Chapter VII: Conclusion
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Coetzee’s works never make a direct statement. Even his Nobel speech is not direct. He always blurs the boundaries of non-fiction and fiction, history and myth, reality and imagination. This is called as meta-fictional discourse, a literary technique in the modern novel, in which the novelist is self-conscious of the act of novel writing, a technique in which the fiction goes one step beyond. But behind this façade of blurring literary techniques, Coetzee makes a statement against racism in South Africa and raises wider questions about colonial oppression and racial discrimination, as evidenced in this study.

Coetzee deals with a South African professor named David who goes out to visit his daughter, Lucy's, farm. While he is there a gang of two men and one boy rapes his daughter. When he later sees the boy at a party thrown by Lucy's neighbor, Petrus, he demands justice. Petrus refuses, and promises protection from further attacks to Lucy only if she marries him. The issues in this novel deal with many of the current plights of South Africa. Land, crime, rape, lack of police protection and racial divides are all themes of the novel and problems in modern day South Africa.

All of Coetzee's writings are similar in that they often center on a solitary character. No direct moral is ever given, but rather situations are set up for the reader to think about. And often the reader thinks about racism and colonial oppression. Coetzee’s aim is not to provide solutions, but to highlight problems and have the reader form their own conclusions. More often than not, these problems concern the racial divides which plague modern South Africa. The study has looked into the
causes of these racial conflicts through the psychological and emotional journey of Coetzee’s characters, which in turn reflect the citizens of South Africa.

J. M. Coetzee grew up in the era of the Vietnam War and was influenced by the anti-war writers of his times like Noam Chomsky. This was the heyday of postmodernism. Hence, the works of Coetzee all contain postmodernist strains and employ many techniques of postmodernism. Like Brecht’s breaking of the fourth wall, Coetzee aims at the exposing of fictional illusion. Coetzee does not let the reader forget that he or she is reading a work of fiction. This is a standard metafictional technique.

There are a lot of biographical characters in almost all of Coetzee’s works which mirror Coetzee’s own life in myriad ways. None is completely an image of Coetzee, but each contains a few strains of what Coetzee is and what he would imagine himself to be. The reader is never sure whether he is reading the exact replica of Coetzee or is just reading about a fictional character. This is another technique of metafiction in which the boundaries between fiction and reality are broken and one never knows whether he is reading a work of fiction or of non-fiction.

His works are also full of self-reference, usually through his biographical characters, like Michael K in *Life and Times of Michael K*, like David in *Disgrace*, like Jacobus Coetzee in *Dusklands* and like Costello in *Elizabeth Costello*. Coetzee often combines his political commentary with the psychological journeys of his semi-fictional, semi-biographical characters with other social issues like animal cruelty, vegetarianism, teetotalism, non-smoking etc. Coetzee does not eat meat, does not smoke, does not drink and is a great campaigner for animal rights, though in his usual
semi-fictional way. Most of his semi-biographical characters stand for animal rights and oppose cruelty against them. He always laces these themes with his primary theme of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism.

Sexual morality is not an issue with either Coetzee or his semi-biographical characters. According to him, sexual morality is a hypocritical device of the colonizers and the imperialists. Coetzee breaks this ‘illusion’ in every one of his work and all his characters swagger in their defiance of the ‘laws’ of Victorian morality.

Chinua Achebe describes the effects of Western customs and values on traditional African society. Achebe's satire and his keen ear for spoken language have made him one of the most highly esteemed African writers in English.

Like other major Nigerian writers including Wole Soyinka, Elechi Amadi, John Okigbo, John Pepper Clark, and Cole Omotso, Achebe was also educated at the University College of Ibadan, where he studied English, history and theology. At the university Achebe rejected his British name and took his indigenous name Chinua. This rejection of the western identity and taking up of the African identity is reflected in his works, most often in his later works like the *Anthills of the Savannah*.

During the Nigerian Civil War, Achebe was in the Biafran government service, and then taught at US and Nigerian universities. Achebe's writings from this period reflect his deep personal disappointment with what Nigeria became since independence.

Africa, the second largest continent on the globe, is home to a host of tribes each with its own language, history, culture, religion and food habits. But all these
differences have been resolved to a certain extent in their fight against the effect of colonialism on Africa.

The Christian missions and the colonial school, backed by the coercive force of the colonial state, were the primary agents of the transformation. The civilized, western-educated, Africans were the targets of the worst form of colonial racism. These are the themes which come out of the study of the novels of Achebe like *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*.

The desire of reformation and re-orientation of consciousness among the educated Africans was kindled in the Africans through the writings of Achebe, which saw the origin of movements like Negritude, African Aesthetic, and political nationalisms that led to independence: indigenous artistic traditions, long maligned and suppressed by colonialism, became the source-pool of inspiration for many writers.

This cultural-artistic decolonization, this fashioning of creative originality from both indigenous and borrowed materials, became phenomenal in its success and is worthy of mentioning. This decolonization has become possible at some level through the study of the racial conflict of Africa, the conflict with its Western dominators. This is the subject of this study as shown in the present study. The racial conflict shown in the works of Coetzee and Achebe has been phenomenal in the decolonization of Africa. More recently Ernest Emenyonu has asserted that: “What many western critics issue on African literature is a reflection of a profound lack of knowledge about African cultural traditions coupled with an ignorance of the existence, nature and depth of the heritage of African oral literature. In most cases
some vague literary background or a landing on an African soil has not been enough to correct this intellectual imbalance. But the works of Achebe and Coetzee will help to bring out the racial conflict which is a must in understanding Africa.”¹

References