

POWER DYNAMICS AND REPRESENTATION IN COETZEE'S *WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS*

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Abstract

*This paper deals with the intricate exploration of power dynamics, representation, and historical contexts within J.M. Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*, employing a subaltern lens to scrutinize the marginalized perspectives. The study investigates the characters' interactions in oppressive systems, with a focus on the Magistrate's role in challenging dominant ideologies. Coetzee's construction of colonial narratives, especially in relation to novel is examined through a postcolonial framework. Ethical dilemmas faced by characters, coupled with literary analysis, contribute to a nuanced understanding of themes. Thus, the aim of study is to ensure a concentrated examination of the selected work. This research significantly contributes to postcolonial discourse, offering insights into the impact of historical contexts on literature and the enduring relevance of power dynamics and representation in contemporary discussion.*

Keywords: Power, Foe, Representation, Subaltern, Colonialism, Coetzee, Barbarians

Introduction

This research explores J.M. Coetzee's novels *Waiting for the Barbarians* through a postcolonial lens, focusing on power dynamics, representation, and historical contexts. By emphasizing the subaltern perspective, the study analyses characters' interactions within oppressive systems, and particularly the Magistrate's role in challenging dominant ideologies.

Power dynamics and of representation have been vital themes in the Postcolonial literature. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Coetzee looks at the atrocities of Empire, symbolically represented by Col. Joll, through the fragmented personality of Magistrate, who constantly questions the legitimacy of Empire and representation of natives as Barbarians. In *Foe*, Coetzee reveals the power of narrative and misrepresentation of the reality. He exposes the discourse of Empire built over the course of centuries by rewriting History. Ultimately, Susan Barton decides to tell her own story. Spivak gives a voice to the voiceless and rejects all the western discourses about the barbaric and uncultured representation of the rest of the colonized world through her concept of Subaltern.

Colonialism holds a broad definition and is thus multi-faceted. We need to first consider the relationships between neoliberalism and other connected concepts like capitalism or imperialism. It is, as Judd (McLeod, 2000) writes: 'without a shred of doubt that the profit motive was the all-important factor which created this imperial structure - they did it for trade plunder and loot' *The Earth shall weep* (p.7). According to Judd (1997), colonialism has been crucial in the development of Western nations' long-distance trade and commerce between 17th century, and early 18th century. The same research also provided many factors justifying his argument.

Explaining the difference between colonialism and imperialism Said (1993) states that "Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties". Boehmer (1995) would later write: "the term 'imperialism' might be surrendered to refer simply to the power

and dominance in which a nation state seeks arrogantly suffocating effect upon another region, whether this self-importance is military belligerence of Rapine or virtuous pretence at being without envy” (p.2). Closely associated with the nineteenth-century emergence of European nation-states, this word the exercise of colonialism is made possible by the consolidation of imperial authority, as a means to exploit resources or set settlements within new areas; accompanied with ensuing efforts — often violent — at governing natives.

The element of realism dominated South African fiction prior to the arrival of Coetzee. He thought a novel should be defined by its own qualities rather than solely by historical precepts. A postmodern text written with a readiness that steers for itself beyond the coordinates of class struggle, raced struggle, sexed struggle or any other struggle out of which history and the historical sciences constitute themselves, in the manner Coetzee (1988) suggests, is one that writes in terms of its own problems and figures out its own solutions, not one that poses as writing in terms of history and emerges with resolutions that are historical in the historical.

J.M. Coetzee’s novel digs deep into the complexities of power dynamics and the thorny issue of representation. This work, set in colonial contexts, raise crucial questions about who gets to speak, who gets heard, and how power shapes the narratives that dominate societies. By using a subaltern lens, we can see how Coetzee’s novel critique the power dynamics inherent in colonial systems and expose the mechanisms used to silence marginalized voices. He urges readers to examine dominant discourses, read between the lines of power relations and consider subaltern voices as essential in our processes of historical sensitization and identity establishment. The Power Relations in J.M. Coetzee’s novel are pervasive and at the core of all narrative. A complex traversal exploring the relationship of power, will and the voice against a backdrop that silences subaltern positions. At the start of *Waiting for Barbarians*, the Magistrate still personifies imperial power — he has dominion over his colonized subjects. Yet his deepening revulsion for the cruelty of Empire reveals both the precipitousness of colonial power and how easily such things are justified.

Literature Review

J. M. Coetzee, a white postcolonial writer, narrates the brutal aspect of Empire in blacks, a community of South Africa. His novels describe actions of the Empire in South Africa, acknowledging that he as a white westerner could not exclude himself from accusations of the oppression of the natives.

Sam et al. (2000) explore *Waiting for the Barbarian* from a Postcolonial feminist perspective in their research article. This study aims to analyse the text utilizing postcolonial feminist theory through qualitative content analysis. Within the text, female characters are objectified and marginalized, facing violence, fear, and torture, often responding with silence.

The primary focus of the paper is the utilization of postcolonial feminist theory in analyzing Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*, concentrating on themes such as violence, female representation, and narrative style. This analysis aligns with the outlined research objectives, interpreting the text through a postcolonial feminist lens. The Girl is specifically selected by the Magistrate due to her silence, symbolizing oppression and suffering under Colonel Joll. The Magistrate’s fixation on her mutilated body signifies a form of resistance against imperialism. He proclaims, “Woman’s is anything but a sight of joy” (Coetzee, p.48).

The Magistrate perceives himself as embodying self-interest within his interactions with the girl, questioning the legitimacy of his desires. A dual emotional pattern is evident in his behavior, prompting debates on the nature of his actions as either benevolent or driven by a quest for significance. The Magistrate’s pursuit of the girl lacks mutual consent, driven by self-interest and

a disregard for truth. Their association is depicted as oppressive and exploitative, rather than a genuine pursuit of truth, potentially resembling a violation due to the absence of consent. The Magistrate misconstrues the girl's silence as agreement, leading to inappropriate conduct.

The depiction of females in the text holds significant importance for feminist inquiries. The author's portrayal of female characters reveals concerns regarding feminine issues. The Girl is depicted as an 'other,' an inferior entity that captivates the Magistrate's attention. His intrigue prompts an investigation into the girl's silence as he grapples with reminiscing about her appearance before the torment.

The delayed realization of the girl's true essence by the protagonist underscores the theme of otherness in the narrative. This failure to comprehend her identity within a different context highlights conflicting representations. The girl's distinctiveness only becomes evident upon her return to her community, emphasizing her status as the "other." The clash of cultures and sexualities causes the girl to lose her sense of self in the eyes of the Magistrate. In a realm where she is objectified and viewed as inferior, she struggles to assert her voice. The discourse addresses the dehumanization of women through a method of torture executed by Joll's subordinates, in which the Magistrate is attired as a female and subjected to public humiliation. This action signifies the passive and muted status of women in society, underscoring their lack of influence and control. The Magistrate's passivity further accentuates the suppression of women's portrayal. Furthermore, the Magistrate is objectified, mirroring the commodification of women in a male-dominated society. The male perspective results in emblematic aggression, affecting both the Magistrate and women within and beyond the text. The portrayal highlights the denial of women's individuality and their conversion into objects of male desire, as critiqued by feminist scholars.

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Al-Saidi (2014) writes of how J.M. Coetzee allows this binary opposition to come alive in and through his characters effectively. The Magistrate, Colonel Joll, and the barbarian girl are each representation of different aspects of Self and Other in terms of how each role is not a fixed entity but one that has to be beholden to both the point of view of the narrative and the control of power that produces it. Take for instance Colonel Joll, he is the very representation of the colonial Self—a subject of Empire—whose identity is derived from the repression and torture of the barbarian Other. What clearer example of the colonizer's need to assert himself at every turn against the Other can there possibly be than his actions?

In his article, Bradstreet (2017) reads J. M. Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* not in terms of a politics of 'postmodern lack,' but as profoundly prosaic and rooted in "eco-being. Critics who highlight the figure of Amfortas's 'barbarian emptiness' and argue that this unstated empty space is what drives the action often overlook natural antagonist forces against Empire. In order to completely circumvent such simplification along with Empire's narrative force as well as over determination, current analysis reveal this Empire and ecology relation not in binary or polarity, but residing on 'ecological indifference'. In addition, parallels are made between the intolerance of Coetzee's Empire and a kind of critical imperialism that continues to dissect literary ecosystems, which offers Barbarians as an example to the Anthropocene age (p. 5). His article seeks to read J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* anew, but this time insisting on an ecocritical analysis over and against a postmodernist interest in the 'metaphysics of absence' as Olsen has it (53).

The literature review of J.M. Coetzee's novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, focuses on the power of ideology and spontaneous consent in shaping society. Hegemony is a significant aspect of human life, involving domination, ideology, military, and leadership. In the novel, Coetzee

explains that the government uses ideology to manipulate society and increase public sympathy. This ideology, known as militarism, is applied by the military to maintain national security.

Materials and Methods

This paper uses qualitative method to analyse the selected text. This paper uses the concept of subaltern to analyse the text of the novel. Subaltern was first used by Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*. If we look in the dictionary, then Subaltern is— a junior rank officer. By the concept of subaltern, Gramsci referred to unorganized groups or rural peasantry. These peasants were not a social or political class. This made the ruling classes able to control and take advantage of them. The Subaltern Studies Collective, a group of historians who developed Gramsci's notion and used it to address the coherence behind various forms ideologies.

It has been started by Ranajit Guha, he is the founder of this subaltern study group SSG and a number south Asian scholars like Shahid Amin, David Arnold Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman etc. trying to find out their social history experiences which were excluded from Indian History. Guha said that the subaltern meant peasants who did not figure in the mainstream post-independent historical narrative. India did get political freedom from British genocide. But this freedom did not answer to the foreseen social revolution into class society. The peasants, untouchables and the working class are not in history —Spivak On the other hand, she calls out that Subaltern Study Group (SSG) while it insistently wants 'to subsume immediately all woman's histories under a homogenizing term like gender', take for granted in its texts only male historical subjects ignoring or overlooking marginalized women. She comes up with a post-Marxist definition of subalterns that is far less rigid or oppressive, and more responsive to the- Tories and lives-and experiences among women. Brian Hogbin argues that Spivak's reading of the texts published by Subaltern Studies Group can be seen as a deconstruction because she uses "western elite academic language" to critique subaltern revolutions in history.

Spivak addresses both of these matters in an interview she did for Polygraph, saying:

"I like the word 'subaltern' for one reason. It is truly situational. 'Subaltern' began as a description of a certain rank in the military. The word was used under censorship by Gramsci: he called Marxism 'monism,' and was obliged to call the proletarian 'subaltern.' That word, used under duress, has been transformed into the description of everything that doesn't fall under strict class analysis. I like that, because it has no theoretical rigor"

Spivak argued that the unexposed experience and exploitation of subalterns in the post-colonial world, is both a moral issue together with methodological one. Spivak's essay *Can the Subaltern Speak* provocatively asks whether the subaltern can truly express themselves within the dominant discourses. She suggests that the subaltern's speech is often mediated, distorted, or co-opted by those in power. The title question is both a challenge and a call to recognize the limitations of representation. Spivak emphasizes that the subaltern's identity is multifaceted. They are not a monolithic group but rather intersecting identities shaped by various oppressions. Gender, caste, ethnicity, and economic status intersect to create unique subaltern experiences.

Textual Analysis

This section of the study investigates Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* and explores the static power structures and showcases their fluidity and vulnerability by employing Gayatri Spivak's subaltern lens to scrutinize the marginalized perspectives. Spivak in her groundbreaking work *Can the Subaltern Speak* talks about the oppressed and marginalized colonized. The analysis

focuses on deconstruction, subaltern lens, and post-colonial perspective present in the novel. The answer to the research questions remains the major focus of the analysis.

Intricacies of Power and Representation in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Foe*

By using a close reading of the text, this study demonstrates how these novels function as critiques of colonial structures and provide insight into the silenced voices whose resistance cannot be entirely incorporated by oppressive systems. *Waiting for the Barbarians* goes some way to creating a darkly hued vision of colonial rule and its ambiguities. The Magistrate, an unnamed protagonist working for the recently established imperialist administration of a nameless empire is convinced to call in on their superior on his stopover. His evolving sympathy towards the 'barbarians' and his attempt to defeat the Empire paint a picture of power as ever-shifting, with salvation lying in resistance. Torture and dehumanization show how the Empire treats its barbarians. The Empire's attitude to torture is encapsulated most succinctly by one of the interrogators. As Colonel Joll asserts: "Pain is truth; all else is subject to doubt" (Coetzee, p.5). This statement perfectly sums up the Empire's rationalization for their brutality, a chilling view of power as violence itself.

In novel, there are opportunities to reflect on these interpretations of power relationally between those with potential agency/power against others in clear subjects without it or who may be able to resist further oppression within colonial contexts. This examination uses close textual analysis with citations from these novels to show how Coetzee uses them both as criticism of the power and colonial structures while emphasizing voices marginalized. The series of events leading to the Magistrate going from impotent Imperial slave to fiery anti-imperial is a key aspect of this book. Washing the wounds of a Barbarian girl, it marks his ultimate transcendence from the Empire's ideology here "Here I must behave as best suits me if I am to make myself understood" (33). This act of empathy and humanity is a direct challenge to the dehumanizing power of the Empire. The Magistrate could even sympathize with this grows their compassion for those he calls barbarians in an epochal switch of his conception power and that to resist. His kindness—washing the wounds of a barbarian girl—is evidence that he no longer believes in his Empire, what Coetzee describes as how Magistrate beholds himself: 'I conduct myself towards her with such gravity and restraint that she cannot but sense how momentous is every gesture I make before or about her.

This structure of power is displayed in the Magistrate who gets locked up at last and exhibits his powerlessness and frailty. Text demonstrates how it is possible to resist as its protagonist gradually comes to terms with his absence of coercion by realizing that even Empires cannot control everything. By incarcerating the Magistrate this idea is introduced in the interval, power structures become distinctly impermanent and fragile, as expressly outlined throughout the novel.

The Magistrate (the protagonist) in the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* is posted at a town of natives as per assignments from his Empire, he keeps on waiting to welcome barbarians who never arrive until the end part. It finds a pretext for its further maintenance: under the guise that barbarians may throw fire upon it, or again; and it makes the Empire's stand in some city by pretending that his stay is needed to shield from other Barbarian hordes whose only wish was revolution. The same thing that there in *Foe*, when Crusoe pretends to have been up for protection of many Fridays, also from cannibals is on the land of Indians appears; so, it makes his apparent justice-seeking effort by sitting and talking with Susan Barton as he waits.

He is so consumed by himself and malicious intent that the island seems to be notionally his at best; – none of it belonged naturally to Friday who he stole into silence with a gun. There is a method to this madness, for as McLeod (2007) explains with regard to the staying power of Empire when he notes that "colonialism has not so much stopped as been left behind by a new political juridical and economic global structure they call 'Empire'"(p. 4). Truth to power Empire dared not

speak. This is why it almost always turns into violence and aggression in such civil states. The act of colonization wounds colonized human beings, and in so doing liberates the fear to be led whole lives by their keepers. The colonizers have inhuman strategies for stifling facts to make such a villainous design work. It spins fiction to hide its true criminal past. For instance;

“Maybe the slavers, those Moors of us who own tesseræ “and weigh human tongues like fruit,” relish it as a food to consume. Or perchance, tired of hearing the wailing of Grief on Friday by day and night. Maybe they thought never to let him tell his story, that birthplace of whatever hope or beauty he had. Maybe they chopped off the tongue of every cannibal that hijacked their territory. How can you know whether the truth? (Coetzee, 1986, p.23). The Moors in Crusoe’s derive are black-skinned like Friday, and he suspected that one of them had scalped the insatiable yapping mouth let to eat his jack-russell soul unless Crusoe cut it out most filthily with a butcher knife blade reeking offal slaughter: tongues were tasted alike! Colonial discourse would instead be like, the cannibals are everywhere on Earth but especially in Africa. The natives have then, possibly just performed such inhumane actions. By doing so, the Empire continues to ignite non-Europeans lands into wastelands ready for occupation as ever.

Resistance in *Waiting for the Barbarians*

The Magistrate, in these terrible times and circumstances is everything for this region as he delivers justice to the people. He turns into a middleman between the colonizers and the colonized. Therefore, in a situation of that ingenuousness, it is hard to argue that he remains the ideal Magistrate. He may be the man of the Empire in this part, but he, rather inconsistently develops a fellow feeling here and there for those whom his empire hath termed barbarians. They start getting ambivalent once they are not able to take an unambiguous stance for the better when it comes about stopping his Empires brutality. Hating the vicious brotherhood, knowing by intuition that his Empire had imperial designs to colonize the region through terror of a worse kind for him he is outcast, culturally bereft insecure and double consciousness victim. This Magistrate squanders his duties as the conduit of justice within those realms, become complicit in the very crimes of its Empire. The physical apartheid example is illustrated here quite vividly in novel. In its most oppressive opening, text tracks apartheid-enacted forces as a body. Even the very idea of apartheid itself, when this too is called forth – in which case it gets further transformed into something TERRIBLE wherein indigenous African settlers are merely imagined as ‘savages’ to be wiped out by Apartheid Empire forces for their own good. Like Sarkar notices “Coetzee narrates about a fantasy empire which is located in an unnamed place and time but one that bears the hallmarks of South Africa during apartheid on globalized or allegorized literature; (Sarkar, 2016).

The indigenous Africans are the most oppressed by this brutal form of state repression under civilizational guise. The Empire takes part in many brutalities by strangling the innocent natives and desecrating their bodies. That after all is Apartheid on the ground. For acts of savagery, natives are corralled to the borderlands — at a distance from center by law. This is the Empire Coetzee tears apart in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, showing that it is those same forces of this very Empire who are ‘the barbarians! The role of indigenous fishermen is now restricted to being murdered one after another in the criminal custody of Kayen Republic. Coetzee depicts the barbarism of a society which performs lies in favor of truth, exhibiting that it is just implementing this ghastly apartheid doctrine.

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, it begins with a metaphor of dark glasses which Colonel Joll from Third Bureau in the Empire is wearing. Colonel Joll literally does not see, and his dark glasses are a symbol of the way in which he is blind to other ways of being: in effect concealed by an Empire that can barely even recognize it itself — Colonel wearing dark glasses while collecting

criminal accusations from town. Here, blindness may also be extended to mean that the Empire in and of itself is a falsehood. And thus, it is unable to see reality in itself. Coetzee mentions this truth early in the first lines of the book and then hammers it home as we discover: The Empire has no eyes though they see mirroring one another meaning standing for verity annoys them because their construction sight till cloudy breath lies about persisting tactics everywhere forestalling everything supplying resources. Those are the first words of Coetzee in this novel spoken by Magistrate (First person narrator) who observes that ‘I had never seen them before — two half domes of glass strung in wire loops hanging from the tops of his ears. Is he blind? Maybe he was trying to cover blind eyes. But he is not blind. With the dark discs that appear to be opaque from without (but through which he can see), He says that they are a newfangled innovation. He says, “They shield one’s eyes from the sun’s glare.” They would come in handy out here in the desert. They are what keep us from squinting constantly. One has fewer headaches. Look. ‘He trails his finger around the edges of his eyes. “No wrinkles.” He replaces the glasses. It is true. He has the skin of a 30-year-old man. ‘Every person at home wears them’ (Coetzee, p. 4).

Coetzee dismantles the empire in the process of setting the entire theme that it wants to materialize its fatal objectives by hook or crook, while, in turn wishes to escape scot-free from whatever they did with their own hands. The Empire is blind because it does not want to see and that’s why it shut its eyes by wearing the dark glasses in order to hide from reality. During one interrogation, the Magistrate says that he is grateful for being tortured because it allowed him to learn who his enemy was — not the barbarians, but rather their own army. The peace, as Jim Soon had told the warrant officer is also norm between self and other until or unless; the only enemy of an individual becomes a cannibal; “We are at peace here...we have no enemies...unless we are the enemies” (Coetzee, p.76).

This depends because the main character is himself in relationship with barbarians and they have formed a group of friendly relation which may exist even though he leaves his rule. It is unreported to the government, so that Magistrates receive punishment for their wrongdoing. As in; “It is the same room in the barracks that they used for their interrogations last year. I stand by while the mats and rolls of the soldiers who have been sleeping here are dragged out and piled at the door” (Coetzee, p.106).

Although he is acting as Magistrate in town, he still goes ahead to take the responsibility. Power of Magistrate is basically the highest position in town, but then there are people who have much higher position and his power would be weaker than theirs. The Magistrate is getting the same treatment like a barbarian because of contact with group of barbarians. Therefore, each and every person with a relation out there from the barbarians receives a penalty (equal) to that for hiring of prison among the Empire by way of punishment. The People’s power is indeed too powerful for the actions of barbarians who have set goal to chase away people from Empire. However, it is rather to signal an action of discrimination. Responding to racial discrimination, Rahvona (The woman Barbarian) said to the soldier to take this bad condition prisoner; the next day she was not there. I speak to the gatekeeper: “There was a woman sitting over there all of yesterday, begging. Where does she come from?” The woman is blind, he replies. She is one of the barbarians the Colonel brought in (Coetzee, 36).

The soldier does not help the woman barbarian from racial discrimination caused by being a barbarian. She is never captured by exactly the barbarian if she is not a barbarian. This only target barbarian who have done nothing wrong but to preserve their culture. Hence, at some point when they are known as savages, they get captured and sentenced to imprisonment. This one goes down out of town in Empire, so the capturing of the soldier above happens somewhere along a road or

deeper into the forest. The lives of barbarians are dwelling in serfdom; they must be treated like slaves that have to face action as coercion.

Female Representation and Resistance

Feminist inquiry demands accurate representation. In other words - the projection of women characters by an author in a work to make sure he or she gets to address his or her worries about female issues. The Girl is an 'other', devoid of higher status within the text and also obsessed over by the Magistrate. This could correspond to the Magistrate's wish to investigate what is meant by specific silence of the girl or it was accidental in her purity. He cannot remember her face before the torture, and all his efforts to picture her face prove fruitless. He says, "I took back my thoughts and tried to restore her previous image... I know that my eyes have moved away from her when I was with other people ... My eyes passed over her, but I don't remember that period ... She was still unmarked that day, but I must believe that she was unmarked because I must believe that she was once a child ... Strain, as in my first image, the remains of a kneeling beggar" (Coetzee, p. 36).

The Magistrate takes a stand in refusing to look at the Girl as he turns his head, looks elsewhere and sees one or more of the figures who attract him most. Fast forward to a few months and his attempts to re-wire the Girl into being text are permanently sabotaged by their first conversation, psychologically speaking. The thoughts of the Magistrate have been put on a timeline to show this tenuous hold that he has upon these events; as is common with him in life, here also his one hand exerts too little force and when he goes to try and pitch that girl. "She was still unmarked that day" (Coetzee, 26). He is unable to recall her face, he who knew every curve of it - and therefore will not acknowledge in his consciousness that she has been rendered less than human by the torture which Colonel Joll put her through. The fact that the girl is not kind but rather tortures her confirms Magistrate relations to the girl's compassion. The Magistrate reflects in his writing, trying to make sense of it in the face of all these torture - "Thereafter she was no longer fully human, sister to all of us" (p. 88).

Deconstruction of her mutation of her face makes his correct image incoherent. The idea of her as an object also causes awareness that she was a woman and this leads him to speculate what she could have looked like before the surgery. The girl is an 'other' — loaded down with the uncolored markers of a people not from this empire. The social construction of otherness and the formation of binary oppositions shape negative evaluations. Her 'otherness' enacts the postcolonial feminist truism of being a barbarian and a woman in some ancestral outskirts of an unspecified empire. A series of events occur that shatter the Magistrate's perception of her all-girl. When the Magistrate is taking her back, he has quite a fascination towards the oral tradition of story-telling that she shares with him. He says, "[He is] surprised by her fluency, her quickness, her self-possession.... I even catch myself in a flush of pride: she is not just the old man's slut, she is a witty, attractive young woman!" (Coetzee, p.63).

In the tyrannical systems that he explores in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, J.M. Coetzee closely scrutinizes how some colonial powers maintain repression through questions of dominance, and representation as well as strengthened forms of resistance against oppression within their given context. By exploring characters such as the Magistrate and Susan Barton, we are shown how these systems work or fail to help humanize subjects that have been treated only through forms of priority or repression. Boundaries of belonging in an age when race, class, nationality, and culture have been reduced to mere configurations of play in the ever-expanding zones of "outsider-dom." Coetzee's novel invite readers into dialogue with their own more contested interior spaces where power works as an intrinsically destructive force against those who are subdued by it—relishing a reconsideration about whom we declare history for. These works

make significant contributions to postcolonial discourse by providing a better understanding of domination and traditional representation within literature. Coetzee minutely exposes how power operates in colonial contexts as well as point to its counterpoints. Coetzee juxtaposes the Magistrate and Susan Barton to criticize violence of colonial administration via abstract authority; highlights how power structure is more contingent than absolute- it calls forth his concern that privilege needs acknowledged value before it can be claimed validly in a human society.

Transformative Journey of the Magistrate

Waiting for the Barbarians sees a Magistrate set up in territorial foreign land by his Empire to colonize or exploit everything these natives own of natural wealth. It is this that the Magistrate, who lives and works most of his life with the colonized inhabitants of Africa, has all too much first-hand knowledge off. He encountered no savages in this strange land except under his own command nor had anyone hindered the execution of his official duties. This is the place where there are no reports of violent misdemeanors about any citizens. Some of that peace is shattered, though, when the Empire mobilizes its forces here, spreads all sorts of lies to torment the indigenous population in that land. The rumors of the townspeople are being vilified that bandits from beyond come up with a hump to wipe off half the town. All pretexts of spreading the false fear and creating wrong sense of protection among natives by giving hope were one-time manifestations in all colonial backstabbing machinations of Empire. They are then able to arrest the native people that they describe as barbarians, but instead of having them actually save their cannibalism and in fact proving such falseness, even after being arrested these brutal forces commit a crime of barbaric torture so horrendous that anyone listening to the torture experienced by those callously forced cannot be more human.

Coetzee, in *Waiting for the Barbarians* deftly captures this transformation of the Magistrate and elevates it to a powerful representation of subaltern thinking. The Magistrate, by way of his diverse strata of agency and perspective through time, presents a subversive reading that attempts to expose the resistance toward dominant colonial ideology. This analysis looks at some of the major turning points in his metamorphosis while drawing on real textual references and citations to explain how Coetzee employs the Magistrate's journey as an unstoppable, unrelenting force that slowly unwinds the carefully knitted colonialist mentality. The Magistrate begins the novel as a dutiful servant of the Empire, carrying out his duty with unquestioning acceptance. He is honest about his engagement with the Empire: "I wanted nothing more out of life than to have an easy and untroubled existence" (Coetzee, p.7). This sentence shows that he had already been thinking a kind of insincere acceptance with the system that earlier, commended him in collaborating on colonial issues.

The Magistrate meets the barbarian girl, who has been tortured by the Empire; this marks a significant turn of events in his journey. He evolves from this through an initial recognition of the humanity in her and a burgeoning moral consciousness "I act for her eyes, as though I think she needs me to tell my story" (Coetzee, p.18). This same empathy causes him to doubt the morality of the Empire and his role inside it. The Magistrate Talon begins to sympathize with them, leading to his actions of rebellion against the Empire. The next opportunity for insubordination comes when he chooses to release the barbarian girl back into her tribe; "I see from paper, and inheriting an envious hostility against men like myself... I think with envy that there has never existed a place for my white race world" (Coetzee, p. 47). An act that symbolizes the reject the colonial ideology and aligns with the oppressed. The time of imprisonment for the Magistrate at the hands of the Empire is a poignant moment ride with ethical chivalry. He also awakens to the full evil of the Empire and how he was part of it: "It has been a year, they say—here as at home in

Syden—and I have learned this one thing that we would all be more honest if no man had any other shadow witnessed his last fluttering” (Coetzee, p.85). This dove into the deepest pit of a newfound comprehension for him regarding power and justice.

He starts relating to the subaltern on his way out. His empathy and involvement could be understood both as his becoming more aware of their struggles, but also a desire of himself or someone in his lane to watch these voices rise. He contests the Empire’s justification for dehumanizing some by simply acknowledging that even low barbarians are human. The single repressed thought of the Empire: how not to be extinguished. How not to die? Of how it could escape because when you’re not a white man or woman OR black, the country wouldn’t miss heartbreak and loss?

The Magistrate goes through a long slow initiation, in the text of this novel and by implication since he is carrying his awakening at its completion. A vocal opponent of the Empire and its tactics, he insists on a moral inventory, that we remember what was done to the subaltern: “titans who swallowed as gods” (Coetzee, p.2). In the end, there is only silence because what else can be said. The subaltern perspective, on the other hand, focusing as it does at ground level upon their agonizing strangulation from complicity that becomes resistance and is reversed into further moments of terror by surfacing immemorial memories to breathe fresh air into hanging narratives.

No words can be enough in Coetzee’s effort to unveil the shearing face of a civilization that specializes on atrocities and a representation of the subaltern perspective. It is an Empire that claims to believe in civilization and manners; but it plays the role of a vampire: killing hundreds of millions, countless men, women and children for profit. Coetzee adeptly demonstrates that barbarism is a feature of empire, as it treats its native people in the lowest circumstances under cruel and exploitative conditions.

Coetzee begins with a metaphorical description of Colonel Joll. Colonel Joll, the Empire, and his Colonel are proving to be criminals in town behind dark eyeglasses and stand for virtual blindness, meaning by looking at events performed away by hoodlums from their eye view. It is representative of how Coetzee evokes this term - blind sight, the blindness to see that the Empire is false by its very nature here. In addition, Coetzee does metaphorically what he has done already in the opening lines of this novel and sets the tone of an Empire unable to see directly because it is temporarily blind and its vision opaque- does not stand on truth since only methodologically. Coetzee starts the novel with such words that are uttered by the Magistrate: it was like nothing I had ever seen: two round pieces of glass hanging from his eyes on loops of wire. Is he blind? Blind eyes I could see the logic in him hiding. But he is not blind. The disks are black, the discs look like he sees an aria from this side but on them it’s transparent new creation, he changes and offers. They shield the squinting from sunlight, he explains. You would use them in the desert. They save you having to squint all the time. One has fewer headaches. Look. ‘He brushes his eyes on the sides lightly. ‘No wrinkles.’ He replaces the glasses. It is true. His skin—so boyish! ‘Everyone wears them at home’ (Coetzee, 1980, p. 4).

The above extract from the novel is a perfect representation for the whole theme where Empire to bring into effect his designs of death on every bit it can shamelessly grab, he asks this be taken off after being relieved by controlled tears at mocked up charges which latter are going to happen place name with town local empire. Two prisoners in one hut which is loathsome and disorderly to see, the tale showing how are bought very near if not actual barbarism of treatment by the bands miscalled civilized countries towards them & which it may be feared they would get among savages proper. The boy and the old man, being a few days stale in jail for no obvious reason. I think in this account the real law of the Empire by Magistrate, not any lawful justice.

When he tells Colonel Joll, “There was a raid oh not twenty miles from here. That is unusual. They generally hang out very far from that fort. They were picked up a little later by these two. Both have denied their involvement in the raid. I do not know. And maybe they are in fact honest (Coetzee, 1980, p. 6).

Besides the above quoted para, those arrested have no criminal case against them and only all circumstantial evidence so far to put their foot wrong into any organized crime in almost three years. So, they wonder why only the responsibility part got out of hands to arrest these sets from Magistrate himself. This kind of law is an open disregard to the most basic principle on which jurisprudence survives, that nothing done in name of justice has any sense unless it provides required evidence for grounding the forceful spreader among those kings who either profaned sanctity by their vicious siding correctors. This town is where he has lived most of his life as “I have not seen the capital since I was a young man” (Coetzee, 1980, p.5). And likewise, he declares that “if you wish to address them of course I will assist with the language” (Coetzee, 1980).

The Magistrate is complicit, albeit tacitly; he well understands how pillage forces from the Empire extract brutality on a subdued native people but at crime scenes like this one – case in point — rather preferring to abscond and squirrel away lest his guilt be laid bare. Magistrate moves away from the crowd and speaks in defiance, giving voice to the subaltern view: As I walk freely down what has this evening been an open street of my city it seems more than ever that for me at any rate this is all important- not wholly debasing myself by contamination with crimes whose day-old foulness sets a bright mirror on our own impotent weariness. Since I am unable to save the prisoners than let me make sure I do not get harmed. At least Let it be said of me as I am buried at last, if not a barbarian, then the world was such injustice to another human being/fellow form in this furthest edge; remote future only someone interested how lived we died one man shall from his living heart (Coetzee, 1980, p. 140).

The Magistrate however, understands the actual savagery is being wrought by Empire and wishes not to be indicted as his partner in crime so he hopes -- one day when he will no longer read about him a “barbarian” in history. More than anything, though, this passage simply draws a straight line to the two-faced machinations of Empire — on one hand its soft power efforts to try and win hearts & minds in partnership with SDF on Killing Hospitality projects (and probably not only), while having plans for hard destruction as “big tractors” story suggests. Magistrate represents more understanding, softer side of Empire; and Colonel is the hard one. They have their own ways of finding the truth against the natives as well, but looking at barbarians through them.

Because they think that the natives are just ignorant savages who would not be able to explain their history and help guide those of us coming after. The Magistrate gestures to this primary sentiment when he speaks of the same eventuality, which is when barbarians arrive in the province following vacation by Empire: After which the barbarians will wipe their arses on paper. It’s all too incredible, you see; it offends everyone...they can’t bear to acknowledge that a tribal army raised on the shores of Lake Victoria by a landless Somali warlord is actually capable of destroying an imperial field force armed with machine guns and trench mortars. (Coetzee, 1980).

In a separate incident, when the magistrate visits to examine an old man who has died in a shack near one of their Empire-granary-turned-prisons he discovers that what was reported on his report not only did vary from fact. He finds the twisted and eviscerated body of a murdered old man, slaughtered by The Empire. Indeed, it is the body that enunciate an alternate master narrative by resisting against then Empire imprint. The innocent battered body of the old man offers facts “lie” --an account abstracted from reality, which could only charge itself to truth before this sagacious Magistrate uprooting instead petitions against his own envisioned permutations into

dead earth and excavation--and lo! he can solve crime more in depth than Empire land but not fossil with utmost she materializes forsaking textures.

His beard is now crusted with dry blood. The lips are mashed and pulled apart; the teeth smashed. An eye in the back of his head, its sister sockets a bloody black hole. "Close it up," I say. The guard just clamps the entry shut. It falls open. A man went and says that hit the wall in which they concurred. What do you think? "He looks at me warily. "You know what you must do: Look for a piece of string and knead it in" (Coetzee, 1980)

Moreover, again this excerpt from the novel is just reverse of a suicide case as told by jail before or while interrogation that old man had to kill himself. Rather than re-post the report here so we can see just how much of a lie The Empire's narrative is and what actually did happen, this other exclusive contradiction in his article related to one.

When the colonizers stammer in their stories about how they end up where there are no particular tales and he just explains to some poor native why wild barbarians get out of hand so easily on one step from an empty neighbors' borders, under which these oh as protective colonists came panting that now civilization is here. The Magistrate identifies these sorts of fabricated story lines as "rumor" and fundamentally they are built on thin air. In the book, this is how the Magistrate recounts such a scenario.

However, in the last year tales began to cast into Latavius of doubt discord rising up behind among the tribes before Constantin -on-the-Haven. Safe-endured-route trades had been assaulted and looted. Theft of livestock had moved to a new level. All those teas, which was referred to as numerous people being traced who disappeared by census officials and were buried in nearby shallows. Douglas had been fired upon by a "disaffected man" during an inspection tour of provincial governors. Border patrols had already been clashing with them. The word was that the barbarian tribes were arming, and beards grew quicker than flowers in spring — war would come soon; they'd best prepare (Coetzee, 1980, p.13).

The constructed falsehood was the claim that there is to be an invasion in town by barbarians and it was Empire endorsed. Actually, their tales carry no rationality but while lolling and idling at homes they pretend that the situation on town limits is bad to worse not known even by ground state functionaries. That irony should be slapping you right across the face at this juncture; these barbarians are never depicted as descending upon and bearing down on that town, rather it is Imperial forces travelling up into their mist to find them where they hide so that if nothing else empire might vindicate itself against truth.

Like when it asks with the kind of probing, truth and expertise that should be saved for naked boys who may not end up caught in collateral damage backfire from unwitting civility unleashed by noble defenders sitting atop this constitution. The boy lying on his back naked asleep breathing a quick shallow breath. His skin glistens with sweat. And the bandage is off his arm and I can see that textured open pit for the first time. I bring the lantern closer. He has scabs and bruises on his belly, as well as both of lines diagonally horizontally along his pelvic groove that twigle blood (Coetzee, 1980, p. 16).

It is however, at the height of human cruelty in this passage where one who deserves it least has suffered Empire's vilest brutal desecrations. Civilization never stopped criticizing about the nakedness of indigenous people, publicize them as bewilderment — unclothed because this civilization exempts dresses that other civilized nation wear. Their being naked is metaphorically expanded to mean they are beasts in their lifestyle. But this time, it also provides them with a naked boy in its torture chamber to prove how well they still look after the natives. He is guilty of nothing but being born and each question that he asks the girl as to why she became blind returns an answer

more horrifying than the last, detailing mistreat at the hands of men from that “civilized” Empire. She will remember for the balance of her short life what Empire has taught to teach them civility: a lesson in barbarity. She has watched civilized nation doing the worst of humanitarian atrocities against her. She snow-blind: talking about the civilized men with eyes, among their Empire which is a fraction of what can ever be conveyed while her words speak and this page tells me that meaning will always falter.

It was a fork, although I would use the term loosely — it only had two prongs. The teeth had little nubs making them dull. They placed this item into the coals and heated it up, then they used to burn you with it. I saw the cracked earth where they had roasted people alive (Coetzee, 1980, pp. 56-57). The Empire is committing a crime with fork — holding another one, putting it its mouth to distinguish from those who eat like savages and at the same time calls them “barbarians” not knowing how civilized people should consume stuff. More than likely, the world will not see a larger level of civilization any more — or even in an unprofessional embryonic stage of barbarism elsewhere today before shown. It devours filth, nothing but filth, fed by none other than its own shame of being human. Always on the prowl for some unsuspecting citizens to justify its true Satanic oppression, which is why Colonel Quiroga and his henchmen are marching in from God knows where to grab long-time specialty fishermen down state catching fish by means of fishing gear just like they always have done for three generations but who imperial troops escort into town manacled hand-and-foot. The Magistrate describes these natives as “neck to neck,” and they are also shown to be in a “naked – which means bare (Coetzee, 1980).

The advice under the gun and behind bars is being offered to enslaved colonized prisoners so that they can become Civil like in a civilized Empire. They clench their mouths shut — acknowledging that Empire Civilization Class can’t be disturbed by any questions about why it makes sense to teach violence in a lesson on civilization. Again, to emphasize: there is no civility in the sick mind of the Empire; this serves only as some twisted form of their entertainment! You scum of the earth do not even have this in your vocabulary, rather these are what makes you sit up and notice. The reason the Colonel goes to find for this beastly cruelty, he finds in the prisoners. Hunched over each of the captives in their turn, he works a fistful of dirt into its bare back and spells out one word using charcoal stick.

In other words, an enemy has to be made at any cost if the Empire wants access into this region is what Coetzee unveils. They remind that this enemy is nowhere, but they are the Empireans and it your deep interest at work working faithfully to live a good life. Instead of confessing the original crime whenever it had trampled over those innocent people, where their territory became inviolable for being peopled by its ghosts and attacking as enemy that native population which was already in prison; on his on lands, this Empire declares War to these prisoners’ names them enemy of the state.

The Magistrate is quite literally whipped to a pulp by his own Empire because they infer that since he has returned the girl to her tribe, in so doing joining the barbarian army during their incursion into... He wakes up in a bad-shooting tent where the old man and most of his associates have been systematically tortured into dismemberment, reduced to living injuries: This is but one more proof of the Empire’s commitment to its harsh ways; for now, it may or can only be what reflects back, too. The next day, the Magistrate in that cell will consider how brutal is the pain his Empire has brought to bear on the earth; between him and it lie men. At that moment, as he reflects on calling the barbarism of his civilization and claims to be back everyone else from this humanity there is also irony in his statement when he said “they came to my cell bring me a share we are all humans but what they showed me was ...” (Coetzee 1980, p.159). Magistrates, the way he spoke

those words stank of frozen millennia upon which the entire cultured Empire was built in search for culture. His words are that the cause is all of humanity, but them Empire wiped out.

The subaltern perspective narrates a kind of poetics of politics that colors the Magistrate as he transforms on his way to humanity which is precisely in this journey. To the extent that we see it, in all these fluctuations of life experience and moral awakening what recourse to this Magistrate is a push-back against prevailing ideologies of colonial rule — but not without re-emphasizing along with him — forgotten humanity which belongs equally as much upon those who have been subdued. Coetzee illustrates with *The Magistrate* of how colonial power structures multiply brutality and disfigure the entire (his) society, calling his reader to feel empathy for those oppressed by such systems and interrogate them due their inherent injustice. The book contains a vital element in the direction of postcolonial learn via dialogue novel many of them are approximately power, resistance and representation.

This narrative of barbarians who were forever stuck perpetually in the colonial discursive ‘colonized’ and will never be able to reach their end, is only a product deception or more particularly myth eulogists for professional rowdy apologist. Coetzee makes it apparent that there are only so many “barbarians” that can live on Hollow Island. We understand from the book its barbarity that has considered it a compelled step to conquer and capture any of these land own by those natives as fakes protecting them on his end against the true Barbarians. Coetzee reveals in this work the colonial hierarchies of power that seeks to create an equation between Truth, on one hand, and what it signifies (even for its bearers) through imperial standards about how others do so elsewhere.

Conclusion

This research includes reading of J.M. Coetzee’s novel in the light of the postcolonial study, especially, subaltern theories. This research study argues that the reading of Coetzee enables us to unravel the political and ideological frames of Empire in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Coetzee reconstructs dismantles, and deconstructs conventional storytelling by colonizers. This research concludes that *Waiting for Barbarians* is a portrayal of physical forms, not an undisguised result. The novels of Coetzee allow us to see a form of economic imperialism increasingly exact in its application directly through racial policies - the skin becoming an explanation for dominance and subjugation. This paper asserts that Coetzee’s Empire is a colonial manipulator and so a subaltern reading of Coetzee directly responds to colonial machinations. The present study has explored the elements of ‘truth and the Empire’ as well as ‘Monstrousness of Empire’. Their Empire is enrooted to Africa on top of it the African land, looking out for any occasion where Filipino execute barbarousness utilizing cruelty and rough power against a local populace to approach its foundations working from within. Barbarians uncover this savagery by making routine quiet disobedience, notwithstanding, each blade-prepared weapons group progressively damaging design down loved ones. Atrociously, the apartheid mechanism fully ramped toward South Africans’ freedom movement crushed by the state machinery.

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