that the old prisoner does not die by falling heavily on the wall as the guard makes him believe. Rather, Colonel Joll hits him to death by crushing his lips and drawing them back. Colonel Joll breaks the old man's teeth. He rolls back one of his eyes. He also bloodily holds the other eye-socket. The Magistrate narrates the violent persecution as follows:

While the boy still lies rigidly asleep, his eyes pinched shut, we carry the corpse out. In the yard, with the guard holding the lantern, I find stitching with the point of my knife, tear the shroud open, and fold it back from the head of the old man.

The grey beard is caked with blood. The lips are crushed and drawn back, the teeth are broken. One eye is rolled back, the other eye-socket is a bloody hole. (Coetzee, 1980, p. 12).

Colonel Joll destroys completely the body of the old fisherman just because he believes he does not tell the truth. His colonial conception of the aboriginal people brings him to oppress the fisherman to death. Even women are not safe from Colonel Joll's suffering. As Colonel Joll persecutes the old man to death, he breaks the ankles and the eyes of his daughter that he also makes prisoner. Referring to the girl, the Magistrate narrates: "She runs a finger across the outside of her ankle. 'That is where it was broken. The other one too'". (Coetzee, 1980, p. 40). Besides, noticing in the corner of her eye a greyish puckering as though a caterpillar lay there with its head under her eyelid, grazing and asking to know what it is, the girl answers: "'That is where they touched me'". (Coetzee, 1980, p. 44). The girl is not only made blind but also, she can no longer walk. Colonel Joll destroys her eyes and breaks her feet because he does not believe that she tells the truth. Toward the end of the story, Colonel Joll captures twelve nomads as prisoners. The Magistrate describes their inhuman treatment as follows:

A cord runs from the loop of wire through the first man's moth, under the pole, up to the second man's loop, back under the pole, up to the third loop, under the pole, through the fourth loop. As I watch a soldier slowly pulls the cord tighter and the prisoners bend further till finally they are kneeling with their faces touching the pole. One of them writhes his shoulders in pain and moans. The others are silent, their thoughts wholly concentrated on moving smoothly with the cord, not giving the wire a chance to tear their flesh. (Coetzee, 1980, p. 141).

For Colonel Joll, the nomadic people are barbarians. For that reason, he arrests them and annihilates their bodies. He makes a wire runs through the flesh of each man's hands and through holes pierced in his cheeks. The wire that crosses their flesh and cheeks are held by the soldiers. Any movement of the wire tears the flesh and cheek of each prisoner. This fact compels the prisoners to obey the orders of the soldiers as the Magistrates puts it: "it makes them meek as lambs". (Coetzee, 1980, p. 139). In this condition, the nomads are not inferior and animals. Rather, they are made inferior and animals by the imperial army. They endure traumatic violence and destruction. They moan and feel pains as the soldier move the wire. The Magistrate narrates this aspect when he mentions that as if such flesh annihilation is not sufficient,

stooping over each prisoner in turn he rubs a handful of dust into his naked back and writes a word with a stick of charcoal. I read the words upside down: *ENEMY ... ENEMY ... ENEMY ... ENEMY ...* He steps back and folds his hands. At a distance of no more than twenty paces he and I contemplate each other. (Coetzee, 1980, p. 141).

The falsity of the nomadic people as barbarians lies in the boldness and italicizing of the term enemy. The novelist writes the term "*ENEMY*" in bold and italic to show that it does not stand in the novel in its true meaning. The nomads that Colonel Joll calls enemy are not the real enemy. It is the construction of the soldiers of the British Empire. It is on the basis of such a denigration that Colonel Joll inflicts violence to the nomads.

2.2 Apartheid and White Minority Domination

Apartheid cannot be separated from colonial myth of the Negro by the fact that the two occur as the result of western politics of white supremacy. For Ashcroft et al. (1998), Apartheid is a "means of institutionalizing and preserving white supremacy" (p. 17). This system of racial discrimination is grounded upon the domination of Blacks. As for Ashcroft et al., Apartheid is a system of government established by Europeans in South Africa to dominate and maintain white supremacy. Fanon also goes in line with Ashcroft et al. when he raises the concept of the myth of the Negro and the idea of the Negro. For him, white people's construction of blacks as uncivilized and barbaric is due to the fact that they want to extend their dominance and supremacy on them. (Fanon, 1967, p. 204). For Fanon, the Empire uses all these concepts with the sole purpose of subjugating black people. In order to show that Apartheid is what brings conflicts in South Africa, J.M. Coetzee portrays white minority ruling the country to institutionalize black's discrimination. In *Youth*, referring to John, the omniscient narrator mentions:

Wrapped up though he is in his private worries, he cannot fail to see that the country around him is in turmoil. The pass laws to which Africans and Africans are subjected are being tightened even further, and protests are breaking out everywhere. In the Transvaal the police fire shots into a crowd, then, in their mad way, go on firing into the backs

of fleeing men, women and children. (Coetzee, 2002, pp. 36–37).

The pass law to which only Africans are subjected to, is what makes protest be broken everywhere in the country. White's minority ruling the country institutionalizes the inferiority of Africans, the separation of school, public places and districts in South Africa. While whites have the right to live in Cape Town, Africans are restricted to Sharpeville. The institutionalization of such racial discrimination brings South Africa to break into the carnage of Sharpeville, a war during which the regime of white government commits mass atrocity to Africans. The brutality is committed because white minority see that black people are putting an end to white regime as the narrator puts it: "Sharpeville signaled the beginning of the end for the white régime, the increasingly desperate white régime". (Coetzee, 2002, p. 44). The horror undertaken by white minority causes fear and flee of the Africans from South Africa. Seeing their future shattered by the carnage of Sharpeville and their education stopped by war, the South Africans flee the country. They escape the mass atrocity with the hope of pursuing their education and achieving a bright future in western countries. From the narrative perspective in *Youth*, one comes across John and his friend Paul, university students, who flees the country for fear of the mass atrocity:

There is the matter of the Defence Force. When he John left school they were conscripting only one white boy in three for military training. He was lucky enough not to be balloted. Now all that is changing. There are new rules. At any time, he can find a callup notice in his letterbox: *You are required to present yourself at the Castle at 9 a.m. on such-and-such a date. Bring only toilet items.* (Coetzee, 2002, pp. 38–40).

From the passage, one discovers that South African citizens destined to university studies are conscripted for the Defense Force. They are taken in the army by the white minority ruling the country to fight against the rise of the Africans against the institutionalization of the racial discrimination. John is among these conscripts. John is taken from Cape Town from his university education to Voortrekkerhoogte, the military training camp in the Transvaal. In the isolated camp, he finds himself behind barbed wire, sharing a tent with thuggish Afrikaners, eating bully-beef out of cans. This condition breaks him so hard that he tells himself that he cannot endure such atrocity. Traumatized by the training he receives, John runs away to London in order avoid the carnage of Sharpeville.

2.3 Blacks as Subordinates and Power Reversal

Subordination is a state of inferiority. Whites subordinate and discriminate against black people in South Africa. Aware of their denigration, black people undertake actions to fight back in order to reverse the tendency. The subordination of blacks in South Africa brings about power reversal in *Disgrace*. To show that the country is ruled by white minority who institutionalizes black subordination, J. M. Coetzee portrays South Africa to be a country where blacks are at the lower scale of the society. No white is in the lower class until Blacks

undertake a raiding movement that the white David Lurie terms “war reparations”. (Coetzee, 1999, p. 176). The institutionalization of black subordination is brought by the novelist at several levels. At first, the writer shows it by portraying the black peasants of Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape to be employees of whites. This is the case of Petrus and Lucy, the daughter of David Lurie. In an occasion where Lucy’s father David Lurie leaves Cape Town to Eastern Cape in the Grahamstown to pay a visit to his daughter, the latter introduces Petrus to the former as her new assistance: “you will meet him. Petrus is my new assistance”. (Coetzee, 1999, p. 62). Such information that Lucy gives to her father is confirmed by Petrus himself in his conversation with David Lurie when the opportunity is presented to David Lurie to meet him. As David Lurie asks Petrus: “you look after the dogs,” Petrus replies to him: “I look after the dogs and I work in the garden. Yes.’ ... ‘I am the gardener and the dog-man””. (Coetzee, 1999, p. 64). Lucy who is the daughter of the white David Lurie is the woman who employs the black peasant Petrus. The community belongs to blacks as David Lurie attests during the party Petrus organizes latter to which he and Lucy are invited:

They are the only whites. There is dancing going on, to the old-fashioned African jazz he had heard. Curious glances are at the two of them, or perhaps only at the skullcap.

Lucy knows some of the women. She commences introductions. Then Petrus appears at their side. (Coetzee, 1999, p. 129).

Visibly, whites are in minority in Grahamstown. David Lurie and his daughter Lucy’s being the only Whites among several blacks attest that the community in its origin belongs to Blacks. The ruling of such a black community by Lucy shows that South Africa is at an epoch where white minority not only rules the country but also these white people institutionalize the superiority of whites over blacks. Next to using Grahamstown to show the white minority rules the country, J. M. Coetzee uses Cape Town to present white minority ruling the country. The novelist presents David Lurie to be the only white who possesses a big house. Cape Town is appealing in the institutionalization of racial discrimination by the white regime. When David Lurie finds himself trying to sort out the incident of rape of Lucy by the black community, he lets his thought go as follows: “Let them know I am still here, ... let them know I am not skulking in the big house”. (Coetzee, 1999, p. 135).

David Lurie presents himself as a white person who lives in a big house in Cape Town. At the opposite, in Cape Town we found the family Isaacs whose house is described by David Lurie as being “part of a development that must, fifteen or twenty years ago, when it was new, have seemed rather bleak”. (Coetzee, 1999, p. 163). David Lurie describes Mr Isaacs’s family who lives in a bleak house. The family lives in an unpleasant house. Their living condition is drastic and worse. The family of Isaacs does not live alone in this unpleasant situation. Other blacks live in such an unpleasant house. David Lurie informs the readers about the poor condition in which blacks live since several years while whites live in big houses. White people’s living conditions are much better than blacks. In the country represented by

Coetzee, the living condition of blacks whose inferiority is portrayed by the narrator is indicative of racial discrimination. This brings them to undertake a revolutionary movement aiming to reverse the power of the white minority. This power reversal is shown at several levels. At first, Coetzee’s narrator shows the violent reversal of power engendered by whites’ institutionalization of blacks as the lower class and whites as the upper class by portraying the booty, war reparations. As violent attacks go on throughout all the country, the third person narrator reveals that David Lurie describes it as “Booty; war of reparations; another incident in the great campaign of redistribution”. (Coetzee, 1999, p. 176). The white David Lurie and his daughter Lucy find themselves being victims of the violent power reversal. Both find themselves violently attacked by blacks. The narrator mentions that as the country is set in violence, David Lurie finds his big house attacked:

He wanders through the house taking a census of his losses. His bedroom has been ransacked, the cupboards yawn bare. His bedroom is gone, his tapes and records, his computer equipment. In his study the desk and filing cabinet have broken open; papers are scattered everywhere. The kitchen has been thoroughly stripped: cutlery, crockery, smaller appliances. His liquor store is gone. Even the cupboard that had held canned food is empty. (Coetzee, 1999, p. 176).

David Lurie sees his house completely destroyed by the raiding movement undertaken by blacks. All the Equipment of his house has gone. This loss paralyzes and sets him in a state of depression. He is so depressed that he is incapable to act. David Lurie sees his house completely destroyed by the raiding movement undertaken by blacks. In this condition, David Lurie is an unhomely. In so doing, he is described as an unhomely person as developed by Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*. Unhomeliness consists for a person not to know where to sit or what to do in one’s own house. Bhabha (1994), writes that it is “banalities that the unhomely stirs, as the violence of a racialized society falls most enduringly on the details of life: where you can sit, or not; how you can live or not” (p. 15).

Apart from the destruction of his house in Cape Town, David Lurie and his daughter Lucy are victims of violence into which racial segregation sets the country. In Eastern Cape, specifically in Grahamstown, David Lurie and Lucy are violently attacked by blacks. As they are violently attacked in Lucy’s house, the narrator mentions that David Lurie’s whole scalp is tender:

Everything is tender, everything is burned. Burned, burnt. ‘Lucy!’ he shouts. ‘Are you here?’

A vision comes to him of Lucy struggling with the two in the blue overalls, struggling against them. He writhes, trying to blank it out.

He hears his car start, and the crunch of tyres on gravel. Is it over?

(Coetzee, 1999, p. 97)

David Lurie is bitterly beaten to death. The scalp of his head is burnt. By the same token, Lucy is raped by the attackers.

The condition of wearing a bathrobe, being bare feet, wet hair in which her father finds her show that she is raped by the black attackers. The two members of the same family are victims of white minority institutionalizing racial discrimination in South Africa. These atrocities that blacks are victims of, contribute to their struggle to change whites' condition of superiority. This situation leads the African people to psychic trauma.

3. Altered Race and Psychic Trauma

Coetzee brings in his different novels, the psychic trauma of the alterity of black. The South African writer portrays that the different races of the indigenous South Africans are altered by western politics of race. These natives sink into psychic violence. The objective of this analysis is to show how the portrayal of altered race leads to psychic violence. This reflection is conducted through: Blackness as altered race: an unhomely subject, the aboriginals as animals: state of psychic loss and Metis as altered race: an unhomeliness.

3.1 Blackness as Altered Race: An Unhomely Subject

In *Youth*, as the political turmoil in South Africa makes John migrate to London, he discovers himself as a Negro from the citizens of the host country. White people in London, put him in the same basket of Negro as any black. This situation makes him be an unhomely subject in London. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1994, writes:

To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow and suddenly you find yourself with Henry James's Isabel Archer, in *The Portrait of a Lady*, taking the measure of yours dwelling in a state of 'incredulous terror' (p. 9).

John is treated as a Negro, uncivilized and inferior race in London. Describing John's condition at IBM Company and his condition in London, the omniscient narrator voices:

The people he works with are too polite to express their opinion of foreigner visitors. Nevertheless, from certain of their silences he knows he is not wanted in their country, not positively wanted. On the subject of West Indians, they are silent too, but he can read the signs. NIGGER GO HOME say slogans painted on walls. NO COLOURED say notices in the windows of lodging-houses. Month by month the government tightens its immigration laws. (Coetzee, 2002, p. 104).

The narrator's mention of white people's use of discourses of the myth of the Negro such as "NIGGER GO HOME" and "NO COLOURED" shows that white people despise black people. They denigrate and disgrace them to such an extent that they are viewed as inferior race. For them, blacks deserve no consideration and they don't belong to the mankind universe. The tightening of the immigration laws by the British government shows that the consideration of blacks as

Negros is institutionalized in the country. They are taken by white minority regime as the uncivilized people.

The institutionalized racist classification of race by British government makes the socialization be difficult for John. He finds it very complicated to get socialized in his professional domain of IBM Company. As he writes it in his letter to Dr B. L. McIver, his IBM boss, "'After lengthy reflection,' ... 'I have reached the conclusion that my future does not lie with IBM. In terms of my contract, I therefore wish to tender one month's notice'". (Coetzee, 2002, p. 106). John does not find life easy in his professional domain in London. His resignation says it well. He resigns because the atmosphere at IBM is not a communion one. It is rather separatist. Though he works in the company of IBM, he has the feeling of being rejected by the company. John in this standpoint of being racially discriminated means he does not exist. As John experiences racial denigration, he endures psychic trauma. It is difficult for him to be stable and feel at ease at work. He becomes confuse and does not know what to do or the right decision to take for his life. Such a psychic violence reveals the reasons of his resignation to his IBM employer as follows:

'I was hoping for something more.'
'And what may that be?'
'I was hoping for friendship?'
'You find the atmosphere unfriendly?'
'No, not unfriendly, not at all. People have been very kind. But being friendly is not the same thing as friendship.' (Coetzee, 2002, p. 107)

John lives unfriendly at IBM Company. The unfriendliness causes his resignation. Both his resignation and condition of unfriendliness are John's state of unhomeliness. His co-workers are not kind with him. But as he said it to his employer, being friendly is not the same thing as friendship. The unfriendly life corresponds to John's condition of unhomeliness. John is treated unfriendly by his profession. Following this act, he becomes unhomely subject at IBM Company. In the company, he does not know how to handle his work to get friendship and be able to take the right decision. Apart from IBM, it is the social classes that treat John unhomely. He does not know to which social class he belongs:

His full admission, not a temporary ticket valid for certain times of the day on certain days of the years – was decided, as far as he can tell, years ago, even generations ago, according to rules that will forever be dark to him. As for the working class, he does not share its recreation, can barely understand its speech, has never felt the slightest motion of welcome from it. (Coetzee, 2002, p. 103).

Both middle and working classes reject John. To belong to the middle class is something that is dark to him. He is not situated vis-à-vis his belonging to the middle class. By the same token, he is not welcomed by the working class. The confusion and ambiguity of John vis-à-vis his class status is perceived as a condition of unhomeliness.

3.2 The Aboriginals as Animals: State of Psychic Loss

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Coetzee shows that the Empire institutionalized the aboriginal people as wild animals. The Empire does not consider these people as part of the universe of mankind. Such a racial classification sets the aboriginal people into a psychic loss. In the novels, the Magistrate, a responsible official in the service of the Empire, gets a fox cub in his house that he uses to ask the grandson of the prison cook to take care of. Tired of the mess of the animal, the Magistrate decides to let the animal leave his house. To do that, he asks the opinion of the blind girl with whom has sympathy. To his question: “do you want me to take it to the lake and let it go?” The blind girl answers: “you can’t do that, it is too young, it would starve to death or dogs would catch it”. (Coetzee, 1980, p. 48).

The Magistrate and the blind girl talk about the fox cub as an animal. None of them doubts about the fox cub’s belonging to the universe of the animal. The unanimity of both the Magistrate and the blind girl about the universe of the fox cub shows that both the Empire and the aboriginal community recognize the fox cub as an animal. In other words, the recognition from both the Magistrate and the blind girl is a sign of the fox cub being institutionalized as an animal. But in replies to the blind girl’s opinion which is to keep the fox cub in the house, the Magistrate articulates:

So the fox cub stays. Sometimes I see its sharp snout peeking out from a dark corner. Otherwise it is only a noise in the night and a pervasive tang of urine as I wait for it to grow big enough to be disposed of. ‘People will say I keep two wild animals in my rooms, a fox and a girl’. (Coetzee, 1980, p. 48).

The black girl being from the aboriginal community, she cannot be part of the people as mentioned by the Magistrate. The people to whom the Magistrate refers are from the Empire. It is the British people and their imperial forces sent to the aboriginal community that the Magistrate describes as people who will blame him to have kept two wild animals in his rooms in case the blind girl and fox live in his house. The consideration of the blind girl as a wild animal by the people of the Empire shows that they have institutionalized the aboriginals as animals. For the Empire, the aboriginal people belong to the universe of the animals. They do not belong to the universe of mankind like British Empire. As the Magistrate informs the blind girl about her being the equal of the fox cub, she experiences a psychic loss. The Magistrate narrates about the blind girl as follows: “She does not see the joke, or does not like it. Her lips close, her gaze settles rigidly on the wall, I know she is doing her best to glare at me”. (Coetzee, 1980, p. 48). The blind girl’s closed lips and the rigidity of the gaze express her psychic loss. The racial classification makes her be anxious and nervous. She is in mute and her lips are tight.

3.3 Metis as Altered Race: An Unhomeliness

J. M. Coetzee shows that as the Metis is institutionalized as an altered race, either he/she or his/her relatives rise into unhomeliness. Metis are broadly defined as individuals of mixed ancestry. Thus, they derive from mixed race. John, the

Metis, in *Boyhood* takes himself for a white person in Worcester, the community of the Colored. Since he is upbrought “at the hands of his mother” (Coetzee, 1997, p. 79) that he is educated in white manner, John holds white supremacy. Faced with Colored in Worcester, John holds the white superiority for which “Nothing can touch you, there is nothing you are not capable of”. (Coetzee, 1997, p 113). In this view, in Worcester, the Metis is considered as a white. The community classifies the Metis in the universe of white. John as a Metis is altered in Worcester, though his father Jack remains a native colored.

But once in Cape Town, in search of school, John is not accepted by the English people. He is rejected by the schools in the district of the most English. In search for school education in Cape Town, John and his mother are addressed in the following terms by the school headmaster when he takes John’s school report: “So you came first in your class,’ ... ‘Good, good! But you won’t find it so easy here’”. (Coetzee, 1997, p. 135). The discourse uttered by the headmaster shows that the Metis is not classified as a white person in the community of the most English. To the English, the Metis is part of black community. The English consider the Metis as black people. Such an institutionalization brings the school attended by whites to discriminate John to such a point that this situation sinks his mother into unhomeliness. The omniscient narrator mentions:

What is being brought home to them, to him and his mother, is that in Cape Town different classes of people attend different schools. St Joseph’s caters for, if not the lowest class, then the second lowest. Her failure to get him into a better school leaves his mother bitter. (Coetzee, 1997, p. 136).

John’s mother discovers that his son does not fit the universe of whites. John is not even given any consideration despite the fact that his mother is a white woman. John is rather classified as a black person. Therefore, he belongs to the lower class. This accounts for his mother’s failure to find an English school, that is, a well-equipped school for her son. The mother’s failure to get John into a better school refers to a condition of unhomeliness. The failure is her state of unhomeliness. School where English children are educated refuses being homely to John. Though she and her son are in Cape Town, she does not know where to find a school for her son. Not only that but also despite John’s mother’s origin of whiteness, she is in a total difficulty to inscribe her son in white school. A mixed race is a thing, nothing and an animal for white people. That is why white or English school does not make home for her and her son. In other words, the discriminatory racial classification sets John’s mother into unhomeliness. She is confused and sorry about the attitude of white schools vis-à-vis her son John. In addition to the failure, the expression of bitterness of John’s mother discloses her unhomeliness. She is in psychic loss. She does not know what to do at this precise moment. In her own home, that is western culture, she does not find a place to put her son. In Cape Town she and her son are also discriminated by white school. There is a complete separation between her Metis son and the English as the narrator puts it:

The boys from Diocesan College, who are the most English of all and do not condescend even to play rugby or cricket against St Joseph's, live in selected areas that, being far from the railway line, he hears of but never sees: Bishopscourt, Fernwood, Constantia. (Coetzee, 1997, p. 136).

The English children live in separate districts and go to different schools. The school system does not allow black or the mixed race to go in the same school with white children. For white people, there is no reason that a mixed race like John be assimilated to white children. For them, being in the same classroom with blacks reduces the value of white children. All these conditions set John's mother into a bitter mood. The altering of John as a black in the community of the English sets him into unhomeliness as well. The long distance from St Joseph school that John's mother finds for his education, sets him into difficult conditions. From the narrative perspective, it rises that:

TO BE IN TIME FOR SCHOOL at 8.30 he needs to leave home by 7.30: a half-hour walk to the station, a fifteen-minute ride in the train, a five-minute walk from station to school, and a ten-minute cushion in case of delays. However, because he is frightened of being late, he leaves home at 7.00 and is at school by 8.00. There, in the classroom just unlocked by the janitor, he can sit at his desk with his head on his arms and wait.

(Coetzee, 1997, p. 137).

John lives in an uneasy condition. It is difficult for him to reach his school. This situation sets him in nightmares and makes him weep. Thus, he finds himself in despair without help. In these situations, John is in unhomeliness. He does not know how to reach his school peacefully. He also does not know what solution to take for such a situation.

In short, this research has evolved around the trauma of racial misrepresentation in Coetzee's novels. The analysis of the key features of trauma has contributed to strengthen white's position of superiority. The domination of blacks by whites has been possible thanks to the myth of the Negro as coined by F. Fanon. White people focus on the myth of the Negro, altered race and racial heresies to denigrate black people. Through this politics of denigration, white people set their power over blacks.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Coetzee represents racialized domination through intertwined forms of physical and psychological trauma. Through postcolonial and trauma perspectives, the novels reveal how imperial discourse dehumanizes racial others while generating resistance, alienation and psychic fracture. The analysis contributes to understanding Coetzee's fiction as a critique of colonial violence and as a literary mediation on trauma, power and racial subjectivity. Future works may extend this inquiry through comparative postcolonial trauma studies.

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