CHAPTER 1

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASES OF COLONIALISM

This chapter provides a brief historical overview of colonialism, concerning Biblical times, Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the period of the British Empire with special emphasis on Africa\(^1\). The philosophical premises underlying colonialism are embedded in this overview and then followed by an exposition of the economic and social consequences of colonialism. The cultural level, which can be considered as part of the social plane, concentrates on intolerance and the clash of black and white cultures. The clash largely destroyed black culture, superficially superseding it with white culture, but in the matter of fact it deprived blacks of any culture, placing them in the limbo of relativism. This phenomenon evoked a widespread identity crisis among blacks. The crisis prompted the development of African literature and was consequently depicted in it. The literature predominantly gravitates around colonialism and other issues and problems connected to it which causes African literature to be specifically monothematic. The overview of history, philosophical premises and consequences of colonialism together with the next chapter, which explores the subject of colonialism in African and South African literature, will serve as a background against which the works of J. M. Coetzee will be contextualised and analysed.

From a methodological point of view this historical-philosophical overview is based on the conflict of the Judeo-Christian tradition of western civilisation with non-European cultural traditions. The Judeo-Christian tradition is the very backbone underlying European civilisation, culture, history, religion and thinking. During last three thousand years Biblical, Greek, Roman, and Christian elements were fused together into this tradition, in the Mediterranean region, which later also encompassed the whole of Europe, South Africa, the Americas and Australasia.
This immense spread of the Judeo-Christian tradition which exerted its impact on the whole globe is closely related to colonialism which can be briefly defined as a "policy [of] seeking to acquire, extend or retain overseas dependencies" (Barrett, 1983: 148), without looking at its specific implementations and causes in different historical epochs dealt with below.

Colonization - like the very Latin origin of the word colonus - indicates that this phenomenon is largely confined to agricultural (later industrialized) societies which always needed new land (markets) to multiply wealth and to provide for future generations which, to live in the ways of their forefathers, had to possess more land. This insatiable desire to extend one's ownership of land and subsequently power and influence over other peoples was strengthened in our Judeo-Christian civilisation by the very words of God: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1: 28). Especially the growth rate of populations rose unbelievably in these societies, thanks to the sedentary way of life which increased life expectancy and lowered infant mortality. For a peasant wives and children became a kind of goods which constituted his wealth. The more children and wives a peasant had, the more he could produce, and consequently the more powerful he was. From a perspective of a state it meant more people who could be used to populate the wilderness and conquer adjacent countries to allow more space to its own citizens together with slaves if their families happened to be too small to till vast fields, or with time, "too high born" to work, since accumulation of wealth gave rise to differentiation of societies. This was the birth of ancient empires.

On the other hand the population of the societies of nomads was curtailed by the ever-diminishing amount of available food and by the natural environment. Only the very fittest could survive the long journeys of the nomadic peoples and those who were too weak, ill or too senile were left behind to die so as not to be a burden to their tribe or clan. In such societies the population always balanced at the same level, for surpassing
a certain optimum meant hunger, starvation and death of the redundant number of such a society's members, or a phasing out of a community in the case of too big a decrease in the number of its members.

Though all agriculturally-based societies have nomadic roots in the past the two so different ways of life of nomads and agriculturalists could not be reconciled and had to resolve the differences which arose among them in a conflict when agriculturalists began to destroy the very "home" of nomads: forests, meadows, steppe. There was no more space for them. To sustain their livelihood they needed immense amounts of land for few people, which was a terrible loss in the eyes of agriculturalists who used land more intensively. The nomadic peoples had to be defeated by well-organized protostates which always had enough people who could die in these conflicts without any visible effects on the states.

In the Bible we find the very philosophical foundations of colonialism which let Europeans conquer and rule almost the whole earth with its people. In accordance with the will of God they multiplied and subdued the earth, and they also tilled the soil. Thus only they were suited to inherit the earth, and Hamites and Shemites were to serve them, the sons of Japhet.

The conflict of pastoral and agricultural societies had to take part in the Middle East in the times when the first book of the Bible was composed. It is reflected in the well-known story of Cain and Abel:

Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regarded for Abel and for his offerings; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and countenance fell. Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry ? And why has your countenance has fallen ?' 'If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up ? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.' And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that
Cain rose against Abel his brother and killed him (Gen. 4: 2-8).

Here, in an allegorical way, pastoralism is still favoured and agriculture looked down on. Though the latter begins to dominate, superseding the former, as is shown in the murder of Abel at the hands of Cain, the sentiment is still with pastoralism. Hence in the whole Bible we have a lot of comparisons to sheep, flocks and shepherds.

And now you are cursed [...]. And Cain said to the Lord, ‘My punishment is too great to bear!’ ‘Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face I shall be hidden, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me.’ So the Lord said to him, ‘Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him seven-fold.’ And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain, lest anyone finding him should slay him’ (Gen. 4: 11, 13-15).

In this way the tillers of the soil received divine protection and a hidden blessing directly from God. But this sad victory of agriculturalists did not completely obliterate the extensive economy of nomads. It was just the beginning of the tumultuous changes which were to transform the face of our planet, turning wilderness, forests and grazelands into fields. Nomads still existed as a kind of impending danger which could wreak havoc with agriculturalists’ fields which used to be forests and pastures:

And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, ‘God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him’ (Gen. 4: 25).

Ironically the name of Seth means "seed" in Hebrew, suggesting not only that he is a new beginning but also that he and his descendants are to be sown, i.e. sacrificed by their brethren coming from Cain, for the sake of future harvests. It was a commonly attested rite among early agricultural societies to commit the ritual murder of somebody innocent and pure, or simply someone through whose blood soil is made fertile and more eager to sacrifice her children, i.e. plants for men to eat them. But returning to the Bible, a careful reader will note that this story is continued:

And Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, ‘If it is
so, why am I this way? So she went to inquire to the Lord.
And the Lord said to her,
'Two nations are in your womb;
And two peoples will be separated
from your body;
And one people shall be stronger
than the other;
And the older shall serve the younger.'

When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. And afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so he was called Jacob [i.e. "one who takes by the heel or supplants"]. When the boys grew up Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a peaceful man living in tents (Gen. 25: 21-27).

So one can see that in the struggle of nomads with farmers the latter even gain some ideological support in the above description. Though Esau - another from forefathers of nomads and pastoralists - is the first-born, God's prophecy as revealed to Rebekah nullifies his right. Moreover, Esau, unlike his predecessor Abel, is presented to be a man of strength and of a very ugly physique. The sentiment we felt for Abel has now changed into disgust. If the passages were to be written in the 20th century one could say that they are a fine example of deft propaganda. Esau is a man of the woods, resembling a Greek satyr (Brewer, 1989: 996), and his true name in our civilization is a "savage". This word is derived from the Latin adjective siluaticus which means "living in woods" (Partridge, 1959: 588). This very unattractive image of the simpleton Esau is opposed by the peaceful (?), cunning Jacob who is not even liked by his own father who "loved Esau, because he [Isaac] had a taste for game; but Rebekah loved Jacob" (Gen. 25: 28). His mother's love for him and her machinations became essential for fulfilling the prophecy which Isaac did not know, trying to follow the old decorum in passing his blessing to his eldest son. But "peaceful" Jacob, with help of his mother, deceived his old father and stole the blessing from his brother. Esau, having been very desperate after this fact, asked his father for any blessing and

Isaac answered and said to him,
'Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling,
And away from the dew of heaven above.'
'And by your sword you shall live,
And your brother you shall serve;
But it shall come about when you become restless,  
That you shall break his yoke from your neck’ (Gen. 27: 40).

Though the story is much more embellished, the line of narration that I have presented is essential for its meaning. Nomads are to live in deserts and desolate places, far away from farmers. Their destiny is to be subjugated to their younger brothers - agriculturalists, and these words are fulfilled by colonizers who predominantly conquered and enslaved pastoral and nomadic peoples, finding their divine sanction to do so in the Bible. Nomads (represented by Esau) are no more looked upon with any sentimental favour as in the earlier case of Abel. Now the Holy Scripture favours Jacob - a forefather of farmers, as to them belongs the future. Here one is only to quote another biblical saying: "The meek will inherit the earth" and the irony becomes visible as it seems to be quite the opposite. The only doubts are sparked by the end of Isaac's blessing for Esau but it never comes true - or - maybe only for short periods of time.

The story of Jacob's deception may also remind one about its re-telling which is widespread among new Christian-induced religions on the Black Continent. It claims that God created two men. One of them was to get black skin but he deceived God and took possession of white skin which had been promised to the other one. So black man of today "in reality" is a descendant of the primeval "true" white man, and white man is a descendant of the original bad deceitful black man (Anon., 1985: NA). This belief, bearing such obvious resemblances to the biblical story tells us a lot about the contemporary black mind which is schizophrenically torn between two cultures, and more and more westernized to the point of even striving to surpass this deadlock of its own identity with the help of a slightly disguised Christian faith.

The distinction between western and non-western peoples was emphasized by the classical notion of civilisation perceived as the "Heavenly City" (Rich, 1984: 369) or the New Jerusalem, whose idea was known all around Europe in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It was only with the separation of the church and the state that the ecclesiastical elements were slowly excluded, while the meaning more or
less remained - the same idea of associating civilisation with urban areas. This is emphasized by the etymology of the word 'civilisation' which is derived from Latin *civis* meaning a citizen (Onions, 1969: 178). This Latin noun gave birth to the word 'city' and to the plethora of related words in modern English, hence anchoring their meanings in the concept of the perfect city of Rome and the Greek polis. So the very core of the meaning of the verb 'civilise' is to build cities and make people citizens - inhabitants of them. Cities are very closely connected to the intensive economy of agriculture, as without it there would not be an accumulation of wealth, growth of social structures and commerce, and the eventual rise of urban centres - concentrations of power steering all the above mentioned phenomena.

This intimate link of European civilisation with agriculture is also explicitly represented in the word 'culture', which with its scope encompasses the whole civilisation and tradition of Europe together with anthropological systems of behaviour of its individuals and groups. The word is derived from Latin *colere* - to till, to cultivate, associating "culturing of the mind and manners" and cultivation in the meaning of intellectual training and refinement with agriculture (Partridge, 1959: 146). Hence, the word obliquely implies that all kinds of highly refined reasoning and training connected with complimentary actions in the real world are not accessible to nomadic peoples. This is emphasized even more by the fact that at the beginning the term culture was attributed exclusively to Western civilisation, and only afterwards, as a result of the groundbreaking studies of Fraser's *The Golden Bough*, Bronislaw Malinowski, Richard Burton, Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf\(^4\) and many other anthropologists, whose work engaged the accumulation of knowledge about different peoples. The meaning of this term was broadened to encompass, first, all other agricultural societies and then all kinds of peoples and societies with their own specificities.

But going back to the agricultural roots of European civilisation, one can notice link of this kind of economy with the establishment of the first colonies which date back to the earliest times of human history, when ancient Egypt, Persia, China, India, Greece and Rome became organized
states. They were states of cultivators sowing and harvesting the land they controlled. The invention of agriculture let them settle without any need to migrate after herds of cattle or in search for new pastures. It was the tool which enabled people to create more centralized systems of government and to transcend the clan structures, because this form of economy allowed an accumulation of wealth and power. The idea of wealth that was not to be used for immediate need gave rise to commerce, and subsequently money appeared. Also what is very important for our considerations, the concept of time was broadened. People did not live from day to day any more. They consciously noticed cyclical changes of seasons and other cyclical phenomena which could enhance their harvest or bring famine. They started to plan and use observations of nature for their own goals. To the present, the moment of nomadic people, a perspective of the past and future was added. This is the beginning of history and politics. In due course more or less homogeneous societies were differentiated into social hierarchies. In this process, decision-making was delegated to rulers and oligarchies in whose hands power was concentrated.

The early states, to increase their power and wealth, strove to gain new territories, conquering adjacent peoples. This was followed by the development of commerce and of internal dissents, which caused especially the Phoenicians and Greeks to scatter in a multitude of colonies (which were loosely connected to metropolises) on the coasts of the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and even of the Atlantic, beyond the Pillars of Hercules. They transplanted agriculture to the new settlements, and the word "colony" retained this meaning, since it is derived from the Latin colonus, which means farmer.

At this time too the concept of "barbarians" was created. In its original meaning the Greek barbaros was an adjective to describe foreigners, un-Hellenic peoples. The ancient Greeks in their colonies rather preferred not to mix with indigenous inhabitants and if they did it was the "barbarians" who were assimilated, not the Greeks. But people were still not looked upon via the narrow lenses of skin colour, and not surprisingly
some black pharaohs sat on the throne of Egypt, as this country had close relations with ancient Libya, i.e. Africa. The same may be said of the empires of Carthage, Alexander the Great and Rome which in their boundaries comprised the whole spectrum of skin colours ranging from black to copper to yellow to white.

Only after the fall of the Roman Empire, which seemed to be a useless political organism since the new faith of Christianity was to unite the peoples of Europe, the concept of racism was slowly formulated in the face of "a defensive attitude in the West in the course of Middle Ages" (Rich, 1984: 367). The process was quickened by the brilliant successes of Islam, which endangered the whole Christian tradition. In the series of holy wars the Muslims conquered the Holy Land, converted northern Africa, the Near East and for several centuries Iberia, causing the decline and the eventual demise of Byzantium, so that the "second Rome" had to be moved once again. This time to Moscow - the self-claimed heir to the Roman imperial tradition.

Since that time "a dominant theme in the history of Europe is its defense against recurrent invasions from Asia such that the 'mixed' attitude of the Greeks of both opposition and orientation toward Asia became transformed into a siege-like cultural hostility toward cultures threatening its eastern [western and southern] borders" (Rich, 1984: 367). This hostility was deepened by the failure of the crusades to recover the Holy Land and Jerusalem from the hands of the "faithless". This was the beginning of xenophobia and intolerance in European culture which later bred racism.

The masses of knights and adventurers who were pushed back to Europe from Near East kingdoms and principalities had to find new homes on the old continent and find venues to use the stored-up energy in a way which would let them forget the frustration caused by the loss of the land of Christ. This resulted in a series of internal crusades against the Jews, heretics (e.g. Albigenses, Cathars) and heathens; which obliterated the
Pruthenians on the southern coast of the Baltic where the Teutonic order founded its new home after they had left Palestine.

The quest for the Holy Grail came back to the confines of Europe. Chivalry stayed vigilant, guarding the purity of the holy faith of Christianity, and with the coming of modern states was superseded by the Holy Inquisition, an institution which controlled and censored the whole scope of social life.

"The Hellenic notion of civilization was strongly aware of racial differences [but] it was free from any systematized idea of racial superiority or inferiority, and this was to continue into the phase of Roman imperial expansion too" (Rich, 1984: 367). Only in this period of post-crusade frustration "[There] was probably born the image of 'primiùveness' associated with non-Western people which became bound up with colour distinctions drawn from the Christian differentiation between light and goodness and darkness and evil" (Rich, 1984: 367). This association was strengthened by the covenant of the church and the state which, following the age of great geographical discoveries, still worked together and began to colonize new lands. Arm in arm in the name of God and Jesus Christ, they conquered, killed, converted and enslaved.

The peoples which were subjugated to the will of European masters had different skin colours and in this respect resembled the arch-enemies of Christianity: the Mongols and the Saracens. Therefore, they could serve as ersatz Muslims, an aim of the new but apparently easier and more profitable crusades. For the time being it was a good solution, because for the next several centuries the Ottoman Empire was too strong to be conquered and everybody was happy, that its expansiveness was stopped after the absorption of the Balkans.

"The medieval theory of the ecumene, or universal brotherhood of men, that had been taken over from Greek and Roman thinkers, broke down in
the face of the growing assertion of Western technological superiority" (Rich, 1984: 369). This assertion was strongly supported by Cartesian philosophy, which gave the very basis to development of modern philosophy, natural and technical sciences. Afterward, in a quick succession of the centuries of modernity, the rejection of nature and the dichotomous division of soul and body were deepened in the age of industrial revolution. Had Newton and Descartes, the last great magi of Europe, lived then, they would have pronounced, like William Blake a critique and disillusionment with the effects of their teachings. But a schizophrenic division of the wholeness of the human being proved to be very successful in the field of exploitation and of gathering wealth. This division after some time caused a separation of the state and the church. The mediaeval dream of the Holy Roman Empire found its end, which was quickened by protestantism which sanctioned the superiority of the state over the church. It is also the beginning of the modern one-dimensional man from whose wholeness soul and spirituality were delegated into the twilight of afterlife by secularization of life in the 20th c. Sacrum was completely overtaken by profanum. The state no more had to care about content or discontent of the church with its actions. The state did not have to seek ethical and moral approbation of the church any more. The way for unscrupulous colonizers, embodied in the archetypal Mr Kurtz of Joseph Conrad's The Heart of the Darkness, was open. Competition among colonial powers and exploitation was intensified by the vulgarized protestant doctrine of predestination which said that you are the chosen one if God supports your enterprises. Unsurprisingly, the small countries of England, the Netherlands and later Germany became the very centres of commerce, manufacturing and banking. They successfully competed with the older Catholic powers of Spain, Portugal and France. They built their own empires and in a series of wars seized a lot of valuable overseas possessions of the Catholic powers, causing their final decline - with the exception of France, which having been pushed out of Northern America managed to conquer a large chunk of Africa. Ironically, it was mainly the Sahara desert, but it was only the beginning of the "colonial rat-race". It was not possible that some nations could be equally favoured by God. Hence Great Britain proved to be the best, having taken into possession one-fourth of the Earth's lands and controlling all the vital sea routes.
They had to be the best because in the light of the very influential doctrine of British Israelitism the Anglo-Saxons were descendants of King David and other European nations, which originated from the less important lost tribes of Israel (Hexham, 1984: 174-5), could not match their overlord. It would be against the will of God and against reason. In that time Darwin wrote his famous *On the Origin of Species*, whose main thought was survival of the fittest, which, combined with Malthus's statement that population grows exponentially while supplies of food only arithmetically, gave rise to social Darwinism. It was a very mechanistic and in its underlying spirit anti-Christian school of sociology which "scientifically" proved and approved subordination, enslavement and exploitation of people and land based on the principle of force. Who was stronger and owned better weaponry had the moral right and obligation to dominate the weaker because we read in the Holy Scripture:

> Then God said 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth' (Gen. 1:26).

> ... and God said: 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth' (Gen 1: 28).

It is a strong double affirmation of man's lordship over Nature which, in biblical times, was a popular kind of wishful thinking. It was an expression of hopelessness in the face of elemental disasters and wilderness beyond people's control and which often claimed their lives. With the development of technology the situation changed radically and man began to fulfil the Word till it caused an imminent danger of self-destruction of man as seen today.

However, coming back to the origins of racism it was claimed that even the Bible sanctioned it\(^5\). Everybody knows the story of Noah's drunkenness:

> And Ham the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and
Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said,

'Cursed be Canaan;
A servant of servants
He shall be to his brothers.'

He also said, 'Blessed be the Lord,
The God of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant.'
May God enlarge Japheth,
And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant.'

(Gen. 9: 22-27)

Suffice it to say that in the 19th century descendants of Ham were identified with Negroids, of Shem with Semitic peoples and Asians, and of Japheth with the Indo-Europeans, so one can see the emerging pattern of reasoning. Black people are intended by Holy Scripture to serve other races because of the acts of their bad-mannered forefather who was also the youngest of Noah's three sons. It is more difficult to comment on Japheth and Shem since it is not explicitly stated in the Bible who was the eldest.

This idea, together with the above-mentioned British Israelitism and social Darwinism formed the very foundations of the pseudo-science of racism. The "science" became the state ideology of the millennial Third Reich in which the "pure" Aryan element of the chosen nation of Germany with "pure" Teutonic aristocracies of France and England was to rule and inherit the earth, following the "final solution of the Jewish question" and the extermination of "impure" non-Germanic peoples.

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European colonialism was escalated by the development of the industrial revolution, which - because it was born in Great Britain - gave this country a tremendous potential which caused it to become a hegemon over other colonial metropolises. Colonies fueled the British economy with cheap workforce and raw materials prompting the meteoric rise of
this economy and strengthening the dependence of Great Britain on its overseas empire. Therefore, cultural differences between colonizers and the colonized (which caused conflicts and gave rise to various racist theories) when combined with political emancipation and growing awareness of the latter in the last decades of the British Empire which endangered the vital link of British economy with the colonial possessions, had to flare in a multitude of skirmishes, uprisings and regular wars like the Boer Wars.

As the area of this dissertation's interest in colonialism is Africa, therefore only the development of the British Empire's possessions on this continent will be considered in greater detail. At first only British slavers frequented the Guinea Bay coast to provide a labour force for the British colonies in North America. The first time the British Crown showed interest in this continent was from 1795 to 1803 when it occupied the Cape of Good Hope on behalf of the Prince of Orange, an exile in England when his country became the Batavian Republic under French revolutionary tutelage. In 1803, with the peace of Amiens, the colony was returned to the Batavian Republic. The British occupied it once again in 1806, awaiting the outcome of the war against Napoleon. Finally, at the European settlement of 1814, the Cape was formally ceded to Britain. In this way the colony became one of the numerous British possessions strategically scattered around the globe. It was unique in one respect, however. For the first time in the history of colonization the British had to deal with an alien white group with an established identity of its own. The Cape population of 26,000 was almost entirely non-British and the officials faced with the problem of governing the people commenced a relentless policy of anglicisation. The colonial Afrikaners seemed to accept the policy without much protest and only some of the 5000 British emigrants who arrived in 1820 began to demand political rights on behalf of the whole population of the colony. They were more politically-conscious than the Afrikaners and in time they constituted a group which resisted and checked the autocracy of the British governors at the Cape.

At the time when the frontier wars were waged against the Xhosa along the Great Fish River - the eastern boundary of the Cape, the tragic wars
of Difaqane (Mfecane) depopulated vast areas of the interior North of the Cape Colony. This phenomenon created a good situation for about 6000 Boer farming folk (ten per cent of the whole white population of the Cape Colony) who during the years 1835-1848 set out on the Great Trek (Muller, 1972: 331). They were disillusioned by the British policy on the eastern frontier which did not provide any better protection that the Dutch Indian Company and actually forbade farmers to organise themselves into commandos to recover their stolen cattle from Xhosa tribes. The Voortrekkers crossed the Orange River and separate parties crossed the Vaal River and ventured as far North as the Limpopo River, westward to the Kalahari semi-desert, and eastward to sub-tropical Natal. They were rarely molested during the trekking because usually they travelled through the territories depopulated by Difaqane. The Boers who wound up in Natal established their own Republic of Natalia together with the few Englishmen living in Port Natal, following the success of the Battle of the Blood River where the Zulu armies were defeated on 16 December 1838. Soon the republic was suppressed by the British, who still considered the emigrant Voortrekkers subjects of the crown and refused to recognize the republic. Most of the Natal Voortrekkers rejoined their fellows on the other side of the Drakensberg. In 1848 Britain established the Orange River Sovereignty in the area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers and the Drakensberg. Then many Boers moved to Transvaal.

Later Britain engaged a lot of its resources in frontier wars and was not able to effectively bring the Transvaal Boers under its control. Therefore in 1852 a convention was signed with the Transvaal Boer leaders, acknowledging their independence. However, because of disagreements and civil unrest they managed to establish their South African Republic only in 1860. In the meantime Britain was concentrating on other matters of its empire and in 1854 a convention was signed in Bloemfontein, granting independence to the territory between the Orange and the Vaal which then became the Republic of the Orange Free State. Rivalries and dissension frustrated all attempts to unite the Free State and Transvaal Republics.
Between 1867-1871 diamonds were discovered in Griqualand West along the Vaal River and at the new town of Kimberley. The discoveries attracted many a fortune hunter from all over the world but economic progress was marred by bitter disputes over the ownership of the diamond fields between both Boer republics and numerous Griqua and Tswana chiefs. In 1871 Britain ended the disputes by annexing the diamond fields as the Crown Colony of Griqualand West. Now the policy of Britain was changing from indifference into an imperialistic onslaught. In 1877 Britain annexed Transvaal in an attempt to unify the "balkanized" South Africa, but was prevented from fulfilling this aim by serious troubles in the war against the Zulus who were eventually defeated. Zululand was then divided into 13 districts and incorporated into Natal. On the other hand, on the anniversary of the Battle of the Blood River, on 16 December 1880, the Transvalers launched their first war of independence which was won two months later at the Battle of Majuba Hill. Meanwhile, in 1884 Germany annexed the territory which nowadays is called South West Africa/Namibia. That sparked British imperialism anew and from 1885 onward the Transvaal Republic was prevented from expanding westward into Bechuanaland which fell in the sphere of British influence. Moreover, in 1886 the richest gold deposits were discovered on the Witwatersrand, just about 50 kilometers south of Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal Republic. This most important event of the 19th century after the Great Trek, attracted many foreign prospectors, so in the span of ten years one-third of the 200 000 inhabitants of Transvaal were uitlanders (foreigners). Soon uitlanders far outnumbered Transvaal burghers in Johannesburg. Then the uitlanders, to gain more power, began to voice their grievances which in no time were taken up by British proponents of imperialism like Sir Alfred Milner, British Commissioner of South Africa, and Cecil John Rhodes as a means to realise their dream of subjugating the entire subcontinent to British rule. This line of politics had to lead to war against a defensive alliance of Transvaal and Orange Free State. The war broke out in 1899 and lasted 32 months, despite the fact that only tiny forces of Boer commandos opposed the British Empire at the pinnacle of its power. The final defeat of the Boers, sealed on 31 May 1902 by the peace treaty of Vereeniging, opened the road to the unification of South Africa which was completed eight years later, on 31 May 1910.
Even before securing complete control of South Africa Britain began realising the dream of the arch-colonizer Cecil John Rhodes who wanted to span the whole of Africa with British colonies in order to plant the British flag all the way from Cape Town to Cairo and to build a railway which would join the cities. His dream was only partly fulfilled. He could not see it because he died in 1902 aged 49, and had earlier been dismissed from his premiership of the Cape Colony in 1885 because he did not manage to subjugate the Boer republics. During the last two decades of the 19th century and at the very beginning of the next century Britain seized control of the whole of South Africa, Bechuanaland, North and South Rhodesia, British East Africa (Kenya), Uganda, Sudan and Egypt. The land belt connecting Cairo with Cape Town was discontinued only by German East Africa (Tanganyika), but after the Great War Britain managed to gain possession of this colony. So in 1918 the dream of Cecil John Rhodes came true, like the other dream of the imperial Britain of connecting its African possessions with India. However, the latter dream was not fulfilled in its entirety because it was not a complete land connection. It was severed by the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf which, however, were controlled by Britain securing safe passage to the British colonies in Africa, in the South of the Arabian Peninsula and India. The railway between Cape Town and Cairo was never built because in 1920 Egypt re-gained independence and the British economy declined passing its hegemonic status to Germany and the US especially. The plans were also frustrated by pro-independence national movements in the colonies, the world crisis of the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, and the outbreak of the Second World War.

Besides, the colonies in East Africa Britain were also developing a net of its possessions in West Africa to check the advances of France in this region. The colonies of Britain there included: Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. After the defeat of the Germans in the Great War Britain also seized possession of South West Africa, and parts of Cameroon and Togoland.

In 1914 this colonial onslaught of European civilisation on non-European ones gave control of 84 per cent of the world's land surface into the hands of Europeans and North Americans. In this way the white man
dominated almost the whole globe with its inhabitants. The majority of these imperial advances took place in the span of only one century because in 1800 the white man still controlled just 35 per cent of the earth's land surface (Parker, 1988: 391). Such rapid development of colonialism into imperialism was mainly caused by industrial revolution. The growing economic output of such industrialised nations as Britain, France, Germany and the USA demanded more cheap raw materials, an inexpensive labour force and bigger markets which could absorb their production. The ideal situation was provided by colonies. The natives were used as free slave labour force in the Americas but soon their small number were decimated and proved insufficient for planters, mine owners and other businessmen. To keep up with the growing demand, slave traders started to export slaves from Africa. As long as the consumers required relatively few - five or six thousand a year - the demand could easily be satisfied. It was only when, in the 18th century, they demanded between sixty and seventy thousand a year, that the impact on traditional societies became catastrophic, eventually causing their collapse and thereby facilitating the subsequent European conquest of Africa. In all, during the European slave trade, approximately eight million blacks were exported from Africa. But one also must remember that many blacks were relocated by Arab slavers.

There were enough natives to work for their white masters in Asian colonies. The people who were more or less forcefully employed by colonizers were usually given just a shelter and enough food to survive. They were used to gather harvests and mine raw materials of their countries which were later transported to metropolises where they prompted rapid development of economies and created massive fortunes. However, it was not only one-way exploitation because goods produced in metropolises were exported to colonies where natives purchased them with gold, other valuables, labour and even more raw materials. In this way metropolises were even more quickly impoverishing their colonies while accumulating wealth which constituted the very basis of the modern capitalist world, the first world in other words.
On the other hand, the natives were also used in white imperial wars which were of no interest to them, dying for their white masters safely stationed in Europe. Moreover, since the beginning of European colonization when the church was still closely co-operating with the state, the natives were pressurised to convert to Christianity without any respect for their own tradition, culture and beliefs. Such disregard was caused by "the notion of white racial superiority [which] was rarely, if ever questioned" (Parker, 1988: 402) in those times. Therefore, the natives' social structures were disrupted and in the majority of instances completely obliterated. Consequently they were partially and on the whole superficially replaced with European traditions and culture. The process was not to enfranchise natives as "non-white Europeans". The aim of these actions was to make the natives just enough European-like to facilitate the work of the colonizers who in this way could communicate with natives in their own European mother tongues and did not have to adapt to alien indigenous cultures.

This wanton destruction of native cultures provided European colonizers with a self-assertive evidence of their superiority while they observed the natives hurled into the limbo of relativity. Their old hierarchy of values was lost and a new European one still was not fully adopted. It led to many events which would not be accepted by either their old culture or the European one. In the eyes of Europeans it only proved that the natives did not have any culture and their presupposed inferiority was nicely fused with racism because the colonized were always non-whites. This mode of thinking on the part of European colonizers caused contempt for the colonized and intolerance because they could not be treated like equal human beings in the light of these "proved" colonial preconceptions.

Such disregard for natives and their history, tradition and cultures or what rather was left of them could lead only to conflict, i.e. a clash of cultures. In many respects the incompatibility of white culture with non-European ones combined with intolerance had to erupt in uprisings, skirmishes, guerilla wars, conflicts of ideologies, worldviews, religions, politics, beliefs etc. However, the mechanism of the phenomenon of clash of cultures can
become clearer only when one understands the essential differences between European and non-western cultures. Therefore, the problem is presented in a more detailed way later in the dissertation and the elucidation of these differences will concentrate specifically on white and black cultures as these form the crux of the clashes in J. M. Coetzee's fiction. The conflict of the two cultures underlies the whole of black literature, and thus demands a thorough treatment.

What really differentiated western culture from other cultures was the notion of progress, well anchored in the biblical ideal of subduing the earth which, with the spread of Christianity, affected the whole of Europe and which to a large extent became the very *modus vivendi* and obsession of western culture. The word progress is constituted of two Latin parts: *pro* - forward, and *gradi* - step, walk, go, march (Partridge, 1959: 528). It expresses the Judeo-Christian ideal of conquering nature and "developing" it according to needs and whims of man. It is perceived as a thing, an object from which people are detached in the tradition of Greek philosophy and Cartesianism. Nature is inert in understanding of Europeans, lifeless like a machine, and they, being deprived of restraints of spirit and soul by the Method of Descartes, are "lords and possessors of nature" (Rich, 1984: 368) and "absolute lawgivers" (Rich, 1984: 368) who are obliged to conquer nature and make it obedient to their will, to its master - man.

This attitude was unintelligible and sacrilegious to non-Europeans whom the westerners used to describe with the help of the two words - the adjective "primitive" and the noun "savage". The former sprang from the Latin *primitus* - in the first place, whence *primitius* which was transformed in Medieval Latin into *primitivus* - first-born (Partridge, 1959: 526). This adjective describes the pre-agricultural peoples as elder brothers of farmers, but ironically this word reflects the story of Esau and Jacob, having acquired in its modern form pejorative meaning of: "early stages of development, crude, unrefined, simple". In the mirror of this usage we perceived nomads, and only nowadays we do realize the potential and richness of their cultures, mostly expressed in the spiritual domain of their lives as opposed to the materialistic West which worships
its own products and artifacts - plunging deeper and deeper into cultural solipsism.

Most of us like and feel comfortable with our worldviews (Lakoff, 1987: 304). [Therefore] [o]ne of all important things should be remembered about Whorf [namely that] [h]e did most of his work at a time when Nazism was on the rise in Europe and jingoism was prevalent in America. At the same time, white people were assumed, even in much of the US, to be more intelligent than people with skins of other colors. Western civilization [sic] was assumed to be the pinnacle of intellectual achievement; other civilizations [sic] were considered inferior. ‘Culture’ meant European and American culture not Hopi or Balinese culture. ‘Literature’ meant European and American literature. ‘Logic’ meant Western logic, not as it developed in China and India. ‘Scientific thought’ was the last word of rationality, and it of course belonged to us. It was even thought that Western languages were ‘advanced’ and that non-Western languages were ‘primitive’. The very idea that ‘uneducated’ Indians, who were still considered savages by many, could reason as well as educated Americans and Europeans was extraordinary and radical. The notion that their conceptual system better fits reality - that we could learn from them bordered on the unthinkable (Lakoff, 1987: 330).

It is clear from this comment that western chauvinistic culture tends to describe non-western peoples by using the noun ‘savage’, which - like the adjective ‘primitive’ - also acquired a pejorative meaning in culture of the West, though originally the noun only denoted somebody living in woods. But woods are associated with nomads and hunters whose picture was so distorted and impoverished in the person of Esau. Woods and pastures are potential economic and ideological dangers for agriculture as nature-made not man-shaped like fields, roads, villages and urban areas. This refusal of the West to perceive and accept other cultures as different but equal to its own, on the theoretical level equates "refusal to recognize conceptual relativism where it exists [...] . It leads directly to conceptual elitism and imperialism, - to the assumption that our behavior [sic] is rational and that of other people is not, and to attempts to impose our way of thinking on others. Whorf's ethical legacy was to make us aware of this" (Lakoff, 1987: 342).

It is clear from the argument above that on the philosophical plane the notion of colonialism is based on all the above-mentioned prejudices, biases, "rights" and preconceptions which have conditioned European
culture to be intimidated by the idea that there may be people who think differently. Therefore, to exorcise this fear westerners preferred to talk about these peoples as "primitive savages", and our culture had to prove to be the best, "chosen by God", "only real human culture", and to impose itself on other peoples and cultures with sword and fire.\(^6\)

But from a practical point of view colonialism is best defined by Aimé Césaire:

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\text{[It is] neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontier of ignorance, disease, and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law. To admit, once for all, without flinching at the consequences, that the decisive actors here are the adventurer and the pirate, the wholesale grocer and the ship owner, the gold digger and the merchant, appetite and force, and behind them, the baleful projected shadow of a form of civilization which, at a certain point in its history, finds itself obliged, for internal reasons, to extend to world scale the competition of its antagonistic economics (in Watson, 1986: 374).}
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And it is striking how, in contrast with the definition of colonialism, there are opinions expressed by a British source from the time of decline of the British Empire. Listen, for example, to the end of the article on Colony by an anonymous writer from the 11th edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which in boastful tone declares:

It is the English-speaking race [...] that has shown the most remarkable energy and capacity for colonization. [...] [The colonizing genius which, with the British Isles as centre, has taken up the ‘white man’s burden’ in all quarters of the globe, is universally recognized. In the problems of government raised by the organization of the British dominions beyond the seas the system of colonization has been developed to an extent unknown under any other national flag (Anon., 1910-1911: 717).

This boastful tone is still prevalent even at the beginning of the end of the Empire, as it can be concluded from the first volume of *The "King’s English" Encyclopaedia* where under the headword ‘Colonization’ one can read that “with the partition of Africa towards the end of the 19th century the work of colonizing the vacant spaces of the earth may be said to be ended” (Anon., 1934: 305; my emphasis). Here we can see clearly how
alive was the double right of the white man in the consciousness of the British who subdued and cultivated the earth, in accordance with the highest moral authority of the Western world - the Bible, just one, two generations ago. Like the Pilgrim Fathers of America they still perceived other lands as "vacant" if they were not used in the ways of Western economy and controlled by white men. However, by such a statement, although the British colonial policies abolished slavery in the early 19th century, they still covertly claimed non-whites to be less human or just sheer animals, and this idea proceeded to its logical end in the overt Fascist ideology of Übermensch and Untermensch. What Nazism did was only to adopt and develop the notion of the anthropometrists' "scientific racism", British colonial policies and the greatest invention of the 20th century which the British first used during the Boer War - the concentration camp. Colonial pride was still present in Britain after the World War 2 and we can read in Hutchinson's Twentieth Century Encyclopedia that, for instance, "Colonial Development Corporation [is] an official body set up in 1947 to establish or assist any enterprise in the British colonies designed to increase their productivity" (Anon., 1948: 291). Colonies were still considered to be "vacant spaces" to be utilized to enhance the economy of the metropolis lying on the other end of the world. With the process of decolonization the British Empire has been dismantled although the spectre of its tradition still lingers in the shape of the British Commonwealth, in literature and minds of the elderly Britons. Only the last two generations of the British ceased to perceive themselves as masters of the world, and to refer their experiences to the "good olde imperial times" of Queen Victoria.

The difference between black and white cultures is very well illustrated by Herman Charles Bosman in "Aspects of South African Literature" as quoted by Stephan Gray in his seminal Southern African Literature: An Introduction:

Some years ago it was fashionable for a European tourist to explore some part of Africa, and after he spent a week or two in the dark Continent, to return to Europe and to write an authoritative work on the tribal customs, etc., of the savages who allowed him to pass peacefully through their territories. Because they didn't ask to see his visa, or offer to kill him - as would have happened to a foreigner trying to walk through
any part of Europe that way - the tourist always knew that he was dealing with a lot of savages.

And the funny thing is that Africa has been uncivilised like this for a very long time. Look for how many years Livingstone walked about all over Africa as a spy. And whenever he came to a village the savages, with studied brutality, would set before him food and drink. When he got fever, the benighted heathen even nursed him back to health without pay - just so that he could go and spy on them some more. "There's this continent for you, sunk in absolute abomination" (Gray, 1979: 93).

This excerpt is striking and reminds one that what the civilisation, of which one is so proud, is constituted from the concepts of borders, bureaucracy, governments, state etc. In comparison to the presented hospitality of black people and the very freedom of the Dark Continent before the onslaught of the white man who imposed on it and its inhabitants his own criteria and values, one may well question if all the fundamental assumptions of European civilisation are not only limits and a sort of harness which do not enhance but ridicule our famous slogan of democracy: "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality". But not to deal only with the surface of the problem of differences between black and white minds, one has to look at it in a more structured way to gain a certain level of understanding which would allow one to transcend the popular preconceptions and prejudices in order to perceive black and white cultures from a more objective point of view. To attain this aim I will base my considerations mainly on the works by Prof. B. J. van der Walt.

Having said this, I will concentrate on the spiritual life of the Africans and the black mind in general in the short outline presented below.

The spiritual world was of greatest importance for blacks of the pre-colonial period and still is for their descendants, unlike for the majority of modern whites for whom the spiritual world is a mere superstition and something connected with the church and not the real world. Today the names of the gods of the West are technology, progress, prosperity and science. For blacks there is no distinction between spirituality and reality. Everything is permeated with spiritual forces. The world in essence is spiritual. It comprises amongst others: things with magical power,
ancestors, various divinities, as well as the ultimate deity who is the creator. But she/he is only an inert observer who does not involve himself with the world and cannot be directly approached. That is why he/she also does not demand any direct accountability. This worldview causes man to be afraid of spiritual forces. Everything is directed by the forces. For instance, if somebody is killed by a falling tree, the explanation of the fact is sought not in chance but in witchcraft and some magical practices with which someone brought this tragedy for a victim who in the culture of the West would be considered just a luckless man. One has to protect oneself against all these spiritual forces, by using all kinds of amulets and potions. The world is understood in the light of constants and man safeguards himself through conformity and adjustment, not through change like European civilisation which worships progress and strives to dominate nature. Black culture does not dwell on development or dynamism. It tends to be fatalistic, or more appropriately, conservative. Therefore black cosmology in its essence bears some teleological resemblances to a mediaeval one. Everything is an integrated unity in which man, animate and inanimate things have their own places in the hierarchical order of the universe. Man almost cannot do anything to change this order and he does not want to change anything, he wishes to preserve the harmony of the world, so it results in a strongly holistic but static culture where there is almost no place for individual initiative, unlike in western culture which is based on it. The westerner is not to accept the cosmos as it is, he "understands" it through the Cartesian method of dissection and wants to dominate it with the help of science, technology and organisation which will let him transcend individual limitations.

The idea of limited good is strongly connected to this closed and limited cosmology of the universe of black culture. "This does not refer in the first place to 'goods' in the sense of 'material possessions', but rather to vital force, power, prestige, health, good luck, etc." (Van Rooy, 1978: 7). One of the most important manifestations of this "limited good" is vital force, which blurs the distinction between life and death which are non-relative and absolute concepts for Europeans. Therefore, if a black adopts the western worldview and attains success, he is perceived as a wicked man who steals for himself this limited cosmic good, which should
be distributed equally among all individuals. They do not see any relation between his hard work and the final result of well-being. For them "he has zombies working for him" (Van Rooy, 1978: 8).

In black culture religion is like one's skin, it is the unity with spirituality which permeates the whole world. So every domain of human life is religiously, i.e. spiritually determined. This holistic orientation of religion contrasts sharply with the dualistic orientation of western religion where one puts and takes off religion at will, like clothes. Religion is confined only to the church and is excluded from other areas of human life, and the void is filled by secularism.

History is linked to the origin which was most perfect, as in the European myth of the golden age. In the course of life people are moving away from the beginning, further and further away from the primordial perfection. Therefore the aim of all kinds of rituals, legends and ceremonies is to bring this powerful perfection to the present, so that contemporary man can be strong and healthy. Subsequently, the black mind always looks back to the past, unlike the civilisation of the West for which history is just origins. Europeans are people of nowadays and work towards a future purpose which overshadows the past and the present. It is also reflected in the concept of time which for the Judeo-Christian tradition is a linear movement from the past via the present to the future. The present still becomes the future unlike in the black tradition where the past continually "swallows" the present, and there is almost no place for the future. Therefore in European culture aimed at the future people almost forget the past while blacks and other indigenous peoples still live in their celebrated past with no cultural background to be able to plan and to strive for the future. By the way, it is no surprise that if a non-westernized Australian Aborigine, for instance, is imprisoned he dies in his cell as he cannot "see" the end of his punishment. The period of imprisonment cannot be accommodated in his two-dimensional time perspective, therefore it equals eternity, which equals death. The European concept of time is even more alien to the blacks because of its mechanicity and ultimate detachment from the cyclical repetitiveness of
nature. This vision is often superimposed on the black vision of history which - in opposition to our linear view - can be likened to a spiral.

Consequently black culture is anchored in the reflection of the past and in the future - there is little meaning, as the more time elapses the further they are from the beginning, and the worse the world and life become. For westerners the past is primitive and just a beginning. The white culture still looks and delegates its dreams into the future which seems to be better than the past and the present. Hence old people are pitied but are not perceived as ultimate sources of wisdom as in black societies where authority is given, not acquired, for the elderly are closer to the beginning. In European culture youth is the golden age and old, senile people are hidden from society in old-age homes and hospitals so that the myth of eternal youth can be perpetuated in the mass media without any difficulties as the bedridden and closed in the above-mentioned institutions cannot disturb other members of society and burden their lives with the old-age experience of pain and memento mori.

Without the developed concept of the future the black culture always looks "forward" into the past which is the ultimate source of all good things. A black respects tradition, habits, customs and ceremonies as linked to the past. He does not want the future and his ultimate goal is to join the ancestors - the past. This two-dimensional perspective of time causes the black civilisation not to be worried about tomorrow, which is just another day, if people have enough for today. It leads to subsistence farming and a relaxed attitude to life which is so despised especially from the protestant, and on the whole from the Christian point of view since white civilisation constantly looks forward to the future, the second coming of Christ, God's kingdom on the earth, the last judgement and the like. What is important is change and constant development. Continuity of tradition is not so signifiant, and what counts is achievement of a higher standard of living, success, popularity, status etc. It results in workaholism and the tense way of life which is marked with chronic fervour. This style of life intensifies production and change which perform on the stage of the free market, regulated by the harsh laws of competition, which produce brilliant or broken human beings devoted to
the notion of individualism as the force shaping their lives. It says that any society is just a collection of individuals who constitute it. Relationships with other people are not of greatest importance unlike in black societies who live in clan or tribal structures which form one big family. There man does not belong to himself like an island, he exists for the society because of which he can only stay alive. Lonely, without friends and family man would be doomed to perish. Man treats his community as a sort of organism interconnected strongly with blood ties, of which he is just a small part. If the community is weakened by the death of one of its members or famine he also feels weakened. If a member of such a community is killed and blood is spilled man perceives it as his own blood which needs vengeance to equally weaken the enemy community and/or to regain the lost blood and strength.

This relation between man and group together with all the phenomena resulting from this relation are embraced by the term communalism. This sort of social organization represents the inclusive attitude for its members, as opposed to outsiders, and in this way the very structure ensures security for individuals, which is fortified by intense, strong personal relationships based on cooperation, and a great degree of harmony. Peaceful coexistence is highly regarded and supported by generosity and readiness to share. Moreover, interpersonal relationships are enhanced by eating, which is a social event when food is shared, by dialogue through which all decisions are taken with approval of the whole group, as everybody has opportunity to air his views, and by the following character traits: modesty, compliance, pliability, willingness to compromise which westerners may perceive as a sign of dishonesty. Moreover, relationships are built by doing things together, greeting people and a more casual and indirect manner to ask and to answer questions. One would rather keep quiet than disturb relationships, and prefers to give the answer one thinks the other would like to hear. So we see that black culture is man-centred and in it is not important to do things for others but to be available to people. In such a society the values of friendliness, helpfulness, hospitality, patience, brotherliness and forgiving nature are highly respected. Therefore, in this culture man cannot be rich but can be poor if he does not have children or does not belong to a family.
A group, not an individual, is of the greatest significance, and the duties of a man towards it are stressed. If a man is not a member of a group he is doomed to perish. That is why one should not work for individual status since the norm is group status and acceptance attained by good social character. Responsibility is easily shifted onto the community and everybody's responsibility becomes nobody's. Moreover, shame plays a more crucial role than guilt in ethics as it is important that people should not know that one did wrong so as not to damage one's image.

Individual egoism is superseded by group egoism. Successively for ethnic or tribal ethics or morality, "right" means defending one's own group and "wrong" means to sin against one's own group. Therefore, to kill an outsider is not regarded as murder but as a heroic deed. Moreover, in black culture there is no place for bachelors or spinsters. Marriage is compulsory for all as a large number of children decide about the power and the strength of a group which would be endangered by the dwindling birth-rate where life-span is short and the death-rate tremendous. The social structure is based on the extended family - clans which make the whole group be one big family. Communication in a group is conducted in the personal way of the spoken word which involves people in all kinds of the responsive genres of poetry, drama, dancing, singing, story telling, active listening, etc. The genres are usually mixed and do not exist in "pure form". What is also significant is the fact that the black worldview more easily accepts and is more tolerant toward others' viewpoints and religions.

While the social life of Africans is based on communalism whose tenets were presented above, the white culture dwells on individualism. Of highest significance for Europeans is an individual and his rights - only then the community or social relationships. The group exists because there are individuals constituting it. Hence, kin relationships are not so important for the westerner for whom the lack of it does not mean death. So the culture of the West is characterized by the exclusive attitude, loneliness, alienation where interpersonal relationships are casual and
impersonal because they are usually established to gain certain aims as status, money, pleasure, not for people themselves. The opinion of the group does not count since achievements, success and individual initiative are more important than attention to the community, stressing the ideal of competition which furthers meritocracy, consumerism and materialism. Therefore confrontation is not avoided at all cost, decisions are taken individually or by few for time should not be wasted through endless repetitions. If necessary one is told the unmitigated truth even when it is hurtful or injurious of relationship. And values of formality, self-efficiency, etc. are highly regarded.

Subsequently white civilisation propagates individual virtues of honesty, frankness, incorruptibility, steadfastness and perseverance which the African may perceive as signs of rudeness. The individual can be very rich in western culture because things and their acquisition are important not people. Poverty in western eyes means that one does not have a large home, an expensive car, a huge salary and an enormous bank account. People are not important, westerners greet others to obtain information and eat just to acquire new energy to be able to face their task-oriented culture where it is most important to do something for others than to be available for people. In this culture, unlike among blacks, westerners like doing everything on their own not to dilute their success with sharing because it is their individual achievement and excellence for which everybody craves. For that reason academic qualifications can provide status.

In the West the individual concepts of happiness and responsibility are stressed. In ethics individual egoism and transgression against individuals are wrong; and guilt plays more important role than shame since guilt is felt even though nobody knows about it. Western law aims at determining the guilt or innocence of an individual, and punishment is important even though it causes bitterness at times. The role of African law is not to punish or to seek truth but to restore social harmony. White culture is more intolerant because of sticking to the binary logic where something is either true or false. Bonds among people are not of greatest importance so there is no strong pressure to marry in the West, and
marriage is in the first place intended for the sake of the couple. Hence, families are small, nuclear, more mobile, and bonds within them are slacker than in black counterparts. This situation affects communication which is conducted through impersonal and non-responsive modes of the written and printed word, and the electronic media.

The western way of thinking also differs profoundly from black culture. Western mode of thought is abstract, theoretical and analytical, marked by systematic reconnaissance and cerebral intellectualism. Its aim is objectivity. Contrarily, in the African tradition direct experience is of foremost importance. The style of thought is more pragmatic, concrete and synthetic, and what is remarkable, it is sensitively emotional. In European thinking there is no place for feelings, mysticism, emotions, transcendental experiences but only for cold, formalized rationalizing and dissection of reality accordingly with Descartes' method. The spiritual plane of the world and westerners is rejected, giving rise to an uneasy and highly artificial division of soul and body. The former, together with the spiritual world, is delegated into the moss-covered enclosures of churches which nowadays are also endangered by ratio and dirty games of worldly politics. With the obliteration of the sacrum, spirituality strikes back, invading profanum with sects, new faiths, spiritualism, charlatans, drugs etc. And most profoundly, from the times of the Enlightenment, western thinking is causal excluding possibility of existence of phenomena outside the iron rule of cause and effect. Today only modern physics has dared to cross the limits of classical thought. It coaxes philosophy to develop a more mystical and spiritual point of view in dealing with the ultimate mysteries of reality, matter and universe. These changes were also prompted by discoveries of psychology (e.g. Jung), linguistics (e.g. Sapir, Whorf, Lakoff), and physics with its three main 20th century branches of relativity, quantum and chaos physics. Moreover, the achievements also led to the discovery of acausal phenomena such as radioactive decay where there is no cause but only effect.

It seems that European thinking is being slowly liberated from the narrow limits of Cartesianism and mechanicism, going towards multi-dimensional man, although the old mode of thinking still prevails. It is completely
incompatible with black thinking, causing a mutual misunderstanding, which is deepened by the fact that differences between the two ways of perceiving and describing the world are embedded in languages through which whites and blacks look at one another with their own sets of preconceptions and prejudices induced by their languages and cultures. It is well rendered by Edward Sapir, who is quoted by Benjamin Lee Whorf:

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation (Whorf, 1967: 134).

However, despite the differences, on a more general plane, it has been well established that biologically speaking man is one species, distinguished from the animal world by its ability to Think and the use of Language, by the development of Culture in this or that form, and a complex of Myths and Beliefs whose essential unity was proved by many thinkers but especially by Joseph Campbell in The Masks of God and Mircea Eliade in A History of Religious Ideas.

This chapter has presented the philosophical bases of colonialism along with their historical development with emphasis on the continent of Africa as the field of special interest of this dissertation. Moreover, major differences between black and white cultures were analysed to facilitate understanding of culture-induced conflicts in Africa which form the very background to African and South African literature against which books by J. M. Coetzee should be read.
NOTES

1. The conceptual body of this chapter is based on an amalgam of ideas from such books as (full details are furnished in the bibliography):

BREWER, E. C. Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable
BRONOWSKI, J. The Ascent of Man
BRUKITT, A. N., MACINTOSH, N. W. G. et. al. Aborigines (different articles)
CAPRA, F. The Turning Point
CAMPBELL, J. The Masks of God
CAMPBELL, J. The Mythic Image
ELIADE, M. A History of Religious Ideas
GRAY, S. Southern African Literature
JUNG, C. G. & PAULI, W. On Synchronicity
LAKOFF, G. Women, Fire and Dangerous Thoughts
PARKER, G., ed. The Times Illustrated the World History
TOYNBEE, A. A Study of History
WHORF, B. L. Language, Thought and Reality

2. The Bible here is used as a historical document following *The History of Religious Ideas* by Mircea Eliade. It is significant to note that Toynbee also treats Cain and Abel as symbolical forefathers of nomads and agriculturalists (Toynbee, 1979:106).

3. Relations of the rituals and their interpretations can be found in *The Masks of God* by Joseph Campbell and in *The History of Religious Ideas* by Mircea Eliade.
4. Fraser with his monumental *The Golden Bough* commenced the beginning of modern religious studies and supported the groundbreaking anthropological researches of Bronislaw Malinowski who conducted them mainly in the Micronesia and published them in the ‘20s and ‘30s. The famous traveller and adventurer of the Victorian England - Richard Burton discovered for European culture, and translated into English many literary achievements of other cultures. To his major achievements belong translations of *The Tales of One Thousand Nights and One* and *Khama-Sutra*. Edward Sapir conducted serious research on the languages of Native Americans and his pupil Benjamin Lee Whorf on the basis of these developed his theory of language, based on the principle of linguistic relativism.

5. This opinion is usually expressed by white people with a very conservative background.

6. There are virtually no lands and peoples which have not been conquered or influenced by Europe.

7. Black and white cultures are very different from one another being based on different worldviews, complexes of myths and beliefs, languages, heritages etc. The differences most often are not consciously perceived, understood and appreciated by members of African and European cultures which leads to misunderstanding and bitter conflicts. Therefore, a selection of publications on black philosophy was included in the appendix.

Books by B. J. van der Walt and J. Van Rooy on the black mind and worldview were used for references therefore they are included in the main body of the bibliography.

8. The adjective "black" is a generalization which here is used as synonymous with the adjective "African".

9. The insightful article about such phenomena "On Synchronicity" was co-authored by C. G. Jung and Wolfgang Pauli.
CHAPTER 2

COLONIALISM IN AFRICAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE: AN OVERVIEW

In analysing the writings of J.M. Coetzee one cannot simply treat them as entities on their own or a basically emanating from the European tradition, as this would be akin to plunging into the pitfall of cultural solipsism and relativism. One should be keenly aware of the fact that although Coetzee’s home or white South African culture has both European sources and strong connections with Europe, and although he studied and travelled widely in the USA and England, he lives and works at the southern tip of the Dark Continent - Africa is his home.

In contrast, however, to settlers in North America and Australasia the white settlers in Africa did not manage to outnumber and possess the continent both physically and culturally. They have instead had to learn to co-exist in uneasy equilibrium with blacks, at times struggling to dominate and at times simply to survive. White and black cultures differ greatly, and in the past this led to bitter clashes which are still occurring today, causing great bitterness and resentment - and this resentment has permeated the lives of all South Africans to a greater or lesser extent and in different ways.

Coetzee is therefore not a product of the Western tradition but of the culture of the descendants of white settlers in Africa. He is not, however, an African - he can be called a white African or a European, but in the sense that he is not an African he is not a European either. He inhabits the borderland where African, English and Afrikaans traditions interact, creating the rich potential and also the threat to the very existence of this magnificent country. The inherent contradictions of the country are form the basis of J.M. Coetzee’s life and literary work, and is the context in which his novels should be read and interpreted.
To facilitate this process, the chapter aims at to present an overview of African literature since its earliest beginnings, from the genre of rock art (where early records of the presence of the white man on the Dark Continent can be seen), via the oral tradition to written literature caused and prompted by the colonial intrusion of Europe. Because the wealth of African literature is tremendous it is impossible to contain its richness in the scope of one chapter of this dissertation. Therefore the overview of the literature concentrates mainly on the subject of colonialism as reflected in African literature because it was colonialism which gave rise to literature on the continent in the European meaning of this word. Colonialism also constituted the literature’s very subject so that only nowadays this specific monothematicism is slowly giving way to a more varied choice of topics.

From the methodological point of view it should be mentioned that the first part of this overview depicts major trends, authors and phenomena of African literature in a more or less impressionistic way to overcome the sheer impossibility of presenting the whole of African literature. The second part deals specifically with South Africa and its diverse literary and cultural traditions. And eventually the fiction of J. M. Coetzee is placed against this background as a prolegomenon to the next chapter which begins the analyses of the author’s novels.

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White settlers in Southern Africa especially but also elsewhere in the continent discovered a lot of specimens of rock art, but the specimens seemed to them to be of no value seeming to be just primitive scribblings worth no attention whatsoever. The subcontinent of Southern Africa boasts the biggest number of them and only thanks to the rise of cognitive archeology one realises that they are not mere pictures but whole stories, literature enclosed in rock frames, which explains to us the mind, thinking, daily happiness and sorrows of the Khoisan, the ancient inhabitants of this part of the world. It also duly reflected the changing world: the extinction of some species, the appearance of subsequent ones,
disasters, the arrival of the white man etc. A library many times older than that of Egyptian Alexandria lies open before our eyes - only we do not wish and care to learn to read it. Moreover, priceless examples of rock art which are the oldest "books" of the world, some of them dating back to 30 thousand years BC, are vandalised and recklessly destroyed nowadays.

Colonists, as usual, after the period of strife imported the Christian faith to which blacks were more or less forcibly converted, who then became labourers, slaves and servants of their white masters. Under the banner of the merciful Christ old cultures were uprooted and supplanted with the word of the only true God. Rich oral tradition in the form of myths, legends, epic poems, chants, incantations, dirges, praise-poems, proverbs, riddles, divinatory texts, songs and predominantly animal tales with morals which was generously handed to Europe by African Aesop; degenerated and was largely forgotten. However, from the evidence left one can judge that it was so rich and sophisticated, like the lost tradition of the Druids. For instance, among the Yoruba operated the remarkable body of Odu religious poetry which was used for divination by votaries of Ifa. It was so extensive that Ifa priests (babalawo) could not hope to know it all after seven years of studies but had to specialise in certain areas. The poems functioned as a set of precedents which through the process of intricate manipulation of divination paraphernalia was applied to a problem of a Yoruba seeking counsel. The precedents were taken from the vast treasury of tribal experiences and adopted the same strategies that proved efficacious long ago with the certainty that as it was then it would be now (Owomoyela, 1979: 12).

The oral tradition, before its destruction, was partially preserved by missionaries who wrote it down and duly "corrected" it, making it more palatable for church authorities and own countrymen by introducing some Christian elements - as also happened with the oral tradition of the Anglo-Saxons one thousand years earlier. Therefore, the more important are songs which can be composed at any moment, but once composed and popularised "certain songs remain virtually unaltered for long periods as sanctified entries in the communal treasury. It suffices to provide the
following example of an insulting song, in which a contemporary Hausa woman calls a foe a harlot" (Owomoyela, 1979: 15). It is hard to imagine that a missionary would record it without any alterations:

A harlot is misfortune, daughter of Muhammadu [Mohammed],
The one with the calf that shines like a watch face,
If you give her seven shillings,
When morning comes she will say 'Where's some more?'
As for me, it's my living I'm seeking; I don't steal
To give presents to an old whore!

When the money of the harvest season is gone, it leaves
The young men of the town quarrelling with their womanfolk!
There is a certain harlot who makes bean cakes,
She sets her trap on the ground, she displays her wares
At the side of the street for the sake of labourers
The harlot passes by and the old man says,
'Where's she off to?'
Brazen one of the village, with a calf like a watch face!

When you go for a stroll to a brothel,
If you find a harlot putting on airs, with a well-washed body,
A powdered neck, and a new hair style,
If you are sensible, pass by, young man, avoid misfortune,
Because if you touch her, beneath her pudenda
Is the ripeness of withered fruit!
Among all women, the one who solicits the most
Has got the clap!
(Owomoyela, 1979: 15-16)

The arrival of colonists and missionaries marks the end of the oral tradition. The transition period began first with presses bringing out publications in colonial languages and it was quickly followed by missionary school and presses. Missionaries learned local languages and started printing in them after having had devised for them appropriate alphabet systems, usually based on the Latin script. The publications they were bringing out were predominantly religious pamphlets, hymnals, catechisms and above all the Bible - the spiritual foundation of our civilisation. Not surprisingly, protestant missionaries from England, Germany and The Netherlands were mostly responsible for this trend, following the teachings of Luther. So continuing in this vein, black language editions of John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress became the first book and bestseller among newly literate Africans (Dathorne, 1976: 2, 12, 34, 42). The tremendous popularity of this book, which greatly influenced the black mind leading to writing alike works, can be explained by the fact
that *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a variation on still deeply oral moralities which also resemble largely allegorical and conventionalized African animal tales with morals, only that now animal characters were replaced with Virtues, Good, Sins, Evil, etc.

As one can see, the beginning of African written literature was induced by European colonization, and curtailed and shaped in accordance with the European systems of beliefs and values, striving to suppress indigenous cultures. So the whole scope of African literature is obsessed by the problem of colonization reflecting the clash of African and European cultures, its results and influence on Africa. The literature, being a product of colonial expansion of Europe, is very monothematic in its subject-matter, dealing always with colonialism and its aftereffects, and even if there are a few works attempting more or less consciously to break out of this convention their very origin and basis are colonial. Moreover, it is very ironic that "African nationalism and colonialism had to find expression in the languages of Africa's colonial rulers" (Knappter, 1984: 239) and oppressors, and that "the African artists write for metropolitan reading publics in London, Paris and Lisbon" (Dathorne, 1976: xi) perpetuating and strengthening cultural colonialism as books written in Africa, by Africans, can reach African readers only via Europe or America. On the whole the process made local cultures secondary to metropolitan ones, and export costs inflate prices of books turning culture into a luxury unavailable to ordinary people. That is why there is almost no literature in vernaculars in Francophone and Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa; which was discouraged by colonial policies promoting complete assimilation with the cultures, customs, habits and languages of the colonists, unlike in the British possessions where colonial authorities, like earlier their Muslim counterparts, grasped power benignly, allowing the coexistence of their and local cultures. Subsequently "[m]ost vernacular literature has been written by South Africans (and here one might include Afrikaans) and in general by Africans who once lived in English-speaking areas" (Dathorne, 1976: 1).

At first African literature in vernaculars relied heavily on Christian tradition and *The Pilgrim's Progress* became an example to be followed.
The Ibo authors from Nigeria wrote in this vein. They are represented by Pita Nwana's novelette *Omenuro* (1933) and L. B. Gam's *Ije Odumodu Jere* (Odumodu's Travels, 1952) which also has much in common with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*, indicating the influence of the hero-quest-like English novels (Dathorne, 1976: 11-12). The other trend in early attempts was moralizing. The Yoruba author Isaac Themmas's "The Autobiography of Segilola: The Lady with the Delicate Eyeballs" was serialized in *Akode-Eko* (Lagos Herald) between July 1929 and March 1930, was written in thirty letters to the editor, and intended readers to learn much from the prostitute's life-story (Dathorne, 1976: 4).

In Malawi S. A. Palini wrote a story entitled *1930 kunadza mchape* (In 1930 There Came a Witchdoctor, 1972) about the triumph of superstition. "It describes the process by which a local magician gains power over his unsuspecting villagers" (Dathorne, 1976: 23). In this way the author stresses the point that "superstitions" are wrong and Christianity must be cherished. Another Malawi author writing in Cewa, Samuel Ntara romanticized the past in the biography of Msyamboza, a village chief, entitled *Headman's Enterprise* (1949). The moral element of this book quite unrealistically culminates in Msyamboza's conversion to Christianity:

I have fired this gun today as a sign that from now onwards I shall follow Jesus. You my wives! all of you! I put away for Jesus' sake and I do not wish to leave out even one of you since it is my live and your lives that is concerned. I know that you will have anxiety and sorrow but I cannot give up honouring Christ who is Master of Life (Dathorne, 1976: 23).

On the other hand the greatest Sotho writer Thomas Mofolo from South Africa wrote about the synthesis of Sotho tradition and Christianity which destroys the wholeness of the old tribal world and causes alienation of individuals who chose Christianity, disconnecting themselves from the consciousness of their tribes. The author tackles these problems in his *Moeti oa Boluabelo* (The Traveller to the East, 1934) which is a story of Fekisi, who is disgusted with the life around him. He chooses Christ and leaves his village to find the "true" faith. First he meets people who are "bad", like his tribal fellowmen and only after a long journey, exhausted,
he comes across three white elephant hunters who convert him and return to him some of the happiness he lost. Then, on the occasion of receiving the first sacrament, he sees Christ at the altar and rushes to him. There Fekisi is found dead. His death confirms his pointless vacillations and the illogicality of alienation.

In his most renowned novel, *Chaka* (1931), Mofolo presents a man who by circumstances is forced to accommodate the very European ideal of individualism which is so alien to the African worldview. Unlike Fekisi Chaka conspires with evil forces to overpower his enemies and to build his empire in the very European way of effective extermination, by means of intrigues and by subduing the neighbouring peoples. However, black Christian and pagan cannot survive alone, they need the props of tribal security, that is why Chaka also has to die because European and Christian influences on the individual are incompatible with African communalism. Mofolo himself experienced this having had to "choose between the amiable offerings of Christian camaraderie and the diet of an uncompromising art". For instance, his *Chaka* had to wait until 1925 to be published (in Sotho) since it was rejected by missionaries by whom he was employed; and Mofolo's other novel, *Masarou*, has not be published as late as 1976 (Dathorne, 1976: 38).

Xhosa literature, like all other black languages literatures, was stifled by missionary censorship in whose exclusive limits it could operate to be published and made available to readers. Despite this position S. E. K. Mqhayi managed to give a picture of Xhosa court life before the advent of Europeans in *Ityala lame wele* (The Case of the Twins, 1966), and in 1925 composed his "praise song" to the Prince of Wales in the form of a European sonnet deftly using satire and various African oral tradition devices:

Ah Britain! Great Britain!
Great Britain of the endless sunshine!
She hath conquered the oceans and laid them low;
She hath drained the little rivers and lapped them dry;
She hath swept the little nations and wiped them away;
And now she is making for the open skies.
She sent us the preacher, she sent us the bottle,
She sent us the Bible, and barrels of brandy;
She sent us a breechloader, she sent us cannon;
O, Roaring Britain! Which must we embrace?
You sent us the truth, denied us the truth;
You sent us life, deprived us of life;
You sent us the light, we sit in the dark,
Shivering, benighted in the bright noonday sun
(Dathorne, 1976: 44-45).

The poem initiated a literature of protest in Xhosa which was stimulated by the Native National Congress (later its name was changed into the African National Congress) whose establishment and development was also stimulated by the literature. Protest was further introduced into Xhosa poetry by James J. R. Jolobe. For him Christianity did not have such a stifling effect as it had on many of his writing colleagues. He even tried to utilize it for his own aims, claiming that through Christianity Africans could gain a new revolutionary awareness of themselves. In his poetry Jolobe protested against the economic enslavement of Africans (UmYezo, An Orchard, 1936) and celebrated a return to the wholeness of being which had existed in pre-Christian times. Although writing in the tradition of missionary literature he had to walk the tightrope between his gods and missionaries. Since the end of tribal life caused by the onslaught of Christianity there has always been "latent desire for the individual to return to the solidarity of tribe" (Dathorne, 1976: 48). Jolobe, in his poems, led the African back into the past for origins, into a tribal past that had been discontinued and was therefore regarded as worthless.

However, a return to the old pre-colonial tradition could not be accomplished without rejection of Christianity, which in literature is presented by A. C. Jordan in Inqumbo yeminyanya (The Wrath of the Ancestors, 1940). In this novel King Zwelinzima is a paragon of Westernization who against the wishes of his people marries Thembeka, who is neither of royal blood nor a member of the tribe - her only claim to Zwelinzima is that she is "educated". Later she kills Majola, a sacred snake, to protect her child. The snake symbolizes the integrity of the tribe and the tradition which are regained when "the royal family are claimed by the ominous river" (Dathorne, 1976: 49). This theme of reassertion of the group and its values is also developed in Zulu literature in the works by J. L. Dube, R. R. R. Dhlomo and B. W. Vilakazi.
The transition between cultures in African literature in English is represented by Gabriel Okara, who in his novel *The Voice* (1964), experiments with language, using English words but harnessing them with the syntax of his mother tongue Ijaw (Dathorne, 1976: 93). On the level of stories this transition is visible in Amos Tutola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1953), where the author in his "African English" fuses folklore with modern life in his colourful novel about a man addicted to drinking palm-wine, who goes in search of his dead palm-wine tapper. In this novel reality mingles with fantasy, magic, sorcery and the African lore, though on the whole its pattern resembles Mediaeval quest-stories, based on the ancient examples of *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*, and permeated with allegorical techniques which here are shown by use of symbolical persons/things/actions such as Drum, Song, Dance, Skull, the Faithful Mother in the White Tree, Death, and by names of allegorical localities: Heavenly Town, Red Town, Wrong Town, Deads Town. It seems that these indicate the author's indebtedness to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The problem of Christianity and its complete alienness to African culture is further examined in African literature in English, and although the writers to large extent inherited the virtues and failings of the vernacular authors, they did manage to free themselves from the bounds of missionary issues and censorship. E. Casley-Hayford wrote *Ethiopia Unbound* (1969) where his main character, Kwamankra, expresses an iconoclastic (for a European) belief that God is black and that Christ was born of an Ethiopian woman. E. Casley-Hayford also uses the character to air his view on segregation which, he thinks, should not follow skin colour but rather individual abilities, in this way promoting a kind of meritocracy and individualism which are in extreme opposition to African communalism (Dathorne, 1976: 54, 56). European ideals are taken up in J. W. Abruquah's *The Catechist* (1965) which is a life story of Afram, a son of a fisherman. He is very ambitious and leaves his village for one of the big cities, determined to learn English, and to write and read. Although he never achieves the goal of speaking English perfectly, his son achieves it, speaking English like an Englishman. Afram "dies a happy man who had succeeded in raising himself by his own efforts" (Dathorne, 1976: 64) In this novel influences of Comte's concept of organic work and of the
American black activist Booker T. Washington who promoted upliftment of the black race through work, are quite visible. On the other hand, another West African novelist Onuora Nzegwu, picks up the theme of conflicting cultures: Christianity and paganism. The main protagonist of *Blade Among the Boys* (1962) Patrick Ikenga was educated by European teachers and enters a seminary desiring to become a Roman-Catholic priest. With this act he terrifies his family who from a traditional African point of view considers celibacy to be a curse and a very danger for its continuity. Patrick hesitates what to choose but he is spared prolonged pains of doubt and vacillation as he drinks a love potion which makes him give up the priesthood and marry Nkiru who becomes pregnant. The old African world managed to defeat European onslaught once again. One only wonders whether it is a real victory or just a delay of the engulfment by Western culture.

One of the most renowned contemporary West African novelists in English is Chinua Achebe. He empathizes with African traditions to the point of calling himself an "ancestor worshipper" although his works chronicle the fall of traditional ways in a clash with Europe. Characters from his books are men divided between past and present, Africa and Europe. They try to oppose forces of change and perish in the strife as even their fellowmen turn against them, as in the author's first novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958). Okonkwo is a proud man whose father was a failure. He is brave, strong, hardworking and endeavouring in his intention not to follow the steps of his father. He becomes a successful farmer, liked and revered by people. However, the fear of failure - his father's failure, in the Week of Peace, drives him to a cruel and irrational beating of one of his wives and to shooting another who narrowly escapes death. Afterward, to prove that he is not weak, he kills a boy under his guardianship. Subsequently he is banished from the village without any money or goods. His life is ruined. He ultimately recovers some of his wealth, but he cannot find happiness in the life of an exile. His existence is permeated by sadness and resignation. Then he learns about advances of Christianity in Umoufia, his village and decides to return to bring back the old order. However, the village gave itself to the strangers. The missionaries became involved in every aspect of life of Umoufia and its inhabitants. Okonkwo fights against them, demolishes the church and
beheads one of the insolent government messengers. But when he sees that his clansmen are not eager to support him he hangs himself, lest the hands of foreign justice can reach him.

The same pattern of defeat is repeated in the most ambitious book by Chinua Achebe *Arrow of God* (1964). In a way it is like Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* but only superficially. The novel is set in Nigeria in 1920s. Ezeulu is an upholder of the old, traditional and Captain Winterbottom of the new, change. They have much in common, like the two main protagonists of Greene's novel representing two completely different, irreconcilable worldviews. They respect each other, but there cannot be any compromise between them. And it is not giving in when Ezeulu sends his son Odochi to a mission school. From him he hopes to learn the secrets of strangers which would give the priest added power. Then Captain Winterbottom is appointed a warrant officer in the area of the old priest. He sends to Ezeulu messengers to summon him to inform him about the fact, but they were too arrogant and the priest offends them. In due course he is detained by a deputy on Government Hill and cannot eat two sacred yams to commence the Feast of the New Yam. After his release he delays the feast for two more months to show the omnipotence of his god, and before the completion of these rites harvest cannot take place. So people are starving while yams are rotting in the ground. To add to his griefs one of his sons dies and Ezeulu becomes insane.

Once again the author, so revering the old values of pre-colonial Africa, has to display their decline and disintegration in the struggle with the materialistic, intolerant, "objective", scientific and mechanistic world of white man, where there are no gods, spirits, souls and no place for the sacred, mystic and visionary.

The situation of the black man was presented differently in Francophone literature. In its colonies France forced a complete assimilation with the metropolitan language and culture stripping the African of his tribal past, unlike in the British territories where tribal consciousness was and still is
strongly present. Theoretically, this process of assimilation was to let the Africans from French colonies into the stream of French life and culture. However, this ideal has never come true and assimilated black men soon found out that they were still treated and regarded as inferiors. The same situation took place in the USA and an answer to it has been the Harlem renaissance with its desire to recover a lost African identity which was diluted and forgotten in the overflow of European culture. These ideas mingled with Caribbean nigritie, coined in Haiti as a reaction against the American occupation of 1915. This movement was also paralleled by negrismo in Cuba, but finally all of them had to be abandoned because "it became obvious that national mystique based on blackness could prove disharmonious in multiracial society" (Owomoyela, 1979: 37). But those ideas were taken up and transplanted to Africa in works of French Caribbean poets, namely: Aimé Césaire from Martinique and Léon Damas from French Guiana. They not only transplanted the ideas but really started and actively developed the movement of négritude which was named so by Césaire. It aimed at re-discovery and re-evaluation of traditional African values and at the rejection of European cultural superiority which founded the basis for colonialism and racism. But paradoxically négritude was based on European ideas of Marxism, surrealism and existentialism. The attractiveness of these three may be explained by the fact that Marxism stressed equality and the destruction of the bourgeois class and values; that surrealism, striving to transcend the limits of decorum and European culture, could accommodate the non-European tradition; and that existentialism was in a way iconoclastic toward the French heritage. Moreover, existentialist writers often sympathised with négritude, so that Jean-Paul Sartre wrote the preface to Léopold S. Senghor's anthology Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malagache de la langue française (1948, Anthology of the New Negro and Malagasy Poetry). The beginning of this preface opens with an invocation to the white man:

When you removed the gag that was keeping the black mouths shut, what were you hoping for? That they would sing your praises? Did you think that when they raised themselves up again, you would read adoration in the eyes of these heads that our fathers had forced to bend down to the very ground? Here are black men standing, looking at us, and I hope that you-like me-will feel the shock of being seen. For three thousand years white man has enjoyed the privilege of seeing without being seen; he was only a look - the light
from his eyes drew another each thing out of the shadow of
its birth; the whiteness of his skin was another look,
condensed light. The white man-white because he was man;
white like daylight, white like truth, white like virtue-lighted
up creation like a torch and unveiled the secret white essence
of beings. Today, these black men are looking at us, and our
gaze comes back to our own eyes; in their turn, black torches
light up the world and our white heads are no more than
Chinese lanterns swinging in the wind (In Owomoyela, 1979:
39).

It is thus clear that négritude, whose international conferences took place
only in Europe, was obsessed with Europe, against or in relation to it,
though historically speaking functioned both as a protest against
colonialism and an assertion of African values. However, though at first
popular among intellectuals of Francophone Africa, it soon became
obvious that this movement, created by assimilated Africans who studied
in Paris and at other universities in metropolises, could not be truly
African and applicable to the African reality with which they wished to
deal in terms of general myths and symbols. Although Jean-Paul Sartre
assessed négritude as a "transitory stage...not a final goal" (Dathorne, 1976:
221) this movement was harshly criticized by African thinkers from
English-speaking territories where tribal experience was and still is alive
since Britain never wanted to assimilate its black subjects with its culture
rather preferring separate development and was pleased with overall
control.

Wole Soyinka is often quoted as having said that he sees no necessity for
a tiger proclaiming its tigeritude (Dathorne, 1976: 219). Lewis Nkosi
opposes the movement on several grounds, the first being that the role of
art is to unite people not to divide them; the second that négritude should
rather be interested in the assertion of human dignity than in proclaiming
African dignity; the third, he thinks, that although from a historical point
of view it is a protest against colonialism and an assertion of African
cultural values "it detracts from the humanity of the African by portraying
him romantically as a being incapable of violence, rape, murder, arson
and so on" (Owomoyela, 1979:51). Moreover, he indicates, that
ideologically speaking, négritude can constitute the same danger to cripple
and limit writers as can socialist realism whose frames were drawn by the
high-handed dictates of cultural commissars in accordance with the
political line of a communist party; and were guarded by censorship and the threat of imminent imprisonment or exile.

The 1950s were marked by a decline of *négritude* because the argument with colonialism ceased at the theoretical level of artistic wishes and declarations. In a more pragmatic vein, black intellectualists started to engage themselves with pro-independence movements which were preceded by literature of protest and literature devoted to sufferings of the black man, especially in English although there are also remarkable examples of protest poetry in Portuguese by Alda do Espírito Santo, José Craveirinha and Mario de Andrade (Dathorne, 1976: 256, 258, 263).

The fertile ground of pro-independence movements was prepared by the Anglophone Africa's concept of Pan-Africanism, which like *négritude* "was a Caribbean sickness" (Dathorne, 1976: 229) which originated among American blacks. It was different from *négritude*, having had definite political motives which it set out to achieve. Its second conference, held in Paris in 1919, had fifty-seven delegates, but only nine African countries were represented, 'with twelve delegates'. Not until the sixth and last conference, held in Manchester in 1945, does one find solid African interest, represented by Nkrumah, Kenyetta, and Azikiwe. The ready conclusion springs to mind that disinheritcd slaves were more concerned with the vague concept of Africa than were Africans themselves, secure as they were in tribal enclaves. But there the comparison with *négritude* ends, for the literature of Pan-Africanism was propagandist literature devoted to a specific cause. By 1945 when the Pan-African Congress declaration of 'having the right to express our thoughts and emotions, to adopt and create forms of beauty' was passed, the literary homework had already been done (Dathorne, 1976: 221).

Soon Pan-Africanism was proved to be an idealistic and unrealistic movement. Two examples will suffice: if one considers the two countries established in 1847 and 1960, for ex-slaves from the USA and UK: Liberia and Sierra Leone. Instead of African brotherhood as promoted by Pan-Africanism, blacks coming from America and Great Britain became a kind of upper class in their countries replacing white racism with black
racism, dividing blacks in Liberia and Sierra Leone into castes of rulers and servants. Moreover, the union of black Africans, consolidated in the struggle against colonial occupiers, was paradoxically broken in the 1960s when the majority of African colonies gained independence. The process was completed in 1990 when the last African colony, Namibia, became independent.

These colonial and post-colonial periods are shown in the books of the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o (formerly James Ngugi). His first novel, *Weep Not Child* (1964), describes the breakup of a family during the Kenyan struggle for independence. The family is torn apart between the world of white man, education, Western values and the traditional African world. This disorientation from the family produced a brooding thinker, Njorge, obsessed with formal Western schooling and his unrealistic love for a rich white landowner's daughter, and a guerrilla fighter Boro. The division of the Kenyans between ancient African and European halves, symbolized in the above-mentioned novel by one family, is deepened by the introduction of Christianity, which to traditional tribal animosities adds a new dimension of different faiths, pushing neighbouring tribes which stick fast to Christian or old traditions into the pit of exhausting strife which can be likened to the religious wars of Europe. This is represented in Ngugi's *The River Between* (1965) which is a story of two tribes: Kameno and Makuyu which face each other across a valley. The Kameno tribe is tradition-oriented and the Makuyu people - Christian-oriented. The leader of the former opposes Christianity by encouraging the building of schools where non-Christians can acquire a formal Western education. He is convinced that his people can be only free knowing about white people's ways. However, his brief interest in the Christian church and school, and moreover his desire for a daughter of a deacon let him understand, with the help of her commitment and love, that formal education alone cannot save his people. Then he becomes their true and dedicated leader but this realisation comes too late, as due to the intrigues his rival strips him of the leadership of Kameno offering little hope for further existence of the traditional African worldview concretized in this novel as Kikuyu tradition.
In his other novel, *A Grain of Wheat* (1968), Ngugi shows us the struggle for Kenyan independence which is marked, like all kinds of strife, by betrayal, commitment and disorientation of its active or unwilling participants. He even offers us a look at the time when independence has already been gained when he asserts that tribal tensions still exist and that some people who did nothing to bring about freedom attain easy recompenses and high positions, which should come to the real fighters who died for liberty of their country (Dathorne, 1976: 128-9). On the whole African writers do not seem to be eager to depict the truth about postcolonial Africa. They are prevented by censorship and threats as the reality is not very magnificent. Usually, after having got rid of a colonial occupier the united front against white exploiters was turned into a pro- or overtly communist/socialist party - the only party of a mono-party system of government - as other parties were not allowed on the grounds of being reactionary, bourgeois or Westernized. The communist party led by an autarch, be it the self-proclaimed Emperor Bokassa from the Empire of Central Africa or any life president, became the only rulers nationalizing and collectivizing, following the exemplary fallacies of the USSR - another white man-made ideology which had been thought out to be made applicable to Western societies therefore leading to even worse disasters in Africa than in Europe. When one looks at Africa now what one sees is a continent of hunger and internecine warfare, a continent of tyrants and inefficiency, a continent of disoriented people who would like to stick to the mostly forgotten old values and to possess the material goods of Western civilisation at the same time. Africa is in a limbo, marginal to the interests of the West, uncertain which path of development and future to choose. It constantly vacillates between these two different worldviews and its dictators throw it into embraces of opposite extremes. For instance

President Houphouët-Boigny has been overtaken by delusions of grandeur [and] is squandering his nation's resources; his mind has been colonized by mechanical Western fantasies. [He built] the new modernistic capital city [and a replica of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome]. No human face is to be seen there (Coetzee, 1987: 20).

He made the whole Côte d'Ivoire adopt or seem to adopt Catholicism and Western civilization. On the other hand the Zairian president Mobutu, who has been ruling almost for thirty years now, tried hard to re-
Africanize his country, introducing in 1972 the philosophy of *authenticité* which forced Zaïrians to drop their Christian names or at least adopt African postnames, and prohibited wearing ties, wigs and suits under the threat of imprisonment. In this context, the panegyric poetry of Roland Dempster addressed to the president of Liberia Tubman:

Twas in this sunkissed November,  
When nature did her work complete  
To hand to us a great redeemer  
To rule Liberia brave and free  
(Dathorne, 1976: 166).

or the poetry of Wole Soyinka, examining the poor situation of black expatriates in London (cf. his famous poem "The Telephone Conversation") are quite ridiculous and inadequate. The majority of contemporary African writers cannot free themselves from the fetters and temptations of sycophancy and the need to decry the situation of blacks in metropolises and to blame the former colonial powers for every evil in contemporary Africa, while demanding aid and repentance.

In South Africa the relation of local literature to colonialism is even more complicated by the intricate history of this land. In the first centuries of the existence of the Cape Colony all documents, travelogues, diaries and descriptions were written in Dutch, preceded by the same genres but in Portuguese, as earlier Lisbon had explored the southern tip of Africa. Due to extensive settlement Dutch farmers (Boers, Afrikaners) sprawled across the land, often for years losing contact with neighbours, Cape Town, the church and civilisation, let alone The Netherlands. In the course of this isolation the Dutch language spoken by the Afrikaners developed differently from its parent in Holland; additionally having been exposed to Khoisan, Black and Malay influences, and also to especially German and French (because half of the Afrikaner population came from Germany and France), and later during the British occupation to English. Further, this variety or already a dialect of Dutch, evolved to become the only European language developed outside Europe. It was the immediate effect of colonization which was strengthened by the establishment of the Boer republics. However, to become one of the two official languages of
South Africa it had to stand up against Dutch and English in the second half of the 19th century and in early decades of the 20th century:

The first attempts at creative writing in Afrikaans are of linguistic rather than literary significance. The poetry of the period before 1900 was characterised by propaganda for the new language and protest against forced anglicisation (Heyns, 1988: 615)

The first Afrikaans authors were interested in landscape, fauna, flora and local matters. The fight for the recognition of Afrikaans was caused by forceful anglicization imposed on the Afrikaners by British rulers, and it resulted in founding of the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners in 1875 which was followed by the founding of the journal *Di Afrikaanse Patriot* a year later and during Boer (independence) wars this language "became identified with the struggle of the Boers for independence from 'imperial yoke'" (Adey et al, 1986: 15). As a literary language it was established and codified through the first dictionary, the *Patriot Woordenboek* and following the pattern of Europeanization of Black languages, through Totius' (J. D. du Toit's) translation of the Bible (1933) so the Afrikaners could use the Holy Scripture in their own language and not in what had become at times unintelligible Dutch. Early prose and poetry by C. Louis Leipoldt, Jan F. Cilliers, D. F. Malherbe, Eugène N. Marais, Jan Lion-Cachet, the Rev. Willem Postma ("Dr. O. Kulis") and J. H. H. de Waal constituted the beginning of Afrikaans literature which then was mainly didactic and educational, concentrating on historical, local and religious themes. But because of the activity of these and other authors Afrikaans became an official language alongside Dutch and English in 1925, and afterwards replaced Dutch completely. And as the beginning of the nation is commemorated by the Voortrekkers Monument in Pretoria, there is the monument of Afrikaans in Paarl. It is the only language in the world which boasts its own monument.

Afrikaans literature was developed into a fully-fledged body of works by the "Digters van Dertig": N. P. van Wyk Louw, Uys Krige, I. D. du Plessis, W. E. G. Louw and Elisabeth Eybers, who in their poetry tried to embrace all human emotions and sometimes showed elements of renewal in their verse. S. J. Pretorius developed the socio-economic theme in his poetry, showing poverty and the squalid existence of the Afrikaners in the
aftermath of the Boer wars and during rapid urbanization; but it was only the "Sestigers" who brought about a more balanced literature in Afrikaans encompassing prose and poetry. In the meantime G. H. Franz and Mikro (C. H. Kühn) had written several novels about blacks and coloureds but from a stereotypical master-servant point of view. The first who broke free from this tradition of Afrikaans literature supporting racism were Breyten Breytenbach and André Brink. The former, because of his cooperation with the armed wing of black liberation movement and opposing the government was imprisoned for five years when his major works such as Mouvoir (1983), Die ongedanste dans (1987) and Confessions of an Albino Terrorist (1984) were written. After his release he emigrated and for a long time he could not return to South Africa because of the Immorality Act since he married an Oriental woman.

André Brink criticizes the harsh reality of apartheid in his novels (e.g. 'n Omblik in die Wind (1976), 'n Droë wit seison (1979), Muur van die Pes (1984)). His uneasiness about the present and future of South Africa was completed by Karel Schoeman's political fiction trilogy of which the most famous part, Promised Land (1972), describes a ravaged South Africa after revolution where the whites who could not emigrate live under a black totalitarian (Communist?) regime. They try to resist but to no avail because they are successively executed or perish in prisons, leaving their wives and children on far-away farms where the government tolerates their drab existence. On the other hand, J. C. Steyn, in Dagboek van 'n verraatier (1978) written in diary form, analyzes "the internal state of mind of an Afrikaner intellectual at a time of major social and political changes" (Heyns, 1988:618). The same problem, but with the use of real and fictional documents, is dealt with in his other book Die verlore vader (1985).

Wilma Stockenström explores in fairy-like Die kremetart ekspedisie (1981) the concept of "Afrika" while another woman writer Elsa Joubert examines the theme "we are in Africa" in, among others, Ons wag op die kaptein (1963) and Bonga (1971), both situated in countries to the north of South Africa. However, the author's opus magnum is Die Swerfjare van Poppie Nongena (1980) in which she presents a striking picture of a black
woman desperately striving to keep her family together in the face of the pass laws which control influx.

Moreover, the twenty-year-long border war which ended only in 1990 left its painful imprint on Afrikaans literature, giving rise to a new literary genre of border literature whose authors Koos Prinsloo (Jonkmanskas, 1982), Etienne van Heerden (My Kubaan, 1983; Om te awol, 1984), Louis Kruger (\\'n Basis oorkant die grens, 1984) and Alexander Strachan (\\'n Wêreld sonder grense) had to defend their country like their great- and grandfathers during Boer wars, only now they won (or seemed to).

Quite ironically, "as the first serious writers of Afrikaans were foreigners: the Frenchman C. E. Boniface, the Scot A. G. Bain and L. H. Meurant who was of French-Swiss extraction" (Heyns, 1988: 75) the first speakers of the language (or rather its version at an earlier stage of development) were the Cape Malays. Later due to miscegenation of the Afrikaners with their servants, Afrikaans also became the mother tongue of the present three million South African coloureds. Their social and political plight of being rejected by the whites and blacks was addressed by the poets: V. Peterson (Suiderkruis, 1965) and P. J. Philander (Zimbabwe, 1967). But it was the only the Trieste-born Peter Blum who first employed in his poetry the Cape dialect so characteristic of the spoken language of the Coloured people. He published two collections of poems Steenbok tot poolsee (1955) and Enklaves van die lig (1958).

However, only Adam Small from the younger Coloured generation vehemently expressed the plight of the Coloureds in "poems of liberation" (e.g. Kitaar my kruis, 1971) and in the famous play Kanna hy kô hystoe (1965) set in the world of violence and tragedy. In his verse he combines "Negro spiritual", social, political and ironical comments presented in "an easy, colloquial Afrikaans, freely interloaded with English words and expressions, as well as expressions unknown in standard Afrikaans but very much alive on the Cape Flats" (Heyns, 1988: 616). Adam Small, was followed but not in such a committed way, by other contemporary
coloured poets, such as Peter Snyders, Vincent Oliphant and Hein Willemse.

The introduction of English to Southern Africa and to the Dark Continent on the whole actualized in the first British occupation of the Cape Colony from 1795 to 1803, which was soon followed, after a short interval by the second occupation which began in 1806 and whose results are still present. It must be noticed that the influence of Dutch and other languages used in the Cape on English date back to "English explorers, naturalists and scientists who visited the Cape [and] used words from these languages to name the many new things, especially flora and fauna, topographical features and customs they encountered" (Heyns, 1988: 77). But it was not until the arrival of British settlers in 1820 that the language was well established in South Africa and subsequently in 1828 became the official language. Afterwards, an extensive body of documents, travelogues, biographies, diaries, letters and descriptions were written in this language. The English they employed in the course of years developed into the South African variety, unlike Dutch which became Afrikaans, because the Cape Colony had quite frequent contacts with the metropolis and was not isolated as were the Afrikaners on their far-away farms in the deep interior.

The first South African poet whose works were published in book collections, unlike poems of other authors dispersed in newspapers and journals, was Thomas Pringle. He came from the stock of the 1820 settlers and founded the tradition of South African colonial writing which was "almost entirely preoccupied with local matters/colour, couched in a sense of nostalgia evinced in a sense of exile from the home country" (Brönn, 1991: 3) and formed certain continuity with the great tradition. This trend of colonial writing ended, as conventionally accepted, in 1920s with the verse of Roy Campbell.

Colonial writing, for instance, is represented by the South African Jules Verne, Sir Henry Haggard who in *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885) associates the ancient ruins in Zimbabwe with the person of the Hebrew king
striving to "prove" that they could not be an effect of the indigenous people's work. However, in the same year another very important book was published, namely *The Story of an African Farm* by Olive Schreiner, in which the author transcends the colonial tradition criticizing the situation of woman on backwater farms, the patriarchalism of the Afrikaners; and protesting against hypocrisy and cant in general. In this sometimes uneven novel Schreiner managed to create full-dimensional characters who did not follow stereotypical hunters, prospectors, missionaries, farmers and Kaffirs who peopled colonial writings. For example, in her novel Lyndall, who is not understood by the people of her rural milieu, takes up social-feminist issues, and Waldo searches for the meaning of life and the Universe (Adey, 1986: 192).

The Boer Wars also contributed to breaking the tradition of colonial writing as they were the first wars fought by literate common soldiers who left a considerable body of verse, short stories, sketches and reminiscences. Moreover, the wars were frequented by the first war correspondents and during the wars' course many techniques of modern warfare such as concentration camps, camouflage and khaki field uniforms were used, preparing the termination of the innocence of the Belle Epoque which was completed in the trenches of the Great War, throwing our world into the claws of modernity. From the plethora of Boer War writings one should mention *Ballads of the Boer War* (1902) by "Coldstreamer" (a pseudonym for Harry J. C. Graham), Sir Winston Churchill's accounts of the battle front, *Unofficial Dispatches of the Anglo-Boer War* (1901) by Edgar Wallace, and *Commando* (1929) by Deneys Reitz, originally written in Afrikaans and then translated by the author into English. These were the first colonial wars fought by white men against white men and cannot be likened to the Kaffir Wars or the Maori Wars in New Zealand, but rather to the American Civil War, which divided the nation and left a lot of bitterness. Ironically, the victors and defeated of the Boer Wars were destined to form one country (The Union of South Africa in 1910) although the wounds of mutual hatred were still open and even today the Afrikaners refer to these wars as the Independence Wars.
The Black man’s view of the wars is reflected in *The War Diary of Sol T. Plaatje* (1973). He was the first black South African to write a novel in English: *Mhudi* (1930), a historical romance about a woman, Mhudi who risks her life to save her husband at the time of Milikazi’s raid on the Barolong of Botswana. The book was published in the complete form only in 1978 when the earlier excised elements of oral narrative, and elements constituting a greater focus on Mhudi were re-included. Another important black writer R. R. R. Dhlomo presented in the novella *An African Tragedy* (1928) a sombre picture of life in the black urban slums.

In the 1920s when more and more blacks became educated (like Sol T. Plaatje who worked for the ANC), and with the rise of black expression in media and literature, white writers answered with explorations of the problem of miscegenation. One of the most notable authors who examined this problem was Sarah Gertrude Millin. In the trilogy of the Coloured Race (*God’s Step-Children* (1924), *King of the Bastards* (1949) and *The Burning Man* (1952)) she "proved" from a racist point of view that mixing of races must lead to tragedy. She did not try to explicate that this tragedy is just man-made, due to policies treating "people of colour" as inferior and servants if not slaves. She was mainly preoccupied with the notion of the purity of white blood. She claimed that if white blood is "marred" by black it will always show up in descendants no matter how white they may be, causing disaster and unhappiness. Her views were very like those of fascism and promoted the "necessity" of separate development which officially started in 1948 when Apartheid (in English "separateness") was introduced by the Nationalist Party after successful elections. She also presented the effects on indigenous people of an alien culture in *The Coming of the Lord* (1928), *What Hath a Man* (1938), *The Wizard Bird* (1962) and *Goodbye, Dear England* (1965) but it is very ironic that a person whose family most probably escaped pogroms of Jews in Lithuania should promote racism (Adey, 1986: 137-8).

William Plomer looks at racism differently in his youthful *Turbott Wolfe* (1925) which remains the best novel he wrote. It is a story of an intelligent young man who arrived from England to work in a shop
catering mainly for black clientele. Turbott Wolfe comes across many people, both white and black. He and the ineffectual missionary form an association "Young Africa - for the regeneration of the country". They talk endlessly but only two of them translate their feelings into actions. "Chastity" Wolfe feels something for a comely African girl Nhilziyombi but it never becomes a real love but just a passing attraction. Afterwards he has problems with the police authorities and returns to England.

However, it was only Alan Paton whose novels attained a high degree of objectivity in describing racism and won a world-wide acclaim. In Cry the Beloved Country (1948) a black, elderly, country parson, the Reverend Stephan Kumalo, comes to Johannesburg seeking his son whose trace he had lost. The trip soon proves to be a story of new understanding as he meets his sister who runs a shebeen and finds his son imprisoned for murdering a white who ironically supported the black liberal cause. The son is sentenced to death and the father returns to his home in the valley of Ndotsheni in Natal (Adey, 1986: 62). Another renowned book by Alan Paton Too Late the Phalarope (1953), is a tragic story of an idealistic Afrikaner policeman who crosses the boundary between black and white races, having a liaison with a black woman. In this way he transgresses the Immorality Act which does not allow any fulfilment of his love but brings instead prosecution and incarceration.

Black authors after the introduction of apartheid in 1948 as a part of the people suppressed by the system had to become a voice for their families, friends and fellowmen. They could not be so objective and detached as white authors as repressions of apartheid were embedded in their very lives in the form of different acts, passes etc. The sad fate of the black race under the system is well portrayed by the set of phrases on golf from the 10th edition (1977) of J. D. Bold's Fanagalo Phrase Book, Grammar and Dictionary, the Lingua Franca of Southern Africa:

Wena azi lo golof? Mina hayifuna lo mampara mfan.
Have you caddied before? I don't want a useless boy.
Tato lo saka gamina.
Take my bag of clubs.
Tata mabol, yena doti. Susa yena nga lo manzi.
These balls are dirty. Clean them with water.
Muhle wena tula loskati lo-mlungu ena beta lo bol.

77
You must be quiet when my partner plays a shot.

_Tula!_  
Be quiet.  

_Noko wena lahtega lo futi bol, hayikona mali._  
If you lose another ball, there will be no tip for you.  

_Susa lo-mtwzzi gawena. Hayikona shukumisa lo saka._  
Move your shadow. Don't rattle the bag.  


The title of the phrasebook is also a piece of white wishful thinking. Fanagalo (Fanakalo) is confined almost exclusively to South African mines, and as a pidgin language is to a large extent based on the vocabularies of Zulu, English and Afrikaans with a very limited syntax. It invokes aversion in most blacks who regard it as an inferior and undignified medium of communication. Therefore, it is not really a lingua franca and does not have any chances of creolization to become a fully-fledged language. Dreams that the Cape dialect of the coloureds will become a common language of South Africa in the period when Afrikaans was more or less forcefully introduced as a medium of instruction in education, were doomed to be frustrated as this dialect was perceived by whites as a "funny Afrikaans" and by blacks as a language of the oppressor unlike English which black intellectuals consider a world language of communication, and surprisingly it does not bear any connotations or links with colonialism and apartheid, both of which are almost exclusively associated with Afrikaans and the Afrikaners, most probably because they preceded the British in conquering the interior of South Africa, disrupting and destroying native cultures and also because they introduced apartheid, having had ousted the parties with British antecedents and associations from power in 1948. Afrikaner colonialism and repressions are more immediate for blacks, therefore, British imperialism and wrongdoings have been largely forgotten, and today are just a part of history like Chaka Zulu. In the early decades of this century too, the very strong Pan-Africanist support of the ANC for the unrealistic project of making Swahili a South Africa's lingua franca (Kistner, 1991: NA) was also doomed to failure. And as a matter of fact this multi-national, multi-racial and in many aspects still tribal country, with the best developed economy and democracy in the Dark Continent, does not have any lingua franca which would be intelligible to all its inhabitants. This phenomenon hinders communication and in a way must be a source of misunderstanding and many conflicts and probably even of numerous acts of violence.
Peter Abrahams is the most important immediate pre- and apartheid South African black author who left the country for England in 1939, where he became a member of the Communist Party, and settled in Jamaica, one of the sources of Pan-Africanism. He returned to South Africa only for short visits. In his autobiographical *Tell Freedom* (1954) Abrahams "offers retrospective insights into a despicable social system [and] describes perplexities of his youth and how he finally loses hope and leaves South Africa" (Dathorne, 1976: 137). In this book, Abrahams, home during a holiday from a college, reflects on the psychological implications of "Reserved for Europeans only" and other innumerable humiliations he endured in Johannesburg and which were inflicted by white supremacy as crystallized in apartheid. He also fails to get a newspaper job and realizes that education has not done anything to ensure him status and a good place in the white society and only alienated him from his own environment. Then a reader can learn about literary influences in the persons of Shakespeare, Keats, and poetry in general, and an eventual exposure of Abrahams to black American writers who "awakened curiosity and pride in [him]" (Dathorne, 1976: 145). His art then conflicts with apartheid and this situation cannot be rectified by a love affair and the consolation of books, so he has to leave South Africa.

In his other books Abrahams employs the theme of the corrupt city (e.g. the notorious District Six in *Song of the City*, 1942), evils of white oppression and the plight of the Coloured people under apartheid in *Path of Thunder* (1948). In *Wild Conquest* (1950) he tried to present a more balanced and truthful picture of the trek of the Afrikaners northward between 1834 and 1835. The two parts of the novel "relate how both the Boers and the Matabele fail as humans and as a whole [, and] graphically depicts the dehumanizing effects of war" (Dathorne, 1976: 143). The novel shows how Afrikaner boys are taught to hate and distrust "Kaffirs" and to know that in time of war there is no place for pity. Murder means nothing to them. They are deprived by the Afrikaners' lust for land, but the Matabele equate them with their desire for power, internal strife and intrigues and blood thirstiness. "At the end, no one side triumphs - only
bestiality wins. The Matebele cannot resist the force of guns and have to surrender; the wild conquest is complete" (Dathorne, 1976: 144).

Alex la Guma, unlike Peter Abrahams was forced out of South Africa, thus his works "express sincere earnestness and passion" (Dathorne, 1976: 145). *A Walk in the Night* (1962) is set in the District Six and concerns the problem of violence, crime and the nature of punishment. It evokes the world of dirt, grease and stale smells and is a story of Michael Adonis who was fired from his job and returns home drunk. *En route* he meets Doughty, who was once an Irish actor, and accidentally kills him. Afterward Willieboy, a friend of Adonis, happens to come across the body and is mistakenly shot to death by a policeman who thinks him to be the murderer. The like world of brutality, cruelty, violence and injustice la Guma creates in *And a Threefold Cord* (1964) set in a shantytown outside Cape Town. La Guma's next novel *The Stone Country* (1967) is based on his own prison experiences and is set in the microcosm of a gaol (Dathorne, 1976: 145-6).


Many South African writers have used the genre of autobiography to show their contemporaries their difficult paths of life, for instance, the renowned *Down Second Avenue* (1959) by Es'kia Mphahlele. It relates his early life in South Africa and its settings are the little village of Maupaneng, Second Avenue in Marabastad near Pretoria and the
township of Orlando. It depicts apartheid through the author's protest and uneasy acceptance of the reality and ends with Mphahlele's departure from South Africa. The sequel, *Afrika My Music* (1984), covers the period of travel and self-imposed exile from 1957 to 1983. Besides being an author Mphahlele was also an editor of the first widely read black South African magazine *Drum* (Adey, 1986:141; Dathorne, 1976:148). It was launched in 1951 and successively published and still publishes the work of black journalists and what is most important South African black writers whose forte in the apartheid years became short stories, poems and one-, two-act plays. It is argued that the writers, overburdened with difficulties of everyday life and imprisonment, did not have time and on the whole could not afford to write longer pieces. The 1950s black literature became known as Drum literature since the majority of black writers of this period: E. G. Casey ("Kid") Motsisi, Can Themba, Blok Modisane, Todd Matshikiza came out from the magazine's stead. Their works in romantic and sometimes eccentric ways utilized shebeens with their subculture of camaraderie, American-gangster imitations, booze, dames and jazz, and also the everyday life of mainly Sophiatown. The group of authors really launched South African black literature and is described by the term the Drum generation (Adey, 1986: 187-8).

This period was ended by further impositions of apartheid structures by means of new acts and the demolition of black townships (e.g. Sophiatown) or multiracial areas (e.g. District Six) under slum clearance programmes. It culminated in anti-pass laws demonstrations, which ended in violent confrontations with the South African authorities in Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. The events were described in *The Hero of Sharpeville: A Tragedy* (1961) by B. E. Onokpasa and in *Cross of Gold* (1981) by Lauretta Ngcobo. The 1960s are also dramatic for the world with intensification of Cold War, a general disillusionment with post-war humanist ideals; and for Africa with the rapid decolonization of the continent. South Africa in the post-Sharpeville period broke ties with the Commonwealth, becoming an entity on its own, separated from the British world; and the years are also marked by the making of a new martyr in the person of Nelson Mandela. In the 1960s the civilising role of English culture is denied and black writers seek to show white people hopelessness and poverty of the black world oppressed by apartheid (e.g.
Bloke Modisane, *Blame me on History* (1963), Can Themba, *The Will to Die* (1972)). Furthermore, the rhetoric of black power influenced the South African blacks, especially intellectuals and teenagers, who closely followed American blacks' struggle to desegregate the USA. In the late '60s the ideals were disseminated by the SASO (South African Student Organisation) under its first president Steve Biko, who died in 1977 while in police detention. The movement was dubbed black consciousness and its definition was presented in SASO Newsletter, vol. 5, No. 3, Nov./Dec. 1975:

BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS IS:
1. an attitude of mind, a way of life;
2. its basic tenet is that the Black man must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity;
3. it implies awareness by the Black people of the power they wield as a group, both economically and politically and hence group cohesion and solidarity are important facets of Black Consciousness;
4. The Black man must build up his own value systems, see himself as self-defined and not defined by others;
5. Black Consciousness will always be enhanced by the totality of involvement of the oppressed people, hence the message of Black Consciousness has to spread to reach all sections of the Black community;
6. Liberation of the Blackman begins first with liberation from psychological oppression of himself through an inferiority complex and secondly from the physical one accruing out of living in a white racist society;
7. Black people are those who are by law or tradition, politically, socially, economically discriminated against as a group in the South African society of their aspirations (In: Alvarez-Pereyre, 1983: 48).

It was defined in a more compact way by Alan Boesak as an awareness by black people that their humanity is constituted by their blackness. On the whole this limiting of humanity to the boundaries of blackness reminds one about *négritude* whose like shortcomings were fiercely criticised by Es'kia Mphahlele.

Also in the 1960s the flirtation of the ANC with communism began after the USSR had made many inroads, subjugating to its will many a newly independent African country with the system of socialism propagated and supported with shipments of weapons. The South African black movement further and further goes away from ideals of such black
The shift was marked by student protests on 16 June 1976 against Afrikaans as a medium of educational instruction. The riots led to widespread confrontations over socio-political conditions in general. Afterwards, Soweto attained a certain symbolic significance and this became a distinctive caesura dividing black literature. It accelerated the rise of Soweto poetry, which is closely related to people's literature in the persons of Mongane Serote, Mafika Gwala, Ingoapele Madingoane, Sipho Sepamla, James Matthews and Oswald Mtshali. The only difference between Soweto poetry and people's literature is that the former depicted the conditions of ghetto life of townships in a stark idiom and rough-hewn lines. The latter is rather falsely defined as literature written by black workers striving to further a vision of African socialism in the future Azanian age (Adey, 1986: 152-3). However, the distinction is superficial and made only for the sake of criticism, as the two movements are really one movement of protest literature, using the black oral tradition and socialist realist rhetoric to talk to the fellowmen of authors, and not to whites any more. The literature follows the guidelines of the European proletariat and revolutionary literature perceiving socialism as deliverance from apartheid, not just another white man-made fallacy covering with deft demagoguery of propaganda that which the system really aims at is authoritarianism which ravaged half of Europe, a large chunk of Asia and the majority of African countries north of the Limpopo.

The literature is primarily of utilitarian rather than intrinsic value. Its role is to conscientize a communal black audience, and the function of the artist is to actively help change a world that has pluralistic possibilities. This is an extreme which could be named art-for-life's sake, or more appropriately art-for-revolution's-sake. Anyway, some "critics of Marxist persuasion have quarrelled with contemporary black writers, indicating that the informing philosophy of the black writing of the 1970s is one that has taken its impetus from the ideals in Black Nationalism or Black Consciousness and does not sufficiently take cognizance of 'true people's problems' such as the effects of a hegemony of Capitalism on the South African labour" (Adey, 1986: 132). Therefore, maybe not surprisingly, the white poet Jeremy Cronin, sympathizing with the cause of the blacks, is
even more orthodoxically socialist and Marxist in his poetry than black authors. He rigidly follows the schemata of proletariat ballads and protest poems in a very European rendering of socialist realism. Therefore his poems (e.g. "Walking on Air", "In a Pool of Water...") are rather European and Stalinist than anything else and do not truly reflect the spirit of the black struggle which in his poetry is "overCommunised". However, one can suppose that his poetry follows the guidelines of the ANC and SACP more strictly than any other works by white liberals or black writers. On the whole, committed literature leads nowhere, since it is predominantly a game of slogans and clichés, and works created in the scope of this trend are only a politicized pretext of literary writing, aimed at furthering a specific cause. Thus they are automatically outdated and forgotten when a socio-political situation changes, like for instance in South Africa after the historic speech of President de Klerk in February 1990.

This cul de sac of literature was carefully avoided by important white South Africa writers of the last decades; who in this way won a world-wide recognition. Doris Lessing's first book The Grass is Singing (1950) shocked the South African public with her unusual treatment of miscegenation. It is a story of a Rhodesian couple, the Turners, reporting the disintegration of their marriage as they are overwhelmed with the heat, the sheer force of the environment and with the complexities of the white-black racial scene. It is important that against all conventions Mary Turner takes her black African servant as a lover developing the subject of unfulfilled love and desire from William Plomer's Turbott Wolfe (Adey, 1986: 93-4). Later the writer emigrated from Rhodesia and returned to the problems of the subcontinent in her five-volume series Children of Violence (1952-1969):

covering the emotional and political development of a Rhodesian woman, Martha Quest in her search for sexual freedom [and truth] in a confiningly hypocritical settler environment, and for political definition as she espouses the cause of communism. It begins in colonial Rhodesia and proceeds...to England (Adey, 1986: 50).
Another writer of equal merit is also a woman - Nadine Gordimer. Unlike Doris Lessing, she continued to live and write in South Africa during the difficult days of apartheid, although several of her books, such as *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966) and *Burger's Daughter* (1979) were banned for shorter or longer periods of time, especially because of her outspoken views on the South African reality and on matters of sex. *In A Guest of Honour* (1971) Gordimer re-creates the conditions of a Central African country emerging into independence. The main character James Bray formerly expelled by British colonial authorities for the support he has given to pro-independence movements returns invited by the country's president Adamson Mweta. Bray finds to his dismay that the president exiled his rival with whom he had fought together for independence of their country. Despite this he agrees to become a regional educational advisor in the district of Gala where he enters into a passionate relationship with his neighbour's wife, Rebecca Edwards. The two of them are ambushed during a coup d'état and Bray is killed. In her presumably best and most famous novel *The Conservationist* (1974) Gordimer portrays relations between black labourers and a white owner of a farm in high veld. In the course of the novel blacks are depicted as claimants of the earth and the owner experiences a sense of increasing alienation.

In this enumeration of contemporary anti-apartheid South African writers the playwright Athol Fugard must also be mentioned. From the beginning of his writing career he probed into painful problems of South Africa: racism, apartheid, the question of colour, etc. He advocated racially desegregated casts and audiences in South Africa working with black and white actors, and having established multi-racial theatre groups. His plays have been staged all over the world and shown the plight of black men under apartheid. From more recent achievements in this vein one should mention the Olive Schreiner Prize finalist *A State of Fear* (1983) by Menán du Plessis. It is set in contemporary Cape Town at the time of boycotts by Coloured schoolchildren and concerns the search by the protagonist for the self-knowledge amid the demands of socio-political circumstance (Adey, 1986: 73).
At the end of the presentation of these four white liberal writers, although they are completely different from Jeremy Cronin and contemporary black authors, one may notice in their books a reflection of a dangerous leftist bent of South African white liberalism which tends to sympathize with the totalitarian system of communism/socialism without realizing the completely contradictory character of it vis-à-vis liberal ideals. The white authors, between the lines, seem to declare communism to be the best replacement of apartheid which as a matter of fact, like communism, was an authoritarian and oppressive system.

Against this complicated linguistic, ethnic, political, social, economic backgrounds of South Africa J. M. Coetzee’s works are very distinctive from the rest of South African literature. To categorize this author we would have to create for him a separate file in a history of South African literature. At first glance it may be inexplicable. However, the differences become ever clearer when one looks more closely at his life, which shows that he is an inhabitant of a cultural borderland, no man’s land which he claimed in his novels like Caliban or Robinson Crusoe did their islands. "His parents were ‘Bloed-Sappe’-Afrikaners who stood aloof from the nationalist movement of the period and supported General Jan Smuts" (Malan, 1990: 20). So for Afrikaner nationalists he is a "false Boer", or in their specific terminology, a "Kaapse Afrikaner". His mother tongue is Afrikaans, but most probably because of residing in Cape Town he became fully bilingual and at present, through his works, it seems that he prefers using English to Afrikaans. Moreover, his Anglophone background had to be developed during his literary studies in England and the USA where he was also employed by some multinational companies. Another kind of borderland shows up when one looks more closely at the course of his studies which besides literature and English included mathematics, linguistics and computer science, so that now he is an inhabitant of no man’s land between the sciences and the humanities though it seems that he is more inclined to the latter being a critic, literary scholar and lecturer at the "South African Oxford" - the University of Cape Town. He is not just a dweller in these borderlands but he is actively engaged in the process of developing them. For instance, he translates Afrikaans masterpieces into English (e.g. Wilma Stockenström The Expedition to the Baobab Tree, 1981), and in his books which are set
in different borderlands between cultures, peoples, histories, traditions, races, customs. He also uses Afrikaans words and sentences and South African English to enhance the effect of this multicultural borderland.

His fiction is usually un politicized, objective, without feelings dissecting and exposing tragedies of the South African reality with the mastered tool of language operated by the deft hands of a linguist and a computer scientist. This vision avoids the drawbacks implied by direct support for the black cause or communism, mathematically presenting "facts" which are to be interpreted and assessed by readers. But to indicate that reality is not simple and maybe even not real, since there may be different, overlapping realities of every man (it is especially visible in misunderstandings and communication problems between representatives of the different cultures who even share the same language), he employs post-modernist techniques, diffusing the sharpness of classical Euclidean realism in Einsteinian relativism of fantasy elements, two mutually exclusive developments of a plot, metafictional reflections on discourse, understatements, schizophrenia etc. This repertoire of writing "utensils" is used to the full to torment a reader who decides to undertake the trip of his novels which leads nowhere but to itself. But in the course of reading one is kept painfully aware of this process and the rules of the game called fiction lest one falls asleep in the easy arms of the uncomplicated exegesis of "the" world pronouncing that reality is real. In this way one is offered a kind of meta-perception of reality in the works by J. M. Coetzee which in this way strive to talk with one objectively. Moreover, to make his fiction even more objective and to keep one away from the Cartesian system of pigeonholing, J. M. Coetzee sets his books in the unspecified spacetime of the continuum of interacting realities. Therefore his stories, concretized in many equally possible readings may appear to be a historical journal, a diary of a madman or a fantasy novella. It is like quantum physics, which enclosed in mathematicai formulae, is concrete and to the point, and only, when it comes to its interpretation do physicists group themselves into opposing factions and warring schools. The universality of his books is enhanced by his modern, Kafkaesque use of allegory which also adds another dimension to possible readings of his novels and shows his close affinities with Afrikaans literature, where the device was and still is used quite extensively, as it was proved by Laraine
C. O'Connell in her doctorate *Traditional Allegory and Its Postmodernist Use in the Novels of J. M. Coetzee* (1988). But he writes in English and many of his characters are black or non-white. In this way he accommodates the English and the indigenous tradition, serving in the in-betweenness between them, and also between Afrikaans and world culture as a kind of metacultural, metatextual interface.

The genre’s reaction against colonialism and post-colonial problems as presented in the fiction of J. M. Coetzee is explored in the next chapter with the help of such concepts as cultural borderland and clash of cultures, and the description of the trope of modern (postmodernist) allegory which is so characteristic of the author’s works allowing him to gain a greater degree of objectivity than in the case of other literary approaches and styles.

**NOTE**

1. Doris Lessing was born in Rhodesia (after 1978 Zimbabwe) and started her literary career in this country before his later emigration. However, Rhodesia has never managed to develop a notable literary tradition and as a matter of fact its literature, especially written by whites, is considered to be an offshoot of South African literature. Therefore, Doris Lessing is treated by scholars as an inherent part of South African literature and culture.
CHAPTER 3

THEMES AND TECHNIQUES
IN
THE NOVELS OF J. M. COETZEE

To date J. M. Coetzee has written six novels, all of which revolve around the same subject of colonialism and its effects of strife, contradictions, corruption and suffering. Other writers have tended to become tendentious with the result that their work dates and appears to be extremely subjective. The continent's problems are superficially treated by television and such treatment does not explain anything, but merely obfuscates the real face of the Dark Continent. The very objective of J. M. Coetzee's writings is to avoid this danger, and this chapter, which commences the analyses of his books, is an attempt, to relate his opinions and to describe the techniques that he uses in his novels.

First, the author's opinions on colonialism are presented as derived from his critical writings. Although Coetzee's novels are set in different settings, widely diverse in time and space, certain elements always stay constant, such as for instance the placing of characters in cultural borderlands and the dramatic clash of cultures in these borderlands. These essential notions are discussed in some detail while the last part of this chapter is devoted to the trope of allegory through which Coetzee attains objectivity and universality in his novels.

Coetzee, a keen observer of the feedback and interaction between white and black cultures in his White Writing, shows the mechanism of "colonial propaganda" which was to convince colonizers and subsequently the colonized about the inferiority of the latter to the former, and to facilitate the process of imposing white ways on black societies. As the author
indicates, popular travelogues and descriptions of the Cape Colony were
built on and accumulated around the following nineteen areas:

Physical appearances
Dress: (a) clothing,
   (b) ornamentation, (c) cosmetics
Diet: (a) foodstuffs, (b) cuisine
Medicine
Crafts: (a) handicrafts,
   (b) implements
Technics
Weapons
Defence and warfare
Recreations
Customs
Habitation: (a) dwellings, (b) village
   layout
Religion (including superstition,
   witchcraft, magic)
Laws
Economy
Government
Foreign relations
Trade
Language
Character (WW: 14)

Chapters and paragraphs devoted to the areas were to show the
strangeness, ridiculousness, irrationality and the primitiveness of the
"barbaric" style of life of the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape Colony.
The author quotes an appropriate excerpt from *A Clear Description of the
Cape of Good Hope* by Jadocus Hondius:

The local natives have everything in common with the dumb
cattle, barring their human nature... [They] are
handicapped in their speech, clucking like turkey-cocks or
like the people of the Alpine Germany who have developed
goterie by drinking the hard snow water... Their food
consists of herbs, cattle, wild animals and fish. The animals
are eaten together with their internal organs. Having been
shaken out a little the intestines are not washed, but as soon
as the animal has been slaughtered or discovered, they are
eaten raw, skin and all... A number of them will sleep
together in the veld, making no difference between men and
women... They all smell fiercely, as can be noticed at
distance of more than twelve feet against the wind, and they
also give the appearance of never having washed (In WW:
12).

The First descriptions were accounts given by seamen, ships' doctors,
adventurers and company officials. Usually simple, uneducated or under-
educated, they were not able to "put aside their inherited Eurocentric conceptual schemes in favour of a scheme based on native conceptual categories" (WW: 15). However, such an attitude was not needed and has never been developed because the ideological aim of colonizers was not to understand the natives but to emphasize their idiosyncrasies to prove and strengthen "the theory of 'double right' propounded [on the biblical grounds] by Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts, the right of cultivators, who clear and settle the land, [which] always take[s] precedence over the rights of nomads, who merely hunt over it" (WW: 3).

The exaggeration of the differences between western and Khoisan civilisations in the course of time created a chasm between these entities, separating the former from the latter not only on the basis of race but often claiming the Khoisan to be a sub-species of Homo Sapiens, *Untermensch*. That is why descriptions of their habits use animal similes such as, for instance that their language sounds like "turkey noises", that they lie all over on one another like "hogs", eat raw meat together with cowhide and guts like "brutish beasts". Moreover, because the Cape was colonized by protestants, the "immoral and disgusting behaviour" of the Khoisan: "they smear one another with dung and exhibit their private parts" (WW: 16); and laziness: "the Hottentots sleep by day in a hut" (WW: 16) were especially exposed as breaches of the values promoted by Luther and Calvin. Afterwards, this presupposed laziness of the Khoisans was often described in books reconnoitering the Cape, though it is worth remarking that "[s]urprisingly little mention of Hottentot idleness occurs...before 1652" (WW:16). So as one can see the descriptions were at first dictated by reality and started to emphasize the sloth of the natives when the natural habitat of the Khoisans was superseded by the expansion of the European civilisation in whose environs the native ways were degenerated by impostures of the West. The Khoisans deprived of their tradition and usual lifestyles were lost in the drastically new situation, which may appeared to Europeans as their sloth. Some of the descriptions of the Khoisans' idleness are quoted by Coetzee and give a clear indication of the Europeans' perception of these attributes:

They are lazier than the tortoises which they hunt and eat.

They secure themselves a luxurious idleness, they never till the soil, they sow nothing, they reap nothing, they take no heed what they shall eat and drink... Whoever wishes to employ them as slaves must keep them hungry.
[A] dull, inactive, and I had almost said, entirely listless disposition...is the leading characteristic of their minds..., necessarily produced by the debilitating diet they use, and their extreme inactivity and sloth.

They are extremely lazy, and had rather undergo almost famine, than apply themselves.

They are, without doubt, both in body and mind, the laziest people under the sun... Their whole earthly happiness seems to lie in indolence and supinity (in WW: 17-18).

These views prompted the church and colonizers to undertake many actions to "enlighten" these people and uplift them from "the stupor of this brutish state", to teach them conscientious work and to solve their souls (provided they have souls at all). But in the wake of active missionary work, and the acceleration of Europeanization of the Khoisan and their land, when the protestant ideas of Christianity and work ethic together with the crucial distinction between idleness and leisure were imposed on their culture

no one asks for what reason a people whose traditional diet is meat, milk, and veldkos (forage food) should after 1652 decide the vegetables are better and begin to till the soil; or why, after artificial appetites for baked bread, tobacco, and spirits have been awoken in them, they should want to sell any more of their labour than would be required for the immediate satisfaction of these appetites (WW: 19).

Because it seems that

A man does not 'by nature' wish to earn more and more money but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose. Wherever modern capitalism has begun its work of increasing the productivity of human labour by increasing its intensity, it has encountered the immensely stubborn resistance of the leading trait of pre-capitalistic labour" (Weber in WW: 27).

And though the resistance of the Khoisans was broken with the rifle, fire and European diseases so that at last they became good slaves and labourers of white masters, their lifestyle was not completely forgotten. Quite ironically it strongly influenced the piously protestant nation of the Afrikaners whose squalor and sloth "afford[ed] sinister evidence of how
European stock can regress after a few generations in Africa" (WW: 30). In this way their idleness, shared with their "Hotnots", endangered the colonizing mission of white man. The sloth of this nation is evident even today "in taboos on certain grades of manual work (hotnottswerk, kafferwerk), as well as in rituals of leisure indistinguishable from idleness (sitting on the porch...)" (WW: 35), and the presupposed sloth of the natives is still enforced by the "tradition of overemployment and underpayment, maintained from both sides of the fence, in terms of which two men are hired to do one man's work, each working half the time and standing idle half the time, each getting half of one man's wage" (WW: 35).

In recapitulation, it would be interesting to observe how the black mind was influenced by all the changes. Following Van der Walt's useful periodization (Van der Walt, 1991: 18), it may be said that by 1890 the Africans still lived undisturbed, not knowing the phrase "identity crisis" because the traditional African worldview still bound their lives in its holistic, all-encompassing vision of life. However, during the period 1890-1960 Africa was divided among the colonial powers irrespective of its own local traditions and diversities which were perceived by the whites as the same kind of brutishness not worth being taken into account.

The colonizers did not hide their Western sense of superiority. The African worldview was considered childish and therefore had to be corrected and brought to the same level as that of the West (Van der Walt, 1990: 8):

This imposition of western culture on the black mind did not obliterate the old heritage and traditions but only vulgarized them, at the same time having superficially westernized Africa. It caused the African to be suspended in a kind of limbo between the two systems of beliefs and values. He tries to live in the both worlds alternately but it additionally causes schizophrenic division of his mind and he truly lives in neither of them. He does not have a worldview in which he feels totally at home, and he experiences an identity crisis.

The African has tried to transcend this crisis by developing the ideal of négritude in Francophone Africa and by accommodating the culture of the
Afro-Americans together with their slogan: "Black is beautiful". There were also some attempts to codify and revitalize the old tradition (e.g. Bantu philosophy), to follow the Christian worldview, or to unite the Africans by a religion, e.g. Zionism. However, the attempts proved to be largely futile because they did not take into account the tribal, linguistic and cultural diversity of the continent striving to treat its inhabitants as homogeneous. Therefore what really united this continent in the post-1960 period was the process of decolonization which pushed the metropolises' authority back, giving Africa back into the hands of its inhabitants. Unfortunately, this process followed the skeleton of western ideals and the western division of Africa, giving rise to artificial countries torn by internal tensions and strifes. So the colonial spectre is still haunting this continent in the forms of degenerated democracy and corrupted western institutions. This impasse seemed to be transcended by the adoption of another white ideology which pretended to be universal, namely communism/socialism but it only deepened antagonisms and the inefficiency of local economies, throwing the whole continent into the shadows of tyrants, famines, militarization, starvation, wars, unhappiness, juntas, coups d'état, and oppression.

J. M. Coetzee strives to tackle these problems in his fiction in an objective way. However, one should be aware of the fact that absolute objectivity is virtually impossible because of the relative, ever-changing character of the world in which we live. It does not discourage the author because even a little bit truer picture of the relations between white colonizers and the black colonized is better than any conventional renderings of the relations based on ideals of racism and presupposed white superiority. He was raised in the country, where the white population is exposed to the ideals from birth to grave. But he was lucky enough to live in the cosmopolitan, more European area than the rest of South Africa, Cape Town. Moreover, he travelled widely and studied abroad and in the course of his journeys and sojourns he must have become more conscious of and tolerant towards racial, cultural and linguistics differences. The author's family background was also conducive to developing his broadminded worldview. Although his parents were Afrikaners they felt more affinity with the traditions of democracy and liberalism than with Afrikanerdom. They dissociated themselves from the "true" Afrikaners of
the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and supported the "traitor" Jan Smuts. They and others like them, formed a liberal group contemptuously referred to as the "Kaapse Afrikaners". J. M. Coetzee had to live in this environment in the two cultures of the English and the Afrikaners. In this way he became fully bilingual and versed in the two traditions, so that he is simultaneously an Afrikaner and a Brit or as a matter of fact - a true South African who managed to transcend some of the linguistic and national (or rather tribal) animosities of the groups populating South Africa. Moreover, he is also aware of the non-white traditions which constitute an equally important part of the South African heritage. He understands and sympathizes with the predicaments of black, coloured and Indian cultures of which the first was destroyed and re-shaped by the colonial expansion of Europe and together with the two others which are a product of colonialism, were suppressed and limited by colonial policies and which were followed by apartheid in 1948, perpetuating the myth of the racial superiority of the whites. In the years of the forced "separate development" when contacts between cultures and different nationalities were strongly discouraged in South Africa, Coetzee must certainly have striven to reach beyond the artificial bureaucratic boundaries in the quest for understanding. On the other hand, one cannot claim that he completely understood the cultures, because it is impossible without becoming a member of them. It would be paranoic too because Coetzee does not want to denounce his own culture, but to reconcile it with non-white, non-European traditions for the sake of everyday life, goodwill and a peaceful South Africa of the future.

He contributes towards this goal with his works. He cannot write objectively on non-white cultures, which is why he leaves this task to much more competent non-white authors. He also does not want to write just about whites so as not to fall into the pit of old stereotypes and preconceptions, and not to push non-white characters into the margins of such a literary picture, unjustly endowing them with inferior roles which they usually occupy in the alien environment of the whites. So to provide his readers with a truer and more objective picture of South Africa and its problems, in a way, Coetzee looks back into his life and, following his multicultural experience, he places his white and non-white characters in environs where they could conceivably act as equals. Coetzee - a
conscious dweller in the borderland between Afrikaans and English cultures - is very well-qualified to fulfil this goal.

To attain objectivity in his novels Coetzee places his characters in the borderlands between different races, traditions and cultures. In *Dusklands* it is a borderland between Vietnam and the USA in the case of the first novella, and between the Khoisan and Dutch settlers in the second. In *In the Heart of the Country* the borderland between the Afrikaners - masters and blacks - servants (slaves) is dealt with. In *Waiting for the Barbarians* it is a more symbolic borderland separating civilisation, in the European meaning of this word, from the "barbarians". In *Life and Times of Michael K* the borderland is placed between the world of white South Africans and the non-white ones who are subjected to pass-laws and all other kinds of restrictions. In *Foe*, once again, there is a more general, universal kind of borderland between the worlds of colonizers and the non-white colonized. And so far the last book by Coetzee *Age of Iron* presents the borderland between the blacks and whites as it seems to appear in the actual contemporary South Africa.

The cultural borderlands are not a static phenomenon. Like actual borderlands between the territories of nations and states they are constantly re-shaped by wars, strifes, conflicts, political deals etc. In the best case they can be only in the stable (i.e. peaceful) state of dynamic equilibrium which breaks down into the flames of a struggle when one of the sides of a borderland weakens or strengthens, thus disturbing the balance. But the cultural borderlands which Coetzee describes in his novel most often do not coincide with state or national boundaries. They tend to exist as a destabilising factor in the very middle of countries, leading to internal tensions and unrest. It is most visible in the countries where different cultures are more or less equally strong, because weaker cultures, such as, for instance of the Americas and Australasia, were obliterated in previous centuries. Africa is the scene of a long strife of the white colonial tradition against the native one. First, the Europeans were winning this conflict, subjecting the continent to their will, but in the 20th century the wave of rapid decolonization terminated their power. But it does not mean that they lost, because European culture and the languages
they introduced to the continent became a vital admixture to the native cultures, corrupting and superseding them at a slower or quicker pace. Thus nowadays many African countries, which are a product of white colonialism, are based on pseudo-European state systems and boast the Europeanized educated part of population which stands in contrast and opposition to still tribal and more African masses in this way severely dividing and detaching native population from the government. This process is escalated by white mass media, technology and artifacts - economic and cultural colonialism which followed hard-line colonialism. In South Africa clashes of cultures are even more visible because this country has a tremendously diversified population of many racial and cultural provenances and what is even more significant - although the white population of South Africa is relatively small, it is bigger than in any other countries of the Dark Continent, which has effectively made South Africa a western, white-dominated country. But it also must be noted that this white population is not homogeneous and as a matter of fact reminds one of a tribal society of blacks being divided among numerous factions and national groups with the leading English speakers and Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaners. The two groups are the source of the main animosities disrupting the unity of white South Africans.

Thus as one can see the present reality of South Africa is permeated by lots of clashes of cultures which provoke tensions, violence and unrest and which endanger the very existence of the country. J. M. Coetzee is conscious of the phenomenon which is tearing his country to pieces and pushes it to the edge of chaos. Therefore, the conflicts are re-enacted in his novels in the different borderland settings which I sketched above. However, he does not limit himself to a mere representation in which he would have to take sides, distorting the truth. He does not want to indiscriminately subscribe to white values or black struggle. He sees the shortcomings and promises of both and understands that the two main powers in South Africa can achieve prosperity and justice only in conjunction with a multitude of smaller groups whose interests must be also taken into consideration. So, to speak truly on the problems and maybe their possible solutions, Coetzee must discuss them in an objective way. He attains this mentioned objectivity in his novels by placing his characters in the borderlands between warring cultures (as I mentioned
above) and by striving to come closer to the intuitive thinking of the black mind: "To me' said Coetzee, 'a story is a way of thinking - an archaic way of thinking, non-analytic. It's the sort of thinking I do best" (Malan, 1990:20). In this statement he explicitly expresses his attempts to overcome the European malaise of a Euclidean representation of the world, original Greek binary logic and philosophy of detachment, and the Cartesian method of dissection equaling a sum of parts of a wholeness to this wholeness which is also responsible for the schizophrenisation of European culture by shattering the perfect monad of body and soul into the unbalanced diad where body completely suppressed soul in the age of consumerism and commercialization. These above-mentioned are the bases of "psychopathology of Western life" (Knox-Shaw, 1982: 37) as described in Coetzee's fiction, which also constitute the foundations of his writings, whether the author wants it or not.

However, the essential tool with which he attains the objectivity and universality in his fiction is the ancient trope of allegory which seemed to have been extinct during the Enlightenment and to be just a fossil found in old masters' works. Traditionally, allegory is understood as:

a method of representation in which a person, abstract idea, or event stands for itself and for something else. Allegory may be defined as extended metaphor: the term is often applied to a work of fiction in which the author intends characters and their actions to be understood in terms other than their surface appearances and meanings. These surface or extended meanings involve moral or spiritual concepts more significant than the actual narrative itself (Shaw, 1972: 12-13).

In the course of centuries allegory has undergone many transformations "but has retained its typically bipartite design of saying one thing and meaning another" (O'Connell 1988: i).

To understand Coetzee's modern use of this trope, a brief historical overview is necessary.
In ancient Greece the actions of gods in works by Homer and Hesiod were interpreted allegorically, after some time having given rise to compositional or narrative allegory in the form of "battle" or "progress". In the Middle Ages this trope was developed strongly, becoming a very popular literary device used in liturgy, oral tradition, literature, sermons, drama etc. It came into being mainly because of allegorical character of the Bible - the Book of books which at that time strongly influenced the European mind still united in tradition of the Roman Empire by the faith of Christianity, the Church and Latin. This longing for the New Jerusalem which would unite the whole world, i.e. Europe in the vision of the Kingdom of Christ, was expressed by allegory which could surpass the post-Roman and post-Charlemagne chaos to give people a feeling of divine order and stability permeating reality. From the greatest achievements of mediaeval allegory one can enumerate a multitude of moralities (which later became the basis of the revival of allegory in the seminal *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. This book is very important for history of the South African black mind since it was translated into Xhosa, Zulu, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Venda and Northern Sotho (Heyns, 1988: 625) marking the transition period from oral tradition to written literature, and simultaneously proving affinity of this trope to the black pre-Cartesian mode of thinking and perception of reality), Christian cosmology was crowned with the already semi-Renaissance *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, the chivalric tradition gave us *Le Chanson de Roland*, while *Tristan and Isolde* and *Le Roman de la Rose* are the finest examples of medieval love poetry. Afterwards, the use of allegory deteriorated and was not revived until Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. In the Renaissance it was used as a valuable didactic tool and a useful rhetorical device. Subsequently, in the following centuries, allegory "undergoes a drastic change no longer referring to an ordered universe, but revealing a sense of hostility to any systematization of life" (O'Connell, 1988: i). "Allegory changes from being an essentially affirmative mode, to an increasingly ironic mode" (O'Connell, 1988: ii). Also in this period allegory was despised by critics and reviewers, and the re-birth of the modern version of this trope dates back only to Franz Kafka's writings. Allegory proved to be very suitable to expose the inhumanity of the modern world crystallized in law, bureaucracy, ideologies, propaganda, authoritarianism etc., viz. George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Mikhail Bulhakov's *The Master and Margarita*; innate evil in
man, e.g. in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*; and to probe into the questions of reality and the meaning of life as, for instance, in the writings by José Borges and Philip K. Dick.

The re-vitalized modern allegory also retained one of its Renaissance characteristics "that both the courtier and the courtly poet might use allegorical figures to criticize their prince" (Zamora, 1986: 2). Therefore, in the age of totalitarianism and security forces which strive to control the "masses" and confine individuals to the prison of restrictive laws, demagogically denying them any human rights for the sake of tyrants and dictators, allegory became one of the most suitable modes of writing to mislead censors. Unsurprisingly, allegory bloomed in a Europe torn by nationalisms, the Second World War, the Cold War and the oppression of communism, in the police state of the USSR, in the Latin America of the coups and juntas, and in South Africa under apartheid.

But the present-day use and characteristics of allegory are quite different from the allegory of the past centuries, considering its purpose and methods:

The fundamental forms of allegory are still the journey, the battle or conflict, the quest or search, transformation, and some form of process, but the purpose of this process has become diffused and is no longer controlled or directed to some ideal condition or destination. The referential certainty upon which allegory has always stood, is repeatedly deconstructed. It does not make any pretence of cohering experience, but it does by its very form manage to express the otherwise inexpressible, while retaining its universality, which is characteristic of allegory.

In conclusion, it appears that modern allegory needs to be defined in terms of its nature and its purpose. A working definition of allegory recognizes the presence of the following characteristics:

* Its nature is multi-level, which is the literal or surface level, and any number of underlying levels of meaning;
* realism is often abandoned in favour of imaginative projection;
* the writer's craft is often examined and the problem of communication explored;
• it has an inherently ironical and satirical nature;
• it is largely psychological, concerned with inner rather than external conflict;
• it employs personification, but far more subtly and indirectly than in earlier allegory. The purpose of the use of allegory may be suggested as follows:
  • To examine the relationships between master and servant, powerful and oppressed, parent and child;
  • to deliver disguised political and social commentary, being an oblique method of dissent;
  • to reflect man's alienation and his futile search for meaning;
  • to treat universal themes, universality being the underlying level of meaning.


As one can infer from this definition, books using allegory are sombre, full of psychological broodings and avant garde devices which intend to make a reader seek for different points of view from which he could observe himself and the world in the never-ending quest for truth. Therefore, they are not easy reads and one may even be "tempted to propose that we identify allegory by its combination of thinness of material (action-packed novels are rarely allegorical) with indeterminacy of time, place and circumstance" (Enright, 1983: NA).

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The analyses of Coetzee's novels which follow this chapter are arranged chronologically, reflecting their publication dates. This arrangement is dictated by the fact that the novels do not form a gradual development of a certain subject, or clear thematic groups. All of them deal with the same theme - cultural borderlands and clashes of cultures and problems caused by these phenomena. The novels constitute different points of view - more or less concrete, more or less universal but always relevant and showing new facets and dimensions of multiculturalism and its plights in South Africa and in the world. They gravitate around one set of
problems in an archaic, non-Cartesian (close to nature and man) circular, way striving to transcend the dry, unimaginative language of political science textbooks and papers with compassionate, not devoid of feelings style which is only able to promote goodwill and mutual understanding among people of different races, nationalities, cultures, and opinions.

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CHAPTER 4

DUSKLANDS (1974)

*Dusklands* is J. M. Coetzee's first book and "reflect[s]...the author's experience as a South African who knows what it is like to live and work in the United States" (Crewe, 1974: 90). As he says "[i]n the interview with Stephen Watson...'I came back to this country in 1971 with half of what later turned into *Dusklands*.' Coetzee spent approximately ten years in the United States before returning to South Africa in 1971" (Dovey, 1988: 138). So his American stay coincided with probably one of the most tumultuous periods in the history of that country and the world on the whole. This period was a logical continuation of the colonial and imperial policies of the West, which in South Africa took the form of apartheid and which began to be finally dismantled only in 1990. Therefore the sweeping changes of the 1960s, the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1970s most likely were of great influence and interest to Coetzee - an author who more or less consciously chose to depict in his works colonialism and its effects in South Africa and elsewhere. So the following short sketch of the situation in those years will re-create the atmosphere in which *Dusklands* was conceived, and is intended as an explicatory intertextual comment on the novel itself.

The beginning of 1960s was marred by the Cuban revolution in 1959 and the resultant escalation of the cold war which culminated in 1961 with East Germans erecting the Berlin Wall, and in 1962 during the Cuban missile crisis.

After the conflict with French colonizers and the Korean war, communism made real inroads into the unstable region of Indochina. The answer of America since 1961 was a growing involvement of its forces
in Vietnam. In 1963 the USA was shaken by the assassination of the youngest ever American president - John Kennedy. During the whole decade the majority of African countries were decolonized. In 1965 generals seized control of Indonesia, massacring thousands of communists, and in 1966 the cultural revolution began in China. 1967 was marked by the Six-Day war. In 1966 black discontent erupted in the USA accelerating the growth of black power and two years later America was shaken by the assassination of Martin Luther King.

During the 1960s Rock and Roll music engulfed the world, together with its subculture of contending ideologies, hippie flower power, drugs and the sex revolution. In 1968 the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia to stop the Prague Spring, and the world-wide student protest movement started. The fall of old authorities was symbolized by defossilization of Catholic liturgy and dogma by the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The whole period was spanned by the space race, which began with the victory of the Soviets when Gagarin as the first man was launched into outer space and ended with the victory of America when in 1969 Armstrong as the first man stepped on the surface of the Moon.

When Coetzee returned to South Africa, the anti-Vietnam war movement in America as well as the escalation of military actions in Vietnam was rampant. Also in 1971, to counterbalance the Soviet influence in Vietnam, the USA initiated the policy of detente with China, and in the same year abandoned the Gold Standard and depreciated the dollar, which together with the growing price of oil and the Vietnam war expenses, sparked a major recession in 1973.

One cannot know what prompted Coetzee to return after so many years abroad while a lot of South African intellectuals were exiled or had emigrated, disillusioned by apartheid. However, one may be sure that the novelist had to be influenced also by the news from home: 1960 - the Sharpeville riots; 1961 - South Africa under pressure of other members walked out from the British Commonwealth and became an independent republic. It was the beginning of the international isolation of the
country, sanctions and an intensification of apartheid whose dismantling started only with tentative movements of the predecessor of P. W. Botha - John Vorster.

The other important element of those years which possibly also had a kind of formative influence on the fiction of J. M. Coetzee was the process of decolonization of sub-Saharan Africa which started with the independence of Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1957 and was almost completed by the middle of the 1970s when Portugal granted independence to Angola and Mozambique. The decolonization of Africa was preceded by a long conflict of the West and its culture with indigenous black African heritage which can be paralleled with the above-mentioned imperial wars in other parts of the world (e.g. Indochina, Korea, Vietnam). However, the character of the African experience is radically different in the respect that it engulfed the whole continent and above all, in its emotive sphere, was based on racial hatred replacing white racism with black racism.

The first part of the diptych entitled *Dusklands* strongly indicates Coetzee's American years as its source. While in the 70s and 80s American showbiz and publishers harvested the fruit of post-Vietnam trauma in the endless flow of publications and films *ad nauseam*, Coetzee chose to explore the mind of a man obsessed with destruction. *The Vietnam Project* opens with the preem:

> Obviously it is difficult not to sympathize with those European and American audiences who, when shown films of fighter-bomber pilots visibly exhilarated by successful napalm bombing runs on Viet-Cong targets, react with horror and disgust. Yet, it is unreasonable to expect the U.S. Government to obtain pilots who are so appalled by the damage they may be doing that they cannot carry out their missions or become excessively depressed or guilt-ridden (D: ix).

This statement of Herman Kahn's is very pragmatic dictated by the harsh demands of warfare. However, in the statement's sheer pragmatism the element of humanity, which makes us men, was betrayed, ridiculed and covertly replaced with money-wise cruelty.
The main and only (truly speaking) character of this part of *Dusklands* is Eugene Dawn. His symbolical surname creates an aura of beginning but it is not a beginning, a morning of new life. It is the beginning of the end, opening of twilight of the gods, introduction to the land of dusk (Dovey, 1987: 17).

He works under the supervision of a Coetzee. This foreign-sounding (for an American ear) surname from the first pages of *Dusklands* creates the atmosphere of borderland which is the main subject matter of J. M. Coetzee's fiction. This surname is an intratextual link spanning the whole novel because the main protagonist of the other part of the novel is Jacobus Coetzee - an ancestor of the author (Crewe, 1974: 91). Then the literary mystification goes even further and the presupposed editor and writer of the afterward to *The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee* is a "chauvinistic academic identified by the author as his father" (Knox-Shaw, 1982: 27). Moreover, Coetzee poses as a translator of the piece. So in this way he "cleverly link[s] the historic roots of [South African] violent racism with America's traumatic experience of Vietnam" (Anon., 1978: NA) presented in the novellas, and also with the world existing outside the novel with the help of having embedded himself and "his family" in *Dusklands*, forming an intricate borderland among the colonial experiences of the two countries, the text and the extra-textual reality.

Eugene Dawn's responsibility is to do research for the New Life Project. The truth is hidden behind this demagogic title. The project is not to invigorate and bring peace to war-torn Vietnam. Quite on the contrary it aims at developing psychological warfare against the Viet-Cong to suppress and finally to pacify the country, which is in a state of hostilities with western culture, concretised here as the imperialism of the USA.

This project becomes the *idée fixe* of Eugene Dawn. It obsesses him to the point when it becomes his only sense of life. His unhappy marriage with Marilyn, whose name reminds one about the success and unhappiness of the legendary Marilyn Monroe, is a contradiction of the American Dream. He strives to restore the dream in his life looking for
an icon, not a real woman, when he comments on his wife's psychoanalytic therapy which she attends every Wednesday:

I do not disapprove and gladly pay. If she will return to be a smiling honey-blonde with long brown legs, I do not mind by what unsound route she gets there. I am weary of this mental patient with hair in rat-tails sprawling around my home, sighing, clasping her hands, sleeping round the clock. I pay my money and hope for results (D: 11).

He cannot see that it is he who "is alienated beyond alienation, locked in a sterile selfhood from which only fitful relief may be obtained by the exercise of a ruthless intelligence" (Crewe, 1974: 92), that it is he who withdraws into himself, and makes his family life psychotic, succumbing to the madness of the New Life Project. This madness completely engulfs him, leaving no place for sanity.

After having accepted the project he "was offered a familiarization tour of Vietnam. [He] refused and was permitted to refuse" (D: 14). He reasons that:

I discovered all the truths in my Vietnam report, by introspection. Vietnam, like everything else is inside me, and in Vietnam, with little diligence, a little patience, all truth's about man's nature (D: 14).

In his stance he symbolizes the new colonialism, an imperialism which having been driven away in the process of decolonization, returns as western technological and cultural influx, with the controlling power of money. It is presupposed that anything which originated in the West is superior to products of other cultures, which are assessed as being primitive and unrefined. Accordingly they do not know what is good and appropriate, and therefore sometimes it must be forced on them.

Eugene Dawn enters the borderland between two worlds, but he is not prepared to empathize with the Vietnamese, to try to understand them. He treats the subject of his project like a homogeneous mass, following the "best" examples of Nazi and socialist propaganda. To concretise his imaginations about Vietnam he has his three photographs. The first one
represents a bull-like, tall American sergeant, a graduate of the University of Houston. He rapes a small Vietnamese girl, showing off his strength. Eugene Dawn gives the picture the title "Father Makes Merry with Children" (D: 13) which indicates his progressing mental degradation. The picture symbolizes the rape of every colony that is conquered by the colonizer, and is reflected in the directive of relentless colonialism Eugene Dawn employs in his project. "This system is illustrated in his personal life as well, when he snatches his child from its mother and penetrates its wholeness with a fruit knife" (O'Connell, 1988: 191-192) The second picture is of two Special Forces sergeants. They pose like hunters and hold by hair their "trophies" - severed heads of Vietnamese men which were taken from corpses or near corpses (D: 15). These severed heads are an emblem of the sergeants' schizophrenically isolated consciousness (Williams in O'Connell, 1988: 192) which allows them to be transformed from well-behaved, polite and "civilized" citizens of a western country into cruel savages pitilessly fulfilling the imperialistic directive. The soldiers most probably strive to keep the two completely different selves separate, but like Eugene Dawn cannot be entirely successful. The third photograph depicts a malnourished Viet-Cong POW who is kept in a tiger cage like a wild animal (D: 16). The photograph also symbolizes the detached cool intellect, which "when divorced from reality and emotional experience, looks out upon the world with a freezing camera eye, destroying the natural equilibrium between thought and feeling, reason and imagination" (Gillmer, 1984: 108).

The photographs - Eugene Dawn's Vietnam - gradually supersede his family and real life. They are his escape from his impotence, which is expressed in his detailed descriptions of mechanical love-making with his wife, in which he tries to blame her for his unsuccessful sexual life; and from the virile, bull-like supervisor Coetzee, who disapproves of the effects of his work and urges Dawn to stick to generally accepted conventions in his writing. Under his fixation on the photographs he begins to think of his home as "out of a La Jolla décor catalog [sic]" (D: 15), and Marilyn as "a wife out of a novel that waits for [him] in a library, in provincial America" (D: 15).
His project, which becomes a maniacal dealing with the problems of psychological warfare on the ground of myths and mythologies, is highly theoretical and reminds more of an academic treatise than a set of practical hints and instructions which it is required to be. It is of no immediate value, therefore the project is rejected by Coetzee, but Dawn is not going to resign from his line:

I must pull myself together. I believe in my work. I am my work. For a year now the Vietnam project has been the center of my existence. I do not intend to be cut off prematurely. I will have my say. For once I must be prepared to stand up for myself (D: 2).

The degradation of Dawn's personality is described by Marilyn and her friends as "psychic brutalization" (D: 9) but he disregards the remark and ridicules their belief "that everyone who approaches the innermost mechanism of the war suffers a vision of horror that depraves him" (D: 10). But the signs of the schizophrenia which slowly overpowers him, are visible in his elated description of the sub-basement of Harry S. Truman Library, whose battleship interior could be likened to the sinking submarine of Dawn's mind.

The microcephalic stack attendant who flirts with a girl in the blind spots between four security cameras, and is reported by Dawn as his friend, is a kind of omen implying the closure of Dawn's mind, because his own mind has already been closed by retardation. Moreover, there is no clear distinction between idiocy and madness, and Dawn's surname resembles the surname of Dr. Down, after whom mongolism was named as Down's Syndrome. Dawn enters the borderland between real life and his project, normality and psychosis. Then the image of his insanity is graphically depicted in the form of

a thing, a child not [Dawn's], once a baby squat and yellow whelmed in the dead center [sic] of [Dawn's] body, sucking [his] blood, growing by [Dawn's] waste, now, 1973, a hideous mongol boy who stretches his limbs inside [Dawn's] hollow bones, gnaws [Dawn's] liver with his smiling teeth, voids his bilious filth into [Dawn's] systems, and will not go (D: 39; my emphasis).
After this description Dawn exclaims: "I want an end to it! I want my deliverance!" (D: 39). But ironically his deliverance proves to be his end—he gradually becomes mad.

Finally, his project is handed in and it becomes clearer to Coetzee and Dawn’s co-workers that Dawn is insane. They avoid him, his sight and questions. On the other hand he becomes estranged from Marilyn, whom he ensnares with his mute, permeated with heavy breathing calls and his secret presence at windows of the house which used to be his home. He has no work, his photos and paper are taken from him, and in a desperate attempt he abducts his son, who appears for the first time in his thoughts and narrative. Dawn does not consider his son as a person but only as a thing which can be possessed and can give him a venue for pseudo-life activities. When the police try to take the boy away from Dawn he stabs him because he is of no more use for him.

The first novella, as Morphet remarks, "shows the trajectory, while the second one carries the fire power" (Morphet in O’Connell, 1988: 197). It is true to the extent that The Vietnam Project depicts mechanisms of destruction and submission of non-European cultures, which are even denied the right to call themselves cultures. For Eugene Dawn, Vietnam is only "the insolence of the people, the filth and flies and no doubt the stench" (D: 16). He is happy to stay away from the country. He prefers to deal with "the cool, odorless [sic] surface of the [photographs]" (D: 16). He finds himself in the borderland between cultures only mentally, repelled by any possibility of physical involvement. He does not want to understand the country and the people. The frozen sea of his thoughts that thaws and cracks inside him only early in the morning is not daylight. Paradoxically, it is the dusk of late evening that takes over his mind and consequently destroys it. And at the end he does not blame himself or Eurocentrism of his culture for his state but Vietnam: "There's no doubt that I am a sick man. Vietnam has cost me too much" (D: 32). His colonization urge is stifled and limited by the modern world: "[h]ad I lived two hundred years ago I would have had a continent to explore, to map, to open to colonization" (D: 31-32). These adolescent dreams of adventure and travel have not left the supposedly adult man, and the only
available space for them is the sub-basement of the Harry S. Truman Library, but it has already been dominated by Harry - the microcephalic - and the girl with whom he flirts. On the other hand, his office at the Kennedy Institute is controlled by the ubiquitous presence of Coetzee, who is the "Caliban of the island". So what is left for Dawn is his family, who stands up staunchly against his mental degradation and finally he can invade only his mind. But even this colony is endangered when he is closed up in an asylum:

I watch the earnest, honest eyes behind their young owl-glasses: they sincerely want to understand me, in the light of the case histories they read at home in their leather armchairs, with a pretty young wife in the kitchen and the kiddies asleep with their bunnies (D: 47).

He is a failed colonizer, unlike Jacobus Coetzee, who was given all these opportunities of which Dawn was deprived.

* * *

The other part of Dusklands is The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee. It is disguised as a genuine piece of Africana edited with an afterward by S. J. Coetzee, the father (Knox-Shaw, 1982: 27) of J. M. Coetzee who himself poses as its translator from Afrikaans (Dutch) into English and who added a preface. Only the appendix is bona-fide - The Deposition of Jacobus Coetzee, written down by a colonial official because the frontiersman was illiterate.

From this game of pretexts the beginnings of the master-slave relation emerge as depicted in the journeys of Jacobus Coetzee - one of J. M. Coetzee's (fictional) ancestors (Crewe, 1974: 91). He is an archetypal farmer-colonist, frontier settler. He is placed in a borderland between two cultures but his mind is still entrenched in Eurocentrism. The dynamics of conquest is invisible to him and in the old biblical mode of thinking he perceives the act of colonization as a justified filling of an "unused void". Like Eugene Dawn (in the case of Vietnam) he does not
try to understand the Khoisan and their culture, but considers them to be non-humans:

I might even have consented to die at the sacrificial stake: if the Hottentots had been a greater people, a people of ritual...But while it was conceivable that in a fit of boredom the Hottentots may club my brains out, it was unlikely that, lacking all religion and fortiori all ritual, they would subject me to ritual sacrifice (D: 88).

Furthermore Jacobus Coetzee, in his own words, denies the myth of unrefinedness of the Khoisan: "The only sure way to kill a bushman is to catch him in the open when your horse can run him down. On foot you haven't a chance, he knows all about guns, he keeps out of range" (D: 63). The ridiculousness of his opinions is revealed in another fragment:

The only [Bushman] I ever caught on foot was an old woman in the mountains: I found her in a hole in the rocks abandoned by her people, too old and sick to walk. For they aren't like us, they don't look after their aged, when you cannot keep up with the troop they put down a little food and water and abandon you to the animals (D: 63).

He does not seem to understand that nomadic people, to be nomadic, cannot be burdened with immobile members, and on the whole are westerners really so different? When members of their families are too old or too ill to look after themselves, they do not generally curb their activities to attend to their aged relatives' needs, even though Christianity demands it of them, they put such relatives aside in the "humanitarian" institutions of hospitals and old age homes, where, far away from their dearests, "carefully cared of", devoid almost of any say about themselves, the relatives wane quickly. But westerners do not have to see the aged relatives therefore they do not feel guilty and consider themselves good sons and daughters if after their relatives quickened death they organize for the deceased decent funerals and gravestones. And is Jacobus Coetzee as human as he thinks himself? He leaves his ill, faithful servant Jan Klawer to die at the edge of "the endless red rock desert" (D: 95), and though he promises to return as quickly as possible with help, he does not intend to keep his promise, as in the next passage after the scene of separation with Klawer he says:
I was alone. I had no Klawer to record. I exulted like a young man whose mother has just died. Here I was, free to initiate myself into the desert. I yodelled, I growled, I hissed, I screamed, I clucked, I whistled; I danced, I stamped, I grovelled, I spun; I sat on the earth, I kicked it, I hugged it, I clawed it. Every possible copula was enacted that could link the world to an elephant hunter armed with a bow and crazed with freedom after seventy days of watching eyes and listening ears. I composed and sang a little ditty:

Hottentot, Hottentot,
I am not a Hottentot (D: 95).

This excerpt also shows the loneliness of the master, which is a desired state, as the very distinction setting him aside from his servants and slaves. Therefore, deep in Namaqualand, he becomes furiously offended when the indigenous inhabitants do not respect him and are not interested in his mission (secured by bombastic prerogatives of the far away Dutch East India Company). Thinking in Eurocentric ways, he demands a reception and answers from the natives in European tradition. He seems not to perceive cultural differences. Whole venture into the uncharted interior on the psychic level becomes "a journey of the western consciousness out of the polity and into the void" (Crewe, 1974: 92). In this aspect The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee may be compared to Conrad's Heart of Darkness - "and it is not absurd to mention both in the same sentence" (Crewe, 1974: 92). However, it must be remembered that when Marlow strives to preserve an attachment to light while travelling to the inner station, Jacobus Coetzee reaffirms his alliance with darkness (Knox-Shaw, 1982: 31). This fact ironically stands in radical opposition to his role of a self-conscious European explorer who is to bring "light" of western civilisation to the Dark continent (Zamora, 1986: 5).

When he falls ill he is looked after by the village he happened to stumble across. But he is not grateful for this care and is only preoccupied by the deterioration of his control over his servants, who, coming from the same tribe, very quickly return to the ways of their ancestors and become free, happy men. Then upon his recuperation he mutilates a playful child by biting off the child's ear, which results in his immediate expulsion from the village because an egoistic individual, not following basic social rules, is an imminent danger to every community.
Deserted by his servants and feeling offended, he sets out for home, accompanied by Jan Klawer during the first part of the trip. His mind is preoccupied with thoughts of revenge though there is nothing to revenge. But he perceives himself as a god-like figure, revered and listened to:

On 12 October 1760 in the evening I reached the markers of my own land. Unseen I donned my clothes and buried my bow. Like God in a whirlwind I fell upon a lamb, an innocent fellow who had never seen his master and was thinking only of a good night’s sleep, and slit his throat ... Bearing the liver, my favourite cut, I burst open the door. I was back (D: 106; my emphasis).

Here he denies the concepts of humanity and culture, behaving like a brute, a very European icon of a savage, mistaking himself for God (Zamora, 1986:4). It is also highly symbolic that he - a Christian who has the missionary responsibility to further Gospel and boundaries of Christianity to encompass in it heathens, kills a lamb - the symbol of innocence and Jesus Christ.

It is not so surprising when one hears Jacobus Coetzee’s philosophy of violence and power which most visibly is pronounced in his broodings on the symbology of the gun:

The gun stands for the hope that there exists that which is other than oneself. The gun is our last defense against isolation within the travelling sphere. The gun is our mediator with the world and therefore our saviour. The tidings of the gun: such-and-such is outside, have no fear. The gun saves us from the fear that all life is within us. It does so by laying at our feet all the evidence we need of a dying and therefore a living world. I move through the wilderness with my gun at the shoulder of my eye and slay elephants, hippopotami, buffalo, lions, leopards, dogs, giraffes, antelope and buck of all descriptions, fowl of all descriptions, hares and snakes; I leave behind me a mountain of skin, bones, inedible gristle and excrement. All this is my dispersed pyramid to life. It is my life’s work, my incessant proclamation of the otherness of the dead and therefore the otherness of life (D: 84; my emphasis).

He does not know what mercy is. His life is actualized by death, which he can wreak because only death can assert his reality. He betrays all ideals of Christianity with his having equated the gun to the Saviour - Jesus Christ. His iron will of destruction makes him organize a military
expedition to punish, i.e. to kill his disobedient servants and to destroy the village with the help of the deftly used neighbouring tribe of Griquas. The author vividly shows the scene of destruction detailedly describing deaths of the servants and cruelties committed on children and other villagers. Jacobus Coetzee presides over the scene like Old Testament God, the ultimate judge, "explorer of the wilderness [who has] always thought [himself] an evangelist and endeavoured to bring to the heathen the gospel" (D: 101; my emphasis), the gospel of death and hatred. It is the only way for Jacobus Coetzee who cannot transcend his Eurocentrism to understand and empathize with non-European cultures. He has to destroy them to be able to replace the cultures with the "true savagery" (D: 104) of western civilisation (Knox-Shaw, 1982: 31). This radical commitment to savagery which keeps Jacobus Coetzee on the paths of "righteousness" (Knox-Shaw, 1982: 31) underlies his whole story, emphasizing the fact that it is a "tale of the individual savageness of modern civilisation pitted against the collective savageness of the untamed" (Barnett, 1976: 459). In the terminology of this dissertation, one could describe this tale as a colonial clash of western culture with its counterparts in the other regions of the world, which must perish only because whites have developed more effective technological means of extermination with which they manage to subjugate the cultures. And on the human level The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee "shows that past isn't much to believe in; the sad, brutal story of colonialism never is" (La Salle, 1980: 44).

The first book by J. M. Coetzee states in itself quite an interesting problem as to why the author thought it necessary to publish the two constituent novellas together. Superficially they have nothing to do with each other and although "they do share the theme of outsiders failing to understand the cultures of the people they wish to dominate" (La Salle, 1980: 42) one can claim that "they can stand as separate novellas, and [one] cannot detect enough unity to make them parts of a single whole" (La Salle, 1980: 42). But as a matter of fact even "[t]he common title - Dusklands - indicates the existence of a relationship between the two
nouvelles, a relationship as it turns out, of quite subtle resemblance and contrast" (Crewe, 1974: 91). Moreover, "[b]y publishing the two stories side by side, Coetzee has deliberately given a wider horizon to his South African subject. Left to its own, The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee would immediately have suggested yet another tale of African black-white confrontation" (Barnett, 1976: 460). And that is what J. M. Coetzee wants to avoid in his fiction - the poetics of particularities and local colour which could dangerously equal his writings with committed literature (which is always of ephemeral significance), in this way undermining the author's aim of attaining universality and objectivity in the subject matter of his books.

The predominant technique which J. M. Coetzee employs to reach the above-mentioned goal is allegory. The use of this trope is clearly visible in the arrangement of the novellas where "[t]he former is historically antecedent to the latter...[B]ut the stories are published in reverse-chronological sequence [to] remind us that we are looking at recto and verso of the same coin - the Western consciousness in its exploded and imploded condition" (Crewe, 1974: 94-95). Then, exploring the fields of external reference in Dusklands with the USA and South Africa in relation to Vietnam and the black man respectively, the author shows that the novellas are linked with the continuity of colonial (imperial) policies which formed "the rigid attitudes and the props needed to establish and maintain the master/servant relationship" (Toerien, 1978: 510). On the plot level the copula that joins the main protagonists of the two novellas is the gadgets which serve as the agency of power over human territory, detaching the characters from reality and humanity, and leaving them sterile in over-intellectualisation in the case of Eugene Dawn and in the thoughtless savagery in the case of Jacobus Coetzee. Only the pen and the camera of the first story are replaced, or work alongside the gun of the other story (Dovey, 1987: 27). So from a symbolical point of view one can note that "both characters cross the twilit boundary between the sun of masterhood and the darkness of slavery" (Haluska, 1987: NA). J. M. Coetzee concentrates on this crossing which in western culture had bred racism, colonialism, intolerance and contemptuous disregard for other cultures and which consequently led to bitter conflicts - clashes of the cultures; because in Dusklands "he wishes to trace the guilt of the white
man to its base, and indeed by widening his scope in the two novellas, to explore the guilt and duty of the individual in the western world" (Barnett, 1976: 60).
Magda, the heroine of the second novel by J. M. Coetzee, lives on a sheep farm in the middle of nowhere - in the Karoo, which is a harsh land forming a borderland between desert, mountains and the beginning of the interior. The harshness of this arid veld evokes another borderland which is even more basic and symbolic - the shadowy line between life - water and death - drought. Her father is like Jacobus Coetzee - a worthy descendant of colonizers, hunters and soldiers who in the first phase of the Cape Colony's history "discovered" and conquered new land, and eradicated the indigenous population, turning its remnants into slaves. She is different and does not seem to be a willing heir to this proud tradition. She is painfully lonely in the heart of the country which is barren, desolate and dry. Although she grew up with servants' children, spoke like one of them and listened to the stories of their blind old grandfather (HC: 7) she is different. Her otherness of which she was not aware as a child, takes over when she becomes an adolescent and an adult. In the process of socialization she acquires the concepts determining her place in the society as white and belonging to the class of masters. Slowly she is torn from the sweet illusions of childhood to face her growing loneliness and subsequent unhappiness.

There was nobody to teach her tenderness, femininity. Her mother most probably died at her birth, and what was left to her was her father with his obsessive "NO" (HC: 128). He is the king of "[t]he farm, the desert, the whole world [which] as far as horizon is a communion with itself" (HC: 49). This self-contained kingdom of Magda's father exists like a separate planet, without any contact with the outer world. Her father permeates her life, the farm and the discourse of In the Heart of the Country. This allegorical Caliban-like, God-like figure
creates absence. Wherever he goes he leaves absence behind him. The absence of himself above all - a presence so cold, so dark, so remote as to be itself an absence, a moving shadow casting a blight on the heart. And the absence of my mother. My father is the absence of my mother, her negative, her death (HC: 37).

Such a degree of loneliness and her dominating father who turns her into his personal servant, who cooks for him and helps him in his bath enclose Magda in a relation which resembles master-servant rather than a normal parent-child relationship. But more specifically it is a subjugation of the woman in the system of patriarchalism (Zamora, 1986: 9) which is also a kind of colonialism, to which Susan Barton of Foe is subjected too. This oppressive situation pushes Magda into the world of fantasies, her thoughts and diary, and eventually into solipsism. The fantasies which she expresses in reflexive fictions, which constitute the book, are her escape from the bleak reality (Haluska, 1987: NA); they also create another borderland in In the Heart of the Country with this reality in effect placing Magda somewhere in between which equals her later balancing between sanity and madness. The borderland is made even more profound in the first edition of the book by the introduction of the linguistic borderland between English and Afrikaans, because originally the dialogues were written in Afrikaans, disrupting the easy continuity of the English prose (Dodd, 1987: 153).

In this way Magda, living "a completely isolated and boring existence with her authoritarian father" (Maes-Jelinek, 1987: 89) becomes an embittered and tormented spinster (Paulin, 1977: 87) with nobody to love and marry. She "stays in her room reading or writing or fighting migraines" (HC: 1). She describes herself as emptiness which symbolizes her unfulfilled femininity:

I move through the world not as a knifeblade cutting the wind, or as a tower with eyes, like my father, but as a hole, a hole with a body draped around it, the two spindly legs hanging lose at the bottom and the two bony arms flapping at the sides and the big head lolling on top. I am a hole crying to be whole (HC: 41).

The passion which burns inside her she cannot offer to anybody. She grows older and her ugly body becomes even less desirable, useless.
Nobody wants it and it will not bear any children to make Magda a true woman. She stays "a miserable black virgin...[whose] story is [her] story, even if it is a dull black blind stupid miserable story ignorant of its own meanings and of all its many possible untapped happy variants" (HC: 5).

It is significant that in describing herself she often uses the colour black which in European culture symbolizes death, barrenness, mourning, and often is associated with the church. Moreover, it is also the colour of Magda's servants' skin. It is the first sign of her rebellion against her father and patriarchalism on the whole (which constitutes the book's gender clash); and of her inclination to enter the borderland between the worlds of masters and servants. Black also emphasizes her ugliness and is the colour of her daily clothes which she changes to white ones only at night.

Her unfulfilled love turns into a sterile, consuming, incestuous desire for her father which changes the normal parent-child relation into a diabolically unbalanced "love/hate relationship" (Maes-Jelinek, 1987: 89). Twice she describes herself labouring under her father's weight (HC: 10, 116) and desires to become his bed companion. In this way, unlike Eugene Dawn, who gave in to other colonizers, Magda - colonized by her father (Dodd, 1987: 160) - strives to colonize him with her jealousy which cannot stand any other woman in the life of her father. She is afraid that a day may come when her father will marry again. She expresses this fear in her fantasies:

The new wife. The new wife is a lazy big-boned voluptuous feline woman with a wide slow-smiling mouth. Her eyes are black and shrewd like two berries, two shrewed black berries. She is a big woman with fine wrists and long plump tapering fingers. She eats her food with relish. She sleeps eats and lazes. She sticks out her long red tongue and licks the sweet mutton-fat from her lips. 'Ah, I like that!' she says, and smiles and rolls her eyes. I watch her mouth mesmerized. Then she turns on me the wide smiling mouth and the shrewd black eyes. I cannot easily sustain her smile. We are not a happy family together (HC: 1-2).

The beautiful, sensual woman is an antithesis of Magda who is unattractive and hysterical (Roberts, 1980: 30). She states that "[t]he
colonies are full of girls like [me] but none, I think, is extreme as I" (HC: 1). Then in her imagination, which dangerously merges with reality\(^1\) she hacks to death her stepmother and father together in bed, symbolizing the clash of genders in *In the Heart of the Country* or more specifically the corrupt father-daughter relationship: "[a]ll kinds of people have done this before me, wives, sons, heirs, rivals. I am not alone." (HC: 11) She will not allow any other woman to enter her father’s life. He is her island, her colony. However, this relationship is doomed to be infertile: "[l]abouring under my father’s weight I struggle to give life to a world but seem to engender only death" (HC: 10).

But her fears are actualized on the day when their servant Hendrik brings home a girlish wife, Klein-Anna. With candy her father coaxes Hendrik’s wife to become his lover, and makes Hendrik agree to this arrangement by bribing him with brandy. It is important to note that here the author allegorically presents the origins of the South African coloureds, who were relentlessly exploited by many white farmers like Magda’s father (Morrison, 1977: 900). But coming back to the main consideration, Magda - "a black widow in mourning for the uses [she] was never put to" (HC: 40-41), metaphorically becomes a "real" widow when she shoots her father in bed with Klein-Anna. Then she leaves him to die without medical help. He has betrayed her and she is not going to forgive him. Now he will be hers forever: "Daddy, forgive me, I didn’t mean it, I loved you, that was why I did it." (HC: 80). But the melodramatic strain of the text is quite deceptive and superficial because as a matter of fact Magda’s killing of her father on the allegorical level represents an overthrow of the patriarch (Dodd, 1987: 159) and liberation from the fetters of the oppressive love-hate relationship.

Now she is free, and inherits the position of the master violating the rules because it was usually reserved for men. It is the end of her boredom and subservience, she tries to enter the cultural borderland which divided white masters and black servants. She crossed it long ago as a child playing with servants’ children, and now is free to do it once again when her father is gone.

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She strives to break old barriers and first coerces Hendrik and Klein-Anna to move to the house to live together with her (HC: 87). The distinction between servants and masters becomes more vague, however, as they will never be equal. It is so because Magda "can only continue, as she has done in her narration, to toy with the ideas of living closely and sensually with the brown people, while in reality retain[s] her [master-like] isolation" (Roberts, 1980: 30). Moreover, this relationship cannot be actualized because "she is treated with fear and suspicion by the 'freed' brown people" (Roberts, 1980: 30) who always were subjected to the will of white base. So Magda can give Klein-Anna clothes and even serve her a cup of tea (HC: 101), but it is impossible for Klein-Anna to call Magda otherwise than "miss" only (HC: 102). Hendrik becomes more bold, more equal towards Magda, but he still treats her as the mistress of the farm. Magda still gives him orders, and only when she has no money to pay him Hendrik sways away from his role of a servant. He becomes more independent and takes his money in the form of sheep of which he slaughters one every week. He even moves to the point of raping Magda who in her unfulfilment and desire provoked and encouraged him. On an allegorical plane this rape may symbolize the clash of black and white cultures and of feminine and masculine elements expressing Hendrik's answer to what he perceives as Magda's ("new baas's") attempts to re-colonize him and his wife. Dodd claims that it is Magda who is colonized by Hendrik like by her father (Dodd, 1987: 160) but this interpretation does not seem convincing.

The event of the rape is described differently four times (HC: 105-7) embodying all then fantasies of Magda with which she associated this act. But it also may have never happened: "Am I now a woman? Has this made me into a woman?" (HC: 107). Anyway, in the fabulations of In the Heart of the Country she enters into an uneasy ménage à trois with her foreman and his wife.

This arrangement completely reverses the old colonial custom of white men taking black women as lovers. Men were allowed to do it to "sow their wild oats" but it was prohibited for white women to take black
lovers. But now, when Magda's father is gone, she is free to do as she pleases. She changes roles in the pattern of this custom but it cannot change the basic meaning of this custom because in its essence it still remains colonial and is just a duplication of her father's relationship with his African mistress, an arrangement which she previously abhorred (Larson, 1978: 245). Magda's desires to free herself from the fetters of colonialism, to merge with the servants, to transcend the barrier of race, class, morality and culture remain unsatisfied because in lieu of her half-hearted attempts "[s]he cannot elude the basic pattern of master/slave relationship" (Haluska, 1987: NA).

After some unspecified period of time the absence of the old baas becomes conspicuous and even the neighbours appear for the first time in the book to discuss men's business with her father. Magda does not realize that when the body of her father is discovered the first who are going to be accused of this murder will not be she but the servants, just because they are black and she is white. She does not want to understand the very fact and simple pattern of colonial domination, egoistically engrossed in her sexual desire which is satisfied by Hendrik almost every night. She does not seem to note any impending danger over the lives of Hendrik and Klein-Anna although it was she who created it with her crime of parricide. When Hendrik decides to leave she tries all kinds of words and statements to keep him back. She even says: "I am not simply one of the whites, I am I! I am I, not a people. Why have I to pay for other people's sins?" (HC: 118). She tries to separate herself from the burden of whiteness which destroying her only hope of love, but it is only words and wishful thinking, because status and tradition do not die easily. She cannot defeat them, being just an ageing, over-intellectualised spinster raising a lonely rebellion against male domination and colonialism in the very heart of patriarchal land. She is doomed to lose this battle. And when Klein-Anna states "Miss is the Miss" she is reducing Magda's identity to that of master to the exclusion of everything else, stripping her still further of the personal identity she craves" (O'Connell, 1988: 217).
Eventually nothing has changed, only Magda has become known among local people as "the witch of Agterplaas" (HC: 118). In the last section of the book she descends into the world of fantasies and fruitless ruminations, cutting back her life needs to bare existence and sexual desire, entering the uneasy borderland between the married and unmarried - she does not have enough strength to be a spinster and on the other hand nobody wants her as a wife. This unhappy character, seeking personal fulfilment, begins to resemble the main protagonist of *Life and Times of Michael K.* who to a large extent is a male counterpart of Magda the major difference between them is that he is not hysterical and his razor-sharp perception of reality is not obscured by abstraction. He was spared the malaise of intellectuals by his mental under-development.

Magda limits her life to bare sustenance:

> I live on pumpkin and mealie-porridge. I have put away nothing for the hard days ahead. God will provide for his own; and if I am not one of his own, it were as well as I should perish (HC: 120).

But she is not going to perish: "I must face my demons alone, a grown woman, a woman of the world" (HC: 123). However, many years pass and she becomes the "old miss" (HC: 125). The only man she once again tries to seduce in a crude way is a twelve-year-old boy who escapes at the sight of her explicitly expressed proposition: "I made a circle of the thumb and first finger of my left hand and plunged the first finger of my right hand back and forth through it" (HC: 125). Afterward, she retreats into language (i.e. fantasies) which constitutes for her a substitute for action and a "a unique but tragically aborted opportunity to transform her [and blacks'] existence through a new vision" (Maes-Jelinek, 1987: 90) of postcolonial times. She escapes into the madness of her talks in Spanish (in reality it is Esperanto) (Dovey, 1988: 174) which more fully emphasizes the oneiric quality of the borderland between fantasies and real life, in which she chose to live) with sky gods but, as she emphasizes at the beginning of the book, they are her "monologue of the self [which] is a maze of words" (HC: 8). Her solipsism, which was earlier revealed in the conviction of herself as God, the centre of the universe: "If for a moment I were to lose grip on the world, it would fall apart" (HC: 72), is
led to its logical end at the in the last part of the book when she portrays herself as: "a crazy old queen in the middle of nowhere" (HC: 138).

The nowhere is the borderland between the cultures of black servants and white masters which she did not manage to unite in her life because of her egoism and weakness. Her half-hearted attempt was aimed only at satisfying her sexual drive and marooned her on the lonely island of her inner space, separated from the reality by the ocean of time. She is forgotten. She is in limbo, suspended between the planets of black and white worlds. She belongs to none of them, and the messages she sends to sky gods are messages from her to her, and fill the time before Magda's death.

This novel was not received extensively and was issued in paperback only after the publication of Waiting for the Barbarians, which proved that this author was economically viable (Dodd, 1987: 153). Moreover, the difficult allegorical language must have discouraged many critics who agree though that In the Heart of the Country is a novel about South Africa and also claim that there is "little plot, less purpose and much confusion" (Anon., 1977: 73) in it. I can subscribe to all those but the accusation that the novel is of little purpose because problems of racism, the impact of colonialism (Watson, 1987: 373) and cross-cultural relations as for instance friendship and love (Morrison, 1977: 900) are of vital significance for South Africa and the world. And the sparseness of plot and apparent confusion of narration are just intended techniques of the trope of modern allegory with which the author can objectively explore and diagnose the situation of South Africa filtering his opinions through the mind of Magda. In this way he can also write genuinely universal literature of profound insights. It is therefore quite surprising that some critics interpret this novel as a picture of South Africa as static and unchanging, interested only in preserving white domination (Paulin, 1977: 89). It is quite clear that the above-mentioned "confusion of narration" and other techniques of very dynamic in itself modern allegory which is employed in this book do not allow such highly contradictory reading abusing the very spirit of the novel which according to me presents South Africa in the dynamic state of confusion with all its promises and dangers.
NOTE

1. Here the author introduces the unsolvable question: "if reality is real", which torments everybody's mind. In this way he uses the postmodernist technique of fabulation which allows him to describe two mutually exclusive events without tampering with the rules of logic. Moreover, thanks to this technique he can also make the reader be always aware of the fictionality of his narrative which is one of the most important goals of postmodernism, and props which can facilitate fathoming of the above-mentioned question.
What are we waiting for all crowded in the forum?
The Barbarians are to arrive today.

* * *

Why should all this uneasiness begin all of sudden,
And confusion. How serious people's faces have become.
Why are all the streets and squares emptying so quickly,
And everybody turning home again so full of thought?
   Because night has fallen and the Barbarians have not come.
And some people have arrived from the frontier;
   They said there are no Barbarians any more.

And now what will become of us without Barbarians?—
Those people were some sort of solution.”
(Cavafy in Dovey, 1988: 421-2)

The excerpt from the Greek poet Cavafy's poem under the same title as the novel of J. M. Coetzee introduces us to the intertextual atmosphere of the two literary pieces. They are treatises on waiting, permeated with the question of change and lasting, opposing an empire and barbarians. The poem and the novel question our distinction between civilization and barbarism probing, in the case of Coetzee's novel, into the issue of colonialism, mastery and servitude (Harvey, 1981: 4).

The book is not placed in specific settings in order not to particularise the message, and subsequently make it less profound. In this way the message becomes universal and can show problems of imperialism objectively without sympathising with one of the sides. The universalism of the book is also strengthened by the clear allegorical mode of dealing with the subject mixing time and epochs. For instance, some figures from the novel are unmistakeably contemporary, like Colonel Joll or Warrant
Officer Mandel from the Third Bureau, which one immediately associates with the KGB, the Third Reich, the Gestapo and totalitarianism on the whole (Lewis, 1980: 1270; Anon., 1980: 14). On the other hand the soldiers who feature in this novel remind one of mediaeval chivalry or the early Renaissance, clad in suits of armour and fighting with swords. The author comments on this technique: "I wanted to create characters and settings that belong to no contemporary situations" (Coetzee in Smolowe, 1982: 55). However, he believes that this book is also relevant for his country: "But people who know South Africa will probably pick up allusions" (Coetzee in Smolowe, 1982: 55).

*Waiting for the Barbarians* is a story of the aged Magistrate of a small, unimportant border town, flung far away from the capitol of the unnamed, symbolic Empire. For twenty years he has been administering this town in a mode of benevolent paternalism. He did not even build cells and punishment took the form of compulsory labour or a fine. The only change he undertook was moving shabby stalls from the centre to the outskirts of the town, for the sake of decency. The Magistrate often uses the word "decent" explaining with this concept his actions and the basis of his moral code (Du Plessis, 1981: 80). But strangely enough, despite his paternalism, there are signs of sloppy administration and he himself reveals his weakness when he quotes the overheard opinion of his soldiers on his kitchen maids: "From the kitchen to the Magistrate's bed is sixteen easy steps" (WB: 32).

For more than two decades he has been an independent ruler of the place and retained an easy *status quo* between his outpost and the barbarians in this frontier borderland, a "cultural division" (Rich, 1984: 384) between imperial and "barbarian" civilisations. He does not want any change of this easy-going routine. But everything is changed by the arrival of Colonel Joll. Times are changing and even the Magistrate notices it: "The Third Bureau is the most important division of the Civil Guard nowadays" (WB: 2). The change in polices is nigh. The "overheated" empire reaches the point of dissolution, crumbling (Haluska, 1987: NA) like the Spanish Empire at the beginning of the 19th century, the British Empire in the first half of the 20th century and now, in the 1990s, the Soviet Empire.
Roberts describes the Magistrate as both liberal and radical. He has never openly challenged the rightness of the Empire's settlements on land owned by the barbarians, but neither has he imagined that the Empire would be eternal. He has never expected the use of inhuman methods, and he eventually comes to realise that the Empire, asserting itself, destroys the ordinary rhythms of life (O'Connell, 1988: 230-1).

Then his role becomes clear for him:

For I was not, as I liked to think, the indulgent pleasureloving opposite of the cold rigid Colonel. I was the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy, he the truth that Empire tells when harsh winds blow. Two sides of imperial rule, no more, no less (WB: 135).

The Empire is an "enemy of life,...abstraction that men strive for and serve" (Harvey, 1981: 7) perpetuates itself by extension of its control which becomes ubiquitous, intervening into every aspect of the subjects' lives like the Gestapo in the Nazi Germany, the notorious KGB in the USSR, and to a lesser extent the CIA under Hoover and in the McCarthy years.

This other side of imperial rule is epitomized in the person of Colonel Joll whose arrival heralds the beginning of the novel and destroys the calmness of the frontier town. The Magistrate is one of the "old men" (WB: 24) of the Empire placed at the frontier, in the borderland between two cultures, two different ways of life; he tries to understand the barbarians or at least to avoid any conflict with them. What he promotes is the philosophy of peaceful coexistence. But peaceful coexistence does not lie in the nature of empires, which to exist have to expand their rule over new lands, subjects, riches, and always to find new frontiers to be able to invest the energy of their citizens and to multiply their fortunes. Otherwise, if empires have no more lands and peoples to conquer, they are overpowered by adversaries or lost momentum; they stagnate and collapse under the pressure of corruption, overgrown bureaucracies, and the power they accumulated during centuries and which now cannot be used externally to conquer and colonize new territories.
The Magistrate who treats the frontier as a borderland, betrays the *modus vivendi* of the Empire, unlike Colonel Joll, who is one of the "new men...the ones who believe in fresh starts, new chapters, clean pages" (WB: 24), and epitomizes a colonizer, adventurer who treats the frontier as a line which has to be pushed forward. He is energetic, disciplined and effective in conducting his actions, only he does not seem to perceive the decline of the Empire (Haluska, 1987: NA) obsessed with the non-existent danger of barbarian invasion induced by some unconfirmed stories circulating in the capital about unrest among the barbarians, and that the north and the west may be uniting (WB: 123). This fear is caused by "[w]hite settler political ideology [which] has traditionally seen itself as the embodiment of some form of 'civilization' against the threatened 'barbarism' of [non-European] majority rule" (Rich, 1984: 365). This ideology causes clashes between western and non-European civilisations.

Colonel Joll's blindness, who wishes to expand the Empire in the days of its collapse, is symbolised by his sunglasses, "such a novelty in this outpost [that they] imply the absence of humanism, his spiritual blindness, the lack behind the 'mystery of dark shields hiding healthy eyes'" (O'Connell, 1988: 231). He came there to seek the truth, to uncover the barbarians' plot to invade the Empire, and to crush it with the whole might of imperial power which wanes. He is one of "guardians of the state, specialists in the obscurer motions of sedition, devotees of truth, doctors of investigation" (WB: 9) in the best Nazi and communist tradition. "In his quest for truth he is tireless" (WB: 22) and sets out into the steppe to capture enough prisoners to get out from them truth with the help of sophisticated tortures, because he reasons that "[p]ain is truth; all else is subject to doubt" (WB: 5). In his methods and beliefs he is closest to the staunch missionaries of Eurocentrism such as Eugene Dawn, Jacobus Coetzee (Wood, 1984: 132-3) or Magda's father.

The Magistrate's dislike of Colonel Joll turns into an open conflict when he decides to see the tortured prisoners after Joll's first interrogation when he received a laconic briefing on a prisoner's death (WB: 6) and later after the series of interrogations at the end of which Joll returned to the capital with a report. Due to these visits the Magistrate became
personally involved, although first he just intended to assist Colonel Joll to attain "peace at any price" (WB: 14) even if that price should be a compromise with the "barbarians" from the capital. "[He] never wished to be drawn into this" (WB: 8) and what he only hoped for was a quiet life in quiet times which could merit him "three lines of small print in the imperial gazette" (WB: 8) when he passed away. However, "witnessing this barbarism of the civilized" (Schott, 1982: 2) the Magistrate who by nature is humane must therefore deny the Colonel's authority" (Wood, 1984: 134). This involvement of the Magistrate, whom one can now describe as a "liberal humanist" (Wood, 1984: 129), opens the most important part of the book when after release of the prisoners he gives work to a barbarian girl who was left behind. She only has peripheral vision as a result of torture. She becomes the Magistrate's way to katharsis and to solution of his situation which trapped him in the borderland between barbarian victims and imperial victimisers (Anon., 1980: 14) confining him to the ambiguous nobody's land where he seeks for "a third ethical position apart from the strictly-defined roles of masterhood and slavery" (Haluska, 1987: NA). Because of his ever deeper involvement with the girl he goes away from the Empire while at the same time he cannot cross the line of accepting barbarian ways which he does not understand like the signs on the poplar slips created by distant ancestors of the barbarians.

The girl whom he takes home suffers from ankle injuries besides impaired sight. The Magistrate settles to the daily routine of washing and rubbing her body. First, in a sacramental gesture, he washes her feet. He does it because he may feel some remorse that he did not dare to oppose the cruel Colonel or rather because he may still be obsessed with the ideal of a quiet life and wants to wash down traces of tortures from the girl’s body, and like Pontius Pilate, guilt from his hands. Despite his frantic effort this procedure does not calm him down. He bathes and sleeps with the girl and stroking her body while in bed he waits "for a flush of blood that never truly comes" (WB: 33). He only strives to decipher and understand the marks on the girl's body because he thinks that before that he cannot let go of her. However, his "studies" of her torture signs are fruitless and do not bring any results like the poplar slips. He cannot understand her since he does not offer her any human feeling. His attempts to transcend
his past are purely for history's sake, to satisfy his scholarly curiosity. He cannot perceive her as a person, a separate human being but only as a representative of the barbarians. It is reflected in the Magistrate's obsessive dreams in which he cannot visualize her face (WB: 9-10,37). In next dream, at last he manages to see her face of "a smiling child, the light sparkling on her teeth and glancing from her jet-black eyes" (WB: 53). She is in the state of innocence in which she must have been before the tortures.

Earlier, when the Magistrate bought her a little silver-fox cub she remarked that "[a]nimals belong outdoors" (WB: 34), and now after the third dream the Magistrate realises that his impotence and perverted sexual desire (or rather lack of it) hurt her:

'You visit other girls', she whispers. 'You think I do not know?'..."Do you also treat them like this?" she whispers, and starts to sob (WB: 55).

He decides to return her to her people and sets out West, to the steppe "[t]o repair some of the damage the department wrought by the forays of the bureau...and to restore some of the goodwill that previously existed" (WB: 57) as he states in the document to the provincial governor. "Having crossed 'the limits of the Empire' the Magistrate...has also crossed a breakpoint in his acceptance of the imperial ethic" (Rich, 1984: 383) and truly entered the cultural borderland between the Empire and barbarians.

No more has he to assert his distance from Colonel Joll not to suffer for his crimes (WB: 44). Now he makes the choice to betray the totalitarian Empire openly and "becomes an enemy of [it]" (Burgess, 1982: 88). Upon his return he is duly detained and interrogated by the Warrant Officer who had arrived with soldiers in meantime, to prepare "the promised campaign against the barbarians" (WB: 76). The Magistrate is accused of having "been treasonously consorting with the enemy" (WB: 77) and on hearing these words he is elated:

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! (WB: 78).
When he has decided to confront the Warrant Officer - although he knows "they will use the law against [him] as far as it serves them, then they will turn to other methods. That is the bureau's way" (WB: 84) - another dream of the beggar girl, once more with her monstrous tortured feet captures the essence of the novel:

I enter the barracks gateway and face a yard as endless as the desert. There is no hope of reaching the other side, but I plod on, carrying the girl, the only key I have to the labyrinth, her head nodding against my shoulder, her dead feet dropping on the other side (WB: 87).

Finally, he opposes Colonel Joll who returned "after his months of campaigning...leaner and darker" (WB: 113) but triumphant with another group of docile and resigned barbarian prisoners. In the presence of the townspeople greeting him upon his arrival the Magistrate dares to expose his inhumanity. Severely beaten he has another assertive dream, in his cell, in which the girl - in a sacramental gesture similar to his washing her feet - offers him a loaf of bread. But this gesture does not belong to "barbarian" culture but to the symbols of the imperial consciousness which are derived from the Judeo-Christian tradition. So "[e]ven in renouncing the Empire, the Magistrate [more or less consciously] realizes that he is still dominated by its own ethic" (Rich, 1984: 385).

When the poplar slips are found in the chest of the Magistrate, he is brought before Joll to account for them. The Magistrate "translates" them as a collection of histories of the old empire, in this way, indirectly accusing the Empire of cruelty and corruption:

[together they [the slips] can be read as a domestic journal, or they can be read as a plan of war, or they can be turned on their sides and read as a history of the last years of the Empire, - the old Empire, I mean" (WB: 112).

The covert accusation is followed by the Magistrate's open attack of Colonel Joll: "'You are an obscene torturer! You deserve to hang!' 'Thus speaks the judge, the One Just Man,' he murmurs" (WB: 114). The Magistrate has no clear right to do so because he is just the other side of the coin of imperial rule (Wood, 1984: 134-35) embodied in the person of
Joll, and during the long years of his administration he took part himself in the decline of the Empire and strengthening of its follies. Although now he devotes himself to the ideals of civil disobedience, anyway, his opposition is conducted within the boundaries of the imperial system and (European) culture which he cannot transcend despite his attempts. He could not understand the poplar script and the girl whom he began to see as a human being only in that dream where she offers him a loaf of bread. But this gesture is purely Christian, western-like and indicates that the Magistrate does not wish to accept the barbarian culture which in the matter of fact is alien and unintelligible to him:

Do I really look forward to the triumph of the barbarian way: intellectual torpor, slovenliness, tolerance of disease and death? If we were to disappear would the barbarians spend their afternoons excavating our ruins? Would they preserve our census rolls and our grain-merchants' ledgers in glass cases, or devote themselves to deciphering the script of our love-letters? (WB: 52)

And though, as a modern "liberal humanist" (Wood, 1984: 129) he feels obliged to oppose cruelty and the inhumanity of the methods of the Third Bureau (which having imposed the state of emergency, wrested power from the hands of civilians) what he truly dreams of is "to live out my life in ease in a familiar world, to die in my own bed and to be followed to the grave by old friends" (WB: 75). And even when the Magistrate is prosecuted he more resembles the crucified Christ than someone else. He suffers not for the cause of the barbarians but rather for the people of his town and for the Empire in its prolonged agony "as much as the Colonel...resisting the changes necessary to life's creative continuation" (Wood, 1984: 138). In these allegorical provenances his attachment to western culture also is emphasized stressing the fact that he can only sympathize with the barbarian culture without embracing its lifestyle and tradition.

The barbarians come unseen at night to steal sheep and flood the fields. The second party under Colonel Joll's command sets out to fight the barbarians, and does not return for a long time. The townspeople are overcome by fear and some of them leave for "the Old Country" (WB: 122). The ones who stay are oppressed by the demoralized soldiers who the Colonel installed to take care of the town. They rob, steal and rape,
embracing the imperial concepts of savagery and barbarism in their behaviour. The Magistrate, who experienced the elusive Kafkaesque terror (Anon., 1980:14) at the hands of the Third Bureau, is inexplicably released from his cell by Mandel who tells him to "go and die somewhere" (WB: 126). Finally the Warrant Officer retreats with his troops and the Magistrate returns to his old functions. After some time, at night the decimated expedition of Colonel Joll arrives: "We froze in the mountains! We starved in the desert! Why did no one tell us it would be like that? We were not beaten - they led us out into the desert and then they vanished!" (WB: 147). Subsequently they abandon the town in a rush.

Ironically, "no decisive encounter takes place...[with] the elusive enemy" (Clemons, 1982: 55). There was no conflict or clash of cultures actualized in the imperial (western) understanding of this word because the barbarians are not like the Empire itself whose fears that the barbarians can come are a reflection of its own state of decline (Haluska, 1987: NA):

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 the fires to the curtains, raping his daughters (WB: 8).

What was left is waiting, waiting for the barbarians who are not going to come because the barbarians are within us all. The "real" barbarians seem "to be humanly better equipped than their 'civilized' imperial counterparts" (Wood, 1984: 132).

The dying Empire (Haluska, 1987: NA) begins to collapse and the frontier rapidly implodes, leaving behind the townspeople to themselves. The coming confusion of the process marks the borderland between colonial (imperial) and postcolonial times, the known and the unknown. In this bleak picture children are oblivious of the problems of adults, and at the end of the novel they are building what the Magistrate describes as "not a bad snowman" (WB: 156). O'Connell argues that children project hope in this book (O'Connell, 1988: 245) but she does not mention that the snowman does not have arms, is incomplete, like children who still
cannot understand the state of minds of their parents, and the Magistrate who feels stupid, "like a man who lost his way long ago but presses on along a road that may lead nowhere" (WB:156). The children are simply not able to perceive the hopelessness of their situation. And the symbol of a snowman is even clearer in its negative connotations for a Polish speaker, since in that language the word snowman - "balwan" - denotes a stupid person in the colloquial register. There is a ray of hope, however, in this sea of postcolonial despair. This hope is symbolized by the stance of the Magistrate whose failure to find "a third ethical position apart from the strictly-defined roles of masterhood and slavery, nevertheless, represents a triumph of the striving human spirit" (Haluska, 1987: NA).

At the end of this analysis of the problems of borderland and clash of cultures in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* one may ask what meaning the book has for everyday reality. The Marxist/leftist reviewers show a rather lukewarm reception of this novel. The Saspu *National* review of *Waiting for the Barbarians* concludes:

> As the CNA award shows, this is a book which will be enthusiastically assimilated into the very system it (vaguely) condemns. In the end it is not a disturbing book, and ultimately it challenges nothing. Coetzee is a fine writer. It's a pity he isn't a bolder one (Anon. *in* du Plessis, 1981: 77).

Vaughan also supports this stand in more developed theoretical terminology, complaining about the absence of industrial labour and the tenuously depicted relations between the imperialists and the barbarians, which do not suggest any material interests being involved in the book, and which thus indicates J. M. Coetzee's methodological idealism, which "prevents the possibility of a fiction of materialist realism, a fiction that understands the determination of the present by the past" (Vaughan *in* Watson, 1986: 376).

One can see an intoxication of the reviewers with Marxist rhetoric, which firstly does not allow them to understand that one cannot reduce the richness of human and interhuman experience to just materialism and that J. M. Coetzee is writing a type of fiction which is not realism (Watson, 1986: 377). Writing such a kind of fiction the author wants to
avoid the one-dimensionality of committed literature, which would probably please the former reviewer, and strives to reflect the whole spectrum of multi-faceted human experience. To attain this degree of universality, Coetzee employs the versatile trope of allegory, exploring in general "how empires seek to rationalize and justify themselves" (Rich, 1984: 382), "the ambiguities of civilization and barbarism" (Zamora, 1986: 6), "the paranoia that at once fosters and undermines the ambitions of imperialism" (Lasdun, 1984: 69), "war and peace, life and death, justice, torture and cruelty, conscience, political policy, history and time,... 'subject races', survival, sex, love and human loneliness [etc.]. All this in 156 pages!" (Harvey, 1981: 4). In this way, Waiting for the Barbarians transcends the narrow limits of contemporaneity, South Africa or ideology. So the novel is not a fable of "recent events in Southern Africa...[which] can be read either as a retrospective account of the end of empire in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, or as a covert prophecy for the future of South Africa itself" (Shrimpton, 1980: 30). "J. M. Coetzee is too intelligent a novelist to cater for moralistic voyeurs" (Lewis, 1980: 1270), therefore, Waiting for the Barbarians "is not about anywhere and hence it is about everywhere" (Burgess, 1982: 88), and beneath the surface of the text, having read the book, one realizes that "it is timeless, spaceless, nameless and universal" (Anon., 1980: 14). Thus J. M. Coetzee "produced a remarkable book which works at varying levels of abstraction" (Abelman, 1980: 21), and this quality causes the novel to have "more significance than a thousand polemical pamphlets" (Seymour-Smith, 1981: 247).

Recapitulating it must be noted that the so profound effect of universality, which the author attained in this novel, is the direct effect of his extensive use of the trope of allegory in Waiting for the Barbarians. Allegory permeates the whole book with allusions to Christ, Christianity and the Judeo-Christian tradition, however, without supressing the role and heritage of the barbarians. This balance is vital for understanding the nature of cultural borderlands, and combined with the highly allegorical character of the novel makes Waiting for the Barbarians the so far profoundest literary achievement of J. M. Coetzee.
The fourth novel by J. M. Coetzee differs from his previous books which were strongly allegorical and written in the first person singular (Zamora, 1986: 11). In *Life and Times of Michael K* the author presents a South Africa of near future in the throes of a civil war which has frighteningly changed it into a third-world country (Lehmann-Haupt, 1983: C22). It is never mentioned who the hostile sides are but taking into consideration the present political situation in this country one may quickly deduce that it must be a conflict of white masters against the non-white underprivileged, the "have-nots" which at another level can be defined as a clash of western and indigenous cultures (Müller, 1985: 41). Life in the novel is restricted by permits and curfews, and has disintegrated into the world of "careless violence, packed buses, food queues, arrogant shopkeepers, thieves and beggars, sirens" (MK: 10). It seems as if inflamed black townships have exploded setting the whole country on fire. The third world swallowed the first world and the situation resembles Africa north of the Limpopo in the days of decolonization, before whites managed to leave the countries for their metropolises. Tragically enough, white South Africans' metropolis is their own country, and the majority of them do not have the alternative of being able to leave the country whenever they wish.

The book is a detached account by an omniscient narrator (O'Connell, 1988: 245), a story of Michael K, a hare-lipped, slow-witted person unloved by his mother and without any known father. His childhood, after a brief trial stay in a preparatory school, is spent under the protection of Huis Norenius in Faure. The memories of this institution for retarded children where he learned "elements of reading, writing, counting, sweeping, scrubbing, bedmaking, dishwashing, basketweaving,
woodwork and digging" (MK: 4) haunted him for all his life: "my father was Huis Norenius. My father was the list of rules on the door of the dormitory, the twenty-one rules of which the first was "There will be silence in the dormitories at all times" (MK: 143).

The novel is Michael K’s journey through South Africa which has become one big borderland beset with the war of milling cultures, races and ideologies. The land is nobody’s because nobody has time for it any more. People are fleeing, fighting, robbing and striving to survive. Michael K seems to refuse to take part in this danse macabre, he simply does not notice the whole commotion. His retarded mind allows him to stay away from the madness of the world though physically he is in the middle of it. His retardation is also a kind of borderland between reality and escapism, between sanity and madness. This borderland serves as an Ivory Tower to Michael K, which allows him to stay morally untouched by the civil war. On the other hand, however, it must be noted that such a borderland is quite delusive and can become a quick downslide into madness as in the case of Eugene Dawn in Dusklands. Besides his retardation his physical blemish must also contribute to his isolation from society (Milne, 1984: 9) letting him concentrate on his only love - gardening. This activity is his philosophy, religion and sense of life, and above all way of life. Gardening is the only reassuring thing: “the pineapples don’t know there is a war on. Food keeps growing” (MK: 21).

For some time his mother has been ailing from dropsy and when she is discharged from hospital the elderly couple where she worked as a servant move away after a night of looting. Michael K, with his mother, takes over the flat. Her health wanes and she begins thinking about Prince Albert where she was born and spent her youth. He decides to take her there but after having battled with the bureaucracy for appropriate permits he gives up the idea of travelling by train. He steals a wheelbarrow from the Parks and Gardens where he worked and makes it into a kind of carriage for his mother. During a painfully slow journey his mother becomes so ill that already in Stellenbosch he transports her to hospital where she dies and is cremated, and only the ashes are left for Michael K.
After a longer stay in Stellenbosch he moves on and is caught by soldiers to join a railway gang from which he escapes and goes into veld where he meets the only man in the book who invites Michael K to his home and helps him. The credo of this man: "[p]eople must help each other, that's what I believe" (MK: 65) is not unlike the principle of common decency espoused by the Magistrate from Waiting for the Barbarians. The man looks after him for several days and facilitates his trip to Prince Albert.

When finally Michael K arrives in Prince Albert there are no more such farmers as Mr Vosloo or Mr Visser whom his mother had remembered. Michael K is directed to the abandoned farm of the Visagies. Once again he is alone, far from people and war, free to starve and garden. He plants some pumpkin and waits for it to grow. Before that "[t]he time came to return his mother to the earth" (MK: 80) so he buries her ashes, turning the soil he is going to use into his own, consecrating it with the remains of his mother. He begins his mystic closeness with the earth, awaiting fruit it is to bear. He cares for his mother and for the earth, and now he knows that they come to the same end (Ozick, 1983: 1). "He is of the earth" (Müller, 1985: 42). Though hungry and delirious he is happy but it does not last long. Life does not want to forget about him. One day Mr Visagie’s grandson, who has deserted from the army, comes to the farm to hide there. When he meets Michael K he imposes on him a new identity, that of his grandparents’ servant, and treats him accordingly despite the fact that the civil war which is on is most probably to level inequalities among races. But the old lingers long and one is be appalled to learn as Michael K tells Visagie’s grandson that he earns two rands a week (MK: 86), thereby depicting his low status in the South African white-dominated society. It is only camouflage Michael K wears to survive and be able to escape the colonization which other people, like the grandson, want to impose on him. It is ironic that Visagie’s grandson, who asks Michael K to undertake a dangerous trip to the town for supplies, tries to appeal to him with the cliche: “Michael I am speaking to you as one human being to another” (MK: 80). Michael K agrees to the arrangements, only to escape from this man who like a king of this island - farm, wants Michael K to belong to him, to be his docile Friday (Abley, 1984: 49) like this one
colonized by Robinson Cruso in *Foe*, to perpetuate the master-slave relationship whose intolerable burdens (Watson, 1986: 378) are besetting and destroying the country.

He goes to the Swarteberg preoccupied with thoughts about the pumpkin he had to leave to die. He does not think of the terminal civil war symbolic of "mankind's lust for self-destruction" (Blake, 1984: 56), he does not feel any need to join rulers or rebels - the former trample the vines in his garden the latter blow up the pump (Ozick, 1983: 28). "The wild and merciless power of inanity" (Ozick, 1983: 28) of their acts makes Michael K suffer so none of these two sides can be a kind of solution for him. In this game they are victimizers and he is one of the victimized, closed up in the borderland of pain (Gornick, 1984: 40) between the colonial (apartheid) and postcolonial (post-apartheid) times. In this way his isolation from the society, reinforced by his harelip, causes him to be intimate with the earth and its life, and in close harmony with its rhythms (Milne, 1984: 9) which is what helps him transcend the bleak reality, attain "a third ethical position apart from the strictly-defined roles of masterhood and slavery" (Haluska, 1987: NA) which is actualized in the idea of gardening (Gordimer, 1984: 6), the symbol of Michaël K's humanity. It is quite a feat on the protagonist's part which sets him apart from the neurotic, over-intellectualised indecisiveness of the Magistrate of *Waiting for the Barbarians* who never manages to reach any "third ethical position" (Haluska, 1987: NA). On the other hand, such a deliberate turning of his back on political events is thereby a political decision because there is no escaping it (Anon., 1987: 13) as it is impossible to escape from history... [and t]he forces around him that shape his destiny" (Abley, 1984: 49).

Up in the mountains, on the brink of death from hunger, Michael K is not unlike Jacobus Coetzee playing the game of a Zeno beetle which can never die always being alive in one second, one fourth, one thirty-ninth etc. A part of it, small and infinitely minute as it can be, is still alive. Michael K "thought himself as a termite boring its way through a rock. There seemed nothing to do but live" (MK: 90). From this point of view he is partially dead throughout the whole novel but not like Jacobus
Coetzee devoting his life (or rather what was left from it) to the sake of colonization; he wants to be free at any price. "He becomes a condemnation not only of the racist nature of the South African political system [of apartheid], but of oppression of the individual, regardless of colour or race" (O'Connell, 1988: 247). Living in the borderland between life and starvation death for the sake of personal freedom, humanity and his "third ethical position" (Haluska, 1987: NA), Michael K suffers "utter privation [which] leaves him physically a wreck, but spiritually strangely intact" (Dowthwaite, 1984:2).

Michael K's urge to liberate himself from "the ghostly pattern of master-servant" (Gordimer, 1984: 3) is also a little man's protest (Dowthwaite, 1984: 2) and accusation of the war, and he argues that "presumably the grass [has] not stopped growing in Wynberg Park because there [is] war, and the leaves [have] not stopped falling" (MK: 92), allegorically stressing the point that contact with the earth must be maintained "because once that cord [is] broken, the earth [will] grow hard and forget her children" (MK: 150).

This allegory of Michael K's emphasizing that the contact with the earth is vital to the existence of people, is also an accusation of war itself and its greatest evil - death.

Michael K's life is almost extinguished when he decides to go down to Prince Albert, where he is picked up and taken to a cell, ill and delirious, and then to hospital where he is stripped, washed and given intravenous nourishment. After he regains some strength he is taken to the Jakkalsdrif Relocation Camp for the unemployed and homeless. The idea of the concentration camp, which was born in South Africa, does not die but only surfaces in different forms of actualization such as township, bantustan and the Group Areas Act on which Michael K's friend Robert comments, expressing his opinions on the camp:

"What they would really like...is for the camp to be miles away in the middle of the Koup out of sight. Then we could come on tiptoe in the middle of the night like fairies and do their work, dig their gardens, wash their pots, and be gone in
the morning leaving everything nice and clean...and at the end of the day the truck fetches [us] and [we] are gone and [they don’t] have to worry about [us] or [our] families, [we] can starve, [they] know nothing, it's none of [their] business (MK: 112).

Ironically, Michael K who always wants to be free, during his stay in the camp works repairing fences of one farmer who praises him: "You have a feel for wire...[y]ou should go into fencing. There will always be a need for good fencers in the country, no matter what" (MK: 131). Michael K, who wants to escape all fences restricting his freedom, is good at putting them up.

One day he escapes from the camp and returns to the farm to begin growing pumpkin and melon once again. To be less conspicuous he digs out a burrow for himself instead of living in the farmhouse. He becomes a real elemental creature, eating lizards, roots and insects. "Hunger was a sensation he did not feel and barely remembered" (MK: 134). To protect his plants from wild goats and not to be noticed he sleeps by day and works by night. In this process he becomes a living skeleton, an insect himself. The author, to emphasize the fact, compares him to a "worm" (MK: 147) and "snail without its shell" (MK: 154). Then the great reward comes - pumpkins begin to ripen and the soil with which he merged the ashes of his mother bears fruit. His happiness, however, does not last long. The soldiers find him and take him for a man growing and storing food for guerrillas in the mountains. The soldiers blow up the house and mine the vicinity. Michael K's work is lost once again, he is taken away from his garden which without watering is doomed to die.

He is taken to another camp but this time he is so weak that he must be placed in the camp's hospital. The medical officer observes that he is an old man but Michael K claims that he is only thirty-two (MK: 178). The medical officer wants to improve Michael K's condition but he refuses to eat: "maybe he only eats the bread of freedom" (MK: 200). But the only desire of Michael K is to be free, to flee this haunting borderland of escapes between prisons, camps and open veld which in its vastness is the symbol of liberty. His refusal of prison food is a form of passive revolt against the institutionalized barbarity of "civilisation" (Lasdun, 1984: 69).
The people do not listen to him, nobody tries to understand him, and only different identities are imposed on Michael K which colonize and recolonize him. In the book, despite his weak protests, he is wrongly called Micheal Visagie, Michaels and Mr Treefeller. Noël, the commander of the camp insists against common sense that according to papers:

'Michaels is an arsonist. He is also an escapee from a labour camp. He was running a flourishing garden on an abandoned farm and feeding the local guerrilla population when he was captured. That is the story of Michaels' (MK: 179-180).

But nobody listens to Michael K and his statement: "I am not in the war" (MK: 189) causes only irritation. They know what is best for this man with "[n]o papers, no money; no family, no friends, no sense of who [he is]. The obscurest of the obscure, so obscure as to be a prodigy" (MK: 195). The medical officer claims that

[Michael K] needs a graduated diet, gentle exercise, and physiotherapy, so that one day he can rejoin camp life and have a chance to march back and forth across the racetrack and shout slogans and salute the flag and practise digging holes and filling them again (MK: 182-3).

But it is colonial, communist and immoral to plan somebody else's life. It is a kind of colonization Michael K opposes and escapes all his life. Only at the end of the second part of the novel the medical officer - "an archetypal white liberal, plagued with uncertainty about the role assigned to him (not unlike the Magistrate in Waiting for the Barbarians) (Lasdun, 1984: 69) - understands this unusual patient better: "Michaels has passed through the bowels of the state undigested; he has emerged from its camps as intact as he emerged from its schools and orphanages" (MK: 221). He wishes to be like Michael K to renounce his racial, civil and medical responsibilities but cannot.

Michael K's stay in the camp at Kenilworth does not last long. He escapes once again. This "great escapist artist, one of the greatest escapees" (MK: 228) and also a hunger artist very much resembles some characters of Kafka. The majority of critics agree that for the "K" in Michael K's name J. M. Coetzee is indebted to Kafka's Josef K from The Trial or K from The Castle (Abley, 1984: 49; Lasdun, 1984: 69; Lehmann-
Haupt, 1983: C22; Marowski, 1985: 106; Milne, 1984: 9; Ozick, 1983: 1; Zamora, 1986: 11, 13) whose odysseys through the misty-dusty system of courts, and in the case of the latter novel, in search of the entrance to the Castle remind one of the travel of Michael K from Cape Town back to Cape Town. However, the ends of the two characters of Kafka do not offer any hope but despair of men confronted and defeated by modernity. On the other hand, Nadine Gordimer argues that the initial of Michael K "stands probably for Koetze or Koekemoer and has no reference, nor need it have, to Kafka" (Gordimer, 1984: 3). Coetzee never mentions whether the latter reading is also viable, but when he is accused of plagiarizing Kafka he answers: "I don't believe that Kafka has an exclusive right to the letter K. Nor is Prague the center [sic] of the universe" (Coetzee in Morphet, 1987: 457).

Escaping, Michael K breaks away from the confinement of the state beset by civil war in order to be free. Michael K - a child of Huis Norenius and of apartheid South Africa - wants to be out of all the camps the authorities of the country have established

for children whose parents run away, camps for people who kick and foam at the mouth, camps for people with big heads and with little heads, camps for people with no visible means of support, camps for people chased off the land, camps for people they find living in storm-water drains, camps for people who forget their papers at home, camps for people who live in the mountains and blow up bridges in the night (MK: 248).

He does not want to be a part of the system nor devoured by it. He is a simpleton and cannot describe his feelings and thoughts in an articulate way. They did not teach him this at Huis Norenius but he knows how to distinguish subordination from freedom and he chose the latter, in his whole life unconsciously actualizing the dream of his coloured, black and white ancestors to be free. At a price, of course.

He comes back to Cape Town "weak at his knees after his long walk" (MK: 233) and "[has] the feeling that something inside him [has] let go or [is] letting go" (MK: 242). At the beach, delirious and exhausted, he meets a pimp with two prostitutes. They take him to the place where they
live in the forest at Signal Hill. There he spends the following night together with them. During the night the pimp tries to steal some money from beggar-like Michael K but he does not have any money and the pimp only scatters the seeds Michael K has in a packet. They are a symbol of life and regeneration in a metaphorical and a literal meaning so, in the morning Michael K recovers as many of the seeds as he can and leaves unnoticed. Back at the beach the pimp meets him again and orders one of his "sisters" to make love to Michael K who is not strong enough to oppose it. The pimp does not manage "to wake him up" (MK: 236) to the reality which maybe is real to them but for Michael K is just a big prison. The words of the pimp who tells Michael K that "it is difficult to be kind...to a person who wants nothing" (MK: 244), Michael K who has lived all his life in cages, answers later: "I have escaped the camps; perhaps, if I lie low, I will escape the charity too" (MK: 249). So in the light of the above one can infer that according to Michael K "the only way he can be free is to need nothing absolutely nothing from the world that begins at the end of his body" (Gornick, 1984: 40). This bitter definition of freedom reflects Michael K's sad experiences with people and a South Africa "gone mad" (Müller, 1985: 41) which in his searches for this universal quality of happy life made Michael K descend into all kinds of borderlands to escape "the restrictions of permits, curfews and camps" (Müller, 1985: 41), master-servant relations, egoism and the oppressive state which magnified all these distortions.

His escape is absolute and the only truth about Michael K is that he is a gardener (MK: 248-7). Quite surprisingly, he comes back to the room of his mother. His odyssey is over. He has come from nowhere to nowhere but at least the room is not another cage as it used to be at the beginning of the story. Michael K came there to transcend all cages - to die. But such an ending is not unhappy. It gives some hope. The room symbolises his promised land, mother, fertile soil, womb and dying on a cardboard bed where he dreams about the farm where soldiers blew up the farmhouse and the pump. In this dream he comes back to this farm to a garden and to not having water

he, Michael K, would produce a teaspoon from his pocket, a teaspoon and a long roll of string. He would clear the rubble from the mouth of the shaft, he would bend the handle of the teaspoon in a loop and tie the string to it, he would lower it
down the shaft deep into the earth, and when he [brings] it up there [will] be water in the bowl of the spoon; and in that way, he would say, one can live (MK: 251).

The hope of this ending is the hope of rebirth, that after autumn there is winter but then there is spring and summer and autumn again. And the message of cautious optimism is reinforced when the novel "finishes with the hopeful words" (Abley, 1984: 49): "one can live" (MK: 251).

"When times become difficult literature begins to resume its ancient function of prophecy" (Abley, 1984:49) and it is so in the case of Life and Times of Michael K. The "pungent and challenging allegory" (Allen, 1983: 29) "may be interpreted on two distinct levels: the universal and the more specifically South African" (Müller, 1985: 41). On the latter level Michael K as a coloured man (Anon., 1987: 13) "represents the whole black people of South Africa; his personal destiny figures the destiny of the collective" (Zamora, 1986: 11). He is "voiceless" (Müller, 1985: 43) and misunderstood and in this respect he resembles tongueless Friday from Foe, and the blacks in Conrad's Heart of Darkness who never speak and serve only as a kind of background. The role of these two protagonists is basically the same - to be a mighty soundless accusation of the masters and oppressors of all kinds expressed on the behalf of the underprivileged.

On the other level the novel is about "a universal nobody" (Anon., 1984: 28). It is not a story about survival or the survival instinct (Allen, 1983: 29) but rather like Solzhenitsyn's One Day in Life of Ivan Denisovich, the book is a parable of the "pain of not being allowed to live free" (Gornick, 1984: 40) told via the medium of the trope of modern allegory which makes this novel so profound.

On the other hand, the book is about the multitude of borderlands between victims and victimizers, the living and the dead, prisons, oppression and freedom, European and non-European cultures, the third and first worlds, apartheid and post-apartheid times, normalcy and madness etc. Michael K, living in all these borderlands, himself becomes an embodiment of this "borderlandness", throwing the whole book into
the borderland of a "third position" between political movements in South Africa and maybe in the world because most probably *Life and Times of Michael K* cannot satisfy and please the Left (Marxists) nor the Right (apologists for apartheid) (Abley, 1984: 49).

**NOTE**

1. It is interesting and surprising at the same time that so far nobody has tried to combine the two initials of the intriguing Michael K, which together give MK which for every South African is a very well known acronym of Umkhonto weSizwe (the Spear of the Nation) which in the person of Michael K may symbolize the coming of a new South Africa or a change which must come so that this magnificent country is not destroyed.
This novel by J. M. Coetzee is once again different from all his previous books. In *Foe* the author concentrated more on the exploration of new postmodernist writing techniques, the position of women in society, problems of feminism and patriarchalism than on colonialism and the clash of cultures which constituted a pivotal role in his earlier novels. Moreover, *Foe* is not set in South Africa nor in a country resembling South Africa (Alexander, 1987: 38). It is a re-telling of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. But in a sense, Coetzee strives to make this re-telling more honest and truthful than it used to be originally. It is clearly indicated by the title *Foe*, which is the genuine surname of the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, who simply later added the prefix "de-" to it to make the surname more distinguished and uncommon (Wilhelm, 1986: 147).

The missing dimension of *Robinson Crusoe* which J. M. Coetzee incorporates in his novel is a woman, Susan Barton (Anon., 1986: 14). She becomes the narrator of the book and its *modus vivendi*, filling the novel with the femininity which was so conspicuously absent in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. The story commences when Susan Barton, a castaway, reaches the island exhausted. The island differs considerably from the over-optimistic model popularized and mythologized by generations of adventure writers, where "brooks run to quench the castaway's thirst and ripe fruit falls into his hand, where no more is asked of him than to drowse the days away till a ship calls to fetch him home" (F: 7):

> the island on which I was cast away was quite another place: a great rocky hill with a flat top, rising sharply from the sea on all sides except one, dotted with drab bushes that never flowered and never shed leaves. Off the island grew beds of brown seaweed which, borne ashore by the waves, gave off a
noisome stench and supported swarms of large, pale fleas. There were ants scurrying everywhere, of the same kind we had in Bahia, and another pest, too, living in the dunes: a tiny insect that hid between your toes and ate its way into the flesh (F: 7).

It is more realistic and though not so appealing therefore definitely more true and objective. This unromanticized description invites us into a castaway's long days full of nothing, constituted of utter boredom and depression to which, in the case of Foe, especially Susan Barton is susceptible.

Robinson Cruso and Friday seem to agree to the life of castaways and they do not have any objections against it. The only element interfering with their existence is Susan Barton, who questions reality and the conditions under which they live (Johnston, 1987: 1), wants to get to know the life stories of the two men and to tell them her own. She destroys the order of this insular little world being unable to accept it. She introduces a kind of uneasiness to master-servant relations which developed between Robinson Cruso and Friday, but as a matter of fact her "arrival makes curiously little impact on" (Wilhelm, 1986: 147) these two inhabitants of the island. This shows that there is no place for a woman in this system, at least not for such an independent woman as Susan Barton.

Robinson Cruso epitomizes an archetypal colonizer. In the very literal sense of the metaphor he is the king, Caliban of the island. He shares power with nobody and does not desire to be rescued. He "conquered" this island (Marais, 1989: 14) and is really happy in this arrangement because his colonizing tastes were satiated in an absolute way, according to his opinion, of course. He is the undisputed ruler of the small kingdom, isolated by the ocean and therefore forgotten by everybody, and also because it is marked on maps of earlier sea discoverers as uninhabited. He has one archetypal black slave Friday (Williams, 1988: 36) on whom he can exercise his western urge to civilise and colonize. In this respect Robinson Cruso does not differ a lot from the Visagie grandson of Life and Times of Michael K who declared himself in a need of a servant and tried to colonize Michael K. Moreover, Robinson Cruso can use Friday as the labourer, exploiting him within the boundaries of the master-
servant relationship (Anon., 1986: 14). Friday as a servant is obedient and not troublesome. He helps Robinson Cruso to build his terraces which
covered much of the hillside at the eastern end of the island, where they were best sheltered from the wind. There were twelve levels of terracing at the time [Susan Barton] arrived, each some twenty paces deep and banked with stone walls a yard thick and at their highest as high as a man's head. Within each terrace the ground was levelled and cleared; the stones that made up the walls had been dug out of the earth or borne from elsewhere one by one (F: 33).

The labour during which they used one hundred thousand stones is arduous and in essence senseless because as Robinson Cruso says:

The planting is not for us...[w]e have nothing to plant - that is our misfortune...[t]he planting is reserved for those who come after us and have the foresight to bring seed. I only clear the land for them (F: 33)

He prepares an agricultural infrastructure for some imaginary future generations of colonizers, abandoning fulfilment of his own life which is therefore boring and barren. The work ethic of Robinson Cruso, whose roots one can trace to protestantism, I believe, and which he also imposes on Friday, forms a kind of borderland between fruitful efforts and a kind of completely useless camp work which is just intended to keep prisoners occupied.

Foe, harnassed in the serfdom of assisting Robinson Cruso in the construction of these terraces, is even more manoeuvrable, like an obedient tool, because he is mute resembling the blacks in Heart of Darkness by Conrad, who never have a chance to talk. When Robinson Cruso talks about this fact to Susan Barton (F: 23) they come to the conclusion that Friday's tongue must have been cut out by slavers who "grow weary of listening to Foe's wails of grief...[or] wanted to prevent him from ever telling his story" (F: 23) or who did it as a punishment. So "the cause of Friday's silence is his slavery: his previous masters cut out his tongue (Williams, 1988: 34). Susan Barton is appalled by the barbarity, unlike Robinson Cruso who does not want to disturb the muteness of Friday who is his "state" being a slave which in turn constitutes Robinson Cruso's mastery. Having had to teach Friday
English to be able to communicate with him, Robinson Cruso did not want to destroy his position of superiority and taught Friday only necessary words - imperatives, let alone sentences or questions (Brooks, 1986: 17). Robinson Cruso is an absolute ruler, and is very careful not to provide his slave with a device with which Friday could express himself and question the decisions of Robinson Cruso. So in a way he is happy that Friday is devoid of a tongue because it prevents his becoming a master of the English language which also makes impossible fully-fledged two-way communication between the slave and the master. It is a very dangerous thing which blurs the sharp distinction between domination and subservience, leading to dispute, conflict, revolution and change. It is to be avoided at any price by colonizers and then by capitalists.

The factor which upsets this easy status quo is Susan Barton. There is no place for a woman in the system. Nobody knows what to do with her. She is fed, more or less carefully looked after, and slips into the position of an additional slave which is the role of a woman in traditional societies of Africa and Europe. But this position is quite specific. She does not have to work and only wanders around the island looking at the horizon for a vessel which could rescue them. But only she desires rescue and questions the social arrangement of this island surprised by the acts of Robinson Cruso. Robinson Cruso ironically justifies slavery using God by saying that

‘If Providence were to watch over all of us... who would be left to pick the cotton and cut the sugar cane? For the business of the world to prosper, Providence must sometimes wake and sometimes sleep, as lower creatures do’ (F: 23).

This explanation is not enough for Susan Barton, who is assured by Robinson Cruso that he is a lenient master and that it is better for Friday to be on the island "than in Brazil, under the planter's lash, or in Africa, where the forests teem with cannibals" (F: 24) but it only exposes his inability to perceive Friday outside the master-servant relationship (Anon., 1986: 14). Consequently Susan Barton "found Friday a shadowy creature and paid him little more attention than [she] would have given any house-slave in Brazil" (F: 24). She looks for his story to transcend his muteness and only when she sees Friday carrying out some strange ritual, casting petals and buds on the surface of water (F: 31), an action which
symbolizes his quiet opposition to colonial subjugation, she comes to
know that Friday has some story to relate and realizes that he is not only a
tamed savage but a human being with rich spiritual life which he is "[n]ot
able to communicate" (Alexander, 1987: 38) dominated by European
culture whose slavers cut out his tongue. This fact has condemned him to
haunting silence (Wilhelm, 1986: 147) symbolic of non-western cultures in
a clash with the culture of the West.

This island, flung far away from civilisation in the middle of the oceanic
nowhere, is a symbolical borderland, a laboratory where J. M. Coetzee,
using just three characters, can clearly depict the mechanisms of
colonization, taking into consideration the suggestion of Manoni who said
that "the future history of colonialism is foretold...on the fantasy islands of
the European narrative" (Manoni in Clingman, 1986: 48). But it is not
only the borderland between western and non-western cultures, the
known and unknown in the geographical meaning of these words; it is also
borderland between patriarchalism and femininity. The first and last ones
of the borderlands are quite complementary because colonialism was a
patriarchal idea worked out by men. This supremacy of colonialism and
patriarchalism in Foe is considerably weakened by Robinson Cruso's
illness, which terminates the construction of the terraces and allows
Friday to do whatever he wants while Susan Barton looks after Robinson
Cruso.

In the quiet clash of genders the final blow to patriarchalism symbolised
by the person of Robinson Cruso, is dealt by Susan Barton when a
merchantman named John Hobart arrives at this island. Then Robinson
Cruso lies ill in bed and Susan Barton is practically the sole ruler of the
island. She decides to leave this island and takes Robinson Cruso along
who when he

was hoisted aboard the Hobart, and smelled the tar, and
heard the creak of timbers,...came to himself and fought so
hard to be free that it took strong men to master him and
convey him below (F: 39; my emphasis).

In this way she strips Robinson Cruso of his island, of his status as an
absolute king and his only sense of life, which he located in colonizing and
civilising this island. So Susan Barton defeated patriarchalism and showed that in this case femininity was stronger. But ironically, on the other hand, it is patriarchalism which eventually gains the upper hand. Susan Barton decides to return to Britain, the world centre of colonial power and industrialisation - the two patriarchal demons which even more strictly limited the role of women to the confines of households and factories. She also betrays her understanding of indigenous cultures when she convinces the captain of the John Hobart to take Friday aboard. She reasons that "inasmuch as Friday is a slave and a child, it is our duty to care for him in all things, and not abandon him to a solitude worse than death" (F: 39). In this way she shows no respect for other cultures imposing her beliefs and will on Friday and consequently acts like a male colonizer treating him as a childish "savage, a cannibal barely human" (Brooks, 1986: 17). When she sets out on board of the ship back to England she leaves behind this island - the borderland of three elements: patriarchalism (colonialism), femininity and non-European cultures. She has lost her chance. On the island the three elements were equally represented by the three dramatis personae of the first part of Coetzee's Foe. In England the first element subjugated the other two, leaving no leeway for a just partnership between the three nor open conflict - though it is also understandable that as a normal human being Susan Barton suffered nostalgia and wanted to go back home, which she associated with merrie ol' England.

However, this desire was rather delusive, invoked by idealised memories and sentiment. In England, her home, there is neither food, work nor hope for Susan Barton. She and Friday, now her servant whom she inherited in accordance with the accepted norm by her pattern of the master-slave relationship after the death of Robinson Cruso, come ashore to find themselves poor and destitute. The characters (especially Friday) resemble Michael K of Life and Times of Michael K (Morphet, 1987a: 12) and the barbarian girl in Waiting for the Barbararians. They represent the poor and underprivileged, the oppressed and exploited by economic and political systems, tradition favouring white men and cultural preconceptions. Susan Barton begins to understand her mistake only when in England:
When I was on the island I longed only to be elsewhere, or, in the word I then used, to be saved. But now a longing stirs in me I never thought I would feel. I close my eyes and my soul takes leave of me, flying over the houses and streets, the woods and pastures, back to our old home, Cruso’s and mine (F: 50).

But it is too late. She cannot return and has to stay. She can go back to the island only in her thoughts and hopes to render the picture of her stay on the island in a story which is to be written by Mr Foe who in this novel is unmistakeably a variation on the person of the “father of the English novel” - Daniel Defoe (Wilhelm, 1986: 147).

The chance to make a good living from the sales of Susan Barton’s story also proves misleading because after having received three guineas from Foe, he disappears and his valuables are seized by bailiffs. Susan Barton and Friday soon run out of money and become homeless. Life is not easy for them, especially for Friday:

Yet the story that there is cannibal in Clock Lane has plainly got about, for yesterday I found three boys at the cellar door peering in on Friday. I chased them off, after which they took up their stand at the end of the lane, chanting the words: ‘Cannibal Friday, have you ate your mam today?’ (F: 55).

It is the racism of the patriarchal society which together with ironically, prolonged by Susan Barton’s enslavement and life in a cold foreign country, causes Friday to grow “old before his time, like a dog locked up all its life” (F: 55). Susan Barton promptly observes the changes and begins to empathize with Friday:

How dismal a fate it would be to go through life unkissed! Yet if you remain in England, Friday, will that not become your fate? Where are you to meet a woman of your own people? (F: 80)

After some time in her naivety she decides to free Friday:

I have written a deed granting Friday his freedom and signed it in Cruso’s name. This I have sewn into a little bag and hung on a cord around Friday’s neck. If Friday is not mine to set free, whose is he? (F: 99)
Then she travels with Friday to Bristol to find a ship which could take him home to Africa or to Brazil where he could lead the life of a free man. When, after many difficulties and hardships, they arrive in Bristol, Susan Barton starts to realize her folly. It is explained to her that Friday "may be put ashore in Africa and still be farther from his home than from here to Muscovy" (F: 109). Moreover, the captain of the ship where she inquired about the possibility of transporting Friday to Africa reasons from a patriarchal standpoint, so typical of Eurocentric colonialists who feel they know better what is good for non-Europeans, better than non-Europeans themselves: "One half of Africa is desert and the rest a stinking fever-ridden forest. Your blackfellow would be better off in England" (F: 110). Finally he agrees to take Friday aboard but at the last moment Susan Barton manages to look through his machinations and understands that it would be only another enslavement of Friday. "Susan Barton's assumption that it is possible to return Friday to his origins by simply placing him on a boat bound for Africa represents the denial of the colonized subject's geographic, historical[,] linguistic specificity" (Dovey, 1989: 126) and his human individuality on the whole.

They return to London to live together with Foe in his house. Now they can lead a care-free life, having accommodation and enough food, but the happiness is not perfect. It is marred by Foe's attempts to distort the truth of Susan Barton's story to make it more attractive. These attempts symbolize suppression of women and non-European cultures in western society. Foe wants to turn the island story into a small, insignificant episode, and to devote the majority of the planned narrative to Susan Barton's sojourn in Bahia or "to embellish her story with cannibals to make it interesting" (Brooks, 1986: 17). She debates about the problem with Foe, "deceptively deferential, but determined to keep her feet on the ground and make sense of her present and past" (Johnston, 1987: 1). In the end they cannot reach any consensus. The only point on which they agree is that the story cannot be complete without Friday's lifestory.

Susan Barton tries to transcend the silence of Friday and another insight into his inner life after the overseen ritual on the island is given to her when Friday finds Foe's robes. They "set him dancing, which [she] had
never seen before" (F: 92). She can see his other self: "[i]n the grip of dancing he is not himself" (F: 92). She strives to strengthen this insight by finding a way to communicate with Friday. He also has a habit of dancing and playing the flute in the morning. Susan Barton gets a flute too and one morning played the same tune together with Friday: "As long as I have music in common with Friday, perhaps he and I will need no language" (F: 97). She also comments: "The music we made was not pleasing: there was a subtle discord all the time, though we seemed to be playing the same notes" (F: 96). It is an ironic statement when one compares it with the previous quotation because it does not show any signs of mutual communication but rather the lack of it, a duologue which is symbolical of the apparent inaccessibility of indigenous cultures to Europeans (Alexander, 1987: 38) who do not make any effort to understand them. Suasan Barton's messages cannot reach Friday and vice versa:

I could not restrain myself from varying the tune, first making one note into two half notes, then changing two of the notes entirely, turning it into a new tune and a pretty one too, so fresh to my ear that I was sure Friday would follow me. But no, Friday persisted in the old tune, and the two tunes played together formed no pleasing counterpoint, but on the contrary jangled and jarred (F: 97-8).

Afterward she desists from any attempts to communicate with Friday till the time when she is prompted by Foe to teach Friday to write, in this way entering the borderland between the muteness of Friday and the writing of Foe (Alexander, 1987: 38). It is not a brilliant success, but Friday becomes more active and responsive, and begins to write strings of the same letters and to draw strings of the same pictures on a slate. In this way he is given a defence against language with which everybody could manipulate and re-shape him (Marais, 1989: 12). But on the other hand, "Susan's attempt to free Friday with writing is also an attempt to force him to submit to her will" (Williams, 1988: 37). However, he finds quite an ingenious and practical solution to this oppressive situation and when Susan Barton asks him for the slate to show it to Foe he rubs it clean. It makes Susan Barton cry: "'I must have my freedom!...It is becoming more than I can bear! It is worse than the island! He is like the old man of the river!'" (F: 147). The statement expresses the burden of slavery she must bear in the person of Friday and although she is not a despotic mistress she cannot deny the fact that she is a mistress, with such a false statement
as: "Friday has grown to be my shadow" (F: 115) or "I am no slave-owner" (F: 150). It is also remarkable that the burden of slavery that she feels enslaves herself.

On the other hand she is enslaved, colonized by Foe, who perceives her as a foe, authoress (Coetzee in Morphet, 1987a: 12), visualizing the clash of genders in his attempts to change her story according to his point of view. He vampirizes on Susan Barton's experiences, sucking from them their essence, and digesting them into his own version of her story. She opposes it and symbolically manages to dominate Foe when they make love. She straddles him in "the manner of the Muse when she visits her poes" (F: 139), to do whatever lies in her power "to father her offspring" (F: 140), her story (Wagner, 1989: 4). Only then she can find her "way back to the island, to the wind and wave-roar; but no, the island was lost, cut off from [her] by a thousand leagues of watery waste" (F: 139). This sad realization takes her back to reality where women and non-Europeans are dominated by patriarchalism, white males, where there "is a scar like a necklace, left by a rope or chain" (F:155) on Friday's neck.

This scar symbolizes colonization, slavery, Christianisation, civilising efforts, suppression of women and non-European cultures. Susan Barton and Friday have lost. They did not manage to understand each other, Susan Barton could not transcend patriarchal ways in her treatment of Friday, which equalled enslavement, colonization. She herself betrayed her femininity by giving up her story and succumbing to Foe by becoming his mistress. On the sheets of paper he will manipulate her as one of his characters, and in the harsh real world will throw her away when he is bored with her. But Friday and Susan Barton - the poor, underprivileged, enslaved (colonized), are united in revelation of the mystery of Friday's muteness:

His mouth opens. From inside comes a slow stream, without breath, without interruption. It flows up through his body and out upon [Susan Barton]; it passes through the cabin, through the wreck; washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth. Soft and cold, dark and unending (F: 157).
The soundless, endless cry symbolizes the protest of the oppressed, which is to be heard one day when it forcefully surfaces from the bottom of the ocean of pain.

*Foe* is more "a bewildering tortuous literary puzzle" (Darke, 1988: 28) than anything else. But if one decides to read or rather to plough through the novel, conquering boredom and the postmodernist techniques, one will discover that this sophisticated allegory which was hailed "a novelist's novel" (Alexander, 1987: 38) can be read "on all sorts of individual, social, parochial and universal levels" (Johnston, 1987: 1). Generally speaking, however, it "is a dark [universal] parable of being dominated, silenced and cast away" (Anon., 1986: 14) exposing the reader to the problems of "conquest, slavery, subjugation and exploitation" (Alexander, 1987: 38).

The whole story culminates in the person of Friday whose "experience - his whole voice whereby his history might be expressed - has been erased within the mental frameworks of colonialism" (Clingman, 1986: 13) symbolizing the plight of non-European cultures which are misunderstood and mute in the eyes of the majority of westerners.

NOTES

1. Robinson Cruso treats language as a tool with which one can subject other people to one's will. Here the author indicates his awareness of Whorf's research on how different languages influence speakers' mind, thinking and perception of reality. The coercive function of language which Robinson Cruso uses in this novel is employed in propaganda and, was used by the similar to him colonizers who strove to impose European languages on the colonized. In this way colonizers could gradually obliterate cultures of the colonized and subsequently were able to manipulate the colonized better with their own European languages.

2. This island - laboratory, on which *Foe* is set, resembles the island setting of *Lord of Flies*, only in the latter the aim of such setting was to show workings of civilisation not only colonialism.
3. It seems that Susan Barton sympathising with non-European cultures crosses a delicate barrier between sympathy and subjugation, and starts dominating Friday with a kind of patronizing feminism which replaces Robinson Crusoe's outright patriarchalism.

4. Foe unlike the two neatly-knit previous novels by J. M. Coetzee: Life and Times of Michael K and Waiting for the Barbarians, is flawed with the too long-winded second part which relates Susan Barton's life after her return to England.
The latest book by J. M. Coetzee is many ways curiously different from its predecessors. It cannot be otherwise when one looks at the first page commencing the novel. On this page *Age of Iron* is dedicated to the memory of V. H. M. C. (1904-1985), Z. C. (1912-1988) and N. G. C. (1966-1989). The years during which the author conceived and wrote the book were not only a dark time for South Africa but for the author himself. In this span of time he buried four relatives: a 23-year-old son, killed in a fall from a high balcony; his parents (judging from the dates they are hidden behind the initials), and his former wife who died of cancer (Malan, 1990:20). She is not mentioned in the dedication but in a way she was a model on which Coetzee based the narrator of *Age of Iron* - Elizabeth Curren, a retired university teacher of classics.

In contrast to the previous novels, *Age of Iron* is politically explicit and less allegorical, "set in Cape Town in a season of stark choices and bloody violence - probably the winter of 1986" (Malan, 1990: 20). The season symbolic of dying and death makes the book "a winter's tale" (Wilhelm, 1990: 46), and the title gives an even more moribund dimension to this meaning. "[A]ge of iron is the last of the classical ages, the age that marks the final descent from the Golden Age into a time of decay, corruption and violence" (Runclle, 1990: 4), a Kali yuga of modernity. The violence and random killings also represent the South African clash between European and indigenous cultures, between well-to-do westerners and the black have-nots, which marks the uneasy transition from the "colonial" times of apartheid into an unsure tomorrow of a postcolonial era.
The above-mentioned Mrs Curren lives alone in a big affluent house. She is widowed and her only child - a daughter - is in the USA with her American husband and two sons. "I have a daughter in America. She left in 1976 and hasn't come back. She is married to an American. They have two children of their own" (AI: 10). Most probably Mrs Curren's daughter left after Soweto and made a vow that she would not return before the end of apartheid. Her mother describes the event: "At the airport, the day you left, you gripped me and stared into my eyes. 'Do not call me back, Mother,' you said, 'because I will not come.' Then you shook the dust of this country from your feet. You were right" (AI: 127). She accepted the departure of her daughter because it is a primordial law that children must leave their parents, and, she hopes against reality that one day they will meet again and that she will see her daughter's family: "Nevertheless, there is part of me that is always on the alert, always turned to the north-west, longing to welcome you, embrace you, should you relent and, in whatever form, come visiting" (AI: 127). The burden of solitude is too heavy for the old, sensitive, educated woman. When she gets to know that she has incurable cancer, and that a mastectomy has been of no help, she begins to write her long letter to her daughter. The letter is the book and relates Mrs Curren's last months of life. It is also a kind of epistolary borderland between the sender and receiver which may be actualized in the form of an intercontinental bridge of compassion between the mother and daughter if it is ever sent (Wilhelm, 1990: 46) but even if it is sent it will be too late. Therefore Age of Iron is an accusation of her daughter: "Is this an accusation? Yes. J'accuse. I accuse you of abandoning me. I fling this accusation at you, into the north-west, into the teeth of the wind. I fling my pain at you" (AI: 127), and her catharsis in which she unashamedly bares all her thoughts and acts. It is the news of imminent death that gives her courage to shun the conventions of her class and race and express openly what she wants to. She finds herself in the metaphysical borderland of twilight between the kingdoms of life and death. This borderland is symbolized by Mrs Curren's recurring moments of unconsciousness caused by the drugs she has to take to relieve her pains, and by her sleeping - "death in life" (AI: 78) during which she dreams about her youth (AI: 24) which is a sign of old age and approaching death. On the other hand, her terminal illness can also be interpreted "as a metaphor for national destiny" (Taylor, 1990: NA).
It is the beginning of her odyssey. When she comes back from the doctor she finds a squatter who has taken residence on her land. Instead of chasing him away immediately as it is usually done she offers him food and a job. But he - Mr Vercueil, an Afrikaans tramp - resembles Michael K as he does not want help although he is more realistic that Michael K and accepts food, money and accommodation but does not show any gratitude. It is a difficult kind of love to help ungrateful people. Her love for this vagrant and drunkard is the feeling that she cannot devote to her daughter and her family. He becomes an ersatz child of Mrs Curren: "[a] man in his middle years still sucking on bottles, yearning for the original bliss, reaching for it in his stupors" (AI: 53). As a terminally ill English woman of liberal sympathies (Smolowe, 1990: 60), she also enters another borderland, between the affluent whites and the underprivileged (usually non-whites) facilitated by the silent presence of Mr Vercueil who on the social plane is closer to blacks than to whites where he is automatically placed by his European heritage and skin-colour. He also helps Mrs Curren to understand the borderland between Afrikaans and English which governs the multilingual and multicultural reality of South Africa.

Mrs Curren shows her involvement and opposition to Afrikanerdom which she has never expressed actively but only in thoughts, regretting "for what her kind (as well as the others) have done or allowed to be done to the black people" (Anon., 1990: 12). For instance, while watching television she states that it is a disgrace to live under Ministers and Onderministers: "to open a newspaper, to switch on the television, like kneeling and being urinated on. Under them: under their meaty bellies, their full bladders. ‘Your days are numbered,’ I used to whisper once upon a time, to them who will now outlast me" (AI: 9). In other place she compares their rule to the reign of locust family...[l]egitimacy they no longer trouble to claim. Reason they have shrugged off. What absorbs them is power and the stupor of power. Eating and talking, munching lives, belching. Slow, heavy-bellied talk. Sitting in a circle, debating ponderously, issuing decrees like hammer-blows: death, death, death. Untroubled by stench. Heavy eyelids, piggish eyes, shrewed with the shrewdness of generations of peasants. Plotting against each other too: slow peasant plots that take decades to mature. The new Africans, pot-bellied, heavy-jowled men on their stools of
office: Cetshwayo, Dingane in white skins. Pressing downward: their power in their weight. Huge bull-testicles pressing down on their wives, their children, pressing the spark out of them. In their own hearts no spark of fire left. Sluggish hearts, heavy as blood pudding (AI: 25-6).

However, this highly emotional and pejorative picture of the Afrikaners whom she identifies with apartheid does not tempt her to espouse the aims and methods of comradeship:

It is the roaming gangs I fear, the sullen-mouthed boys, rapacious as sharks, on whom the first shade of the prison-house is already beginning to close. Children scorning childhood, the time of wonder, the growing time of soul (AI: 6).

Florence works at Mrs Curren’s place as a domestic. Now she also lives there with her two little daughters and son Bheki because the South African clash of cultures broke out in Guguletu in the form of violence and urban warfare. Schools have been closed down and the main reason why she brought along her fifteen-year-old son, was to keep him out of trouble, out of the struggle. Mrs Curren does not like this arrangement and the liberties the boy and his friend take, but she is too weak to oppose them actively and limits herself to verbal reprimands. Only when they beat Mr Vercueil she tells them to stop it and is met with arrogant, combative looks. "Florence is openly proud of how Bheki got rid of the good-for-nothing" (AI: 44) and Mrs Curren, displeased with the fact, argues: "You are showing Bheki and his friends that they can raise their hands against their elders with impunity. That is a mistake. Yes, whatever you may think of him, Vercueil is their elder!" (AI: 44-5). In another place Mrs Curren, commenting on violence, asks Florence: "Do you approve of children burning down their schools?" ‘I cannot tell these children what to do,’ said Florence" (AI: 36). And finally Florence concludes: "These are good children, they are like iron, we are proud of them" (AI: 46; my emphasis). It shows how rapidly and thoroughly the system of values of urban blacks has been disrupted, thrusting them into the borderland of moral relativity and changing children into cruel proponents of the struggle they do not fully understand, treating it as another game; and parents into inert onlookers. The situation has destroyed the traditional set-up of family, allowing children to question and deny the authority of their parents. It is a clearly revolutionary
situation which pits white against black, young against old, children against parents. This problem is most visible in strife-torn townships therefore in his novel J. M. Coetzee insists that black parents who stand back in seeming thrall to their children’s violence and "refuse to instill in [them] a respect for sanctity of life are as responsible as the ruthless police and indifferent whites" (Smolowe, 1990: 60) or maybe even more.

Mrs Curren is aware that white people with their colonial policies and apartheid are responsible for this situation which has plunged the urban regions of South Africa into the throes of civil war (Anon, 1990: 12). She even observes that to find the origin of "the children of iron" one must search in "the age of granite":

Did we not have Voortrekkers, generation after generation of Voortrekkers, grim-faced, tight-lipped Afrikaner children, marching singing their patriotic hymns, saluting their flag, vowing to die for their fatherland? (AI: 47)

This guilt of white people who conquered and subdued Africa for many centuries she expresses in the following statement: "when I walk upon this land, this South Africa. I have a gathering feeling on walking upon black faces" (AI: 115).

Soon she is made to become more active in expression of her political views when the police come near her house and Bheki with his friend are almost crushed to death by a police van while cycling. This intended assassination of the two young boys symbolizes the sheer impossibility of distinguishing between civilisation and barbarism which in such situations seem to be just the same. After this "accident" Mrs Curren cannot find words to describe it and can comment on it just in understatements: "This country!...prodigal of blood" (AI: 55, 57). Bheki’s friend, concussed, is taken to hospital. When they want to visit him it is proved that he is not in Woodstock Hospital they were told he would be taken. Then they try Groote Schuur Hospital and after a long search they find him. At that point the sad narrative of Mrs Curren begins to approach the elusive prose of Kafka. Unwillingly she is drawn into the clash between white and black cultures (Wilhelm, 1990: 46) and like the Magistrate of Waiting for the Barbarians she cannot identify herself with any of the sides of the
conflict "struggling with the [totalitarian] demand that she make her position clear - either with us or against us, either white or black" (Malan, 1990: 20). She strives to act by following the philosophy of decency, hoping that she will find a third ethical position not so militant and not so exclusive and more just. In this stance, not unlike the Magistrate Mrs Curren represents the state of confusion of white liberals (Malan, 1990: 20).

When it seems that everything has calmed down, even though the police did not want to accept Mrs Curren's complaint because she had been a third party during the "accident", a phone call summons Florence to Guguletu in the middle of night. Mrs Curren insists on giving her a lift... and the nightmare begins. But it is not a nightmare, it is reality for many people of South Africa; however, it is the first time in her life when she sees plundered and burnt houses, bodies of dead people lying in the streets, hears shots - an actual not only a metaphysical borderland between life and death. An oneiric, hallucinogenic quality is given to the events as to the whole book because almost all the time Mrs Curren takes sedation to reduce the pain caused by cancer. She is questioned by blacks, the police, her car is almost taken away from her, its windscreen is broken by an axe; and the situation culminates in the manner of a Greek tragedy when they find out that "[t]he body...was that of Florence's Bheki" (AI: 94). How ironically Mrs Curren's words contrast with this fact: "Children cannot conceive of what it is to die. It never crosses their minds that they may not be immortal" (AI: 14).

After some time, when she is at home, Bheki's friend escapes from the hospital to look for him. He is still in bad shape and does not know about Bheki's death. Mrs Curren lets him live in her house, gives him food, a bed and takes care of his wound. She wants to save him from the fate of Bheki and tries to convince him that he is just a child, and that he is too young to die. War should be left to men, and the comradeship in the name of which he is ready to fight and die "is nothing but a mystique of death, of killing and dying" (AI: 137). However, it is too late, he has already been spotted by the police who arrive at Mrs Curren's place in search of the boy who revealed her his name - John. She cannot do
anything, she cannot save him anymore. She is not able to stop the police who treat her as an old, eccentric lady who disturbs their actions. They cannot perceive the fact that she questions their new postcolonial (?) ethics of mad violence with remnants of the old liberal ethics of decency implying that they enter the dangerous borderland between normalcy and insanity. But it seems that madness is considered to be normalcy in this new world, so after a short shoot-out John is killed and Mrs Curren begins another odyssey into the underground city life which can be likened to a descent into Hades, symbolizing her imminent death. In just a robe, barefoot in the wintry August, she winds up under a flyover, struck by another attack of pain, and wrapped in a quilt soaked with her urine. In this way she finds a third position, a way out of the master-servant relationship, but this solution is short-lived because she is too old and too tired to be able to follow the example of Michael K.

After some time she is pestered by children who try to rob her but she has nothing valuable which can be stolen so then with the stick they probe her mouth for gold teeth. She can sympathise with these children, Bheki and John, but she cannot like them: "they are children pretending to be adults, strutting juvenile ideologues grown old before their time" (Taylor, 1990: NA), victims of all kinds of demagogue and revolutions which instead of love, morality and education breed them on violence and the elusive feeling of power.

From this ordeal she is freed by Mr Verceuil, who by chance comes across her and takes her home. During the whole novel he gradually becomes closer to Mrs Curren. He does not work, almost always stays silent, misbehaves and drinks, paying with the money which she gives him. Mr Verceuil becomes her assistant in daily matters and her audience listening to (or ignoring) her demagogues (Taylor, 1990: NA). In a way they are an ideal though joyless couple: he destroying himself with alcohol and she readying herself to cross the threshold of death (Anon., 1990: 12). She does not belong to the land of the living, and the fact is emphasized when she quotes long dead authors in their dead language - Latin (Taylor, 1990:NA).
Moreover, Mr Verceuil constitutes the *modus vivendi* of the whole book. He is the messenger to mail the letter/book of Mrs Curren to her daughter in America who also "is like iron [and Mrs Curren is] not going to ask her to go back on her vows" (AI: 68; my emphasis). Instead, in the last weeks of her life she colonizes Mr Verceuil, who helps her walk, cooks her meals and even sleeps with her. Too close to death to care about what neighbours will say about her consort, what her daughter can think about her when she reads her diary, Mrs Curren is under the delusion that her liaison with Mr Verceuil amidst interracial violence (clash of cultures) and distrust somewhat fills in the gap between the have-nots (especially non-whites) and well-to-do whites. But earlier she is right in saying that it is not enough to be a good person following the principles of decency (AI: 150; Anon., 1990: 12). She understands it in her last moments when Mr Verceuil "took [her] in his arms and held [her] with mighty force, so that the breath went out of [her] in a rush. From the embrace there was no warmth to be had" (AI: 181). Her liaison with Mr Verceuil was not based on equal rights because it was Mr Verceuil who was needed by Mrs Curren. He seems to symbolize the possible coming of domination of the poor, underprivileged and the blacks, a radical change in the master-servant pattern in postcolonial, post-apartheid South Africa. And what is significant is that he is not presented as vulnerable, powerless and meek like Friday in *Foe*, as it is he who is going to survive Mrs Curren whose death may symbolize the coming end of colonial white liberalism (Taylor, 1990: NA).

Like the Magistrate she was too weak to opt for one side in this conflict or to merge them in a third way. She was left by those dear to her and was able only to place herself in the limbo between the two worlds, cultures; and she chose Mr Verceuil because "it is hard to be alone all the time" (AI: 65). But he is a man and cannot nurture like a woman, he exists only, fed on the artificial fire of alcohol and agrees to be Mrs Curren's listener because she gives him food, a bed and money for wine and brandy. She is not really interested in him, she needs him as an ersatz version of her daughter. She is very egoistic, like her daughter, to the point of using Mr Verceuil to avoid solitude, therefore her pseudo-love, love without love for Mr Verceuil cannot give warmth or compassion but brings only
coldness and death. Finally she does try to identify herself as Mr Vercueil's wife, signing the long letter to her daughter as "Mrs V." (AI: 174). It is just a signature, a sign of abortive hope, identification with the underprivileged and the oppressed, but it is too late. Now it is mere exhibitionistic showing off because this sign can be valid only when one lives his/her all life identifying her/himself with the cause of the poor, not just the very end of it like Mrs Curren.

Her egoism is also expressed in the way she describes the world around herself showing only hopelessness, imminent destruction and the death of the whole country (Taylor, 1990: NA). This death she wants to connect with her own so that when she is gone nothing should be left.

*Age of Iron* is "a mixture of...allegory, political reality and personal epistolary drama" (Runcle, 1990: 4) which represents "the guilty nightmares of white South Africa" (Anon., 1990: 12) caused by "the racial cancer" (Smolowe, 1990: 60) - apartheid. However, this book is not so one-sided because that would mean that the author had abandoned the principle of objectivity which was so clearly espoused in his previous works. So the novel is not just a piece of committed writing and on the other hand expresses the fear that in their violence and bloodshed South African blacks "mirror the intransigence and dogmatism of their Boer foe" (Malan, 1990: 20).

For some critics the hook is a clear ideological sign that "it completely undermines every hope that was raised in February this year [1990]...[and] every hope for a [peaceful] non-racial South Africa" (Anon., 1990a: 52). This accusation can be easily repudiated by the fact that it is clearly stated at the end of the book that it was written in the years 1986-89 (AI: 181) which indicates that *Age of Iron* still belongs to the sombre epoch of President P. W. Botha. The author simply could not be aware of the forthcoming speech of President F. W. de Klerk which was to commence the sweeping changes in South Africa. And the real fault of this novel is that J. M. Coetzee decided to make it more overtly politicized and engaged, lifting the veil of allegory (Runcle, 1990: 4) and in this way
diminished the book's universality, opening it up to such attacks like the one mentioned above.

However, despite valid points of criticism, the novel has retained an allegorical multilevel character. It can be read as "an allegory of the fate of white liberal South Africa" (Taylor, 1990: NA) or on a social plane as an expression of white South Africa's fears and fantasies about the conflict with its servant class (Anon., 1990: 12). Of course, there are many more interpretations of this book besides these two most apparent ones, but the real importance of the novel is constituted by the fact that despite the violent times of the age of iron, Mrs Curren like her real life counterparts - gentle and civilised people - tries to retain her liberal stance in the borderland between racial monoliths (Malan, 1990: 20). Eventually she fails, having not developed any third ethical position which would be valid in post-apartheid times, but thanks to her striving spirit she "attains the dignity of telling the truth" (Wilhelm, 1990: 46) and this is the immediate and cautiously optimistic message of the book, which says that where there is humanity there is also hope.

NOTE

1. Athol Fugard also decided to make his latest play My Children, My Africa politicized and therefore it proved to be a failure on the stage unlike his earlier works which are more interested in people and their problems than political statements of committed literature.
CONCLUSION

South Africa is an exemplar of a country where westernisation went too far to be diverted and where the native population is too numerous to be disregarded, like the Aborigines in Australia. Therefore the response of South African literature, divided along cultural, ethnic and linguistic lines, cannot be homogeneous, and comprises descriptions of the country's beauty, liberal dreams of a future, escapism, traditional Boer voices, the committed writings and allegories of Karel Schoeman, Wilma Stockenström and J. M. Coetzee, to mention a few.

J. M. Coetzee employs allegory - the multidimensional mode of writing - to expose the many vices of the world, South Africa and man who is responsible for all this. Modern allegory does not suggest methods to mend a fractured world, but rather draws attention to the fractures. Therefore, the author's novels aim at depicting "a painful divided world, a state of irreconcilable contraries and unresolvable differences" (Zamora, 1986: 3). In this way modern allegory denies its traditional role of reflecting the order of the universe which relied upon the belief that writing can be analogous to the macro-world and can facilitate the regaining of a momentarily disturbed order of the universe. But this departure from traditional allegory allowed revival of this fossilised and meaningless trope, harnessing it into the service of modernity. And its significance in this service is of not little value, because modern allegory has become the very tool of dissent against all kinds of totalitarianism and institutionalised oppression, letting writers criticize especially the state without the immediate danger of their works being banned and of being incarcerated. Besides these pragmatic aspects, modern allegory also permits "them to distance or to approach the reality which they describe, and thus to modulate the intensity and the angle of their protest" (Zamora, 1986: 12) and to attain a higher degree of objectivity than is possible in realistic writing whose obvious specificity of setting at a concrete point of spacetime makes its message subjective and one-sided,
affiliating it rather with committed literature than being a profound probing into the serious problems of nowadays.

The novels of J. M. Coetzee, to attain these goals of modern serious dissent literature, are clad as "political allegories" (Gunton, 1983: 121) or "allegorical fables" (Zamora, 1986: 1), and oscillate "between public and private realms, and between realistic and symbolic narration" (Zamora, 1986: 1). Anyway, the scope of these novels is not limited just to problems of South Africa because the surrealism and reflexivity of their prose allow them to transcend the basic level of everyday reality and to present the master-servant relationships in a universal light, opening the books to multilevel interpretations (Haluska, 1987: NA). Moreover, thanks to the trope of modern allegory the author can avoid the pit of politicization and cheap sentimentalism, and he can therefore truthfully deal with underprivileged and abused characters who constitute focal points of his novels. The writer presents the characters from "an apolitical narrative viewpoint, projecting a world where an offense against an individual becomes an offense against humanity" (Marowski, 1985: 106). And it seems that it is the most important message of Coetzee's books for our world where basic equality, humanity and individual freedom are trampled by the state and its institution often without any words of protest.

However, in the limited space of this dissertation only one aspect of his fiction was more closely looked at, namely the clash of cultures represented in his novels. Colonization invariably entailed the struggle of two different ways of life, systems of beliefs and values. In this struggle the European culture normally got the upper hand, transforming cultures of indigenous peoples in a schizophrenic marriage of their cultures with the European one. The conflict of cultures is always the very background and main problem of the fiction of J. M. Coetzee, in which he probes into the question of power and into the subject of colonialism or subjugation more generally (Coetzee in Morphet, 1987: 454). But to understand his fiction more profoundly it should be seen against the Judeo-Christian background and in the context of African and South African literature.
Dusklands represents the relentless colonization which does not even take into account that there are any other cultures than the culture of the West. In In the Heart of the Country, on a frontier farm, there is a simmering conflict between a white master and black servant (slave), between patriarchalism and a femininity which sympathises with black culture. This strife between Eurocentrism and "non-cultures" is depicted in the slow-moving clash of the symbolic Empire with the Barbarians in Waiting for the Barbarians. In Life and Times of Michael K this situation explodes into social unrest and regular civil war, as in Age of Iron as well. Eventually, the question of subjugation, dreams of colonizers, and impossibility to understand other cultures without transcending Eurocentrism is dealt with in Foe, a re-telling of Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe.

In his novels J. M. Coetzee uses references to travelogues, European classics and thinkers, and never to a black oral tradition and heritage which he may know and appreciate. This may be ascribed to the fact that he did not grow up in this tradition so he cannot convincingly use it in his writings. I am sure, too, that he understands a strong need among black authors to show commitment in their writings since black literature inherited the aim of oral tradition to serve society. Literature as art, not committed to the immediacy of today, is perceived by black and Marxist critics as a kind of perversion, an unnecessary embellishment and betrayal of a cause. But in commitment lies a danger: "The restrictive quality of commitment appears in the fact that the committed author's attention is never centred on all aspects of reality but only on certain aspects, while others remain more or less neglected. Consequently commitment invariably implies selection" (Klima, 1974: 193-4). Moreover, commitment implies one-sidedness and subjectivity, and these two are the vices Coetzee wants to exclude from his fiction. Therefore, Peter Knox-Shaw's critique: "It is regrettable that a writer of such considerable and varied talents should play down the political and economic aspects of history" (Knox-Shaw, 1982: 37), and those of other Marxist critics accusing him of the lack of commitment, are tainted by ideology and doctrines, and subsequently quite absurd, since adherence to these limits one-dimensionalizes the mind and literature, changing the latter into a
controlled and submissive tool of propaganda, and subsequently excluding any possibilities of objectivity.

To reveal the wide range of different accusations by critics of Marxist provenances, I will outline them briefly. Gordimer finds a revulsion in Coetzee's novels against all political and revolutionary solutions disagreeable (Gordimer in Dovey, 1987: 15), but as everybody knows from history, revolutions have hardly ever improved standard of life in countries where they broke out but, just replaced one regime with another often even more oppressive. On the other hand, an anonymous reviewer of the Saspu National concludes that Waiting for the Barbarians "is not a disturbing book, and ultimately challenges nothing. Coetzee is a fine writer. It's a pity he isn't a bolder one" (Anon. in du Plessis, 1981: 77). In this opinion he reveals his misunderstanding of universalism and the concept of literature, on the whole overestimating the role of utilitarian committed writing. Further on, the title of a review of Foe: "Postmodernist Games While Soweto Burns" "implicates that postmodernism is not an appropriate literary mode" (Dovey, 1989: 119) for commenting on South Africa and the modern world, in this way suggesting that certain modes of writing are more appropriate than others. If this implication were embedded into some cultural policy, it could result in a set of rules like socialist realism, forcing artists to create their works strictly within its limits.

Rich, too, cannot agree with the universalism and the political unobtrusiveness of Coetzee's fiction, claiming that his books indicate "that literary postmodernism in a postcolonial context as South Africa, burdened by cleavages of race and class and historical inheritance of western imperialist control, is a moral dead end" (Rich, 1984: 389). He would rather have Coetzee write on "a postcolonial South African/Azanian culture" (Rich, 1984: 389), devoting his talent to more ideologically oriented subjects and writing techniques and in this way forsaking his aim of objectivity. Rich is not alone in this stance, because Vaughan thinks J. M. Coetzee's mode of writing just poses as "a modernist challenge to liberal aesthetics" (Vaughan, 1982: 126). He goes even further in his criticism, using typically Marxist terminology:
As a consequence of the prominence given to a state of agonised consciousness, material factors of oppression and struggle in contemporary South Africa achieve a subordinate attention... It would seem, then, that in his novels Coetzee gives privileged attention to the predicament of a liberal petty bourgeois intelligentsia (Vaughan, 1982: 126, 137).

Other critics also accuse J. M. Coetzee of the fact that in "failing to delineate the economic complexities of oppression, [he] has got his history all wrong" (Anon. in Marais, 1989: 9). But they seem to fail to perceive that the author "has provided more insights into the colonizing mind, as well as the dissenting, colonizing mind, than any of his contemporaries" (Watson, 1986: 390), focusing the attention of his books on the life and fate of individuals entangled at different social levels of oppressive post/colonial societies. A Marxist approach in literature, disregarding an individual for the sake of masses, has proved barren and unable to transcend demagoguery, ending in serving all kinds of totalitarianism; and historical dialectics of Marxism has failed to explain the behaviour of people on the grounds of sociology or history, using just economy and materialist philosophy and completely exclude religion, the human dimension and idealistic philosophy. Moreover, the author himself remarks that "[h]istory is not reality, it is a kind of discourse" (Coetzee in Davis, 1987: 19) so it cannot be conducive to objectivity and universalism which the writer strives to attain in his fiction.

Coetzee's writings are not criticized only by leftist critics, but rightist critics, unlike the former, do not share such a unanimous position. Some of them claim that the author is too preoccupied with problems of consciousness and thus betrays an idealist stance (Marais, 1989: 9) and others that his novels deny every hope for a non-racial South Africa and even that his last achievement Age of Iron "completely undermines every hope that was raised in February this year [1990]" (Anon., 1990a: 52) although it is clearly stated at the end of the novel that it was written in the years 1986-1989, so by no chance could have been Coetzee aware then of the groundbreaking speech of President F. W. de Klerk.

Moreover, this lonely, unhappy and laconic writer is not suited to be a charismatic leader or a popular propagator of some ideas. He reminds
more of an eremite in the seclusion of his "very small office for a novelist of such great stature, a closet really, with metal bookshelves, a small wooden desk and a narrow window affording a view of the stone buildings of the University of Cape Town and the rainswept slopes of Devil's Peak" (Malan, 1990: 20). He even comments briefly about his stance: "I certainly don't see any way for a person to think in stories and at the same time act on the political stage. So...the role I see for myself is to write stories" (Coetzee in Malan, 1990: 20).

The novels of J. M. Coetzee are always universal in rendering the numerous permutations of clashes of cultures, thereby transcending the South African reality which most probably formed the strongest stimulus which prompted the author to write these books. However, the degree of the novels’ universality varies from one to another. The more universal ones, for instance *Foe* and *In the Heart of the Country*, extensively employ allegory and symbols in contrast to the less allegorical ones (e.g. *Age of Iron* and *Life and Times of Michael K*) which are more concrete, tending to present a specific conflict and locality. But it must be clearly stated that none of the books by Coetzee is an exemplar of committed writing which with its utilitarian and propagandist function of propagating some specific ideological or political goals, is radically opposed to universalism and literature on the whole striving to pass one-dimensional and demagogic writings as bona fide literary pieces. All the fiction of Coetzee, to a greater or lesser extent, does contain allegorical elements and non-banal nor non-universal plots which are based on eternal human dilemmas of love, death, life, parenthood, subjugation, freedom, war, peace etc. These dilemmas are basically the same all over the world, although described by literature of different continents in their own specific geographical, cultural and social settings. So a universality of subjects which constitutes the core of Coetzee’s novels enhances the universality and objectivity of his fiction, which he attains and deepens with the help of the trope of allegory.

However, considering the settings of Coetzee’s books, one might be tempted to place them on a continuum which extends between the speculative extremes of absolute universality and absolute specificity.
Although such a procedure can facilitate one's understanding of the fiction of Coetzee, one should be aware that a tendency towards pigeonholing is based on the analytic philosophy of Cartesianism, which is naturally alien to literature. Literature rather dwells in the archaic mode of holistic thinking, and only this mode of thinking is able to encompass the whole richness and experience of Humanity from its beginnings to today. Therefore, the subsequent grouping of Coetzee's novels to a certain extent satisfies one's need of an analytic understanding, but should not overshadow and suppress the meaning of the fiction of J. M. Coetzee, which - like the whole of literature - is multi-dimensional and eventually impossible to be classified clearly and finally.

Having said that, one must also state that the most universal novels by Coetzee are *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Foe*. The latter is set on a mythical uninhabited island where the conflict between European and non-European cultures, patriarchalism and femininity is performed by just three characters making the novel seem like a drama in terms of economy of character and action. Colonialism and patriarchalism are represented by Cruso, oppressed non-white cultures by Friday and suppressed femininity of the European woman by Susan Barton. The three protagonists, almost like characters of medieval mysteries, seem to cry: "I am Evil, Oppressor, Colonizer, I am an Exploited one, and I am a Suppressed one". *Waiting for the Barbarians* presents a conflict between the symbolic nameless Empire and the barbarians, whose pattern has been re-enacted many times in history. *In the Heart of the County* is less allegorical because it is visibly set in the farm environs of the Karoo in the first half of the 20th century. However, Magda, torn by the tragedy of her love which has never been fulfilled, suppressed by her father, reflects a universal state of unhappiness whose universalism is even deepened by her eventual madness. The novellas constituting *Dusklands* move more clearly toward specificity with *The Vietnam Project* set in America at the beginning of the 1970s and *The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee* in the South Africa of Dutch expansion. But once again like in *In the Heart of the Country* although to a lesser extent, the novellas attain universality through exploring the problem of the consuming urge to dominate and to colonize. *Life and Times of Michael K* and *Age of Iron* stand in opposition to *Foe* and *Waiting for the Barbarians*. As a setting, the former two use
Cape Town and its near or further environs. It is not a Cape Town of the past, it is obvious that it is the Cape Town of today with all its problems and racial tensions portraying the state of modern South Africa. The author strives to blur the sharp contours of contemporaneity with tentative hints that it is a South Africa of the near future. But as a matter of fact the books deal with contemporary South Africa and with what can possibly happen to this country at any time. This slight shift of plot into the future, combined with strong and multidimensional characters, allows Coetzee to give the books more universal, allegorical character which does distinguish them from journalistic committed writing.

Coetzee's novels probe into the problems of a modern South Africa searching for causes in the past, in the everyday life and attitudes of individuals. The author does not offer any ready-made solutions in his books which present the morbid and bleak racist reality of the country which will be haunting the future of South Africa for a long time despite the fact that the oppressive system of apartheid will be dismantled soon. The books, however, are a testimony of a white liberal who managed to penetrate the barrier of Eurocentrism to perceive objectively other cultures which constitute the ethnic mosaic of South Africa. He does not claim the superiority of the white man (like many of his predecessors) and does not concentrate on racial differences which are exaggerated on account of being based on the artificial distinction of skin colour. Coetzee strives to present humans in his novels and hardly ever mentions the skin colour of his characters, so much so that one has to know the social background of South Africa to be able to make an accurate estimate. Coetzee has transcended the bottleneck and presents the tragedies of his characters in universal terms, emphasizing the fact that they could happen anywhere in different guises of ethnic, national, cultural, linguistic or religious prejudices. South Africa is just a spectacular exemplar and in a way a kind of media-created scapegoat which allows the rest of the international community not to feel any remorse when they have similar situations in their own countries and to claim themselves (falsely) to be models of development and peaceful cooperation.
The body of J. M. Coetzee's works has been thoroughly researched so far and its significance is indicated by the literal avalanche of master's dissertations, scholarly articles, reviews, doctoral theses and general surveys devoted to the six relatively slim novels in South Africa and abroad. The mass of critical texts is several times bigger than all the novels put together, which proves that the fiction of J. M. Coetzee is most relevant and "overloaded" with many layers of meaning, certainly allowing profound and appealing interpretations. Many editions of his books in English-speaking countries and translations into numerous languages have commenced the process of their canonization which, according to some scholars, has already been completed because they tend to consider the books as classics (Haluska, 1987: NA). In these works the author has also used many new writing techniques, showing that South African literature and other Commonwealth literatures do not have to be condemned to parochialism and emulation of British, European and American examples, and that these literatures can also be highly original and creative, and produce books of world quality. Besides, Coetzee's writings have contributed to the further development of the genre of the novel and postmodernist writing techniques. In the light of these achievements, therefore, and the world-wide acclaim and reception of this author he does have a chance to be ranked as a peer among the greatest western men of letters. Moreover, being relatively young, Coetzee will most probably write at least several more books, broadening the scope and meaning of the whole body of his works. Therefore, the author's novels will often be scrutinized by literary criticism in search for new and more relevant explications and readings.

Having completed the dissertation, I have come across several aspects of his novels which can be considered worthy of further researching. The whole of J. M. Coetzee's novels could, for example, be explored from a semiotic point of view, in a search of common symbols and symbology. It is very interesting that in all the novels the motif of dying/deterioration is present and Morphet notes that "Friday appears to be a close relative of Michael K's as well as of a number of other figures in [J. M. Coetzee's] work - the barbarian girl, for example, in Waiting for the Barbarians" (Morphet, 1987: 12) or recently Mr Verceuil of Age of Iron.
A study of the reception of the books in South Africa would also be of the utmost significance because, judging from my experience, the author is relatively unknown in his own country, not having been thoroughly explored even by local critics and readers.

J. M. Coetzee as a trained linguist, computer scientist, mathematician and literary scholar is a man of great erudition which shows up in numerous loans from western classics and philosophers which he had embedded in the dense texture of his novels. A detailed survey of these loans could give shape to the author’s literary background and consequently facilitate further research in his novels. Moreover, a survey of the writing techniques and their role in the books could systematize the achievements of the author from a generic point of view, which would be of great importance to future writers of histories of the novel.

Lastly, the fiction of J. M. Coetzee could also become a subject of comparative studies with authors of the same provenances from countries sharing similar patterns of cultural, ethnic and linguistic problems like South Africa. Among such authors one can enumerate, for instance, Canadian fabulators and writers of evocative metafictions such as Aritha van Herk and Robert Kroetsch (How I Joined the Seal Herd) (Moss, 1991:34), the Polish historical fabulator Teodor Parnicki, who places his books in the multicultural past of Poland and Europe, and many others.
NOTE

1. Racial discrimination and exploitation was and still is present to a lesser or greater extent in the USA and Canada in the case of Native Americans and the Inuits, in Australia in the case of the Aborigines and Bass Strait Islanders, in New Zealand in the case of the Maoris and in Japan in the case of the Ainus to enumerate just a few of the most important instances. It is quite ironic that the countries with Canada and Australia as leaders formed a forefront directed against South Africa in their demands of imposition of sanctions and dismantling apartheid interfering in the internal affairs of this country and isolating it at the international arena while their own record of racial co-existence and co-operation was not outstanding.

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