

Chapter III

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***Waiting for the Barbarians* - Political Satire of the Apartheid Regime**

Political Satire is a sarcastic analysis of the political system in a country. It is mainly written to expose the atrocities committed by the government towards the people. The ultimate aim is to criticize the government and certain happening in the society. Authors like Samuel Beckett, Alexander Pope, George Orwell, Jonathan Swift have written satires to comment about the social and political issues. *Waiting for the Barbarians* can be considered as a political satire. J.M.Coetzee has depicted the torture experienced by the native victims in a colonised country. "Satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind reception it meets with in the world, and that so very few are offended with it" (Swift 11).

In his article 'Into the Dark Chamber', J.M.Coetzee states that the colonisers torture the colonised to destroy their will power so that they can be superior and remain in power. "In the torture room unlimited force is exerted upon the physical being of an individual in a twilight of legal illegality, with the purpose, if not of destroying him, then at least of destroying the kernel of resistance within him" (Coetzee, *Doubling the Point* 8). In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, J.M.Coetzee has described various atrocities imposed by the colonisers on the colonised people.

The novel was published in the year 1980 during the author's stay in the United States. *Waiting for the Barbarians* depicts the exact situation that existed in colonised South Africa during the apartheid regime. *Waiting for the Barbarians* allegorically

represents the political scenario of the apartheid regime and explores the agony of the colonised people. “J.M.Coetzee has been instrumental in foregrounding the deprivations of colonialism in South Africa- the long history of oppression and discrimination that found its logical and evil outcome in apartheid” (Meskell 88). J.M.Coetzee has authentically depicted how innocent people become the victims of the dominant section of the society; the ruling class. *Waiting for the Barbarians* is narrated in the first person point of view by the protagonist, the Magistrate using interior monologue technique. *Waiting for the Barbarians* was given the Geoffrey Faber memorial prize for Fiction, James Tait Black memorial prize and the South African CNA literary prize in 1980. This novel was also selected by the Penguin Books as the Great Book of the 20th century. An opera was also written by American composer Philip Glass on this novel which was performed at Erfurt, Germany on September 2005.

Waiting for the Barbarians is about South Africa, in the midst of the unjust system of apartheid. J.M.Coetzee has taken the title from Constantin Cavafy’s poem *Waiting for the Barbarians* where a decadent Roman Empire anticipates a barbarian invasion, which never happens. The story brings out the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, victimized and the victims and finally the Empire and its people. “The story of an imaginary Empire, set in an Unspecified place and time, yet recognized as a ‘universalized version’ of South AfricaThe result is a realistic fable” (qtd in Olsen 48). The novel does not specify any particular place or time, but the events in the novel represent the happening in South Africa and the colonised countries in the world. Due to this unique feature of universality the novel received good acclaim all over the world and recognized J.M.Coetzee as an international writer.

The novel was written with a motto to exhibit the state of apartheid in South Africa, especially the acts of brutality and violence perpetrated by the security forces. J.M.Coetzee has described the humiliation, torture, agony, violence, ruthlessness, oppression and inhumanity that colonial powers have forced on the native people of the town. This is a story about the lack of humanism and the suffering of the captives in the cruel hands of the military forces. Thus physical pain and torture inflicted on the marginalized section of society plays a major role in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. The author has depicted how the dominant section of society consider themselves superior and thus inflicts pain to other fellow men. They try to employ violence and ascertain their superiority among the native people.

J.M.Coetzee has portrayed the evils of colonialism through the protagonist. The story happens in a small town which was under the control of 'The Empire'. The Magistrate of the town is the central character of the novel and he is addressed as 'the Magistrate' throughout the novel. The Magistrate is the first person narrator of the story. The duty of the Magistrate is to collect rent and levy taxes. The Magistrate lived a peaceful life in the town like the character Michael K in *Life and Times of Michael K*. Michael K, lived a serene life without any intervention. But, the civil war made him to flee from the city and he is made to experience torture in the hands of the colonisers. Similarly here the Magistrate experiences humiliation after the arrival of the officers from the Third Bureau constituted by the Empire. The Magistrate is a very old person and he is unable to oppose the military force but narrates the violence inflicted by the Third Bureau.

The most complex character in Coetzee's novel is the Magistrate, who is carrying on a dialectic within himself. Prior to the arrival of Colonel Joll

and the girl, his life had apparently been one of serenity and easy sensuality: administering the law, visiting prostitutes, observing the slow cycle of the seasons and anticipating a peaceful retirement. (Penner 38)

The Magistrate's peaceful existence was disturbed by the unexpected advent of the forces from the Third Bureau led by the sinister Colonel Joll and the announcement of a State of Emergency. Barbarians are expected to visit the town at anytime. Even though no one has seen the barbarians many rumours were spread in the town regarding their appearance and behaviour. If any burglary or crime happened in the town, people immediately blamed the unseen barbarians. Joll and his forces carry out a mission to the land away from the border as they believe that the barbarians are planning to attack the Empire. The barbarians lived peacefully akin to nature and the colonisers termed their land as "barbarian land". Edward Said tells that it is illogical because the barbarians do not name it and only the colonisers term the indigenous people as savages and their locality as the land of barbarians.

A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territory beyond, which they call "the land of the barbarians." In other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. (Said 54)

Colonel Joll is a ruthless and merciless person. His work is to make sure that the laws are followed and the barbarians remain in their place. He started to interrogate and torture the native people in the town and proved them as barbarians. According to him

barbarians are a great menace for the Empire to exist but the threat is imaginary and not proved. The Magistrate pacifies him by telling that the barbarians have no plans of attacking the people in the town.

The novel is the personal narrative of an imperial Magistrate posted to the frontier market town on the edge of a lake and a desert, but cut off from the central political and military impulses of the empire to which he belongs and shut out by an impenetrable barrier of cultural misunderstanding from the “barbarians” against whom he is defending the empire. The Magistrate’s office is the preservation and upholding of the law of the empire, and he is thus expected to maintain certain tenets of “civilized” behaviour. (Rich 382)

The main duty of the Magistrate is to implement the rules of the Empire. The ultimate aim of the so called Empire is to suppress and dominate the native people so that the Empire can rule the state without any objection. But the Magistrate as a part of the Empire sympathizes with the so called barbarians and advises the colonel not to capture them. But Joll confines a lot of fishermen folk, whom they consider as barbarians and bring them to the town. The Colonel and the soldiers torture and kill a few of them. They did not give them food and they were locked up in the prison like animals. J.M.Coetzee depicts the pitiable state of the oppressed captives and the cruelty imposed upon them.

The novel opens with Colonel Joll’s visit to the town where the Magistrate works. The Magistrate on seeing the sunglasses worn by Colonel Joll says:

I have never seen anything like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire. Is he blind? I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes. But he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. He tells me they are a new invention. They protect one's eyes against the glare of the sun, he says. (WB 01)

This indicates that the narrative happens in an unknown time in history where the sun glasses were not in vogue. "Joll is ethically blind, as is the empire that he represents; in the capital, he tells the Magistrate, everyone wears such glasses. The Magistrate's dilemma is that in Joll's dark glasses; he can see a shadowy reflection of himself" (Penner 36). J.M.Coetzee symbolically represents that colonel Joll is morally blind and he projects himself as a civilized person by wearing the sun glasses. If he happens to be civilized and cultured man, he would not torture the natives who are refused of their basic human rights.

The Colonel inquired about the two prisoners they have taken so far. Among them one was a boy and the other an old man. The Magistrate explained the Colonel that they have been taken as prisoners after a stock raid and also he asked the prisoners to speak the truth to the Colonel. "Father, do you see this gentleman? This gentleman is visiting us from the capital. He visits all the forts along the frontier. His work is to find out the truth. That is all he does. He finds out the truth. If you don't speak to me you will have to speak to him. Do you understand?" (WB 03). The old man and the boy came to the town to see the doctor and were caught by the soldiers and imprisoned on the pretext that they were barbarians. The Colonel did not accept the answer and he considered them as criminals.

The Magistrate asked the Colonel, ““Of course one cannot be sure. But even if they are lying, how can they be of use to you, simple people like that?”” (WB 04). The Colonel didn’t treat the simple people as human beings and made them to suffer extreme torture. The power is asserted by the ruling class by suppressing and dehumanizing a section of fellow human beings whom they term as barbarians.

The Magistrate went to inspect the old man’s body and confirms that the old man died of torture. His lips were crushed, teeth broken, one eye was rolled back in the other there was only hole and the eye was missing, and his beard was full of blood. The Magistrate is compassionate and he is worried about the pathetic condition of the native people.

“*Waiting for the Barbarians* emphasizes the opposition between the rigidity of form and the powers and dangers of formlessness. The magistrate, a representative liberal, is concerned only with maintaining the status quo, keeping his own hands clean by due observance” (Newman 88). When the Colonel wanted to cross-examine and afflict the captives, the Magistrate persuaded them to speak the truth otherwise they will be tortured to death. But the native people who were innocent and leading a simple life wondered what truth they were expected to speak.

His method of investigation includes interrogation of prisoners. When there are not enough prisoners to interrogate, he leads troops out to capture more, harmless aboriginal fishing people living on river banks nearby as his victims.

Even worse, he makes systematic use of torture and terror in his inquisitions, routinely killing captives who do not cooperate or who give information he suspects to be untrue. The Magistrate is horrified by such brutality, but there

is nothing he can do to stop it; as a loyal servant of the Empire, he has no authority to obstruct an official investigation. (Lindfors 60)

Joll's main aim was to get the truth by torture. He also advises the Magistrate that he has to be strict with the prisoners and he gives tips how to get the truth from the prisoners.

No, you misunderstand me. I am speaking of a special situation now, I am speaking of a situation in which I am probing for the truth, in which I have to exert pressure to find it. First I get lies, you see- this is what happens- first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth. That is how you get the truth (WB 05).

Having this as his motto Colonel Joll tortured the prisoners.

...the administration justifies the use of torture... as necessary to extract information about potential threats to national security. But it would appear that the torture of the detainees has a second purpose: it is a spectacle in which the injured state brings into play the dissymmetry between the "barbarians" who have dared to attack it... and the sovereign state, which displays its strength. (Lenta 81)

The Magistrate went to see the imprisoned boy who was sleeping naked. He saw the little scabs and cuts in the boy's belly, some trickled with blood. He gets the details that they used a little knife and made a little thrust and turned the knife like a key in the boy's body. He also comes to know that the boy has admitted that their men have stolen sheep and horses. The Magistrate is worried and he tells that the boy's confession will make the soldiers to ride out against their people and they will kill all his brothers, sisters

and kinsmen. But the boy was very sick to answer and also to listen to the Magistrate's words. The Magistrate sympathizes with the boy and arranges for a doctor to treat his wounds. The Colonel's speech proved that the mechanism of the Empire operates like an autocracy and remains in power by making innocent victims to prove their point through torture and to make them confess a crime they have never committed.

“Prolonged torture forces victims to try to comprehend the torturer's interest and present themselves in a way that is most likely to satisfy their torturers. After a time, the victim will say that he/she thinks the torturer wants to hear” (qtd in Lenta 75). Because of the physical and psychological torture it is falsely admitted by the boy that they have indulged in theft and that their people are preparing for war against the Empire. The victims were not able to defend themselves by voicing out their opinions because the torture made them speechless. The victims became passive and they were not allowed to prove their innocence. The colonel tortures the old man and the little boy to threaten other natives so that they may not dare to act against the Empire. The poor native people who are prone to his torture were ready to confess any false accusation filed against them because the affliction was intolerable.

Several thousand native people were taken for enquiry and were killed by the torture imposed by the colonisers. The Magistrate knows very well that the old man was killed by torture and regrets that he was not able to stop such inhumanity. These types of inhuman activities were common in South Africa during the colonial era. No records were maintained and nobody questioned the atrocities committed by the colonisers. The soldiers were very cruel and they tortured the native people as per the command of their superiors. In the colonial era young boys were compelled to become soldiers.

They become soldiers out of the Empire's compulsion and they are trained to hate and torture the people of their own race. This is an irony of the situation.

The Magistrate's main hobby in his leisure time was to research the ruins in the deserted places of the town. During excavation he gets some slips with painted characters which he had not seen before. "The magistrate is not just a country magistrate serving out his days on this lazy frontier. He is an archaeologist, anthropologist, a digger for "meaning", a detective, an explorer, a scientist, searching those ruins that lie under the dunes around the settlement..." (Olsen 52).

But the slips which the Magistrate had collected gave him trouble as Colonel Joll thought the painted language to be the secretive code for communication between him and the barbarians. Colonel Joll asked the Magistrate to interpret them in English and the Magistrate found himself in the status of the victim.

The Magistrate is the only person with conscience who considers all human beings with equality and dignity. The Magistrate challenges the colonisers by asking Colonel Joll to show one barbarian army and he will believe that they are a threat to the Empire.

In private 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 who 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 I will believe.

(WB 09)

The colonisers call themselves as civilized but torture the natives. J.M.Coetzee through this novel proves that the so called civilized people are the real barbarians. The tortured victims were passive because they fear death which made them weak and mute.

To prove the coloniser's superiority Colonel Joll and his men started their expedition to capture the barbarians. They returned with the ignorant fisher folk who live outside the town in a settlement near a river. The Magistrate tells, "...Did no one tell him these prisoners are useless to him? Did no one tell him the difference between fishermen with nets and wild nomad horsemen with bows? Did no one tell him they don't even speak the same language?" (WB 19). The fisher folk were kept in the yard like animals. They were poor fisher folk who were ignorant of the culture and civilization of the dominant colonisers. The innocent people were branded as barbarians. "Living in fear of everyone, skulking in the reeds, what can they possibly know of a great barbarian enterprise against the Empire?" (WB 19). The clutches of colonialism was very strong and the colonised were compelled to accept the changes.

Even a common man will know the fisher folk who live in the river banks are harmless. They are ignorant about civil war, struggle for power and freedom. But Colonel Joll is obstinate in punishing them to prove his ideology that they are barbarians so they are a great threat to the Empire. To showcase his power and civilized behaviour he brought them as prisoners and proudly starts his investigations to find out the truth. After torturing them cruelly they were sent out of the town.

The Magistrate came across a barbarian girl who was brought to the town by the soldiers with her father. Her father was tortured to death by the soldiers and the girl was sexually abused by the so called civilized members of the Empire. The Magistrate took

pity on the girl and allowed her to stay in his house. The girl was subjected to torture by the Colonel and his men. She was crippled and blinded by the soldiers. The Magistrate was curious to know about the torture inflicted on the girl. He discovers from the girl that they touched her eyes with a caterpillar. The Magistrate also helps to clean her damaged foot.

I wash slowly, working up lather, gripping her firm- fleshed calves, manipulating the bones and tendons of her feet, running my fingers between her toes. I change my position to kneel not in front of her but beside her, so that, holding a leg between elbow and side, I can caress the foot with both hands.

I lose myself in the rhythm of what I am doing. I lose awareness of the girl herself. There is a space of time which is blank to me: perhaps I am not even present. (WB 30)

The Magistrate forgets himself in helping the girl. He caresses her like a mother fondling her child. The girl was little bit stout and had black eyes. She was not beautiful but had some attractive features. He does not think about having sex with the girl. He finds pleasure in washing the girl's feet. "The pleasure principle is even characterized by the fact that the impossible is so present in it that it is never recognized in it as such. The idea that the function of the pleasure principle is to satisfy itself by hallucination is there to illustrate this- it is only an illustration" (Lacan, Four Fundamental Concepts 167).

The Magistrate offers her a job in the kitchen. He exploits the girl for his personal use like the other colonisers who exploit the colonised country for their benefit. He is devoid of spiritual and enduring love. The Magistrate commits incest and he uses the girl as a source of sexual gratification. He indulges in affair with the girl who is of his

daughter's age. So, the Magistrate who seems to champion the cause of the downtrodden ironically considers women just as a source of physical pleasure.

The essence of the girl is more obscure. Partially blinded, she makes the best use of the sight that remains to her. Crippled and impoverished in a strange frontier village, she has no means of support but begging and prostitution. She practises both until the Magistrate forbids her to beg and offers her (she has no alternative) a position as a domestic in his home. His first perception of her is as a combination of domestic and concubine. She is productive as a domestic... and later encourages the reluctant Magistrate to make love with. (Penner 36)

The cruel activities performed by Colonel Joll and his team disturb the Magistrate and to escape from the psychological trauma he seeks solace in the hands of women. Even there his thoughts are disturbed and finds himself without pleasure. The Magistrate through his dreams possesses an unconscious desire to know everything about the girl how she was before her torture by the colonel. The Magistrate continuously asked her about the torture she underwent under the custody of the soldiers. "He wants to know of her people, her family; she offers him little information. Whatever he discovers of her, he does so by examining her, by "reading" her as one would a map. The dream in which he tries to remember her as she was before Joll hold of her, is a measure, a scale of his progress in exploring her" (Jolly 72).

The Magistrate finds a sort of happiness in doing so. He does everything to make her comfortable. "I feed her, shelter her, use her body, if that is what I am doing, in this foreign way" (WB 32). He tried to realize the encounter between the Empire and the

barbarians. He thinks that the wounds on the girl's body are not simple but they are the damage done to the barbarians and their culture by the cruel Empire. Magistrate exploring the girl is akin to exploring the mechanism of the Empire. The explorers are the people in power who know the absence of truth. But to make the multitude believe their hypothesis of truth they create an imaginary fear and prove their so called truth by making innocent victims as their evidence.

The Empire uses torture as a tool to find out the truth which does not exist. The scars are the symbol of the countries victimized during the world war. The scars are the repercussions of nuclear bombing, the victims of holocaust during Nazi regime. "All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same "object": man. When one tries to examine the structure of this or that form of exploitation from an abstract point of view, one simply turns one's back on the major, basic problem, which is that of restoring man to his proper place" (Fanon, *Black Skin* 65).

The colonised people are exploited by all means. They consider the native people as mere objects. The Magistrate who tries to change the equilibrium between the victim and the victimizers is put to shame and humiliation. The Magistrate tries to remove the scars but it remains irreparable.

The Magistrate is unable to understand whether his love for the girl is yearning of the soul or the body. He is confused between these two demarcations. J.M.Coetzee here describes the Oedipus complex of the Magistrate who has an urge to return to his place of birth ie, his mother's womb. The Magistrate relates their bodies to the centre of existence which refers to truth. He tells that truth is absent and only the futile search is present.

The Magistrate is dismayed by his sexual desires, sagging flesh and bulging stomach. He builds a sense of shame over his body and its desires. Because of the shame he feels alienated from the outer world. Hence, he loved to go back to the time when everything was normal. He wanted to achieve unity between his soul and his aging body. He wants to be young and feels unpleasant to expose his body before the barbarian girl. The Magistrate also performs the role of a coloniser in few situations. One day he brings a silver fox cub to his room and says, ““People will say I keep two wild animals in my rooms, a fox and a girl”” (WB 37). This incident proves that he didn’t value her as a woman or as an individual. He sympathizes with the girl and also hurts her by asking about the torture done to her.

For the ‘figure’ of woman, the relationship between woman and silence can be plotted by women themselves; race and class differences are subsumed under that charge. Subaltern historiography must confront the impossibility of such gestures. The narrow epistemic violence of imperialism gives us an imperfect allegory of the general violence that is the possibility of an episteme. (Spivak 82)

Colonisation induced race and class differences which resulted in trauma and violence. Hence women are suppressed and they are compelled to tolerate the inhumanity done to them. Here, the barbarian girl does not speak anything and only through the Magistrate we can understand her feelings. She endures the torture and out of her indomitable spirit she survived by earning money on the streets by begging and prostitution. The atrocity committed by Joll and his soldiers was very severe and the girl

does not want to reveal that to the Magistrate. The girl was made to stand naked in front of her father and people said that they heard her scream during the enquiry.

The Magistrate empathizes with the victims. He enquires about the tortures inflicted on them and he stays in the prison and envisions the situation. A man who has drifted along the sands of time is cornered to view his existence seriously and seek a meaning for his presence in the world as he sympathizes with the suffering of the innocent beings. He identifies the thoughts and feelings of another person especially the barbarian girl.

The barbarians used to come to the town to sell their wool, skin and leatherwork and bartered it for cotton goods, tea, sugar, beans and flour. They were introduced to drinks, drugs etc by the colonisers. The colonial system made them lazy and addicted to immoral habits. "The old Magistrate holds a deep respect for the barbarians who have been deprived of their land and shows sympathy, for they have lived so close to them for so many years in spite of being bullied and cheated" (Jinghui 63-64). J.M.Coetzee proves that the civilized and the dominant section are the real barbarians as they are power mongers. They ruthlessly exploit even the poorest of the poor. The Magistrate says:

It always pained me in the old days to see these people fall victim to the guile of shopkeepers, exchanging their goods for trinkets, laying drunk in the gutter and confirming thereby the settler's litany of prejudice: that barbarians are lazy, immoral, filthy, stupid. Where civilization entailed the corruption of barbarian virtues and the creation of a dependent people, I decided, I was opposed to civilization; and upon this resolution I based the conduct of the administration. (I say this who now keep a barbarian girl for my bed!). (WB 41)

These lines reveal the working of the hierarchies in the society. J.M.Coetzee vividly describes the dominant section of society and the victims who are corroded off their values and virtues.

The Magistrate used the barbarian girl to satisfy his own needs on the pretext of helping her. He forced her into a life which she didn't ask and also he misused her helpless situation. But the girl remains uncomplaining and accepts her fate. She takes everything in the same spirit; whether it is torture, pain or pleasure, she remains passive throughout the novel.

The relationship between the old Magistrate and the barbarian girl overcomes the conflict between the Empire and the barbarians. When civilization overweighs barbarianism, the old Magistrate is a saviour of the girl; but when barbarianism overweighs civilization, he falls in love with her. The old Magistrate saves the barbarian girl for self- redemption.
(Jinghui 64)

The Magistrate was attracted towards the silence of the barbarian girl and he was also interested to know about the experience of the girl under the hands of the colonel Joll. Thus, the savior himself turns as a torturer. The Magistrate exploits the girl sexually. The scandalous affair of the two reaches everyone in the city. Their relationship is not accepted because they both belong to different ethnic group, culture etc. Moreover the girl is very young when compared to the Magistrate.

The barbarianism inherent in the civilized people secluded within the fort with armory is revealed by the Magistrate's relationship with the girl. Initially the girl was tortured by the members of the Third Bureau for knowing the truth about an impending

war against the Empire. The Empire forces the barbarians devoid of their own wishes to live the life which the empire dictates. This is not only the status of the subjects but all women as they become properties owned by men.

Coetzee skillfully conveys his horrendous ambivalence in the Magistrate's treatment of the child- woman who shares his bed. At times he is her surrogate- father, offering her- characteristically enough- an equivocal protection; at other times his unconventional sexual ministrations call up subtle, and certainly chilling, reminders of the torturer's actions. (Barratt 32)

The Magistrate sympathizes with the colonised people and shouts at an officer who says that the barbarians should be punished severely.

I will say nothing of the recent raids carried out on them, quite without justification, and followed by acts of wanton cruelty, since the security of the Empire was at stake, or so I am told. It will take years to patch up the damage done in those few days. But let that pass, let me rather tell you what I find disheartening as an administrator, even in times of peace, even when border relations are good. (WB 54)

The Magistrate empathizes with the pitiable state of the poor nomadic people whom they consider to be the barbarians, as they are cheated by everybody, by the shopkeepers, by the soldiers who treat them as slaves and torture them for their entertainment. He adds that "I wish that these barbarians would rise up and teach us a lesson, so that we would learn to respect them" (WB 55). He warns that barbarians will take an upper hand and that day will put an end to the colonial system.

The Magistrate usually dreams of a girl building a snow castle with some children. This was his third dream about the girl. This time he dreams like speaking to the girl and the girl says all the things which happened to her. She says “People were kind to me when they saw I had been left behind. I used to sleep at the inn for a time while my feet were getting better. There was a man who took care of me. He has gone now” (WB 58). The dream changes him and he regrets for the things he has done till now to the barbarian girl. These dreams show his growing sympathy and awareness of respecting others individuality.

The Magistrate, being a sort of prophet is “gifted” with profound insights and exceptional powers of expression that reveal themselves in his prophetic dreams- a very significant element in the whole novel.

His dreams are also salvific in so far as they reveal what might be if only the barbarian girl and the barbarians were recognized for what they are.

(Pugliese 95)

In the dreams he could not see the girl’s face and only in his last dream he is able to see her face as the figure of salvation which was the main reason that led him to take the decision of sending her back to her people. He plans for a brief visit to the barbarian land. The Magistrate finally writes to the Provincial Governor stating that “...to restore some of the goodwill that previously existed, I am undertaking a brief visit to the barbarians” (WB 62). To accomplish the mission he chooses two young men and an old man who is a horse trader and a hunter to accompany him.

The Magistrate, the girl and the three men start their journey to the unknown barbarian land. The Magistrate as the representative of civilized society wants to atone

for the merciless cruel behavior of his community. When he leaves the girl in the barbarian land, he asks her to tell the story of her struggle in the town and he wants the girl to speak the truth. The girl went to them and spoke their language. The Magistrate who was standing down was unable to understand their conversation. He says “‘What a waste’, I think: ‘she could have spent those long empty evenings teaching me her tongue! Too late now’” (WB 78). Finally she looked at the Magistrate and went with her people. The last glance of the beloved made the Magistrate ache for the love he had lost.

The Magistrate thinks that the pain caused by the separation of the barbarian girl was unbearable. He washes the feet of the girl so many times and this incident symbolically represents that he tried to purify the girl from the torture which she experienced under the hands of the Colonel and his men. He also plays the role as a guardian for the barbarian girl. He was not able to communicate with the girl because of the linguistic barrier and hence she was like a mystery to him. Even though the barbarian girl did not request his help, the Magistrate extended his benevolence though she does not solicit. It symbolically represents how the barbarian people are compelled by the Empire to adopt a new life style which they are not accustomed to.

The Magistrate felt a great relief after leaving the girl with her people. When they reached the town they were arrested and imprisoned. The Magistrate was charged for consorting with the barbarians and the three men were accused for helping him. “By crossing the line between the Empire and the Barbarians’ territory, he becomes a different person altogether and as such he is seen by the authorities who jail him on his return; he is no longer a respected Magistrate...” (Pugliese 97). The Magistrate is proved as an enemy of his own subjects and he is made a victim. He was imprisoned and tortured

for consorting with the enemy. When the Third Bureau enquired about his relationship with the enemies, the Magistrate says,

I am aware of the source of my elation: my alliance with the guardians of the Empire is over, I have set myself in opposition, the bond is broken, I am a free man. Who would not smile? But what a dangerous joy! It should not be so easy to attain salvation... Have I not simply been proved into a reaction by the sight of one of the new barbarians usurping my desk and pawing my papers? ... Have I truly enjoyed the unbounded freedom of this past year in which more than ever before my life has been mine to make up as I go along? (WB 85)

He has broken the bond with the Empire and became free by opposing the tyrannical attitude of the Empire. The colonel and his men didn't allow the magistrate to wash himself after the long journey. He felt very humiliated and spent many days inside the prison cell. He wasn't allowed to change his dress which smelt like rotten onions. He was kept in solitary confinement and cockroaches were his companion. "After two days of solitude my lips feel slack and useless, my own speech seems strange to me. 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" (WB 87).

The Magistrate ruminates and introspects about his true intention which drove him to protect the girl and champion brotherhood. The consequence of his humanitarian zeal was his downfall from a respectable position to a prisoner, degraded to the level of bestial existence. "J.M.Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* chronicles the struggle between an idealistic village Magistrate and the imperial officials who attack the

neighbouring “barbarians”. The Magistrate’s resistance to imperial practices and attitudes causes him to become an enemy of his own people” (Pardick 44).

The Magistrate was taken to the officer in the same soiled clothes and was proved guilty. The Magistrate used the opportunity given during the trial to represent his disapproval of torturing the natives and tried to bring out the hypocrisy in labeling the innocent natives as enemies to the state. The system of law and justice was against him. During colonialism prisoners waited for their mercy petitions to be heard for more than twelve years. Even before the verdict was pronounced prisoners were put to death. Fair trial never took place; justice was as an imaginary concept for always the voice of the marginalized went mute.

In the prison the Magistrate longed for freedom. The Magistrate was psychologically traumatized because he had stumbled down to a status of a prisoner from the socially respectable and powerful position of administering the town. His basic needs were refused. He was not allowed even to empty the waste pot daily and he was made to sit in that bad smell inside the cell. The Magistrate expresses his frustration thus:

But now I begin to comprehend how rudimentary freedom is. What freedom has been left to me? The freedom to eat or go hungry; to keep my silence or gabble to myself or beat on the door or scream. If I was the object of an injustice, a major injustice, when they locked me in here, I am now no more than a pile of blood, bone and meat that is unhappy. (WB 93)

The memories of the girl haunted him. He remembered the days when they were together, but he started to forget the girl deliberately. He also says “Cold hands, cold heart: I remember the proverb, touch my palms to my cheek, sigh in the dark” (WB 95).

The Magistrate was not able to sleep properly because the hot spring and the early summer days disturbed him. “How can I accept the disaster has overtaken my life when the world continues to move so tranquilly through its cycles” (WB 102). The cycle of the seasons are moving perfectly while his life has taken a sudden fall. And he could not accept the injustice done to him. He bears his disgrace being shut up inside a room continuously for many days.

...I lie here I am a hunted man, that in the course of their duty soldiers are going to come here and haul me away and lock me up again out of the sight of the sky and of other human beings. ‘Why?’ I groan into the pillow. ‘Why me?’ Never has there been anyone so confused and innocent of the world as I. A veritable baby!... and then, particularly if they have suffered reverses, particularly if the barbarians have humiliated them, they will find me guilty of treason - need I doubt that? (WB 103)

The Magistrate thinks that they will put him to death. He is not worried about his death but he felt bad that he was unable to stop the suffering of the innocent people. He brushes aside his utopian dreams of a just society and wakes up to face reality. “I truly believe I am not afraid of death. What I shrink from, I believe, is the shame of dying as stupid and befuddled as I am” (WB 103). The Magistrate was convicted of the charge of treason for consorting with the enemy. He was confined to solitary confinement where nobody spoke and he communicated only with the ghost in his dream. The Magistrate has strong determination and will power to bear sufferings stoically.

... I am much less sure of myself. The craving to touch and be touched by another human body sometimes comes over me with such force that I

groan; how I looked forward to a single brief contact which was all I could have with the boy, morning and evening!... How can I be in the right when there is not a soul in the town who approves of my escapade with the barbarian girl or who would not feel bitter against me if young men from here were killed by my barbarian protégés. (WB 105)

The Magistrate craves to enjoy freedom but was tortured physically as well as psychologically by Colonel Joll. Finally the Magistrate is made as a laughing stock in front of his people. The Magistrate is blamed for communicating with the barbarian people with the help of the wooden slips which he gathered while excavating the ruins. In the prison he realizes the importance of freedom. He doesn't want to be a mere slave under them.

But for all that, he is a victim of the Empire's brutality; for, in spite of all the anguish he feels and the humiliation he suffers, the Magistrate's commitment to passive resistance and decency is severely undermined by his hunger for complacent ease and a sort of incomplete, vacillating hate of the Empire. He discovers, and knows that he must come to the terms with the fact that like the very Empire, which he says he hates, his most urgent obsession, ultimately, is how to prolong his placid concupiscence. (Barratt 31)

The Magistrate receives information that barbarians have cut the embankment and the fields are flooded. Thus crops are ruined. This incident depicts the false fear of the people. People are forced to live with an impending danger that does not exist. The fear of the unknown is a metaphor for death and afterlife. If anything unnatural happens barbarians are blamed.

If comrades like this exist, what a pity I do not know them! For me, at this moment striding away from the crowd, what has become important above all is that I should neither be contaminated by the atrocity that is about to be committed nor poison myself with impotent hatred of its perpetrators.

I cannot save the prisoners, therefore let me save myself. (WB 114)

The expedition group returned with the file of barbarian men almost naked. They have been tied by a circle of wire through the fleshy tissue of everyone's hands and through holes cut in their cheeks. It was a horrible sight and the army tortured the innocent people. This incident recapitulates the slave trade that started with imperialism. The Magistrate is completely disillusioned with the institution of the Empire as it lacks the basic tenets of humanism. Thus, the civilized rulers lack compassion. The victims were publicly tortured by Colonel Joll.

The spectacle of torture directed by Joll enacts the triumph of the Empire's authority. The recharging ritual is accomplished by marking the barbarians' bodies with the unequivocally negative sign: 'Enemy'.

The crime thus manifested is annulled through the punishment of beating, as the inscription is washed away by the prisoner's blood and sweat....

The spectacle forces the crowd to experience the potency of the Empire's power so that its members will experience themselves as subject to the Empire. (Lenta 76)

The barbarian men were made to kneel down with the wire passing from the mouth to their hands. According to the order of the Colonel one soldier pulls the cord wire tighter and the men moaned in pain. The Colonel went there and he used a charcoal

and wrote on their backs as “ENEMY” (WB 115). Colonel Joll is a symbol of evil as he is the preparator of injustice in a sylvan society. Colonel Joll and his men are the representatives of Empire and they take the law in their hands and torture the native people cruelly. “The State apparatus, which defines the State as a force of repressive execution and intervention 'in the interests of the ruling classes' in the class struggle conducted by the bourgeoisie and its allies against the proletariat, is quite certainly the State, and quite certainly defines its basic 'function'” (Althusser 137). J.M.Coetzee presents the tension between the Empire and the natives in the novel as a prototype of the social and political hierarchy that existed between the coloniser and the colonised in South Africa.

The Empire has entrusted utmost power to the Colonel and the soldiers to keep the native people under their control. When the soldiers grew tired of beating they gave a chance to the public who were standing there. The Colonel came with a hammer to strike the innocent people. The Magistrate says to the Colonel, ““We are the great miracle of creation! But from some blows this miraculous body cannot repair itself! How -!’ Words fail me. ‘Look at these men!’” (WB 117). The Colonel used physical torture as a weapon to subjugate the innocent victims. The colonisers behave more violent than the beast. Animals kill for their hunger but they don’t kill their own kind. But history states how human beings kill and ill treat the innocent people to hold on to the reign of power. “The role of the repressive State apparatus, in so far as it is a repressive apparatus, consists essentially in securing by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production which are in the last resort relations of exploitation” (Althusser 149- 150).

The colonisers think themselves as superiors and they take law in their hands and degrade the natives. Nobody listened to the words of the Magistrate, he was pushed aside and his nose was broken, his left eye was swollen. Even in this injured condition he demands justice to be given to the barbarian people.

Would I have dared to face the crowd to demand justice for these ridiculous barbarian prisoners with their backsides in the air? Justice: once the word is uttered, where will it all end? Easier to shout No! Easier to be beaten and made a martyr. Easier to lay my head on a block than to defend the cause of justice for the barbarians: for where can that argument lead but to laying down our arms and opening the gates of the town to the people whose land we have raped? (WB 118)

The colonisers not only degraded the people but also destroyed their land by pushing the natives deep into the forest. The Magistrate, an old man who is the only person demanding justice for the victim is accused as the offender of the rules set by the Empire. The magistrate is proved as the enemy of his state, who has no power and is imprisoned and assaulted.

The Colonel accused the Magistrate as the only officer who has not supported and co-operated in the Empire's endeavors. Though the Magistrate belonged to the dominant community and was in power still demands justice for the colonised natives. This empathy of the Magistrate was not tolerated by Joll hence he disgraces him. He also questions the Magistrate as "What kind of future do you have here? You cannot be allowed to remain in your post. You have utterly disgraced yourself" (WB 123).

The Magistrate wanted them to put him under prosecution so that he can explain to the

public the importance of a just society. “If I were to confront these men now, in public, in a fair trial, I would find the words to shame them. It is a matter of health and strength: I feel my hot words swell in my breast... they will shut me away in the dark till I am a muttering idiot, a ghost of myself; ...” (WB 123-124). The Magistrate believes that they will not bring him to trial because he is a popular figure in the town.

The Colonel mocks at the Magistrate thus; “Believe me, to people in this town you are not the One Just Man, you are simply a clown, a mad man. You are dirty, you stink, they can smell you a mile away. You look like an old beggar-man refuse-scavenger. They do not want you back in any capacity. You have no future here” (WB 124). Magistrate condemns the colonel for being brutal to the native people. ““You are the enemy, you have made the war, and you have given them all the martyrs they need— starting not now but a year ago when you committed your first filthy barbarities here! History will bear me out!”” (WB 125). The Magistrate was taken back to the cell and was not offered food for two days.

In my suffering there is nothing ennobling. Little of what I call suffering is even pain. What I am made to undergo is subjection to the most rudimentary needs of my body: to drink, to relieve itself, to find the posture in which it is least sore.... I wondered how much pain a plump comfortable old man would be able to endure in the name of his eccentric notions of how the Empire should conduct itself. (WB 126)

The Magistrate inspite of his age was ruthlessly tortured by the people of his own race for raising his voice to help the poor native people. He questions that how much pain an old man can tolerate. He feels that Empire has deviated from its way. It must function properly for the betterment of the people.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Marx & Engels¹⁴)

Pain and deprivation are the tools by which the mechanism of the Empire runs. Empire keeps people in awe of their power because it has the tools of torture to inflict pain and deprivation to the masses.

“Reading of the relationship between violator and violated ties Colonel Joll, the barbarian girl and the narrator together just as surely as if Colonel Joll has connected himself to the other two with the wire he uses to subdue his prisoners” (Jolly 77). J.M.Coetzee suggests that whoever is devoid of compassion is a barbarian. The Magistrate was asked to run naked and was whipped when he slowed down. His torture was made a public spectacle. The town witnessed the old Magistrate being tortured and being inflicted with wounds. No one came forward to support or save the magistrate, as their fear of the Empire was more than their conscience. “It cost me agonies of shame the first time I had to come out of my den and stand naked before these idlers or jerk my body about for their amusement. Now I am past shame. My mind is turned wholly to the menace of the moment when my knees turn water ... ‘Kill me – I would rather die than go on?’” (WB 128).

As a part of the torture they gave him a woman’s dress to wear. The officer Mandel tortured him to the core. “I have said the words *torture... torturer* to myself, but they are strange words, and the more I repeat them the more strange they grow, till they

lie like stones on my tongue” (WB 129). After wearing the woman’s dress his hands were tied using a salt bag and they asked him to climb a rope. He pleads to the officer that there was no connection between him and barbarians and he just went there to leave the girl with her family. The Magistrate says “I want to live as every man wants to live. To live and live and live. No matter what” (WB 130). The rope tightens as he climbs up the ladder and everybody watched the miserable state of the old Magistrate. This reveals the inhuman attitude of the people. Fear is instilled in the public as they are made to watch the tortures inflicted upon the magistrate.

The Magistrate was turned into a clown by the officer Mandel and the Colonel. “A scapegoat is named, a festival is declared, the laws are suspended: who would not flock to see the entertainment? What is it I object to in these spectacles of abasement and suffering and death that our new regime put on but their lack of decorum?” (WB 131). Everybody laughed at his state. But he didn’t blame the crowd for its mockery.

There was great chaos in the city and everybody was scared that barbarians might come and attack at night. A little girl was raped and the entire city was under commotion. Second expedition under Colonel Joll went to the barbarian land. So, the town was under the control of Mandel. The soldiers behaved like criminals. Without paying money they took products from the shop. It was not the barbarians but the soldiers who committed there atrocities. The soldiers played the role of the barbarians.

The Magistrate was released without any trial by officer Mandel. His imprisonment and torture become meaningless. He asks Mandel. “How do you find it possible to eat afterwards, after you have been...working with people?” (WB 138). The Magistrate wonders that how these people eat after killing and torturing innocent

people. After the harassment the Magistrate returns back to the normal life. Everything remained the same except his insight upon the evils of colonialism. He expects that cordial relationship should be maintained between the master and the servant and feels disappointed at the state of affairs.

People started to leave the town. Rumors spread all over the city that the expedition has wiped out the enemies. The officers and soldiers arranged meetings and asked the people to stay back in the town and not to flee from there. “The soldiery tyrannizes the town. They have held a torch light meeting on the square to denounce ‘cowards and traitors’ and to affirm collective allegiance to the Empire. WE STAY has become the slogan of the faithful: the words are to be seen daubed on walls everywhere” (WB 143). Third Bureau which came to protect the country from unknown enemies turns to be the enemy as it destroys the livelihood of the settlement. People flee the country not fearing the barbarians but the soldiers who came to protect them. The soldiers started to behave badly. They kicked the house doors, broke down the windows and spent the night drinking in the square. So, people locked themselves inside the houses and they decided that they don’t need the soldiers in the town because they were worse than the barbarians. Mothers kept their daughters inside the house and the situation was beyond control.

The Magistrate says, “This is a world I know and love and do not want to leave... how can I believe that the night is full of the flitting shadows of barbarians? If there were strangers here I would feel it in my bones” (WB 145). These words reveal his love towards the town and the people. He wants to do something for the betterment of the native people. He also says that the barbarians might have settled in the deepest mountain valleys and they would wait for the soldiers to get tired and move away from their

expedition. He thinks that in a few years peace will be restored in the town.

The Magistrate comments about the people's condition in the town thus;

What has made it impossible for us to live in time like fish in water, like birds in air, like children? It is the fault of Empire! Empire has created the time of history. Empire has located its existence not in the smooth recurrent spinning time of the cycle of the seasons but in the jagged time of rise and fall, of beginning and end, of catastrophe. Empire dooms itself to live in history and plot against history. One thought alone preoccupies the submerged mind of Empire: how not to end, how not to die, how to prolong its era. By day it pursues its enemies. It is cunning and ruthless, it sends its bloodhounds everywhere. (WB 146)

The Empire in the name by which the civilized torture the innocent people.

The colonised people felt hard to live under the clutches of colonisers. Over a period of time when the torture becomes unbearable they revolt against the Empire to get back their lost freedom. "When the colonialist bourgeoisie realizes it is impossible to maintain its domination over the colonies it decides to wage a rearguard campaign in the fields of culture, values, and technology, etc" (Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* 09).

The Magistrate blames the Empire for disturbing the peaceful life of the people. The novelist highlights that lack of compassion of the citizens of the town leads to their own self- destruction. J.M.Coetzee describes the colonel and his soldiers as bloodhounds who ruthlessly drink the blood of the colonised people. The peaceful town is destructed with pyramids of bones piled in the streets.

A rumor spread throughout the town that the barbarians have entered the town. The huge gates were closed, shops were locked and people huddled inside their houses with their cattle. The town had a sinister atmosphere. The Magistrate went to the sergeant and pleaded him to allow the fisher folk inside the gates but his efforts turned vain. The soldiers loaded the carts with the wealth they looted from the people. They confiscated the horses from the stable and grains from the granary. They said the soldiers are withdrawing temporarily from the town and a caretaker force will be left behind for the security of the town people throughout the winter. Many group of families left the town unable to bear the atrocities of Colonel Joll and his Soldiers.

The Magistrate advises the people who remained in the town to plant vegetables in their garden and to harvest the old fields. He asks the people to prepare themselves to withstand the winter. Colonel Joll and his men came back to the town. The Magistrate got angry on seeing the colonel "...I shiver from the cold, but also from the tension of suppressed anger. An urge runs through me to smash the glass, to reach in and drag the man out through the jagged hole, to feel his flesh catch and tear on the edges, to hurl him to the ground and kick his body to pulp" (WB 160). The Magistrate speaks thus out of his rage towards the Empire and its unruly officers. The Magistrate blames the Colonel Joll for being the actual enemy to the people. The Empire's idea of barbarian attack was a lie. The reason for this humbug was the selfish motives of the soldiers and the Empire to establish its power by striking terror amidst its citizens.

The Magistrate at last sees the Colonel defeated off his power and wants to teach a lesson to him. Joll seems unchanged, but the people in the town have changed. At first nobody opposed the cruelty of Joll, but later they threw stones on his carriage. People

understand that soldiers, Colonel Joll and the officer Mandel have ransacked the town and turned a haven into a desolate place. Finally, without getting food to eat, Joll and his army withdrew from the Empire. J.M.Coetzee describes that the damage caused by the soldiers from the Third Bureau is more severe than the threat imposed by the barbarians. The violence perpetrated by the soldiers' boomerangs upon the citizens of the town as they were also doomed to suffer the cruelties imposed on the innocent natives. The uprising of the citizens makes Colonel Joll and his soldiers to retreat like cowards.

The Magistrate comes back to his routine work of digging the ruins. This time while digging, his team unearthed bones of a child. His archeological excavations are symbolic of self- assessment of his psyche.

...quest for vision is the quest of the narrator. He moves between Empire and barbarian territory, between present and past, trying desperately to retrieve some sense of original unity in order to liberate his future from history and his territory from conquest. He knows that something from past needs to be recovered. He digs among the ruins for artifacts that will enlighten him. (Jolly 77)

These excavations denote the transient nature of human life and prove that even mighty civilization has perished. The Magistrate sat down on his writing table and started to write about how the people in the town spent their last year in waiting for the barbarians.

'No one who paid visit to this oasis', I write, 'failed to be struck by the charm of life here. We lived in the time of the seasons, of the harvests, of the migrations of the water birds. We lived with nothing between us and

the stars. We would have made any concession, had we only known what, to go on living here. This was paradise on earth'. (WB 168-169)

As an integral process of the colonial system, the Empire wanted to prove its power over the native people. It also tried to destroy the culture and values of the colonised society. The Magistrate concludes his experience as: "I wanted to live outside history. I wanted to live outside the history that Empire imposes on its subjects, even its lost subjects. I never wished it for the barbarians that they should have the history of Empire laid upon them" (WB 169). The Magistrate plans to give up administration and decided to author a book based on his experience. So he writes the memorial stating what has happened to him in the whole year.

The plot, then, has affinities with the detective story; the reader, as well as the Magistrate and the others, try piecing together clues about what the barbarians are like, who they are, what they want, but meaning continually is deferred... The text of *Waiting for the Barbarians* ends on the page after that which the reader is given. The End never comes, the barbarians never overrun the settlement. (Olsen 50)

The Magistrate initially dreams of children building a fort and trying to prove their authority by fixing a flag on its top. In the next dream he finds the barbarian girl building the castle and realizes that the girl was trying to explain the history of Empire and the torture which she underwent symbolically. Through the final dream he expresses his longing for the future of South Africa where there is no violence. The children build a snowman in his dream and this denotes that in future the country will not give importance to establishing its power instead it will respect the people.

When the Magistrate started to empathize with the downtrodden, he becomes a symbol of compassion and endures suffering because of his humanistic zeal. The Empire's ruthless brutality is represented by Colonel Joll. Humanism and peaceful co-existence is represented by the Magistrate. Innocent life which is integrated with nature is devoid of vice or selfishness is represented by the barbarians. The civilized people secluded within the fort are the true barbarians. The barbarians are actually civilized as they retain the spirit of compassion; love for humanity and nature. The Empire ruled the town for a period of time by imposing violence and showing its superiority. But when the colonised people turned against the Empire they were forced to withdraw from the town. "No class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses" (Althusser139).

"At the heart of Coetzee's allegory is a dialectic concerning the relationship between Empire and colony, master and slave-rebel, man and woman, blindness and sight, law and barbarism, and expediency and ethics" (Penner 35). The Magistrate's spirit was not crushed by the violence. When people started evacuating the town unable to bear the atrocities of the soldiers, it was the Magistrate who encouraged the people to stay back and to revive the country.

In this novel J.M.Coetzee has portrayed the victims of the Empire. The first victim is the barbarian girl but she was considered as one of the enemies of the Empire. Next victim is the Magistrate of the town. The other victims are the Colonel's prisoners who are tortured in front of the public. And the characters in the novel are portrayed as silent characters who do not raise their voice against the Empire. The army killed those who did not yield to them. The old man, the small boy and the barbarian girl were

helpless victims and they were tortured by the army. The colonizers used violence as a tool to control and suppress the native people. The enemies of the empire turn out to be pathetic victims at the end.

The Magistrate is portrayed as a strong willed character, who sacrifices his status and comfort and questions the authoritative power. His dignity increases as his punishment intensifies. He did not fear his death but he did not want to die as an accused, labeled as a traitor. As the narrator of the novel the Magistrate gives first hand information and a personal touch to the injustice done to the simple innocent people.

Because of its very consistency, its identity with itself, the narrative voice of *Waiting for the Barbarians*...effaces itself, naturalizes itself and along with it the historical conjecture which produces it. In other words, it suppresses the arbitrariness and conventionality of its mode of reflection, reaction, conception, and articulation, giving the impression that it is a direct and immediate (unmediated) transcription of "reality". (Martin 8)

J.M. Coetzee has portrayed the hierarchy of the social structure and the unjust system of justice that operates in the timeless Empire. Through the nameless characters like the Magistrate, the barbarian girl. J.M.Coetzee insists the suffering endured by the oppressed.

The Struggle against the colonial oppression not only changes the direction of western history but challenges its historicist idea of time as a progressive, ordered whole. The analysis of colonial depersonalization not only alienates the Enlightenment idea of 'Man', but challenges the transparency of social reality, as a pre-given image of human knowledge. If the order of Western historicism is disturbed in the colonial state of

emergency, even more deeply disturbed is the social and psychic representation of the human subject. (Bhabha 41-42)

Colonisation not only changes the society but disturbs the psyche of the colonised people. The oppressed raise against to challenges the coloniser's domination and it created a new revolution, but the violence imposed on the natives is irrevocable. The protagonist in the beginning of the novel is described as a Magistrate who collects taxes; in the later part he is tortured and punished for sympathizing with the natives, late when the army flees he again retains his position as a Magistrate but with a greater insight into the agony of the simple people.

Waiting for the Barbarians is a post-colonial journey back to South Africa, and at the same time, is also a post-colonial journey around the world. Like most diaspora writers, Coetzee sets human existence in an ambiguous post-modern and post-colonial frame, trying to come up with a solution. Even though he has not been successful in finding a solution he finds satisfaction in disentangling the uncertainties about the human world, and acknowledging the provisionality of all knowledge while constructing a subjectivity that is plural, contingent and scrupulous. (Jinghui 66)

J.M.Coetzee questions the power structure that operates in the society through this novel. The tortures faced by the oppressed throughout history is imprinted in the novel even though the timeless Empire ends. "Thus, Coetzee, as a post-colonial writer, through his use of allegory and retelling attempts to recuperate the history of his own land in this process, he explores the complex strands of power which underlie every colonial society" (Sarkar 49).