NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry
Vol. 20 (I) June, 2022

e ISSN 2789-4665 p ISSN 2222-570
https://doi.org/10.52015/numljci.v20iI.221

Conscious Suspension of 'Stranger Danger': Politics of Fetishism in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*

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Article History:

Received:
May 10, 2022
Accepted:
June 30, 2022

Funding:
This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the politics of fetishism in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*. It contends that the characters in Coetzee's novel appear to consciously suspend the danger that is often associated with strangers. They willingly interact with those in their neighborhoods and consciously suppress the warnings of mishaps or misfortune that such strange encounters may entail. This study is a textual analysis of the selected text to examine all the encounters, specifically those between Lucy and the natives, as well as those of Bev Shaw with David Lurie. In the post-colonial period, such abnormal behavior notably reveals a distinct feature of fetishism among the colonizer and the colonized, as it does in Coetzee's characters. In order to achieve this objective, Coetzee's novel is the primary text, while Sara Ahmed's concepts of "Stranger Fetishism" and "Encounters" serve as a theoretical framework for this investigation. The objective of this research is to analyze the ambiguities of characters in the novel, such as Lucy's passive response to her rape and Bev's ironic behavior with David. Eventually, the discussion leads to the unfolding of their personal intents, which are deliberately kept undercover to satisfy their personal interests. This research intervenes in the current scholarship on postcolonial studies by bringing fresh reading perspectives on Coetzee's text.

Keywords*:* Conscious suspension; stranger danger; encounters; fetishism; *Disgrace*

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This paper studies the deliberation involved in the encounters between former colonizers and formerly colonized people in the ex-colonies represented in J. M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* (1999).[1] This work includes encounters of characters such as the interactions between the second generation of the colonizers and the colonized within the setting of Cape Town, South Africa, an ex-colony of Britain and the Netherlands. The protagonist, David Lurie, a 52-year-old professor at Cape Technical University, and his daughter Lucy live on a farm in the Eastern Cape. It is important to know that both of them are white. On the other hand, Bev Shaw, Lucy's friend, is a native African who runs a veterinary clinic and an animal refuge on the periphery of the Eastern Cape. At the clinic where she works, she must give animals lethal injections to take away their pain and make their deaths as easy as possible. While analyzing the interactions between these characters, this paper seeks to answer the central question of why and in what ways Coetzee's characters Lucy, Bev Shaw, and Mr. Isaacs behave contrary to the common readers' expectations. For instance, for what purpose and reasons does Lucy not pursue legal action against her perpetrators when she has the opportunity to do so? In the post-colonial period, such abnormal behavior showcases a sense of fetishism among the colonizer and the colonized. Therefore, this paper concerns the politics of fetishism among Coetzee's characters.

The characters' day-to-day interactions with the natives are studied in the light of Sara Ahmed's concept of "stranger fetishism." This concept carries two important terms. First, the term 'stranger' that refers to a person who is considered an alien **or** an outsider because he or she does not belong to that community. For instance, in *Disgrace*, David and Lucy do not originally belong to Africa. They are the Afrikaners, a South African white ethnic group that descended from the Boers as part of the colonizers. Their ancestral ties go back to Dutch origin, and therefore, they are strangers to the natives of the Eastern Cape. Secondly, fetishism is a person's fascination and attraction toward another. This attraction may involve sexual gratification or other material concerns. Thus, stranger fetishism, Ahmed argues, involves the fetishization of the figure of a stranger and, in this process, the fetishist "cuts 'the stranger' off from the histories of its determination" (2009, p. 5). To put it simply, a person fetishizes a stranger, and in so doing, he or she ignores or occludes those histories which determine the stranger's strangeness from intervening. By history, Ahmed implies previous meetings (termed as encounters by her) between strangers and the ones who fetishize them. The understanding of these histories of determination demands close observation of the encounters.

An encounter, according to Ahmed, is a meeting that does not occur in the present but rather is linked with the past because each "encounter reopens past encounters" (2009, p. 8). Each encounter carries traces of a history of encounters suggesting that the stranger or alien is dangerous and his or her presence may cause harm. For instance, the colonizers were alien to the colonized and their history of invasion determines that they have harmed the values and norms of the colony, while on the other hand, there is also an element of vengeance from the natives' end. It means that the colonizer may fear any violent act of vengeance or any hazardous or harmful act that, according to Lucy, could be "the price one has to pay

for staying on?" (Coetzee, 2000, p. 158) This element of revenge is based on the dangerous image of the colonizer that has been constructed during past encounters. Therefore, there is a tendency for the colonized to be perilous for the colonizers. Accordingly, the precariousness associated with a stranger has been termed as 'stranger danger' in this paper. Hence, the one who fetishizes a stranger cuts off the histories that determine his or her precariousness. In the analysis of text, Lucy has been examined as cutting off the histories of strangers who have been perilous to her in order to fulfill her desire to settle in the Eastern Cape.

The term 'conscious suspension' that may help in understanding the line of argument is the act of consciously cutting the histories of determination. A fetishist deliberately suspends the idea of peril while encountering a stranger to achieve personal objectives. Keeping that deliberate suspension in view, this essay contends that Lucy and Bev Shaw are the ones who consciously suspend the 'stranger danger'. For instance, Lucy consciously suspends the fact of her rape from the police because she desires to settle in the land of her perpetrators, Petrus and Pollux, who are native Africans. Similarly, for Bev Shaw, David is a stranger, but she consciously suspends his history of exploiting women, for the sake of sexual gratification. In this way, our study examines the characters from both the foreigners and the natives' perspectives. In an effort to defend this line of argument, this essay intends to explore all interactive episodes between Lucy and the natives, as well as those of Bev Shaw with David Lurie. But, before doing that, a rationale for our research method would be in order here.

This research involves a close reading of the selected text. According to Catherine Belsey, "Textual analysis as a research method involves a close encounter with the work itself" (2005, p. 160). Moreover, language is directly engaged with in this method i.e., the words from the text, *Disgrace,* that describe the instances where the characters suspend the 'stranger danger' have been targeted for interpretation. Therefore, this paper incorporates textual analysis as a research method for the in-depth analysis of the encounters among the characters. In addition to that, this article deploys Sara Ahmed's concepts of "Stranger Fetishism" and "Encounters," expounded in *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (2000), as theoretical support to examine the nature of both the targeted characters' encounters with strangers.

Most of the scholars who study outsiders' fascination with the natives have discussed those invaders who digressed and tried to go native in the colonies they were sent to as colonizers. Mary Louis Pratt, in her book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), calls these visitors "seeing-man" (p. 9). She asserts that these European bourgeois subjects, the scientific travelers, were amazed by the cultural norms and the ways of life of natives. They have written personal and often sentimental accounts of their encounters with the natives and their cultures. Pratt observes their narratives of the local communities as their effort at "anti-conquest" (p. 8). In these anti-conquests, the writers have tried to revendicate the natives back to pre-colonial times. For instance, Pratt, in the third chapter of *Imperial Eyes*, entitled "Narrating the Anti-conquest", mentions Peter Kolb's accounts of the Hottentots' cultural practices and the like.

Ali Behdad, in his book *Belated Travelers* (1994), names the urge to understand or be within the Orient's culture as a "desire for/of the Orient" (p. 21). Behdad maintains that it is a strong desire to know about natives as well as their desire to fit into their culture. This desire "makes the orientalist subject surrender his or her power of representation and pursuit of knowledge by becoming a hedonistic participant in the "immediate" reality of the Oriental culture." (p. 21) This desire, Behdad argues, took them beyond the formal expected findings made by their precursors. One may relate this to Sara Ahmed's concept of natives' attraction as "Stranger Fetishism" (2009, p. 3). Ahmed considers natives and invaders alike as strangers to each other. Furthermore, she explains that the one who fetishizes the stranger establishes the alien as a figure by giving it a "life of its own" (2009, p. 5) and, at the same time, suspends the history that determines their past relationships. Moreover, Ahmed contends that every encounter between the foreigner and the natives "reopens past encounters" (2009, p. 8) because the fetishization of strangers began much later. However, in previous colonial encounters, danger was associated with strangers. Later encounters, therefore, carry "*traces* of those broader relationships" (2009, p. 8), suggesting that later interactions cannot avoid the perceptions and prejudices that have been constructed during previous meetings.

Lucy Valerie Graham has argued that *Disgrace* offers the deprivation of "'black peril' narrative" (2003, p. 433) because the story of Lucy's rape is "completely elided" (2003, p. 433) in the police report. In her study "Reading the Unspeakable: Rape in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*", she maintains that victims of rape are kept silent throughout the novel and "thus collude" (2003, p. 442) with the criminals, making the victims seem secretly involved as if the rapes are carried out with their consent. On the other hand, Sue Kossew has observed that the novel complicates ethical values. In her research article "The Politics of Shame and Redemption in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace,*" she argues that the text mystifies the concepts of "repentance and forgiveness" (2003, p. 159) because the responses towards both rapes depicted in the novel are ironic. The focus of Kossew's study is David Lurie's character, who neither repents nor seeks forgiveness, and rather claims that "no animal will accept the justice of being punished for following its instincts." (Coetzee, 2000, p. 90) So, presenting the matter of instincts here, David further muddles ethical values. Besides, the victims are also involved in the crimes committed against them. For instance, Melanie and Bev Shaw do not resist at the time of sexual activity.

Mardorossian also writes on how sexual violence is expressed in terms of gender, race, and social class (2011, p. 72). She claims this novel demonstrates that rape is not a gendered crime; rather, it is a racial crime. She finds Coetzee exposing racial politics and the racialized nature of justice after apartheid in South Africa (2011, p. 73). Likewise, Koul casts light on racial complexity and power shifts after apartheid in South Africa in *Disgrace* (2016, p. 178). She argues that Coetzee has focused on violence, crime, race, and power in South Africa (2016, p. 179). She is of the view that the author is concerned with the issue of power reversal between whites and blacks because he has empowered the black and disempowered the whites (2016, p. 180).

Coetzee, according to Stolarek, writes with "strong anti-imperialist feelings" (2015, p. 2), which are evident in his work *Disgrace*. Stolarek maintains that the writer portrays social marginalization, racial segregation, alienation, and social and racial injustice. She further sheds light on complicated postcolonial interactions and the dilemma of otherness, giving voice to social, political, and racial issues in South Africa that have hitherto been ignored or denied expression (2015, p. 3). On the other hand, according to Beyad and Keramatfar, Coetzee paints a troubling picture of post-apartheid South Africa (2017, p. 152). Beyad and Keramatfar have also focused on racial prejudices as well as interracial violence. They argue that Coetzee's writing depicts a truthful but bleak picture of humanity (2017, p. 153). He emphasizes the fight of individuals for survival in this novel since the Apartheid era signifies the persecution and subjugation of black people. Now, in the post-apartheid state, blacks are reclaiming their identity and standing up for racial equality (2017, p. 154). Moreover, Assefa DT and Chernet YA study the portrayal of deterioration in the status of white people and uplift in the status of black people (2018, p. 1). Coetzee, in their opinion, depicts political transformation in South Africa after apartheid because blacks came into power and considered whites a minority, implying the exposure of power politics in *Disgrace* (2018, p. 2).

Furthermore, the article “Post-colonial Study on J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*” by Vijaya Lakshmi considers the issue of rape as a matter of choice. The author argues that there is a shift in power depicted in the novel. For instance, the native South Africans had to suffer during apartheid at the hands of the colonizers while whites had “no choice in post-apartheid era” (2019, p. 134). Hence, power was being reversed. For instance, it had been shifted from the colonizers to the colonized and it is certain that powerless people do not have choice. This matter of having no choice, according to Lakshmi, was the reason that Lucy’s rape incident remained latent. In all of the above reviewed critical sources, the scholars have adeptly analyzed the rape incidence, but none of them has analyzed the repression of rape from the perspective of *stranger fetishism*, which explains that the rape, as the present study contends, has been deliberately kept under cover.

The first step in our analysis of the selected text is to trace Lucy’s fetishism in *Disgrace*. She comes across a severe incident in chapter eleven when three strangers attack her house, rape her, and take David’s car with them while he remains locked in a restroom throughout the whole incident. After this assault, David asks Lucy to call the police and report the whole incident. Lucy, however, remains completely indifferent to his concern; rather, she asks him to visit the hospital as if that incident only harmed David. This research germinates with the moment Lucy asks David not to disclose the details of the incident. These details are primarily about the incident of her rape. She intends to exclude them from the whole story she weaves. She says, “David, when people ask, would you mind keeping to your own story, to what happened to you?” (p. 99) This question suggests that there is some uncontemplated reason behind asking David not to disclose what happened to her, that do not let her report to the police because whenever a crime is committed, its victims usually seek help from the related authorities to arrest the culprits and for future safety. Lucy, however, digresses from this normative response because she wants the incident of her rape to be concealed.

Lucy suspends the facts of her rape despite the mental agony she is going through. For instance, David, on certain occasions, opens the topic of the incident while Lucy tries to evade it. The next morning, when he asks her what she is planning to do next, his concern is to make her think about the incident, but she tells him that she would continue living at the farm as before. Despite David's insistence that it is unsafe, she prefers to go back to the farm as if nothing dangerous had happened at that farm or as if she were least concerned about her safety. At one point, she replies to David, "It was never safe, and it's not an idea, good or bad. I'm not going back for the sake of an idea. I'm just going back" (p. 105). One may discern from her reply that once again she consciously represses the fact that she has been raped at the place where she is returning to.

Lucy hides the truth in her statement to the police. She does not mention the incident of rape and the pain inflicted upon her. The policemen are certainly the natives, and their encounter with Lucy is also one of the encounters that determines her as a stranger fetishist. This encounter is supposed to reopen her previous encounter with the natives, who are also strangers at that time, but she deliberately suspends the part of rape from the whole incident. The narrator gives the following details:

> There were three men, she recites, or two men and a boy. They tricked their way into the house, took (she lists the items) money, clothes, a television set, a CD player, a rifle with ammunition. When her father resisted, they assaulted him, poured spirits over him, tried to set him on fire. Then they shot the dogs and drove off in his car. She describes the men and what they were wearing; she describes the car. (p. 108)

According to the above statement, the perpetrators only assaulted her father. This is a partial truth. She consciously omits the other half of the truth, according to which she has been assaulted as well. David's constant insistence on making Lucy disclose the truth about her rape makes her deliver some insightful statements that strengthen the argument of this research. David asks once again why she has not reported the crime, to which she remains silent. However, when he does not stop questioning, Lucy gets enraged and says that it is not a matter of his concern or of the public. She clearly says that this "is a purely private matter" and "it is my business, mine alone." (p. 112). The use of the word "business" here provides a hint as to why she is suspending the fact of her rape because business implies the act of giving and taking. In other words, business is the mutual interest of both parties, and profit is also a collocative term for business. This means that Lucy's concern is to take some personal benefit that she considers private. Moreover, there is no harm in associating the word "business" with what Sarah Ahmed refers to as 'fetishism', and she would view it as the business of fetishizing a stranger who has been dangerous. This link between Lucy's business fetishization clarifies her purpose. For instance, when she says, "I am not just trying to save my skin. If that is what you think, you miss the point entirely"; she further declares, "I don't act in terms of abstraction," (p. 112), implying that her concerns are not abstract but concrete, or one may interpret them as materialistic. Hence, it has been unfolded, so far, that

she has been suspending her history of rape, which determines the 'stranger danger' for the sake of materialist objectives. What interests the readers is the nature of these objectives.

Lucy encounters one of her perpetrators during a ceremony at Petrus' place. However, instead of accusing him, she chooses to remain silent and walks away. This act of walking away from the confrontation with the inflictor questions her motive for not calling police or reacting in a way that could fix that culprit. A possible answer may be that she wants to escape from the place where the alien was present, the one with whom any fight or accusation could result in failure of her wish of settling in the Eastern Cape. Despite David's insistence on facing him, her words are, "I saw one of them out at the back. David, I don't want to kick up a fuss, but can we leave at once?" (p. 131) This escape is her move again to suspend the fact that the boy is one of the strangers who raped her. Therefore, she hasn't taken any step that may lead to the reopening of history. The history that, in Ahmed's words, determines the strangeness and precariousness of one of Lucy's perpetrators. Later, in David's words, an essence of what forms Lucy's sole concern behind suspending the said history may be traced. For example, while inquiring about the boy, he mentions to Petrus that his daughter "wants to be a good neighbor – a good citizen and a good neighbor. She loves the Eastern Cape. She wants to make her life here," (p. 138). Here, the readers are told about Lucy's concern, which was the citizenship of the Eastern Cape. She wanted to settle there.

She clarifies it as well by refusing David's offer to send her abroad because she wants to settle there. Furthermore, her aim becomes clearer as she herself implies the reason behind the continuous suspension of the history of her rape. She says:

> But isn't there another way of looking at it, David? What if . . . what if that is the price one has to pay for staying on? Perhaps that is how they look at it; perhaps that is how I should look at it too. They see me as owing something. They see themselves as debt collectors, tax collectors. Why should I be allowed to live here without paying? Perhaps that is what they tell themselves. (p. 158)

Here, Lucy openly states her reason behind not expressing her rape incident. This statement clearly shows her objective behind the suspension of the stranger danger during all incidents where she could have her rapists punished but she didn't. The objective was her wish to settle in the Eastern Cape, and for that sake, she would pay even through her body.

Towards the end of the novel, it is revealed that the perpetrator, the young boy, is Petrus's brother-in-law and his name is Pollux. This fact does not surprise Lucy, but one thing is clear from that point onwards Petrus knows about her assault. After that, she encounters Pollux once again when he is peeping into her bathroom while she is taking a bath. This episode also adds further evidence to Lucy's fetishism and makes it much clearer that she is deliberately neglecting the precarious aspects of the strangers. For instance, when David catches the voyeur on the spot, Katy bites him on the leg because he tries to run. Lucy comes out and

looks at the wounded boy. Instead of cursing him for his voyeurism she says, "Come, let us go and wash it," (p. 207). Lucy is supposed to curse him because cursing a voyeur would be a natural response. Though his act is not illegal, it does transgress the boundaries of ethics. Lucy, however, treats him well. She consciously suppresses the need to inflict any harm upon the stranger. She neglects the fact that history has already determined certain factors, which include the dangerous bearings of a stranger as well. She is on guard on various occasions, but she is not cautious enough to withdraw from dealing with them or from wanting to live among them.

Through the idea of 'business' that has been discussed earlier, it has become clear that the materialistic concern of Lucy is to settle in the Eastern Cape. Unlike David, who is concerned about her safety, Lucy appears or behaves as if she is engaged in some sort of business. Thus, it is clear now that she is making a business deal in which she is even ready to pay physically. In addition, the close observation of Petrus's surprising attitude with David regarding Lucy's rape strengthens the idea of a business deal. For instance, Petrus surprises David by first saying that his brother-in-law would marry Lucy and then, thinking of Pollux as too young for marriage, he says, "I will marry Lucy" (p. 202). Accordingly, after marrying Petrus, Lucy would be part of the native family, and then she would be able to own the farm and get citizenship. Here, both the parties seem to be clear about their business deal, and hence, Lucy would achieve her materialist objectives. Therefore, for the sake of these objectives, Lucy deliberately keeps on suspending the danger attached to the natives during her encounters.

If one shifts the focus from Lucy to Bev Shaw, one may notice that although her only encounter with David is relatable to this research, it is crucial to the argument. Throughout the novel, Bev Shaw remains lenient to David, and even at some moments she shifts "uncomfortably" (p. 107) when he discusses Lucy's rape with her. Neither does he feel any attraction towards her. However, there is a slight and gradual shift in the way Bev treats David. For instance, they start discussing matters other than the clinical concerns, which leads to a point where Bev Shaw seems interested in David's past affairs. She says, "I mean, you must find life very dull here. You must miss your own circle. You must miss having women friends" (p. 147). Here, one can see a person who feels uncomfortable because of the mention of rape, and has begun the very discussion by talking about David's previous women friends. Furthermore, in the same episode, Bev consciously directs their discussion toward David's experience of liaisons with women. For instance, she asks him whether he regrets the moments of intercourse with women to which he replies "at the time? Do you mean, in the heat of the act? Of course not. In the heat of the act there are no doubts. As I'm sure you must know yourself." (p. 148). She blushes at these words, which suggests that she is consciously suspending the fact of the discomfort she often feels in David's presence. Besides, towards the end of this chapter, she herself calls him to come to her clinic during unofficial hours, which is totally unexpected and as surprising for the readers. In so doing, she suspends David's history, which determines that he forces himself upon women thinking that they prefer it, which, to his astonishment, they do not. Bev's sole concern here is to

fulfil her sexual need, which implies that she is fetishizing a stranger by suspending the idea that he could be dangerous to her.

Although discussion in the foregoing pages focuses upon women and their strange encounters, which are quintessential in terms of stranger fetishization, yet there was another woman, Melanie Isaacs, in the novel whose rape has been hushed and understated. She is one of David's students at Cape Technical University, whom he takes to his flat where they have sex. This meeting, later, is referred to as rape because it is lodged as a complaint against David to the university authorities. It is, however, ambiguous in the novel as to who has lodged the complaint. It is ambiguous because David is sure that Melanie cannot do so. When he receives a notification of the complaint, he thinks while opening the envelope:

> Melanie would not have taken such a step by herself, he is convinced. She is too innocent for that, too ignorant of her power. He, the little man in the ill-fitting suit, must be behind it, he and cousin Pauline, the plain one, the duenna. They must have talked her into it, worn her down, then in the end marched her to the administration offices. (p. 39)

According to David's consideration, Melanie would not have lodged the complaint. However, the little man, whom David suspects, who could have done it, is Melanie's father, Mr. Isaacs. This paper argues that Melanie's direct representation has been in the hands of her overpowering father, about whom even David thinks that he must have lodged the complaint. The same father, when he sees David a while later, is unreasonably and unrealistically forgiving of his previous acts. Mr. Isaacs' very act of unrealistic forgiveness falls into the category of stranger fetishism because he invites David to dinner at his home. In so doing, he suspends the stranger danger associated to David's character. It is to say that David could be dangerous to another girl, Desiree. The possibility of this danger becomes certain to the readers when the narrator explains David's first interaction with her. For example, when David has an urge to reach Desiree's lips, the narrator says:

> She is eating a slice of cake, which she holds daintily between two fingers. There are crumbs on her upper lip. He has an urge to reach out, brush them off; at the same instant the memory of her sister comes over him in a hot wave. (p. 163-164)

David's 'urge' shows that maintains that he could tempt Desiree as he tempts Melanie. Furthermore, David tries to leave before dinner because he thinks he is creating trouble in their home while Mr. Isaacs says, "'Sit down, sit down! We'll be all right! We will do it!' He leans closer. 'You have to be strong!'" (p. 169), implying that he has completely cut off the danger associated with David simply because he wants to hear more about his daughter, Melanie, particularly how David fancies her. For example, he insists on his staying for a while when he is about to leave and forces him to speak more about him and Melanie. Despite David's disinterest, Mr. Isaacs once again makes a telephone call during the night and asks him: "'There is a question I never got to ask, Mr. Lurie. You are not hoping for us to intervene on your behalf, are you, with the university?'" (p. 173). This means that he wants to help

David re-settle at the university. This offer shows that Isaacs is acting in a strange way. How can a father help or assist someone who has raped his daughter, especially if the rapist is not ready to admit or feel bad about what he has done? Therefore, this is an unrealistic and strange forgiveness.

Some readers may question the idea of referring to Lucy as a stranger to the natives while she has spent almost the whole of her life among them. Some possible answers to this question may be that what makes her a stranger is her color and background, because she is white, suggesting that she belongs to the race of the colonizers, who are strangers. Second, if she is not a stranger to the natives, why is she the one who has been approached by the rapists? Why not any other woman? Third, Lucy herself says, after one incident, "'I think I am in their territory. They have marked me. They will come back for me'" (p. 158). Hence, the phrase "their territory" determines her otherness.

Another counter question may arise regarding the strangeness of the natives who assault Lucy. Are the perpetrators strangers or not? The answer to this question also lies within the text itself. For instance, the narrator himself calls the perpetrators strangers. For example, it is stated within the text this way: "But questions remain. Does Petrus know who the strangers were?" (p. 116). Therefore, these words establish that the attackers were strangers to Lucy.

As the analysis of text shows, the encounters between former white colonizers and their colonized people in post-apartheid South Africa are strange in a variety of ways. The ambiguous admiration or fetishism of strangers (both foreigners and natives)—the invaders, perpetrators, colonizers, and others, is a peculiar aspects of such encounters. *Disgrace* by J. M. Coetzee is a good example of a text that describes such events. This paper establishes that Lucy and Bev Shaw, as well as Mr. Isaacs, have consciously and purposefully postponed their fear of the strangers they encountered to win their interests and achieve their goals. According to Ahmed, the one who cuts off their history of the 'other' (that determines their otherness) to fetishize them is a stranger fetishist. As a result, it is Lucy, Bev Shaw, and Mr. Issacs who have fetishized the strangers they encounter. Lucy's connivance of her gang-rape may likewise be understood in this way.

Declaration of conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and publication of this article.

Notes

[1] *Disgrace* was originally published in 1999. However, we have used the 2000 edition for our analysis and citation across this paper.

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