

Chen Jialu

Sichuan University

Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

Cohesion and Shame: Ethical Resolution of Dostoevsky and J.M.Coetzee

Abstract: The spiritual crisis of man is the common theme in Dostoevsky's and J.M.Coetzee's works. Dostoevsky dramatizes religious tragedy experienced by Russian in 19th century , whereas Coetzee represents the soul tragedy evoked by certain circumstances. Dostoevsky advocates salvation as the answer to ethical conflict and the cohesion conception of Orthodox Church enables characters to immerse into the human community and connect to each other in the conviction of brotherhood and love. Because Orthodox Church believes everyone is responsible to each sin, even though he commits no sin. As long as there remains one degeneration, salvation and resurrection will not advent. Shame is the key word of Coetzee's fictions. It generates in the tension formed by aversion to oppression, desire for transcendence and relentless questioning the ultimate reconciliation. He tries to detach from the religious perspective, struggling to engage in the bitter exploration of ethical resolution at the level of secular morality. His characters fail to achieve mutual understanding, restricted to the subcelestial world, and direct each other to alienation and isolation instead of solidarity. Unlike Dostoevsky whose fictions pursuit religious solution, Coetzee chooses to invite readers to live through the twisted ethical situation without a clear ending provided.