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Post-colonialism Literature the Concept of *self* and the *other* in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*: An Analytical Approach

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***Abstract*—In the mid-1980s the term postcolonial first appeared in the scholarly journals as subtexts in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's writings. By the mid-1990s, the term established itself in academic and popular discourse. Its subjects include universality, differences, nationalism, postmodernism, representation and resistance, ethnicity, feminism, language, education, history, place, and production *(*Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2004..*Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studie*s, p.2) . It was born out of people's "frustrations, their direct, personal and cultural clashes with conquering culture, and their fears, hope, and dreams about the future and their own identities"(www.nku.edu). It is the literature that has been created as a voice to the powerless and the poorest members of the global community. "Postcolonial theory deals with the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonized countries; a literature written in colonizing countries which deals with colonization or colonized peoples. It focuses particularly on: the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities, and inscribes the inferiority, of the colonized people and on literature by colonized peoples which attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of inevitable *Otherness*" (www.shs.westport.k12.ct.us).**

***Index Terms*—Post-colonialism, the self, the others, binary opposition, consciousness, savage, empire, the oppressed and the oppressor**

I. Introduction

It is Frantz Fanon who develops the idea of the *Other* in his writing to be a key concern in postcolonial studies. To him the *Other* is the "*not me*" he is the *Other*.

So from this perspective an effort in this study has been made to foreground such concepts. This study seeks to consider how literature describes the *Other*. It shows the way to maintain authority over the *Othe*r in a colonial situation, that is, an imperialist must see the *Other* as different from the *Self*; and therefore he has to maintain sufficient identity with the *Other* to valorize control over it. Politically as well as culturally the *Self* and the *Other* are represented as the colonizer and the colonized.

The *Other* by definition lacks identity, propriety, purity, literality. In this sense he can be described as the *foreign*: the one who does not belong to a group, does not speak a given language, does not have the same customs; he is the unfamiliar, uncanny, unauthorized, inappropriate, and the improper.

To understand the concept of the *Self* and the *Other* the formalistic approach (binary opposition) is used which is an important idea that helps us understand how meanings are being shaped, created or reinforced in a text. Binary opposition is the principle of contrast between two mutually exclusive terms which argues that the perceived binary dichotomy between civilized\ savage has perpetuated and legitimized Western power structures favoring "civilized" white men. The existence of 'binaries' within a text "acts to develop often powerful layers of meaning that work to maintain and reinforce a society or culture's dominant ideologies"(www.englishbiz.co.uk).

II. Thematic Concern

Under this idea, the focus is brought into some of the theories related to consciousness where the idea of the *"Self"* is the core of subjective consciousness.

One of the main features of imperial oppression, also, is control over language. It has become the post-colonial voice. As Bill Ashcroft says in his book *(Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studie*s. 2004):

…the discussion of postcolonial writing which follows is largely a discussion of the process by which the language, with its power and the writing, with its significance of its authority has been wrested from the dominant European culture. (p.7)

The fascinating thing which needs to be explained is that we often agree over our understanding of poems, novels and plays in spite of the fact that we are all different. This study explores how it is that Coetzee communicates with us and affects us. It examines the way in which the language of his novels acts as the basis of our understanding and responses when we read.

Many postcolonial writers emphasize the importance of studying the aspects of the language because they know well that the translated word or the unspeakable one, as in the case of Friday in *Foe* and the barbarian girl in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, has a higher status than the *untranslated one* or the spoken one. This also helps us foreground the differences between the *Self* and the *Other*.

Postcolonial theory, as a term can be traced to 1950s. However, it "became part of critical toolbox only in the 1970s, and many practitioners credit Edward Said's book *Orientalism* as being the founding work"(www.faculty.mccfl.edu) . However, the actual term "post-colonial" was not employed in early studies of the power as in Edward Said's *Orientalism* as many thought, but rather it was first used to refer to cultural interactions within colonial societies in literary circles as in the work of Ashcroft et al. in 1977.

By the mid-1980s the term post-colonial and post-colonialism first appear in scholarly journals as subtexts in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's book: (*The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. 2002). By the mid-1990s, both terms established themselves in academic and popular discourse.

Originally postcolonial theory was formulated to deal with the reading and writing of literatures written in previously or currently colonized countries. Whether from the perspective of the colonizer or the colonized, post-colonization is about people and their personal experiences: the sense of disempowerment and dislocation. Postcolonial theory is built in large part around the concept of *Otherness*.

The concept of *Otherness* sees the world "as divided into mutually excluding opposites: if the *Self* is ordered, rational, masculine, good, then the *Other* is chaotic, irrational, feminine, and evil" (www.faculty.mccfl.edu) . This construction of the *Other* is a process of demonization, which in itself expresses the 'ambivalence at the very heart of authority' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin. 2002, P.3).

Post-colonialism is continually described as a term that portrays not a "we" talking about or to "them", but a "them" talking back to an "us". This implies that post-colonial literature in one way or another is about categorization of center and margin. Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that the paradoxical nature and ambivalent nature of the colonizer\ colonized relationship has been a focus for post-colonial theory:

…the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and "its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference. It is this ambivalence that makes the boundaries of colonial positionality- the division of *self\other* and the question of colonial power – the differentiation of colonizer\ colonized- different from both Hegelian master-slave dialectic or the phenomenological projection of *'otherness' "* (www.books.google.co.uk).

Post-colonial novels are written to present the "unequal relations of power based on binary opposition: "Us" and "them", "First World" and "third world", "White" and "black", "Colonizer" and "colonized",(Kehinde, Ayobami.p.108) "Self" and "other", "Powerful" and "powerless", "Torturer" and "tortured", "Master" and "slave", "Civilized" and "savage", "Superior" and "inferior", "Human" and "subhuman". This superiority of the white races, one colonist argued, clearly implied that "the black men must forever remain cheap labour and slave"(www.vuursteen.b). On this Frantz Fanon (1963) argues:

When one has grasped the mechanism described by Lacan, one can have no further doubt that the real *other* of the white man is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely, only for the white man is the *other* perceived on the level of the body image, absolutely as the *not-self* – that is, the unidentifiable, the inassimilable. (p.195, emphasis added)

Fanon sees "the dichotomy (colonizer\colonized) as a product of a "Manichaeism Delirium", the result of which condition is a radical division into paired oppositions such as good-evil, true-false, and white-black" (Kehinde, Ayobami. p.110) where blackness confirms the white *Self*, and whiteness empties the black subject (195). The *Other*, the colonizer believes, has to be owned, altered and ravished -*he* is deceptive and fertile. This postcolonial model is based on the tension between colonizer and colonized, and dominating and dominated. This points to the importance of binary oppositions in post-colonialism. This means that postcolonial writers protest against western ways of categorization. Their attempt at exposing binaries often expresses itself in the rewriting of canonical stories that are at the basis of inequality. The result of this rewriting is that it sometimes reverses a *binary opposition*, so that what used to be the bad half becomes the good one.

It is in the mid of 20th century, "two major European academic thinkers, Claude Levi Strauss and Roland Barthes, had the important insight that the way we understand certain words depends not so much on any meaning they themselves directly contain, but much more by our understanding of the difference between the word and its 'opposite' or, as they called it 'binary opposite'. They realized that words merely act as symbols for society's ideas and that the meaning of words, therefore, was a relationship rather than a fixed thing: a relationship between opposing ideas" (thomhartmann.org). Other oppositions that can help us understand the idea are the youth/age binary, the masculinity/femininity, the good/evil binary, and so on.

Colonization, however, "relates to the 'I': the seeing\perceiving 'I' or 'eye' of the colonizer, the one who sets the standard, who sees the *Other* and makes the agenda through his or her own point-of-view. Thus writing itself can be seen as an act of colonization, of imposing ones authority through culture\ meanings\ language onto someone else" (www.ub.uit.no) . In other words, the aim of colonization is to impose ones culture\language\meaning onto the *Other*.

Apartheid in South Africa is one of this where; also, the identity, which the *Other* loses, was literary established through language.

"Justification of imperialism in general was found on the notion that those who deserve to inherit the earth are those who make best use of it. The colonialist answer would probably be to cultivate the land and prevent it from growing wild, i.e. to protect it from the laziness of the natives"(ibid). Edward Said analyzes this as:

To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land. The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about.' (www.law.uoregon.edu.)

The postcolonial experience and especially the diasporic experience is often characterized by a co-existence of opposites which is a feature of consciousness, which exists along with other co-existence of silence and dynamism, singularity and multiplicity, manifest and unmanifest (Grace, 2007.p.4).

There are three silences that are expressively deployed on the post-colonial stage: inaudibility, muteness, and refusal to speak. Inaudibility becomes obvious when the body's language or the proxemic signifiers are more expressive than his\her voiced utterance, as for example 'when a character cannot be heard by others on stage, but can be heard by the audience. Muteness may be symbolic, in the sense that a character refuses to speak, and not that he cannot speak, or a character continues to suggestively but effectively *speak*, in spite of physical muteness. It bears noting here that the most interesting feature of the use of the language in postcolonial literature may refer to the way in which it also constructs difference, separation, and absence from the metropolitan norm. So silence with all its forms shows the difference and the separation and also the gap between the *Self* and the *Other*.

The oppressor projects his negative identity which is undesirable and dangerous into the oppressed, and that projection makes him feel superior and that is shown in the novels of J.M. Coetzee, who is the best representative of such concepts, represented by the Magistrate and Colonel Joll in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and Cruso and Susan Barton in *Foe* as superiors and oppressors and the barbarian girl and Friday as inferior and oppressed.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1940, John Maxwell Coetzee is probably the most known and most influential South African writer. Coetzee often avoids strict social realism, instead creating universal, often, allegorical fictions that remind us, according to Gallagher (1991,p.10), how oppression and injustice are not limited to South Africa, [and how], in some sense, they are eternal.

He completed his undergraduate work, studying English and mathematics at the University of Cape Town in 1961, and moved to England to work in Computers in 1962, where he stayed for four years working as a programmer. In 1965, Coetzee returned to the academics: he moved to the US, to the University of Texas at Austin, where he produced his doctoral dissertation on the style of Samuel Beckett's English fiction, completed in 1969.

"He returned to South Africa to take up a teaching position at the University of Cape Town in 1972. Following successive promotions, he became professor of general literature at Alma Mater in 1984" (www.assets.cambridge.org). Literature to him is a therapeutic device, where he shows a means of exploring the aftermath and implications of violent experience; an attempt to write away the trauma, to address traumatic memory or to seek healing.

Coetzee's life is full of achievements and rewards. Internationally, he has won the Geoffrey Jerusalem Prize, and the Study Express Book of the Year Award. In South Africa, he has won the Mofolo-Plower Prize, the CAN Prize (three times), the University of Cape Town Book Award, and the Pringle Prize for Criticism (twice). He is an honorary member of the Modern Language Association and a fellow of the Royal Society of literature; he also holds honorary degrees from the University of Strathclyde and the State University of New York at Buffalo. The importance of John Maxwell Coetzee in the development of twentieth-century fiction is now widely recognized. "His work addresses some of the key critical issues of our time: the relationship between postmodernism and post-colonialism, the role of history in the novel and, repeatedly, the question of how the author can combine an ethical and political consciousness with a commitment to the novel as a work of fiction"(www.aruhaz.prospero.hu).

Waiting for the Barbarians is Coetzee's third work of fiction. "It takes its title, and something like its premise, from a poem written one hundred years ago, in 1904, by the Greek writer Constantine Cavafy which is called "Waiting for the Barbarians"(ibid).It provides the novel with the "essential premise, that in order for something like an empire to exist, it must have something to exist against-an opposite; an *Other*, against which to define itself"(ibid). In other words, it depends upon the *Other*, a barbarian enemy to strengthen the national feeling of the state. "White, to be conceivable, relies upon the conception of black; cold must have hot; inside must be what is not outside, and civilization needs barbarism" (www.chinese-hermit.net).

Waiting for the Barbarians (1980) is a disturbing love story about "wanting to possess another person and to turn that person inside-out as though she were a puzzle to be solved"(ibid). It is Coetzee's contribution to the international discourse on torture in South Africa which is often considered to be his most powerful work.

When the novel opens, Colonel Joll, a representative of the Third Bureau, "arrives to investigate rumors of a barbarian uprising which have begun to circulate in the distant imperial capital. As Joll interrogates and tortures barbarian prisoners, the Magistrate becomes increasingly sympathetic towards the victims. When the Colonel leaves the outpost, the Magistrate takes a young barbarian woman" (www.rpe.ugent.be) whose body shows evident signs of her *Otherness*. When torturing her in front of her father, Colonel Joll and his men have made her blind. Both her ankles have been broken and the tortures have left her with ugly scars where her body becomes a tale of the vital *Other*.

Later, at the moment of pure consciousness, he journeys into the barbarian territory to restore her to her people. Upon his return, he finds that the army has arrived as part of a general offensive against the barbarians. The Magistrate is imprisoned for 'treasonously consorting with the enemy' (p.85) and subsequently tortured. "When having failed to engage the barbarians successfully, the army abandons the town, leaving the freed Magistrate to resume his official functions"(ibid).

Coming back to the analysis of the first paragraph in the novel, one can say that Coetzee does well at establishing, immediately, a sort of archetypal indefiniteness in time as well as in space which indirectly refers to the theme of *Otherness.* It is certainly not the start of the twentieth century, "since the narrator, a civilized protagonist, has not only never seen sunglasses, he has never seen glasses. On the other hand, the man in dark glasses is from the feared Third Bureau, which sounds modern enough,"(www.thevalve.org) and who is at the service of suffering. So we are on a painfully stretched line- between a nameless Empire and barbarians.

The opening lines underline the importance of eyes in the story as a whole. The glasses described prevent the viewer from seeing Joll's eyes, therefore, preventing him from looking into the 'windows of his soul'.

Colonel Joll's task is to make sure that the laws and the frontiers of the Empire are respected, and to keep barbarians in their place through military force. "In reflecting on his own and other characters' deeds, the Magistrate initially plays the familiar role of the witness, an outsider to the depicted violence: he incarnates the moral viewpoint in a world which seems prey to bureaucratized evil, of which it is not difficult to imagine examples"(www.rug.nl).

Under colonial conditions some become the masters and some the servants, some have the power and some are totally powerless. "The oppressors are far away from their native countries trying to create something that reminds them of home. The oppressed are no longer masters of their own country since they do not have any rights anymore; their land, money, raw materials and freedom are taken away from them"(www.hem.passagen.se).

Stephen Watson's point of view is that, If colonialism, at its very simplest, involves the conquest and subjugation of territory by an alien people, then the human relationship that is basic to it is likewise one of power and powerlessness: the relationship between master and servant, overlord and slave (p.14). Accordingly the best way to analyze *Waiting for the Barbarians* is through a set of binary oppositions which explains the complex relation between the characters as it helps, also, in visualizing the different positions of the characters.

To Loomba, the creation of the *Other* depends on constructing the *Self;* the insider (usually the White European male- *Self*) is essentially dependent on the outsider (the black African male-*Other*).

The idea of the *Other* is done out of the belief of the colonizer that he is 'the enemy within' the one on whom truth was imposed. This truth is the confession of guilt for which the Empire uses as a tool for invasion and isolation. The clear, simple idea of truth so confidently asserted by the Magistrate at the beginning is undercut when Joll elaborates on 'all he does':

"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." (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.5)

This process is seen as one conquest by the colonizer (the doctor of interrogation) of the colonized, who claims that the barbarians are preparing to muting, so Joll "leads an expedition in search of rebels and that results with a group of nomads in chains, terrified and mute"(www.nytimes.com). The possibility that the barbarians may be innocent of any revolutionary plans is "brushed aside by Colonel Joll in the previous remarkable description of how he conducts his interrogations"(ibid). Simply, because he is looking for the truth which is required to be true by the Empire and where he really succeeds when he tortures a boy taking what he wants. Here the Magistrate is blaming the boy for his confession:

Do you understand what this confession of yours will mean?..."It means that the soldiers are going to ride out against your people. There is going to be killing. Kinsmen of yours are going to die, perhaps even your parents, your brothers and sisters. Do you really want that?" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.10)

Colonel Joll's process of getting the truth is a historical process of colonization which is easily acquired as he said "[a] certain tone enters the voice of a man who is telling the truth .., *training* and *experience* teach us to recognize that tone"(ibid.p.5, emphasis added). This shows clearly the relationship between the conqueror and the conquered which requires the use of complex violence, the violence that the Empire represents: the violence which is achieved only through "training and experience" over the natives. When Colonel Joll uses violence to take out the truth, it is of importance in post-colonial novels in general and in this novel in particular. Truth encapsulates different dimensions as it refers to memory and above all to power. "The act of forced speech is mirrored in the act of torture, where the torturer attempts to make the tortured speak the 'truth' "(www.ub.nit.no).

These procedures are not used only by Colonel Joll and his soldiers but also by the Magistrate himself when trying to get the truth from the girl and his speech with the cook. In this way the Magistrate is no different from Joll. The Magistrate tells the cook that the torturers " they thrive on stubborn silence: it confirms to them that every soul is a lock they must patiently pick"(*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.124), "inadvertently also referring to his relationship to the barbarian girl. The imagery here suggests that the picker of the lock does not have the key that fits the opening, but that he must find something suitable to do the trick. This puts us in the mind of the tortured boy who has been cut as if his

body were a lock"(www.ub.nit.no) : "he makes a curt thrust into the sleeping boy's body and turns the knife delicately, like a key, first left, then right" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.10).

It is not until he has experienced the process of torture and violence he himself, that the Magistrate truly understands the relativity of the word 'truth' which he finally experiences what it is like to be colonized and the true meaning of being *Other*:

I walked into that cell a sane man sure of the Tightness of my cause, however incompetent I continue to find myself to describe what that cause may be; but after two months among the cockroaches with nothing to see but four walls and an enigmatic soot mark, …I am much less sure of myself…And what is the point of suffering at the hands of the men in blue if I am not iron-hard in my certainty (ibid.p.93).

The violence offered to the Magistrate includes a public beating, the force-feeding of gallons of salt water and a mock hanging. The reason behind this harsh treatment was to him as he puts it 'to show me the meaning of *humanity*' (p.111, emphasis added). The Magistrate realizes the purpose of the lesson he is being taught through torture: that high-minded notions of justice can be retained only by the healthy body. The tortured body will lose its grasp of such principles.

In his relation to the girl, she is seen as representative *Other* by the Magistrate and Colonel Joll, however, it has a wide meaning where her injured body represents the conquered land, in this sense: South Africa. The motif of the girl's body "becomes inaccessible to the Magistrate in his inability to remember what it looks like, and because he has no way to penetrate the surface, and ultimately invade her. In this way, his attempt to identify with the colonized *Other* initially fails"(www.ub.nit.no).

All his attempts to access to 'truth' are always blocked. He is faced with the conflicting role of the colonizer who refuses the liberal in a totalitarian regime- on the one hand, his role as the 'One Just Man' (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.114) as Joll sarcastically calls him, and, on the other, his sense of implication in the guilt of the Empire, his sharing of Joll's guilt: 'I was the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy, he [Joll] the truth that Empire tells when harsh winds blow. Two sides of imperial rule, no more, no less' (ibid.p.130). The Magistrate represents a "constructive view of colonial rule where the relationship with the natives is maintained for trading purposes, whereas Joll and Mandel represent a more radical view of Empire's demonstration of power before its subjects"(www.ub.nit.no).

According to the Magistrate, "one thought alone preoccupies the submerged mind of Empire: how not to end, how not to die, how to prolong its era" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.129), and he himself is "no less infected with it than the faithful Colonel Joll" (ibid.p.146). This is the crisis of the colonial identity which is also reflected in the narrative choice or authorial dilemma of the Magistrate, as in the following:

Before I can leave there are two documents to compose. The first is addressed to the provincial governor. "To repair some of the damage wrought by the forays of the Third Bureau," I write, "and to restore some of the goodwill that previously existed, … What the second document is, I do not yet know. A testament? A memoir? A confession? A history of the thirty years on the frontier? All that day I sit in a trance at my desk staring at the empty white paper, waiting for words to come. (ibid.p.55)

The images of hunting and attempted capture are metaphors for the colonizer's attempt to absorb the colonized, with the familiar post-colonial image of the penetration into the interior.

To search and destroy the barbarian enemy so it can widen its perspective of the *Self*, the Third Bureau sends troops into the land beyond the frontiers of the Empire. At first, reports of victory: then, a nervous silence; finally, the troops return, dazed and bedraggled. "We were not beaten" (ibid. p.142) says a survivor, "they [the barbarians] 'led us out into the desert and then they vanished!'...They lured us on and on, we could never catch them. They picked off the stragglers, they cut out horses loose in the night, they would not stand up to us" (ibid p.145). With the loss of this battle, the Empire fades. It loses its premise: the things that can stand against. Then Empire exists no longer: it vanishes.

Colonel Joll and his men retreat; the Magistrate resumes his old authority. "The Empire disappears; the barbarians remain. Only now, in this bitter ending, we grasp the full-force of Coetzee's title, adapted from last lines of by the Cavafy: what does this sudden uneasiness mean, and this confusion? Because it is night and the barbarians have not arrived from the frontiers and they say that there are no barbarians any longer and now/ what will become of us without barbarians?/ These people were a kind of solution"(www.nytimes.com).

True, the Empire is abstract, timeless, placeless, "but through the scrim of Empire, *Waiting for the Barbarians* renders a moment in our politics, style of our justice. Precisely this power of historical immediacy gives the novel its thrust, its larger and 'universal' value"(ibid).

The real foreign, however, is not the colonized but the colonizer. This is only proved at the end of the novel when Colonel Joll's expedition lost the battle which is said at the very beginning of the novel when the Magistrate tells Colonel Joll: "The barbarians you are chasing will smell you coming and vanish into the desert while you are still a day's march away. They have lived here all their lives, they know the land. You and I are strangers- you even more than I" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.11).

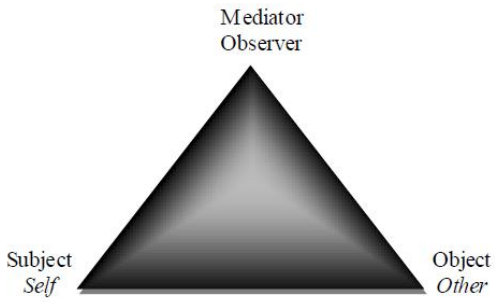
Waiting for the Barbarians is about destruction and self-destructiveness, of an imperial regime, obstructed by one man of conscience who has obvious ramifications for the white opponent of apartheid South Africa in 1980. The time and place of the novel's setting are imprecise. It is this allegory of imperialism which widens its significance. The best way to see this destruction is by drawing the triangulation of *Otherness*, which will also show the changes in the roles

of *Self* and the *Other*. This destruction is not only at the level of the relation between the *Self* and the *Other*; it involves the destruction of the Empire. Coetzee suggests that the actual Empire, like the Empire depicted in the novel, is misguided, for its illusions of humanitarianism, and because its rhetoric is based upon lies and unsupportable binaries.

III. The Triangulation of Otherness

As we have seen earlier that *Waiting for the Barbarians* has addressed the issue of *Otherness* very explicitly as most literary critics approach the text through a set of binary oppositions. The discussion of *Otherness* usually involves two opposite constitutes. Except in *Waiting for the Barbarians* it involves "not only an opposition between two elements but a more complex relation between three entities, namely the three main characters of the novel; the Magistrate, the girl, and Colonel Joll. All three of them inhabit at different moments the positions of the *Self* and of the *Other*. To prove this, we can draw upon Rene Girard's triangle to explain how the three characters are connected. Seen as *Others*, they are all victims"(www.hem.passagen.se). However, it is more obvious that the girl with her barbarian origin is victim and can only be seen in the position of the *Other* than it is to consider the Magistrate and Colonel Joll, although, they are all victims of power. The structure of the triangle changes with the changes in the plot regarding the theme of the *Self* and the *Other*.

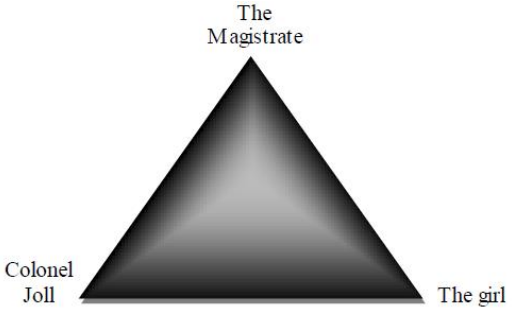
In *Waiting for the Barbarians* there is always a straight line present in the relation between two of the characters. But there is also a third person involved, the one that Girard defines as "the mediator" (ibid) who can be referred as the observer in this analysis and with whom also the relation between the *Self* and the *Other* would, probably, not exist or might be different.



What is interesting, here, is that "both Colonel Joll and the Magistrate can be seen in all the three positions of the triangle while the girl is never in the position of the Subject or the *Self*, when she is in a triangular structure. She is, however, in the position of the *Self* when the plot of the novel presents her in a dual relation with the Magistrate in her "own", "barbarian" territory"(www.hem.passagen.se).

In the very beginning of the novel, the *Self* - *Other* relation is focused on the relation between Colonel Joll and the girl. Joll is in the position of the *Subject* where he clearly shows the power that he possesses. "Only a few days after his arrival in the town several barbarians are taken prisoners by his men. The prisoners are brought into the town where Joll forces them to disclose the "truth" about their disloyal intentions. The girl is one of the prisoners and therefore she is directly put in the position of the *Object*. She is badly tortured and finally left all alone among strangers"(ibid). Her injured body shows evident signs of *Otherness* which results in making her really belongs to nowhere anymore. Her depiction proves her *Otherness:* her skin is dark and [she] has straight black eye-brows, the glossy black hair of the barbarians" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.25). It is clear, here, that the men of the Empire, by occupying a position of power, have the privilege of formulating the rules of the game, and, furthermore, to disregard any given move arbitrarily.

The Magistrate is there, observing, but he does not really take part in what is going on. His position is one of the *Observer* .



His role as observer is also clarified after the torturing episode. He invokes her soul, heart, and mindlessness. He looks into her maimed eyes, and sees nothing but her blindness, and, in describing the scars of torture on her irises, he

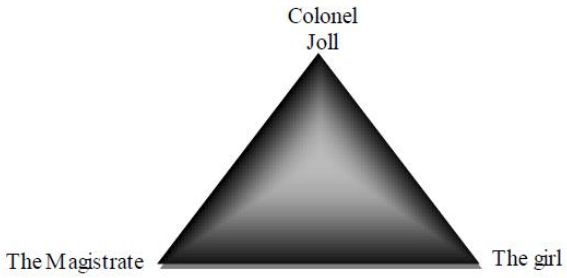
places himself as her observer. He claims that there is no way he can penetrate any further, no way of reaching behind her irises; into her mind. He, also, is unable to attain any insight into her thoughts. As when he waves his hand in front of her eyes:

I wave a hand in front of her eyes. She blinks. I bring my face closer and stare into her eyes. She wheels her gaze from the wall on to me. The black irises are set off by milky whites as clear as a child's. I touch her cheek: she starts. (ibid. p.26)

When the plot changes the structure of the triangle does so. In the second part of the novel, Colonel Joll has returned to the capital and the prisoner have been released and allowed to return to their own land.

"Left in town is the Magistrate and the girl and the interesting relation is now the one between them. The Magistrate is the *Self* who decides to take care of the girl. He is not sure whether he also does so because he really cares about her, or if he only wants to prove that he is not an evil man, like Colonel Joll" (www.hem.passagen.com). Actually, the Magistrate feels that he does no longer possess anything. The frontier is under the grip of Joll and his men. So under this feeling; the Magistrate starts searching to compensate his loss. He sees the girl as the only entity that he can show his superiority and the sense of *Selfhood.* This is proved when he begins comparing himself to Colonel Joll saying that: "I [am] not, as I liked to think, the indulgent and pleasure-loving opposite of the cold and rigid Colonel" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.135). His hatred to the appearance of Joll is clear from the very beginning of the novel when he confirms whether Colonel Joll is blind or not: "Is he blind? I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes" (ibid.p.1). In other words, he attacks his coming from the beginning before Joll does anything.

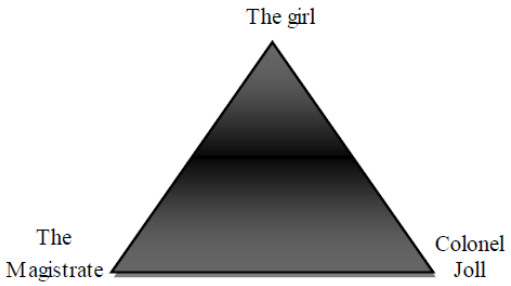
The girl is the *Other* who depends upon the Magistrate's good will and "remains passive in her relation to him. Colonel Joll is the distant Observer, although he is still a necessary constituent of the triangle. But it is also possible, at this point, to draw a second triangle to show that the Magistrate is the *Self* also in relation to Joll" (www.hem.passagen.com) .



The relationship with the barbarian girl is ruled by silence. Silence, here, can be read as a sign or a form of resistance to the *Other's* rule, for revealing the details of the torture she was subjected to imply the acknowledgement of the colonizer's power, and, as such, the negation of her barbarian identity on the other hand, however, the girl's silence reflects the contradictory difficulties of communication between colonizer and colonized.

What makes the girl considered to be the *Other* in the novel can also be connected with being a woman. At all times, being a woman has been synonymous with being the *Other.* The female body has always been regarded as inferior in comparison to the male body. The girl, in this case, has joined both characteristics of *Otherness*: being colonized and female.

The Magistrate finds himself superior to Joll since he looks upon himself as a good man in comparison to him. The Magistrate thinks that "there is nothing to link me with torturers, people who sit waiting like beetles in dark cellars....I must assert my distance from Colonel Joll! I will not suffer for his crimes!" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.43). While Joll is the passive Object of the Magistrate's reflection, the Magistrate acts like the powerful Subject who decides to return the girl to her people to show his humanity and to get peace in mind.



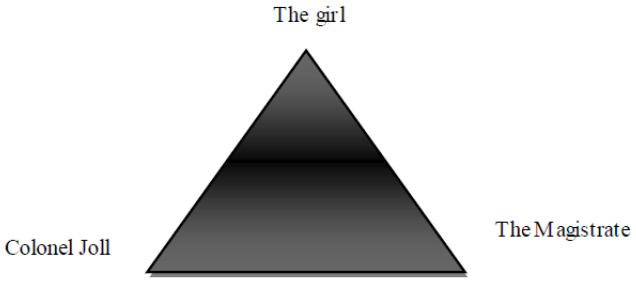
"In part four, the relationships in the triangle have once again changed. Colonel Joll has returned to the town and he is again the *Self*, but now in relation to the Magistrate. On the Magistrate's return from the desert, he is arrested by Joll and he becomes the imprisoned *Other*" (www.hem.passagen.com). By returning the girl, the Magistrate has shown his

dissociation of the Empire and he says: "my alliance with the guardians of the Empire is over, I have set myself in opposition, the bond is broken" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.76).

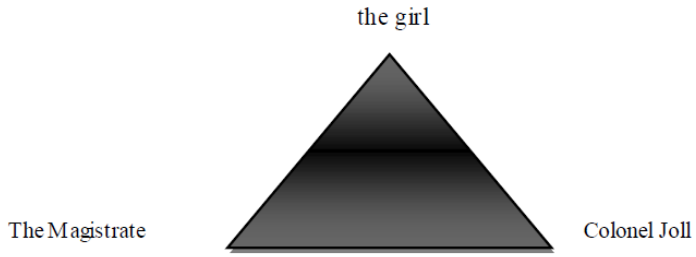
When the Magistrate does this, he was at a moment of self-realization of the real fact of the Empire that it is not as he says earlier "the Empire of light" rather it becomes "the Empire of pain". This self-awareness causes him to be in the position of the *Other*.

I realize how tiny I have allowed them to make my world, how I daily become more like a beast or a simple machine, a child's spinning wheel, for example, with eight little figures presenting themselves on the rim: father, lover, horseman, thief,… (ibid. p.82)

The result of this awareness leads him to be prisoned, tortured and humiliated and to be deprived from all his basic human needs. The reason of the attack made by Colonel against the Magistrate is a result of the understandable fact that releasing the barbarian girl endangers Joll's position as a *Self;* because without the barbarians he is no longer in a position of power.



In the last part of the novel the Magistrate is, once more, the *Self* and he describes his situation like this: "...I have taken the lead. No one has challenged me. My beard is trimmed, I wear clean clothes, I have in effect resumed the legal administration that was interrupted a year ago by the arrival of the Civil Guard" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.140). This is how the Magistrate feels when Colonel Joll returns from the desert in a very bad condition. "Joll has been defeated by the barbarians and he is the weak and pitiful *Other*" (www.hem.passagen.com).



The self-reflection that opens his eyes to the injustice, which he calls 'the new science of degradation" where the torturers are the scientists with sensory data, i.e., pain, (104) makes him realize the impossibility of resistance.

I have a lesson for him that I have long mediated. I mouth the words and watch him read them on my lips: "The crime that is latent in us we must inflict on ourselves" I say. I nod and nod driving the messages home. "Not on others," I say: I repeat the words, pointing at my chest, pointing at his. He watches my lips, his lips move in imitation, or perhaps in derision, I do not know. (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.141)

At the end both Colonel Joll and the Magistrate discover that the intellect is nothing to the human warmth and the sense of belonging.

Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* is an *"allegorical* depiction of the ironic interplay between definitions of civilization and barbarism and a depiction as well of the ironic distance between the ideas of empire and its reality" (Lois Parkinson Zamora. p.12). Allegory has played a significant role in the novel as it foregrounds the theme of *Otherness* and bears out a better understanding and a better reading for the novel.

IV. Conclusion

The Empire's power rests in its ability to name, to label, to categorize, and to define the world according to its own whims. The Empire, moreover, divorces names from their intrinsic meaning and undermines the basis of its power- the absoluteness of its own definitions. "In doing so, the Empire undermines its ownership, for if the Empire cannot categorize a person or a place, how can the Empire be said to possess something?"(www.deptorg.knox.edu). By losing control of words and their meanings, the Empire conquers itself. That is what happened at the end of the novel. The Empire defeats itself when it fails to grip the colonized and to maintain the relationship and when its names fail to be used; the *Other* is no longer *Other* and the *Self* is no longer the *Self*.

The ironic moral objective of the Empire is to reduce suffering; as those barbarians live a very primitive life which the colonizer considers it to be as a kind of suffering and sees that it is his duty to change this kind of lifestyle and to make the world a better place for the civilized. He sees the colonized as a scapegoat who has to bear the burden of the guilt of the civilization. They believe that humanity is possible only at the price of sacrificing the natives, the scapegoats of the fault of civilization. However, this notion has collapsed at the end of novel.

The colonized country is constructed of binary oppositions-pairs that give each other value in that one is what the other is not, "such as female\male, *Self\Other*, central\marginal. Each binary is seen as dichotomies that one negates the other and more dominant to the other. In the binary of *Self\Other*, *Self* has value because it is not *Other* but the concept cannot be applied the other way around" (www.fportfolio.petra.ac.id).

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Coetzee shows us that in a world based on binary oppositions, to escape the identity of the so-called civilized, what option is there but to become the *Other*. The Magistrate seeks independence from the stereotypes and conventions of the Empire by the moment he realizes the loss that occurs in his identity. Thus he seeks to find "means of identification. But regardless of our identity, people need recognition from others. The Magistrate, perhaps due to his role as a public figure, relies heavily upon the impression other people have of him" (www.ub.uit.no) which is in fact a policy the Empire keeps and imposes its followers to keep. This renders him very insecure in his search for the new identity. With the girl, he does not know what he is, a savior, a healer, a father, a lover: "now kiss her feet, now browbeat her, now anoint her with exotic oils, now ignore her, now sleep in her arms all night, now moodily sleep apart"(*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.54), but after his own torture, he realizes that from "the very first she knew me for a false seducer" (ibid. p.130).

In attempting to assert his distance from Colonel Joll when he is washing the girl, the Magistrate wants to build his *Selfhood*. Seeing his own reflection in Joll's shades, however, makes the Magistrate realize that the "distance between myself and her torturers … is negligible" (ibid. p.27). Part of this distance is "his acknowledgement of the inadequacy of the imperial values and practices in which he has been steeped and educated" (www.ub.uit.no).

The Magistrate's identity changes throughout the novel. At the beginning, the changes are made to assert his distance from the Empire and Colonel Joll to rebuild his *Self*. "However, as the novel progresses, this becomes less clear; Empire writes him as *Other*, and he himself aids in this. Thus when he returns to town after handing the girl over to her own people, Empire writes him as an ally of the barbarians"(ibid). Colonel Joll accuses him of wanting to be the judge, the "*One Just Man*" (*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.109), but then goes on to name him and impose an identity on him based on how *Others* see him: "to people in this town you are not the One Just Man, you are simply a clown, a madman. You are dirty, you sink, they can smell you a mile away. You look like an old beggar-man, a refuse-scavenger" (ibid. p.124). After this, Mandel, with the help from the crowd, makes the Magistrate become the clown and madman Joll suggested. The Magistrate refrains from blaming the townspeople: "But of what use is it to blame the crowd? A scapegoat is named, a festival is declared, the laws are suspended: who would not flock to see the entertainment?" (ibid. p.115) We, here, see a shift in the way the Magistrate sees himself. He accepts being *named* the scapegoat, an innocent who is helpless against the Empire and who must please the crowd. This could also be seen as a result of not following the Empire's rules and systems. The twofold humiliation that the Magistrate has to bear makes him conscious of his pride of being a "White Male". It is this pride that hurts him in deep.

A pattern in the Magistrate's desire for identity, is to be seen "as innocent, as an ignorant babe, which again reminds us of his disclaimer of liability. Determining that it is his role to be the scapegoat, the Magistrate must remain passive and distanced to the situation"(www.ub.uit.no). Falling into roles, then, becomes a way for the Magistrate to excuse himself, excuse his own condition, and ultimately to protect himself. No longer locked up, the Magistrate lives "like a starved beast at the back door, kept alive perhaps only as evidence of the animal that skulks within every barbarian-lover"(*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.136). Thus the name the Magistrate wanted to make for himself, "of being the One Just Man, of being the one who opposed the torture of the *Other*, is reduced to nothingness, as he is seen as an animal instead of gaining respect for speaking up against the Empire"(www.bibsonomy.org). He gets the feeling of not belonged which puts him in a state of limbo; "a state that is loaded with anxieties, questions and conflicts as he is unable to find an anchor that he can grip on"(ibid).

Towards the end of the novel, the Magistrate is set free. Since, now, he is a free man, he has to provide his own food. "He becomes a sort of beggar crossed with a bard, who tells a story in exchange for food. Admitting to the reader that what he serves is "half-truths", one gets the feeling that the Magistrate has finally understood the intimacy of torture, and why the girl was reluctant to speak. To overcome his experiences, the Magistrate must in a sense return to his old identity which anchors him to his past *Self* and his prime"(www.ub.uit.no). To regain his old identity he has to be fat: "I want to be fat again, fatter than ever before, I want a belly that gurgles with contentment when I fold my palms over it, I want to feel my chin sink into the cushion of my throat and my beasts wobbles as I walk"(*Waiting for the Barbarians*, p.125). To be fat again is synonyms with no longer being in pain, and returning to his former *Self*. The return to his former position of the Magistrate suggests that the wellbeing of his body goes hand in hand with his notion of identity. When his body was in pain, he was preoccupied with the basic human needs of avoiding further pain of being fed: "I was so hungry that I did not give a thought to woman, only to food… When I dreamed of a woman, I dreamed of someone who would come in the night and take pain away" (ibid. p.140). "Once the threat of violence against his body ceases to exist, his needs, and his notion of identity, change and return to their former pattern"(www.ub.uit.no). That is

one of the methods used by the Empire: to keep the colonized preoccupied with the way of getting their basic needs so that they will never think about fighting or disobeying the colonizer.

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