

Tribhuvan University

Critique of Imperialism in *Waiting for the Barbarians* by J. M. Coetzee

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by

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled,

“Critique of Imperialism in *Waiting for Barbarians* by J. M. Coetzee”

Is my own original work carried out as a Master’s student at the Department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis design and conception in the presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis paper have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis paper.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Critique of Imperialism in *Waiting for the Barbarians* by J. M. Coetzee” submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Chopa Raj Pandey, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee:

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## Abstract

This research looks into the text, *Waiting for the Barbarians* from the point of view of post-colonialism. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the colonel acts aggressively. He acts as though the native inhabitants in an anonymous island are subhuman beings. He holds the view that natives should be conquered and controlled for the sake of the flowering of colonialism and British imperialism. He is fired by a magistrate's gesture of compassion. To achieve the higher status of moral agency he has to fall from the standard of civilized and established level of manners and loyalty. Only after he falls from the standard of empire, he becomes capable of reaching the bottom line of misery. Through the creation of such myths, the Empire not only justifies its incursion into another's territory and the brutal acts of violence on the "Other" by means of this myth. Even at its best, imperial capitalism is oppressive and, as might be expected, introduces no better society than the class-tormented civilizations it springs from in Europe. The easy massacre of an unsuspecting enemy evoked no feelings but those of gladness, pride, and admiration. Primitive men were more faithless than their descendants of to-day.

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## **I. Awareness of Injustice in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians***

### **Colonialism: A Brief Survey**

Colonizers' greed for wealth and gems of an island is limitless that finally they meet their own doom. In their mission to capture materialistic objects, they develop insanity and callousness. The fall of the white shows that colonialism is a mask behind which the ruthless process of exploitation lies. Besides seeking to exploit resources rapaciously, the white do not hesitate to dominate and dismantle the "politico-cultural system of the island. The foundational basis of western colonialism is not to boost and buttress the living standards of the natives of any nonwestern countries" (Ashcroft 46). But the underlying force behind colonialism is to dampen the economic resources of the island.

The island has a long history of tyranny, revolution and war. It has recently experienced a period of stability under the colonial rule. The government will finally bring stability to the country. Simon's wealth inspires a new round of revolutions. As a result, such changes push Simon into chaos. The outsider admitted to become a part of upper-class society. He has good intentions to provide jobs for the peasants. However, he becomes "obsessed with wealth and power. As the political climate gets hotter, he must pay off government officials, bandits, the church, and various armed revolutionaries"(57).

Coetzee wants to dramatize the lingering effect of colonial legacy. Many years ago South Africa achieved independence from the colonial rule. It would be quite irrelevant to discuss and dramatize the effect of colonialism directly in the era of globalizing tendency. That is why the author took the soft, veiled and subtle mode of hinting at the lingering fatal effect of colonialism. The plight of magistrate is

indicative and representative of the plight of all the indigenous people of South Africa during the colonial rule.

The idea of conquering other people's country, culture and civilization serves as the stepping stone on the way to colonialism and imperialism. After the eighteenth century, Europeans come to different countries of the third world, African continent and Latin American countries to make a conquest and dominion. In this course, they set up control over the culture and resources of many nonwestern countries. Western people's adventure begins from direct rule to colonialism and then to the imperialism. By borrowing appropriate insight from the postcolonial theory to imperialism, the present test the proposed hypothesis.

After the eighteenth century, European people come to different continents in search for raw materials and new resources. They have also other motive. That is to explore new markets for the goods and commodities that are produced abundantly in the factories of European countries. They come to the third world countries with bullet, the Bible and business. With bullet, they conquered those who rebelled against them. With the bible, they converted non-Christians and pagans into pious and docile followers of Christianity.

At first those Europeans distributed the rhetoric that they are civilized white people who have the responsibility to educate, uplift and enlighten the nonwhite. But it was just a hoax to hoodwink the innocent people of the third world countries. Contrary to their promise, the white began to establish control over the native inhabitants of the third world. Finally the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized took the form of the relationship of domination. Colonialism is a form of oppression. It is style of domination. Its range and scope is indescribably huge. When



the process of colonialism takes the organized form and can operate from center, it takes the form of imperialism.

### **Complicity of Capitalism with Colonialism**

Capitalism is a particular form of commodity production. It is a production of goods for sale on the market. This form of economy exists where there are many independent producers who produce goods for sale rather than for their own use. The use values of a commodity, the use to which it can be put, and its exchange value, are different concepts. The production of use values is “absolutely essential to the survival of any society, but in a commodity-producing system this is obscured by the fact that the producer is interested only in the exchange value of the product”(Anthony Brewer 26). Capitalism is the product of ongoing growth of colonialism and imperialism.

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, a new awareness is affirmed. Without seeing any chance of immediate benefit, the magistrate helps the so-called benefits. He does not have any benefit by helping the so-called barbarians. Yet he does not hesitate to assist them. The magistrate is selfless and unconditionally altruistic in his relationship with the so-called barbarians. But his friends are rapacious plunderer. They loot resources. All the representatives of empires wage war against the so-called barbarians.

*Waiting for the Barbarians* illustrates how westerners exploit, dominate, and misrepresent the African people in the name of civilization, on the other. The characters like Colonel Joll and Mandel, in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, misrepresent the native people and produce colonizing myths about laziness, irrationality, and barbarism. Only the magistrate is selfless, ethical and empathetic in his relation with the people whom the imperialists call barbarians. The aim of this research is to study

how the westerners express their colonial mentality and represent white as superior and non-white as inferior, uncivilized Others.

J. M. Coetzee writes copiously on the subject of race, colony, empire, apartheid and independent movement. In addition, he also writes on issues that have universal importance. The conflict between the good and the evil and the ultimate victory of the good over the evil is expressed in most of his important novel. Coetzee passes a great deal of his childhood in his homeland, South Africa. He has closely observed the lives of South Africans. The actual problems of South Africa are directly or indirectly represented in his novels.

The majority of the works of the Coetzee are instructive. *Duskland* is one of the most representative works of Coetzee. In this novel, Coetzee depicts realistically the horrible effects of war on the psyche of soldiers. This novel describes how soldiers on war are increasingly empty of pity, love, sympathy and humanity as the duration of increases. *Waiting for Barbarians* is an incomparably superb novel of Coetzee. In this novel, the novelist tests the issue of colonialism.

What makes this novel unique is deconstructive perspective on the traditional ethics. *The Life and Times of Michael K* is another mature fiction of Coetzee. This novel moves round the life of a simple gardener who happens to be captured in civil war and then imprisoned. In prison, he longs for liberation. Despite the utter lack of liberation from this confinement, he continues to yearn for freedom. His longing for freedom is extraordinarily appealing. *Foe* is another powerful novel of Coetzee which is a product of the novelist's revisionist belief. This novel is his attempt to rewrite the history of *Robinson Crusoe* from the perspective of Friday. The perspective of Friday is used to re-narrate the story. Coetzee dwells upon the misery of slave after his tongue is cut. It has both the characteristics of adventure narrative and slave narrative.

*Age of Iron*, the most distinguished novel of Coetzee exploits the theme of empathy. In this novel, Coetzee tells the story of an African lady who dies of cancer. Sickness and disease appear to be vested with symbol meanings. They refer to the diseases and sicknesses in South African culture. *Master of Petersburg* is based on the life of Russian novelist, Dostoevsky. By the same token, *Disgrace* is about how an individual's attempt to cross the liminal line brings risk like ostracism or excommunication.

All these novels are written in high narrative mode. Problems like colonialism, legacy of imperialism, humanity and Christian ideals are reexamined and reviewed from different angle. *Slow Man* is somewhat different from other works of Coetzee. In *Slow Man*, how the colonized subjects feel emasculated despite their freedom. The very idea of recollecting history of African past is itself the source of torture and guilt. African masculinity is questioned in this work. Apart from novels, narrative accounts and literary works of commercial values, Coetzee also tries his pen in memoir. *Boyhood* is Coetzee's memoir which is full of author's personal experiences.

J. M. Coetzee is the leading South African novelist of the contemporary time. He writes prolifically on the wide range of subject matters like the legacy of colonialism, cultural crisis, politics of aggression and mimicry. Lynn Meskell has defined this novel which depicts the scenario of the colonial South African's history. He makes the following remarks:

*Waiting for the Barbarians* is a book that has been described as a pivotal work in the development of Coetzee's oeuvre. Published in 1980, *Waiting for the Barbarians* takes place at a frontier outpost

somewhere within the reaches of empire, recognized as a universalized representation of South Africa's colonial history. (89)

*Waiting for the Barbarians* is one of the major works of J.M. Coetzee, where the writer represents the country which is in the holds of the colonial Empire. The writer is able to describe the colonial country's history in the novel. For Meskell, the country presented in the novel is South Africa. J.M. Coetzee is able to draw the colonial picture of the South Africa.

Michael Valdez Moses is of the view that the novel has not specified any name of the place or the characters. So this novel paradoxically represents the troubled relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. For this he writes:

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Coetzee dramatizes the moral dilemmas and political paradoxes of all imperial enterprises, steadfastly refusing to specify either the geographic or historical setting of his novel. Unmistakable analogies exist between the unnamed Empire of his novel and contemporary South Africa, and yet no simple correlations are possible. According to Coetzee, its two principal characters, whose race is never identified? (116)

The paradox in the novel is a major issue. In the novel Coetzee has refused to specify any geographical and historical setting. There is not any relation to the unnamed Empire and the contemporary South Africa. This novel is applied for the entire nation which has gone into the colonization of any country.

Troy Urquhart presents his idea regarding *Waiting for the Barbarians*. He claims that this novel targets the injustice that is prevalent in South Africa. He further says:

Waiting for the Barbarians articulates the problem of justice in South Africa and challenges the basic premises by exploring, first, the difficulty of establishing the truth about the experience of the oppressed and, second, the manipulation of their voices to protect the interests of the state. Most of the episodic incidents contribute to the narrative tapestry of the novel. (2)

*Waiting for the Barbarians* focuses on the issue of the injustice in South Africa. It challenges the difficulty in the collection of the truth about the people who are suppressed by the regime. It focuses on the skillful handling of the people by the state to grab the hold of the interest of the state.

Barend J. Toerien writes about the novel of J.M. Coetzee. He views that due to the atrocity of the suppressor the native magistrate becomes the target. He further writes:

*Waiting for the Barbarians* makes for compelling reading, largely due to the successful use of the present tense throughout and the vivid presentation of unfolding events. The story is told in the first person by a minor official, a magistrate on the distant frontier whose tolerant administration had become suspect by the government, bent on suppressing any indication of restiveness. (718)

He says that the novel presents many events and actions using the present tense. The whole narrative representation is more a reality than history. This novel is presented from the perspective of the decent, loyal magistrate. He is more presented as a marginalized. The feeble magistrate becomes the target of the regime and destroyed by them.

Wylie Henderson does not hesitate to give credit to Coetzee for humanizing the entire region of Africa via allegorical mode of representation. According to Henderson, Coetzee is the first South African author who is conscious of the culture of empathy. Henderson puts forwards the following view with respect to the possibility of interaction between the dilapidated African community and the liberal western world:

Coetzee may have achieved a political goal by humanizing a region still obscure in Western thought. He describes historical world at the time of the end of colonialism. This issue is implicitly embedded in the subtext of *Waiting for the Barbarians*. However, war and political conflict take the back seat to the human dramas that occur because of and — more importantly — despite of such events. The author's simple language is surprisingly effective in explaining the complexity of emotions, characters and dynamics which could exist in any culture.

(76)

Although there is still doubt and discussion about the alleged nonpolitical motive of J. M. Coetzee for writing *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Henderson maintains that the driving force behind the creation of this novel is undoubtedly political. Without doubt, this novel can hardly survive on its own. Prior to the publication of this novel, Postcolonial culture of South Africa remained a mystery which haunted to the world of readership of Western Europe. When this novel circulated to the western world, many facts about the culture and geographical oddities of South Africa became accessible to the western world.

Mark Seltzer holds the view that characters in Coetzee's fictions are guided and governed by the environmental pull and tug. Factors found in the local

surrounding produce quirky effect in those who dwell in it. Coetzee is acutely aware of this condition. Characters in his novels are expressive of the effect of environment.

The Childhood of Jesus is a case in point:

Whilst there is always a confusion in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* about to what extent the characters are mere manifestations of their environment and as such, powerless ciphers, unable to perform any act of agency, or whether they are to some extent morality tales, with protagonists attempting to work with and against their environments to achieve some sort of epiphany or new mode of living, *Waiting for the Barbarians* can certainly be read in a more positive fashion, and as both evidence of a death of affect and a railing against it. (75)

Seltzer is too naïve to believe that *Waiting for the Barbarians* is concerned with the way readers have come to understand feeling and its role in emotional behavior.

Fascination with esoteric pattern is the most dazzling component in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. The dilemma and ambivalence lies at the heart of the novel. It is very hard to catch a definite answer. The exploration of the new way of seeing one's own inner journey occupies the forefront of the novel. But it is doubtful to ascertain the relevance of this exploration.

Thomas Benton is a critic of J. M. Coetzee. He contends that *Waiting for the Barbarians* is the product of Coetzee's attempt to cope with hatred and cruelty which are implanted in the consciousness of every African citizen following the time in which western colonizers made up their minds to shift power to the native inhabitants of African continent. Benton shortly puts forward the following view:

Fiction has few characters as utterly loathsome as Simon. Coetzee takes on envy, hatred, and iniquity, bringing the reader to identify with a character so despicable that they shudder to recognize their own empathy. The opening chapters create an atmosphere that promise to be a much-needed deviation from typical narratives of heroism and goodness. David's character can also be read as a version of the author's younger self; some experiences seem too vivid to be imagined. (41)

The loathsomeness and wild passion of African citizens worried by the haunting experiences of war are kept in the novel with a huge sense of dedication on the part of the novelist. Benton is more interested in the analysis of the inner malaises of the characters like the magistrate and Joll. Though outer challenges which arose out of the inhabitants' suspicious nature are vital, inner psychological conditions of characters are of utmost importance.

Annie Gagiano traces autobiographical elements in the novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Thoughts are not properly presented in the novel. Gagiano makes the following remarks:

Coetzee's many fictions, his autobiographies, essays, direct political statements and his other writings are probably all better known for their lucid presentation. Though lucidity is obviously present in these works, certain degree of obscurity is present. Relative obscurity is an index of absence of admiration-more highly rated. The richness of this text is nevertheless in one way measurable. It is one of the few African Anglophone novels which brought irresistibly to mind when so



disparate and wide-ranging a list of topics as bodies' identities, subcultures and repression is mentioned. (76)

As claimed by Gagliano, it is a sustained, complex and intensely dramatic evocation of the ancient and urgent question of how violent political and social repression is to be opposed. The entire novel is replete with disparate social and political identities as well as the presentation of one main subculture. Sometimes, it aims at projecting insistent power of ruthless repression.

Emily Cappel has looked into the very title of this novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*. She is determined to demystify the conscious choice of title for this novel. Her view is expressed in the following excerpt:

The middle part of *Waiting for the Barbarians* contains excerpts from Joll's report. In it, he discusses the aims and achievements of propaganda and the difference between its effect on people from Western cultures and those from Asian cultures. One theory that Magistrate pays special attention to is that of the father-voice and how it works to control the common citizen as well as how it fails as a device of propaganda. (34)

Intermixed with the narrative of the report are magistrate's interior monologues. His comments tend to exaggerate his position, such as when he refers to himself as a hero of resistance. Bleak vision of life is reflected in this novel. This vision is provocative of fear of life. Actually, unknown and unfamiliar beings employed to keep an eye on magistrate and barbarian girl. The very title of this novel evokes the sense of divine innocence which is redemptive in orientation. A kind of lingering anthropomorphic pride is entirely accountable for the inception of negative vision almost verging on despair and fatalism.

Although all these critics have examined the novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, from different perspectives, none of them has concentrated upon how much exploitation and domination are committed in the name of imperialism. In an unknown territory, a few outsiders come to do trade and commerce. To hoodwink the indigenous people, they distributed the gospel of Christianity. Under the banner of imperialistic glory and power, the majority of the native people are dulled and brainwashed. They are given just the bare means to live. All the resources of the native land go to the grip of the supporters of imperialism. The subjects of the colonized land are told that they are the members of the empire and they have thus the responsibility towards the imperial glory and glamour. Other inhabitants come to realize that they are cheated and robbed by the outsiders whom they had mistakenly believed.

This thesis is divided in four chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics' views regarding to the novel. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. The third chapter consists of the thorough discussion on post-colonialism. In the third chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of *Waiting for the Barbarians* by adopting postcolonial theory. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

## II. Discussion on Post colonialism

The postcolonial refers to the passage of societies recovering from the experience of colonialism. Rather than indicating contemporary social circumstances, does it signify a state of mind preoccupied with effecting a disengagement from the previous condition? And since, despite formal decolonization, “this experience, Bhabha says, remains a potent factor in the formation of its practitioners, North and South, East and West, does the gesture to an existentially beyond' intimate a therapeutic discourse composed by critics, scholars, and writers in pursuit of intellectual self-fashioning” (*Location of the Cultures* 156).

Associated with a casual approach to historical specificities is an indifference to overseas empire's capitalist trajectory. It is because imperialism lives on in new forms and perpetuates the exploitation of the Third World. The addition of postcolonial to the critical vocabulary remains controversial. The formal independence won by colonial populations does not automatically imply decolonization and independence, since an active colonialism continues to operate in the form of transnational corporatism.

Post-colonialism is subversion. It aims at countering some of the claims and assumptions mentioned about the colonial culture and people in the dominant colonial discourses. In this regard, Bill Ashcroft argues:

Post-colonial studies developed as a way of addressing the cultural production of those societies affected by the historical phenomenon of colonialism. In this respect it was never conceived of as a grand theory but as a methodology: first, for analyzing the many strategies by which colonized societies have engaged imperial discourse; and second, for studying the ways in which many of those strategies are shared by

colonized societies, re-emerging in very different political and cultural circumstances. (14)

There has hardly been a more hotly contested term in contemporary theoretical discourse. Postcolonial in this perspective represents an attempt to regroup intellectuals of uncertain location under the banner of postcolonial discourse.

Intellectuals in the flesh may produce the themes that constitute postcolonial discourse. On the contrary, it is participation in the discourse that defines them as post-colonial intellectuals. Ashcroft goes on to say that “since its entry into the mainstream in the late 1980s with the publication of *The Empire Writes Back* there has been a constant flood of introductions to the field”(86). According to Edward Said, it is important to delineate the discourse so as to identify postcolonial intellectuals themselves. An investigation of the emergence of the term ‘post-colonial’ “reveals how and why such a range of meanings has come to surround its use. Employed by historians and political scientists after the Second World War in terms such as the post-colonial state, post-colonial had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period”(45). The study of the discursive power of colonial representation was initiated by Edward Said’s landmark work *Orientalism* in 1978.

Postcolonialism serves as the methodological fulcrum. It gives plenty of insights about how to examine various tricks and treacheries used by European colonizers to exploit the native inhabitants of the colonized land. Postcolonial criticism has refocused attention on neglected aspects or areas within it. Postcolonial criticism has contributed to the interrogation of received distinctions between high and popular culture.

In *Orientalism*, Said argued that much of the Western study of Islamic civilization is political intellectualism. It is meant for European self-affirmation, rather than for objective intellectual enquiry and academic study of Eastern cultures. Hence, Orientalism functioned as a “method of practical, cultural discrimination applied as a means of imperialist domination, producing the claim that the Western Orientalist knows more about the Orient than do the Orientals” (*Orientalism* 86). Said argues that the history of European colonial rule distorts the writing of even the most knowledgeable, well-meaning, and culturally sympathetic Western Orientalists.

Postcolonial critique allows for a wide-ranging investigation into power relations in various contexts. The postcolonial field includes “various topics like the formation of empire, the impact of colonization on postcolonial history, economy, science, and culture, the cultural productions of colonized societies, agency for marginalized people”( Said 41). Literally, post-colonialism refers to the period following the decline of colonialism. Although the term post-colonialism generally refers to the period after colonialism, the distinction is not always made. In its use as a critical approach, post-colonialism refers to "a collection of theoretical and critical strategies used to examine the culture of former colonies of the European empires, and their relation to the rest of the world” (Bill Ashcroft 121). The postcolonial writers face numerous challenges like the attempt both to resurrect their culture and to combat preconceptions about their culture. Edward Said uses the word ‘Orientalism’ to describe the discourse about the East constructed by the West.

Said examines the historical, cultural, and political views of the East that are held by the West. He examines how they developed and where they came from. He basically traces the various views and perceptions back to the colonial period of British and European domination in the Middle East. Said argues:

During this period, the United States was not yet a world power and didn't enter into anything in the East yet. The views and perceptions that came into being were basically the result of the British and French. The colonial rulers could not rule properly. It was believed without some knowledge of the people they ruled. Westerners believe themselves to be superior to the others. They were basically the opposite of the East and considered to be active while the Orient was considered to be passive. The Orient existed to be ruled and dominated. (76)

Post-colonialism or postcolonial studies are an academic discipline featuring methods of intellectual discourse. It analyzes, explains, and responds to the cultural legacies of colonialism and imperialism. It responds to the human consequences of controlling a country and establishing settlers for the economic exploitation of the native people and their land.

Postcolonial studies analyses the politics of knowledge by analyzing the functional relations of social and political power. Post-colonialism “questions and reinvents the modes of cultural perception. Post-colonialism records human relations among the colonial nations. Post-colonialism presents, explains, and illustrates the ideology and the praxis of neocolonialism, with examples drawn from the humanities”(64). People are reminded that guano is an important nineteenth-century export to Europe used for fertilizer. But the novel begins with the movement away from agriculture to mining the resources for an industrial economy.

The project of postcolonialism is not only applicable to the students of literature alone; indeed, it seeks to emancipate the oppressed, the deprived and the

down-trodden all over the world. Bill Ashcroft puts forward his view regarding to what postcolonial theory:

Postcolonialism is an enterprise which seeks emancipation from all types of subjugation defined in terms of gender, race and class.

Postcolonialism thus does not introduce a new world which is free from ills of colonialism; it rather suggests both continuity and change.

Postcolonialism marks the end of colonialism by giving the indigenous people the necessary authority and political and cultural freedom to take their place and gain independence by overcoming political and cultural imperialism. (22)

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement. It becomes crucial to distinguish between the semblance and similitude of the symbols across diverse cultural experiences. The transnational dimension of cultural transformation migration, diaspora, displacement, and relocation jointly makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification.

Ella Shohat observes if the postcolonial denotes the closure of a previous condition. The postcolonial critique celebrates globalism for the volatility of the cultural flows it brings about. The problem can be located even further, in the failure to engage with the prior terms, colonialism and imperialism. Shohat makes the following observations:

The postcolonial is said to displace or supersede. Associated with a casual approach to historical specificities is an indifference to overseas

empire's capitalist trajectory. It is because imperialism lives on in new forms and perpetuates the exploitation of the Third World. The addition of postcolonial to the critical vocabulary remains controversial. The formal independence won by colonial populations does not automatically imply decolonization and independence, since an active colonialism continues to operate in the form of transnational corporatism. (19)

Shohat laments that postcolonial preoccupation is with the representational systems of colonialism and imperialism. Those pursuing a postcolonial critique are able to hail the vigorous contestation of ideologically contrived knowledge. This knowledge is tantamount to sounding the death-knell of the West's continuing power. It also marks the end of the need to examine the political economy and international social relationships of neo-colonialism.

Edward Said puts an end to the difference between east and west, as orientalists put in discourse of orientalism. He says that with the start of European colonization the Europeans came in contact with the lesser developed countries of the east. They found their civilization and culture very exotic, and established the science of orientalism. Orientalism is the study of the orientals or the people from these exotic civilization. Edward Said argues that the Europeans divided the world into two parts; the east and the west or the occident and the orient or the civilized and the uncivilized. This was totally an artificial boundary. And it was laid on the basis of the concept of them and us or theirs and ours. Said's ideas, which constitute the theoretical framework, are presented below:

The Europeans used orientalism to define themselves. Some particular attributes were associated with the orientals, and whatever the



orientals weren't the occidentals were. The Europeans defined themselves as the superior race compared to the orientals; and they justified their colonization by this concept. They said that it was their duty towards the world to civilize the uncivilized world. The main problem, however, arose when the Europeans started generalizing the attributes they associated with orientals, and started portraying these artificial characteristics associated with orientals in their western world through their scientific reports, literary work, and other media sources. (87)

The trend to divide geography, culture and civilization takes root in the discourses of orientalism. The Europeans see their advantage in drawing boundary between the culture of the west and the culture of the east. By so doing they intend to make their culture acceptable universal. On the strength of the universality of their culture, the westerner intends to take economic and political benefit. As claimed by Said, orientalism generates those truths regarding to the cultures and history of orientals. Those truths are political truths. The truths and knowledge that arise from the discourse of orientalism are politically charged. They are unable to give exact reality regarding how the oriental culture really is. The truths that are commonly found in the discourses of orientalism favour the colonial interest.

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Third World”. The addition of postcolonial to the critical vocabulary remains controversial. The formal independence won by colonial populations does not automatically imply decolonization and independence, since an active colonialism continues to operate in the form of transnational corporatism.

Postcolonial preoccupation is with the representational systems of colonialism and imperialism. Those pursuing a postcolonial critique are able to hail the vigorous contestation of ideologically contrived knowledge. This knowledge is tantamount to sounding the death-knell of the West's continuing power. It also marks the end of the need to examine the political economy and international social relationships of neo-colonialism.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said captures the basic thought behind colonization and imperialism. This line “They’re not like us,’ and for that reason deserve to be ruled.” Shows the basis on which the project of imperialism is constructed. “The colonized, Said maintains, “becomes the other, the not me. Hence, the established binary opposition of “the West”/“the Other” must be abolished along with its intricate web of racial and religious prejudices”(64). This erroneous view of humanity creates a simplistic interpretation of human experience. It must be replaced by one based on narrative, a historical view that emphasizes the variety of human experiences in all cultures. This narrative view does not deny differences, but presents them in an objective way. “Scholarship”, asserts Said, “must be derived from firsthand experience of a particular region, giving voice and presence to the critics who live and write in these regions, not scholarship from afar or secondhand representation” (73). Postcolonial theory moves beyond the bounds of traditional literary studies. It investigates social, political, and economic concerns of the

colonized and the colonizer. No matter which methodology a postcolonial critic may choose, it matters greatly whether or not the theorist/critic has been a colonial subject.

Cultural imperialism is the part and parcel of the thorough system of economic exploitation and political oppression of the colonized peoples. Western literature is an integral part of that system of oppression and genocide. No less so than postcolonial theory, moreover the African tradition proposes that criticism is a practice. "It can play an important role in the ongoing struggle for the political and economic, as well as cultural liberation of the Third World.

These practices of cultural resistance take a number of forms. Many of these have their analogue in postcolonial theory" (Gilbert 45). To begin with, there is a long tradition of what has now come to be known as colonial discourse analysis in African criticism. The simple truth is glossed over in Western criticism of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking.

Anthony Brewer points out some of the important clues as to how representation of culture takes place in a discourse and how the process of interpreting culture turns out to be problematical. Brewer works out some sorts of plan to narrow down the gap between cultures as such and the textually represented culture. Brewer's ideas are reflected below:

As people who belong to same culture must share a broadly similar conceptual map, so they must also share the same way of interpreting the signs of a language. In order to interpret them, we must have access to the two systems of representation: to a conceptual map which correlates the sheep in the field with the concept of a sheep: and a language system which is visual language, bear some resemblance to the real thing of looks like it in some way. The relationship in the

system of representation between sign, the concept and the object to which they might be used to refer is entirely arbitrary. (72)

As claimed by Brewer, the meaning is constructed by the system of representation. It is constructed and fixed by the code, which sets up the correlation between our conceptual system and our language system. One way of thinking about culture is in terms of these shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and the codes which govern the relationships of translation between them. Not because such knowledge is imprinted in their genes, but because they learn its conventions and so gradually become culture persons. They unconsciously internalize the codes which allow them to express certain concepts and ideas through their systems of representation. But of our social, cultural and linguistic conventions, then meaning can never be finally fixed.

Cultural practices could equally work to challenge, question, and critique and condemn colonialist ways of seeing; but the crucial point to grasp is that the act of representation itself is also securely hinged to the business of empire. Bart Moore Gilbert makes the following view in this regard:

In order to assess the justice of some of the charges brought against postcolonial theory, it is necessary to begin with a comparison between its critical focuses, practices and assumptions and those which were traditionally involved in the study of the relations between culture and imperialism in the Western academy. As will be demonstrated later, a number of earlier non-Western critics anticipated the argument of Said *Orientalism*, in asserting a direct and material relation between the political processes and structures of (neo-) colonialism on the one hand

and, on the other, Western regimes of knowledge and modes of cultural representation. (27)

Within Europe and America, however, these interconnections were almost completely ignored throughout the period from 1945 to the early 1980s. This provides the first context, then, in which postcolonial theory must be placed in order to determine whether it is indeed complicit with dominant ideologies in the more recent history of the post-war era.

The mixture of the fantastic and the normal is an important aspect of diasporic realism. The protagonist is a wonderful example of blending the cultural and the real elements. In a diasporic text, readers find the conflict between the world of fantasy and the reality, and each world works for creating a fictional world from the other. Concerning this sort of function of magic realism, Edward Said says:

Through the magical, the realistic creates its voice and makes it heard. Rushdie has used magical realist elements by mixing the real and the fantastic, twisting time, and by including myth and folklore. His magic realism has its origin more in the inner and psychological worlds, inner conflicts, moment of uncertainty, the style of storytelling of the unreliable narrator, and less in the beliefs, rituals and illusions of people as a whole. (57)

Diasporic texts are written in reaction to the totalitarian regimes. These remarks hint to the fact that dislocated identity is an alternative way of saying more than what can be said in a direct manner. Through fragmented and coherent identity one can discuss reality without actually discussing it and what the author cannot say directly can be said by an unreliable narrator. The harshness of reality is questioned and challenged by the lightheartedness of magical and fantastic elements.

It is a common perception that diasporic fictions are often set in rural areas but some politically motivated writers like Salman Rushdie have set their diasporic novels in big cities which are under political and social tension. Rushdie discloses the following viewpoint:

Diasporic identity is associated with non-western cultures which could not be approached with a typical western mentality because magic realist works are full of exotic magic, myth, and grotesque elements. This use of trope of fragmented identity has been considered a regional alternative and a protest to the Eurocentric categorization of the world. The direct allusions to history and the history of the margins have strengthened the postcolonial identity for magic realism. (87)

Rushdie has contributed largely to the connection between plural identity and post-colonialism by presenting magical realism as an instrument to undermine western concept of stability. He emphasizes the function of magic realism as the weapon of the silenced, marginalized, disposed voices in their fight against inherited notions of imperial history.

The identity is associated with putting magical or supernatural events into realistic narrative without suspecting the improbability of these events. With respect to this view, Rushdie makes the following observation:

Although it will be quite unfair to say that plural identity is particularly Latin American, the fame of Latin American dual cultural realism has inspired its adaptation by many writers globally. Dual realism is the very opposite to what is called the absolutist and the traditional. Writers like Rushdie have used this technique to open up new opportunities and varieties. They focus on celebration of plurality,

identity crisis, multiculturalism, and hope for a new nation. Through magical events writers can find new viewpoints, can open new windows through which they can see the world differently. (105)

Diasporic events take place in a real world and through which the stories remain intimate, not unbelievable. Diasporic realist works are not mere fantasies that can be dismissed. They refuse to be tied by the restrictions of real life rather help readers see and think differently of the ordinary events or issues.

Having enumerated these kinds of textual evidences, the researcher now turns towards the theoretical part. Tom Nairn is the noted critic of culture and hybridity. Hybridity reverses the formal process of disavowal so that the violent dislocation of the act colonization becomes the conditionality of discourse. Tom Nairn has defined hybridity as follows:

It is from this instability of cultural signification that national culture comes to be articulated as a dialectic of various temporalities—modern, colonial, postcolonial, native—that cannot be a knowledge that is stabilized in its enunciation. It is always contemporaneous with the act of recitation. (212)

Tom Nairn is of the view that the question of identity and coherence of self are undeniably involved in the lives of those who only want to reshape the future at the cost of the cultural past. What would be psyche of a person who is torn between the alien cultural practices and the assimilated cultural formation? This is the question which the critics of culture try to raise the culture of the metropolis exercise its own constraints and contradictions. The expatriates or immigrants should have the clear understanding about their own position in the midst of cultural chaos and amorphous metropolitan life.

At the same time, however, postcolonial criticism has been silent about its own status as a possible ideological effect of a new world situation after colonialism. Postcolonial as a description of intellectuals of Third World origin needs to be distinguished from postcolonial as a description of this world situation. The complicity of postcolonial in hegemony lies in post-colonialism's diversion of attention from contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination, and in its obfuscation of its own relationship to what is but a condition of its emergence.



### **III. Critique of Imperialism in *Waiting for the Barbarians* by J. M. Coetzee**

Coetzee condemns European colonialism. The fallout of colonialism is called into question. Imperialism is what Coetzee hates in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. By dramatizing how colonial practices and imperialistic intervention mark the onset of political instability, exploitation, genocidal violence, hatred and revenge. The present researcher studies how Coetzee condemns European colonialism in his popular novel. All Coetzee can see in the novel is a world dominated by the West. It is a world in which every opposition to the West only confirms its wicked power.

In Coetzee's novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, all the agents and employees of the empire try to inflict pain in the barbarians. Without any fault of their own, the barbarians have to encounter threat, violence and invasion. They are guided by the purpose of conquering the other. They are of the view that they thrive morally and politically by conquering the other, the barbarians. But the magistrate departs from this sort of aggressive assumption. He acts ethically. He serves the others without expecting anything from them. His help is unconditional, out and out. He is not dismissive of the so-called barbarians. He admits them as they are. They are accepted in their radical alterity by the magistrate. He had to suffer also. But due to this empathetic and ethical attitude and action, he achieved transcendence. This idea is tested in this novel by applying Leviansian ethics on the relationship between self and other.

At the same time, however, postcolonial criticism has been silent about its own status as a possible ideological effect of a new world situation after colonialism. Postcolonial as a description of intellectuals of Third World origin needs to be distinguished from postcolonial as a description of this world situation. The complicity of postcolonial in hegemony lies in post-colonialism's diversion of

attention from contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination, and in its obfuscation of its own relationship to what is but a condition of its emergence.

But perhaps the postcolonial refers to the passage of societies recovering from the experience of colonialism. Rather than indicating contemporary social circumstances, does it signify a state of mind preoccupied with effecting a disengagement from the previous condition? And since, despite formal decolonization, “this experience remains a potent factor in the formation of its practitioners, North and South, East and West, does the gesture to an existentially 'beyond' intimate a therapeutic discourse composed by critics, scholars, and writers in pursuit of intellectual self-fashioning”(156).

Associated with a casual approach to historical specificities is an indifference to overseas empire's capitalist trajectory. It is because imperialism lives on in new forms and perpetuates the exploitation of the Third World. The addition of postcolonial to the critical vocabulary remains controversial. The formal independence won by colonial populations does not automatically imply decolonization and independence, since an active colonialism continues to operate in the form of transnational corporatism.

### **Contradictory Base of Colonialism**

Magistrate is a soft man of principle and justice. He stands for what he thinks of as an old way of gentlemanly behavior. The Magistrate is still not without the faults that make him richly human. Despite his sympathies for the barbarians, he does not view them as civilized or as those he can relate to his propensity for seeing the barbarians as the other begins to fall away as he truly begins to see the force of the Empire he has served for. His own torture at the will of the Empire and his process of

transformation from man to beast facilitates his deepening understanding and a new sense of freedom. This process results not in the typical sense of despair but rather uncharted territory. It creates an ethical space which opens up the possibility of a non-appropriative encounter with the other.

The differences between civilization and barbarism in the novel are represented by parameters set out by the Empire. It is the Empire who has the power to do so. It allows the barbarians to be seen as others. The Empire appears to see these differences as marked by what each group is or is not. Barbarians are purported to be illiterate, lazy, cruel, and secretive. If these things are negatives, then the Empire is well-read, industrious, benevolent, and open. Because the Empire is the hegemonic force at the time, they are allowed to impose their own value systems. The barbarians are then seen as the other. They are created by the process the Empire uses to assert their own power, will, and value.

Joll seems to see them as no more than animals. His lack of sympathy is seen by his commentary on hunting when thousands of deer, pigs, and bears were slain. Joll expresses some regret about leaving carcasses of slain animals. The main difference permits the Empire to feel so superior. It allows it to other the barbarians. It is the difference between civilization and barbarism which is a fundamental distinction. This is both true and false. The barbarians do not have a method for writing their language and the Empire does. The following extract clarifies the point:

Since they cannot read or write, they have no use for the things that the Empire holds as important to civilization, the law and history. Even the Magistrate, the closest that the barbarians have to an advocate, believes after which [the success of the barbarian invasion] the barbarians will wipe their backsides on the town archives. (51)

The belief that the barbarians hold little to no respect for the laws and history of the Empire is unfounded. It is based on the idea that they cannot read or write. So their ignorance must translate into disregard for the law and history of the Empire. That literacy is the primary difference between civilization and barbarism is a false pretense. It is set-up by the Empire in order to perpetuate a major difference between the barbarians and themselves. It allows them a feeling of superiority.

The illiteracy of the barbarians prevents them from participating in the civilized life that the Empire views as superior. The presumption that the barbarians do not understand and cannot participate in civilized life because of their illiteracy is faulty. It is faulty because the Empire misunderstands and others the barbarians. The barbarians had held the secret to literacy at some point, yet they lost it. The slips symbolize the rise and fall using this narrow view of civilization. Those which once had literacy do not any longer and are now barbaric.

The Empire or self cannot comprehend the language of the other and dismisses it as barbaric. Self or the agents of empire deny the possibility of their own downfall. They too may eventually be considered uncivilized. They are treated as unable to participate in the life they have perpetuated as superior. The barbarians are cruel is a pure product of fear and fancy. Such a conception is the stereotyped other. It is ironic as it is the Empire inflicting cruelty on the barbarians.

When the barbarian captives are brought to town, Colonel Joll rubs a handful of dust into the prisoner's naked back. Then he writes a word with a stick of charcoal. Joll uses written language to define his enemies clearly, regardless of whether or not they are actually his enemies. The barbarians likely do not even understand the frontier zone. The Empire's literacy and supposed culture do not mean their dismissal of barbarian suffering, intentional cruelty. The pleasure they seem to take from

torturing the barbarians make them any more civilized than the barbarians. It simply happens because barbarians do not have a written language.

The Empire's attitudes towards the barbarians as dismissive of their humanity are not unique. The Magistrate is no less guilty of this behavior than anyone else of the Empire as he says "Do I really look forward to the triumph of the barbarian way: intellectual torpor, slovenliness, tolerance of disease and death?" (50). His attitude is enlightened in comparison to those of his fellow countrymen, but is still steeped in othering and stereotyping.

The magistrate knows more than his countrymen about the barbarians. But it is not enough to make evaluations of their culture and lives. He even admits so as he says, "But what do I know of barbarian upbringings?" (56). Even when he is confronted with a barbarian girl that essentially lives with him, he cannot see her as she truly is. He begins to forget her not long after their departure from one another. He does not remember seeing her the first time. His distance allows him to other the barbarians as much as the Empire, despite his sympathy and advocacy of them. It is through these scars that the Magistrate tortures the barbarian girl. He uses her scars as a means to understand her. He succeeds in understanding her Otherness as he uses interpretation as a form of torture.

Although the Magistrate is seeking to understand the other in his interactions with the girl, he also tortures her as he does so. In this attempt, he tries to convince her to discuss her torture. The Magistrate knows "an interrogator can wear two masks, speak with two voices, one harsh, one seductive" (7). He does her no favors as he tries to understand her and forces her to relive her torture, but "it has been growing more and more clear to me that until the marks on this girl's body are deciphered and understood I cannot let go of her" (31).

## **Psychological Fallout of Colonialism**

The magistrate's own understanding is more important to him in the beginning than her needs. But the narrator does let her tell him at her own pace. He does not force her to talk to him. Although he is a torturer in his own way, the Magistrate is willing to live with the difference. The following extract describes the point:

After he returns the barbarian girl, the Magistrate loses his position and is imprisoned. This is the beginning of his transformation from beast to animal because he is at the whims of those who imprisoned him. He has to depend on his enemies for everything, including food, washing, sunshine, and human contact. (26)

The Magistrate acknowledges that being subject to degradation makes him embarrassing. He describes himself in unflattering terms by saying, "truly, man was not made to live alone! I build my day unreasonably around the hours when I am fed. I guzzle my food like a dog. A bestial life is turning me into a beast" (80). Because of his treatment, he has become animalistic and is regarded on the same level as the barbarians whom Joll hold with no respect.

The passivity of the for-the-other is the tearing away of the mouthful of bread from the mouth that tastes in full enjoyment. It is an attack made immediately on the plenitude of the complacency in oneself. The immediacy of the sensible is the immediacy of enjoyment. It is the gift painfully torn up. It is not a gift of the heart, but of the bread from one's mouth. "It is the openness, not only of one's pocketbook, but of the doors of one's home, a sharing of your bread with the famished, and a welcoming of the wretched into your house" (152). The immediacy of the sensibility is the immediacy or the proximity of the other. The proximity of the other is the

immediate opening up for the other of the immediacy of enjoyment, the immediacy of taste, materialization of matter, altered by the immediacy of contact.

Although the Magistrate wants to understand the other and the barbarian girl, he is not able to until he has the same status as they have. His sympathies result in his differences from the self of the Empire and consequent status of other. They are dehumanized. Ironically, this dehumanization makes him far more humane than the professedly civilized Empire. Before his transformation, the Magistrate says things which are expressed below:

Of the screaming which afterward people claim to have heard from the granary, I hear nothing. The noise that all these souls make on a warm summer evening does not cease because somewhere someone is crying. He chooses not to hear the screams and torture; he chooses his cosseted and easy life rather than the inevitably hard path he ends up traversing. (15)

His superficial sympathy is now empathy and kinship as he sits in his prison room trying to attune my hearing to that infinitely faint level. In this level, the cries of all who suffered here must still beat from wall-to-wall. His becoming-animal allows him a new, deeper sense of humanity that opens his consciousness to the existence and suffering of others.

The Magistrate gains a true empathy and also gains new freedoms which had previously been denied to him as a member of the colonizer. After the conversation when he realizes that he will lose his post, he states:

But what a dangerous joy! It should not be so easy to attain salvation. In my opposition there is nothing heroic. He is aware that breaking with the Empire is dangerous and he pays the price through his

imprisonment and his transformation into a beast, but his emotion after this is one of the first genuine instances of any emotion. (35)

While going through the motions as a typical bureaucrat, he has finally made a choice. His observation is that it should not be so easy to attain salvation is astute and correct. He must first suffer as the other, as the beast, before he can achieve a new level of understanding. What the Magistrate gains is more than he loses for the first time. He has made a choice. Primarily, he has gained the freedom to choose his path and the course of his own life.

Consciousness is not only naivety and opinion. The ethical language people have resorted to does not arise out of a special moral experience. It is independent of the description hitherto elaborated. In his old life, he is constrained by the expectations of the Empire and the town. By becoming other, he has already violated the norms and made himself an exile. As an exile, he scavenges and begs, but he is permitted to follow his conscience however he wishes. He chooses to return to the prison room, not because he particularly wants to but because he is concerned for the soldier whose duty it is to watch him.

The magistrate says to the soldier “Think about why I came back and what it would have meant if I had not. You can’t expect sympathy from the men in blue” (101). Had he not returned, the soldier would have suffered. The Magistrate is allowed to follow his own scruples, not the edicts of the Empire. Despite his sufferings, he seems to find that it agrees with him. His dreams are often full of snow with the barbarian girl making a castle in the courtyard. She is barely recognizable, covered up in a parka. It is not until the Magistrate stands up against the cruelty in the square as soldiers and townspeople beat the captives that he can share an intimate moment with the girl in a dream.



## **Restriction on the Freedom of Choice**

Once the Magistrate chooses to stand up and make use of his new freedom, he is permitted the company of the other as an equal. Because he has resumed what authority is left in the town, the Magistrate is in the most promising position to connect his town. The barbarians and his suffering allow him to understand them in a way that the other colonizers cannot. His unconditional activities allow for the possibility of a coming community.

The scene with the children and the snowmen is not what the Magistrate had expected. In another sense, the Magistrate may be missing seemingly essential parts of himself. The Magistrate is pressing on along a road that may lead nowhere. He is certainly correct. Community with the barbarians is not a given, it is something for the distant future. Magistrate's actions on the behalf of the othered barbarians result in his imprisonment and subsequent transformation into a beast. While degrading, his transformation leads him both to new freedoms and a higher understanding of the other as he communes with them.

The Magistrate has now experienced the other. His uncertainty and ignorance can be seen as products of his new understanding and the potential for community between barbarians and the supposedly civilized. The following extract throws light on how the magistrate's heart wells up towards the poor girl who is victimized by the agents of empire:

Their relationship lacks mutual understanding of each other. They often fail to communicate what they feel towards each other. Their confusion leads to frustration. The magistrate goes back to having sex with his previous casual partner. His frustration grows, however, both

with himself and with the girl. He decides to take her back to her own people. (34)

The magistrate eventually regains his previous position. Together with the inhabitants he devises various means of protection, where they fake the presence of soldiers. Peace returns, but the magistrate has many regrets about the past. He realizes his mistakes while feeling ashamed about the treatment of the barbarians. He realizes he is unable to provide a historical account of what happened. The reality of life on the frontier is to live through seasons and cycles rather than events with beginnings and ends.

The magistrate discovers a blind girl begging on the street for money on a cold winter day. Due to her injured ankles she carries sticks with her to be able to walk. He gives her “money, being concerned about her health as well as attracted by her beauty. When she disappears for a while he inquires about her. He approaches her when seeing her back on the street, offering her cleaning work at his house as she is not allowed to ask for money in town, especially that winter is coming” (49). The following extract throws light on the magistrate’s increasing benevolence towards the poor so-called female barbarian:

He wants to notify the Bureau about his trip, justifying its purpose as an attempt to restore good relationships with the barbarians. After writing a letter he decides against sending it. Without informing anyone about his trip, he takes four soldiers with him, the girl, and heads for the mountains. (65)

Upon arrival, the magistrate meets a warrant officer from the Third Bureau. The officer accuses him of conspiring with the enemy. When the magistrate accuses the army of triggering conflicts, he becomes imprisoned. In his solitude he analyzes the

events of the last few weeks. More prison cells are built for the barbarians tortured in front of their relatives. Unable to defend themselves, they are vulnerable and deprived of their humanity. He analyzes his feelings for the native girl who stayed with him, questioning his pity for her. She became less of a human being during her torture.

### **Aggression as a Colonial Trope**

Joll travel south towards the desert and then the valleys, where the nomads winter and usually follow the old dead river-bed. To shorten their trip they choose a different route never previously attempted. Even though winter has passed, the wind blowing through the ice makes breathing difficult. They carry firewood and try to conserve food and water

The magistrate's unconditional love and moral sense of responsibility towards the poor barbarian girl knows no bound. Initially he is hesitant. But as time passes by, he becomes increasingly aware of the value and possibility of enhancing his moral sense of responsibility by being empathetically concerned with the poor girl. The following extract is expressive of this view:

While he washes her and bandages her ankles, he inquires about her injuries. Upon his return the magistrate is imprisoned for the alleged conspiracy with barbarians, becoming the victim of the system he once represented himself. He is kept in prison without trial, tortured, and eventually released. (76)

The barbarians arrive before dark, stealing clothing, food, and anything of use. The magistrate is released from prison without any means of survival. He is forced to live on the street. The barbarians hide while their huts are destroyed. They reappear in other places, being cheated when they try to trade with fish. Policeman Mandel wants

the magistrate to work. When he responds that he is still awaiting his trial, he learns that there are no records of him.

The magistrate is capable of unconditional help. He is able to demonstrate a great sense of empathy. He accepts others in their radical alterity. For cultivating this ethical aptitude, he had to pay a lot of price. The following extract illustrates the point:

Helmets placed alongside the rampart simulate the presence of soldiers. Children, who pass by every now and then move them as if the soldiers also moved. With three men guarding the town, the magistrate assumes the leadership in town along with legal administration. No one wants to gather wood after the fishermen claim to have seen the barbarians. (74)

Suspended and then punished in a businesslike manner by Joll, the magistrate is at a loss. Yet he remains undaunted and undefeated.

At the tragic death of his fellow comrades, the magistrate is really sad. He is at pains to see the sufferings and agony of his fellow beings. He is not only touched by the sufferings of his colleagues but also the pathetic plight of those whom his own colleagues take as their arch enemies. The following extract is suggestive of this point:

Though the lieutenant is inclined to leave them there, I persuade him to send out a party. Besides, it is good for the morale of their comrades. They should not think that they too might die in the desert and lie forgotten. What we can do to ease their dread of having to leave this beautiful earth must be done. (89)

The colonel and the barbarians are alienated both from power and the powerless. Both of them are to the Magistrate an unfathomable mystery. This mystery is the source of threat, fear and intimidation to the other. The Magistrate becomes painfully aware of the keen contradictions that his existence has been built upon. He is unable to escape the self-knowledge that his easy life has allowed him to evade. He nonetheless is unable to break with his duties. By degenerating into the bottom line of barbarians, he is able to penetrate the other and accepts them in their radical alterity.

Prior to coming to terms with the realization of her suffering, the magistrate happens to enter physical relationship with the girl. This physical intimacy enables him to enter the humanitarian level of empathy and ethical responsibility. The following extract elaborates this point:

Nor, if I must be candid, does the pleasure I take in her, the pleasure whose distant afterglow my palm still feels, go deep. No more than before does my heart leap or my blood pound at her touch. I am with her not for whatever raptures she may promise or yield but for other reasons, which remain as obscure to me as ever. (87)

Her torturers have left upon her. The twisted feet, the half-blind eyes are easily forgotten. At first he had just shown pity on her. Pity is the force that belongs to the lower realm of life. Ethical responsibility, moral maturity, unconditional love and empathy are the graces that pertain to the higher realm of life. It is by climbing the lower rung of ladder that an individual is likely to reach the higher rung.

### **Colonial Pride and Prejudice**

There are various prejudices against the barbarians on the part of the agents of the empire. Almost all the agents and employees of the empire are brainwashed that the barbarians act secretly and they are most untrustworthy. But the reality is that they

are the innocent and trustworthy people. They do not hatch any kind of collusion and conspiracies against the agents and employees of empire. The following extract shows how prevailing prejudices act as the rigid barriers in patching up the differences between self and the other:

The barbarians come out at night. Before darkness falls the last goat must be brought in, the gates barred, a watch set in every lookout to call the hours. All night, it is said, the barbarians prowl about bent on murder and rapine. Children in their dreams see the shutters part and fierce barbarian faces leer through. The barbarians are here! the children scream, and cannot be comforted. Clothing disappears from washing- lines, food from larders, however tightly locked. (97)

Barbarians are not as bad as people generally think. Viewed from the near, they are not as different as other people. The barbarians have dug a tunnel under the walls. The majority of people circulate this sort of prejudice. Even the calm and contented life style of the barbarians is viewed by the outsiders as the source of threat.

The Magistrate sees in the barbarian woman an image of a free state since the barbarian girl belongs to the nomads. His belonging to her is a rejection of the dictates of imperialism and a wish to free all of the colonized territories. For the first time he comes from the coon of his narcissistic self. The moment he comes out of the cell of his self, he perceives a glimmer of humanity in the girl. He expresses such wish as he says: "I watch her as she undresses, hoping to capture in her movements a hint of an old free state" (34). To him also, she is a historical document of the injustice of colonization. Such document has proof in the marks and traces of torture on her body, her eyes, and legs.

The magistrate's action of handing her to her people is a gesture which he hopes will allow him to erect an identity for him. This identity is not scornful towards the other. It is all-inclusive. To resist the agents and employees of an empire is to reject the traditionally perceived notion of self. To show a further development of the Magistrate's identity, he is trying now to disassociate himself from his self-centric groups. Moreover, the Magistrate reaches a point whereby he frankly and angrily reveals the truth of other's marginalization and repression.

In the town, the magistrate is the only authority until Colonel Joll arrives with a group of soldiers belonging to white dominating society. The magistrate lives in peace with the natives in the town in an undefined world of barbarians. In the novel, the magistrate expresses the situation of the town to Colonel Joll. In relation to the existence of the barbarians in his town, the magistrate says:

I observed that once in every generation, without fail, there is an episode of hysteria about the barbarians. There is no woman living along the frontier who has not dreamed of a dark barbarian hand coming from under the bed to grip her ankle, no man has not frightened himself with visions of the barbarians carousing in his home, breaking the plates, setting fire to the curtains, raping his daughters. These dreams are the consequence of too much ease. Show me a barbarian army and I will believe. (101)

The attacks and violation of invisible barbarians are always expected in the town though nobody has ever seen them. Great powers want social groups to live apart from each other because they fear of the integration of these groups. These groups would be a threat for their existence and power. Although the magistrate is a member of the empire, he is not disturbed by the idea of the unification of the barbarian tribes.

To cut the entire story, *Waiting for the Barbarians* is path-breaking for its representation of an entire post-colonial society engaged with global capitalism. It is a decisive novel in that it aims to work for its reworking of the historical novel in an age when traditional historiography, the omniscient perspective, and the idea of progress could no longer be taken seriously. His experience during the revolution have disillusioned him of the European aristocracy, but his new-found Marxism is undermined by his obsession with, in fact his enslavement to, the silver itself. He gained his character by laboring for reputation.



#### **IV. Coetzee's Vision of National Independence**

The core finding of this research is to elucidate how colonial practices and aggressive activities take place in the colonial period. Colonialism is the projection of the mentality to conquer, subjugate and dehumanize those who belong to different kinds of socio-cultural category. In Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, it is noticeably clear how European traders and colonial agents practice harsh and dehumanizing practices. The magistrate thinks that he can live meaningfully only in the respectful existence of the barbarian girl. It is this girl in the light of whose existence; magistrate finds his meaningful whole and selfhood.

The relationship between magistrate and the girl exemplifies how colonial-self acts in relation to the other with the nonreciprocal sense of responsibility. It is by giving, fulfilling his responsibility to the other that magistrate is growing. The self-nature of the magistrate grows and unfolds meaningfully only when he acts compassionately, altruistically and ethically. Magistrate's relation with the girl is a brilliant act of affirmation of self's proximity to the sphere of the other.

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, life revolves around securing food supplies for the coming winter. Horses are the preferred mode of transport. Guns seem as common as more primitive weapons amongst those who gather armies. Magistrate oversees a far-off and isolated frontier fort at the edge of the Empire's domain. Within the walls of the fortress, a small village of people has come to exist for the purpose of feeding and trading with the soldiers stationed there. They live in a kind of symbiosis with nomads and tribes people of the local area. They occasionally arrive to trade their valuable furs and foods.

The Barbarians represent a kind of omnipresent outside threat which seeks to trample on the security and safety of the people of the Empire. The Magistrate has

seen no evidence of a gathering Barbarian menace. He knows they have no clear designs to engage in a battle against the frontier fortresses of the Empire. He resigns to the fact that soon the Colonel will be done with his work and will return to the Capital. The quiet life of their isolated settlement will return to its peaceful normalcy.

The expedition to bring back Barbarian prisoners is dubious. Col. Joll's captives seem to the Magistrate to be little more than nomadic heathens. The Magistrate struggles to understand the barbarian manner in which Col. Joll goes about questioning his prisoners for intelligence. The captives confess and give the Colonel details of their tribe's whereabouts and plans. In the aftermath of the torturing, one prisoner is left dead and another, a young, black haired woman, is left partially blind. The Magistrate takes the young girl under his wing, and brings her back to his quarters. They sleep beside each other and he massages her and caresses her. Their relationship hardly becomes more physical. He gives her a job in the kitchen cooking for the soldiers and bureaucrats.

Magistrate struggles with the rationale of the visiting Colonel. His loyalty to the empire comes into question. He fills his days with unauthorized archeological expeditions in the desert. There are clear symptoms of the magistrate that he is already fallen from the standard of civilized life. His suffering has already begun as retribution to his amoral act. But it is this amoral that uplifts him morally, ethically and philosophically. He happens to cultivate the higher level of humanity. He becomes ethics incarnate. He is an embodiment of compassion and unconditional love.

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