



IRAQI  
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية  
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية



ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

## Journal of Language Studies

Contents available at: <http://jls.tu.edu.iq>

### A Deconstructionist Interpretation of J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*

Noora Mazin Shakir \*

English Department-College of Education for Women- Tikrit University

E.mail: [nmazin@st.tu.edu.iq](mailto:nmazin@st.tu.edu.iq)

Prof. Dr. Ansam Riyadh Abdullah Al-maarof

English Department-College of Education for Women- Tikrit University

E.mail: [Sbc.su2000@gmail.com](mailto:Sbc.su2000@gmail.com)

#### Keywords:

- Coetzee
- Barbarians
- Deconstruction
- The Magistrate
- The Barbarian Girl

#### Article Info

##### Article history:

Received: 28-9-2021

Accepted: 15-1-2022

Available online

**Abstract** Deconstruction is a postmodern theory that was propounded by, Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher to fathom the connection between text and its meaning. It is a form of literary and philosophical analysis derived from his work which began in the 1960s. In this work, he questions Western philosophy through a close examination of the language of literary and philosophical texts and their logic. Although it was applied by many critics in the 1970s, he is considered the pioneer of this approach. This paper analyzes J.M.Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* as a postmodern, deconstructionist text or novel. By choosing this text, the paper attempts to prove that Coetzee is a postmodern novelist who followed Derrida's thoughts in deconstructing his text. It tries to answer the questions: firstly; how Coetzee depends on some sources written before not by rewriting them from the beginning till the end as other writers do, but by adapting a single event, a title, or a verb? By demonstrating and answering this question, the paper will prove that deconstruction does not only occur by rebuilding a previous text but also occurring within the text itself. Secondly; how he employs the techniques of deconstruction to prove an essential notion of deconstruction that each text

\* Corresponding Author: Noora Mazin Shakir, E.Mail: [nmazin@st.tu.edu.iq](mailto:nmazin@st.tu.edu.iq)

Tel: +9647710912217 , Affiliation: Tikrit University -Iraq

	fills with ambiguous ideas. Thirdly; how those ideas are interpreted according to the readers' points of view? The paper has five parts. It begins with an introduction. The second part discusses the Methodology. The third gives background of the novel and the novelist. The fourth analyzes and examines the novel as a deconstruction text and conclusion sums up the findings.
--	--

### تفسير تفكيكي لرواية في انتظار البرابره لجي ام كويتزي

نوره مازن شاكر / كلية التربية للبنات / جامعة تكريت

ا.د. انسام رياض عبدالله / كلية التربية للبنات / جامعة تكريت

<p><b>الخلاصة :</b> التفكيك هي نظرية ما بعد الحداثة التي طرحها الفيلسوف الفرنسي جاك دريدا لفهم العلاقة بين النص ومعناه. إذ انه شكل من اشكال التحليل الادبي والفلسفي المشتق من عمله الذي بدأ في الستينات. في هذا العمل، يشكك في الفلسفة الغربية من خلال الفحص الدقيق للغة النصوص الادبية والفلسفية ومنطقها. على الرغم من ان عمله هذا تم تطبيقه من قبل العديد من النقاد في السبعينات الا انه يُعد رائداً لهذا النهج. سيتناول هذا البحث كتاب "في انتظار البرابره" لجي ام كويتزي باعتباره نصا او رواية ما بعد الحداثة او التفكيكية. تحاول الدراسة الحالية اثبات ان كويتزي هو روائي ما بعد الحداثة، حيث انه اتبع افكار ديريدا في تفكيك نصه. وكذلك تحاول الاجابة على الاسئلة التالية: اولاً؛ كيف يعتمد كويتزي على بعض المصادر المكتوبة من قبل ليس باعادة كتابتها من البداية حتى النهاية كما يفعل الآخرون، ولكن عن طريق تكييف حدث واحد او عنوان او فعل؟ من خلال اظهار هذا السؤال والاجابة عليه، ستثبت الدراسة ان التفكيك لا يحدث فقط من خلال اعادة بناء نص سابق ، بل يحدث ايضاً داخل النص نفسه. ثانياً؛ كيفية استخدام تقنيات التفكيك لاثبات ان الفكرة الاساسية للتفكيك هي ان كل نص مملوء بافكار غامضة؟ ثالثاً؛ كيف يتم تفسير هذه الافكار من وجهة نظر القراء؟ تقسم الدراسة الى خمسة اجزاء. تبدأ بالمقدمة. الجزء الثاني يناقش المنهجية. الثالث يعطي خلفية عن الرواية والروائي. الرابع يحلل ويفحص الرواية كنص تفكيكي والخاتمة تلخص النتائج.</p>	<p><b>الكلمات الدالة:-</b></p> <p>- كويتزي - البرابره - التفكيك - قاضي التحقيق - الفتاة البربرية</p> <p><b>معلومات البحث</b> <b>تاريخ البحث:</b> الاستلام: 2021_9_28 القبول: 2022_1_15 التوفر على النت</p>
---	--

## **1. Introduction**

Literary theory is the collecting or accumulation of ideas and methods of supervising literary writings. Theories refer not to the referents and significance of a literary work, but it is a tool to edit by which one seeks to understand literature. According to the theories, one can evaluate and decipher literature. They also support the readers in analyzing the connection or the relationship between the creator whether novelist, dramatist, or poet, and his work. This field illustrates the part and the role of deconstructionists in examining the text.

As a theory, deconstruction was originated in the early 1960s. However, in the late 1970s, it became a literary sight. Its major introducer and supporter is Jacques Derrida showing logic and rhetoric in harmony between what was mentioned explicitly in the texts and stashed implicitly in the texts (Fadhilah 2). This theory is built against the slogan that the text has a stable and single meaning. It attacks the general idea that the writer or author has an independent interpretation and thus calls for his death and absolute silence, as no text defines a meaning. Deconstructionist thinks that the meaning is created by the reader through his communication with the text. Deconstructionist emphasizes on how the author or writer has twisted his style and diction, as a result of that, what he has said can be replaced or changed at any time (Timibofa 2-3). It builds in the reader's mind a concept that what the writer, he/she, has comprised is open to various interpretations, giving the reader chance to void his heart to bring out something unique. The most important concept of this theory is that the subjectivity of the author must be killed, seeing the literary work as completely objective which awards room for creativity. By doing so, it induces the "close reading" (Norris 16). It debates that hidden meanings inside the text can only be achieved through a deep study of it line by line.

From the viewpoint of Derrida in *Of Grammatology*, any structure whether in science, literature, or even social studies, requires rethinking or reconsideration from the new situation to leave evidence for the interpretation (158-159). If the reader does this, he can monitor the text as he desires, setting in it his experiences and changing or modifying his understanding. H.J.Silverman clarifies that deconstruction pays too much attention to what is happening in the text, and what is interesting in it. The questioning is not searching its parts, its meaning, and its systematic, but by distinguishing its relationship with its contexts, other texts, and its sub-texts. By showing what the text includes, deconstruction highlights what it excludes (4).

John Maxwell Coetzee is a white South African writer, novelist, linguist, essayist, translator, professor of literature, and one of the pioneers of South African literature who is engaged with global and local issues. He is considered as one of the most frequently studied contemporary authors and the most highly respected. He was born in Cape Town, South Africa on 9 February 1940. His father was a lawyer and his mother was a teacher in a primary school. His father spoke excellent English, but with an Afrikaans accent. His family speaks two languages English and Afrikaans. They spoke excellent English because of being schooled in English, but their first language was Afrikaans. Being an educator, his parents encouraged him in his writing. His boyhood in Cape Town was predominated and controlled by cultural struggles, consequent upon the social location of his father, as a lawyer, and his mother, as a teacher, and his situation as an English-speaking White South African. This is what gives him a great significance in being professional in two languages: he speaks English at home and with his relatives, Afrikaans. In an interview, when he was asked

about his date of starting writing as a career, he replied that "he had written and published poetry, and well into his twenties, in the mid-1960s, he still sought a poetic career, while briefly experimenting with prose" (Coetzee and Scott 82-102). He won many prizes including Nobel Prize for Literature(2003) (that is why he was called Nobel Laureate), South Africa's CAN Prize(1977), The Irish International Fiction Prize, Britain's Booker-McConnell Prize (1983), Prix Etranger Femina(1985), and Jerusalem Prize(1987). For his achieving the Nobel Prize, Rob Nixon states that "the prize may be awarded for a lifetime's achievement, but this Nobel feels as if has been awarded for Coetzee's great allegorical novels from the early 1980s, *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Life and Times of Michael K*" (1). Upon his publication of *Waiting for the Barbarians* in 1980, he didn't achieve only Nobel Prize, but also many awards including Geoffrey Faber Prize, James Trait Black Memorial Prize, and CAN Literary Prize (1980). This novel is regarded as the most major text of his novels which can be studied according to Derrida's deconstruction theory. Its publication also reinforced his job as one of the most illustrious writers in the English language.

Giving too much attention to Derrida's idea, especially metaphysics of presence and absence, absence is at the centre of Coetzee's novels, as well the notion of *différance* with signifier and signified. Susan Van Zanten Gallagher concludes her article by saying that "Coetzee identifies the absence of moral authority that results in torture with the absence at the heart of contemporary literature since the advent of deconstructive criticism. This absence is of the ability to write and proclaim the truth about oppression...completely and effectively" (ukessays.com). He was the first novelist to be awarded the super prize, the Booker Prize twice for his two novels: *Life and Times of Michael k* (1983), and *Foe* (1986). He is regarded as the most prominent writer who produced a series of brilliant post-colonial and postmodern novels as well as critical essays covering different and variety of approaches and themes. Coetzee's style of writing is very difficult to describe. Unlike the long sentences that are full of details, one of the prominent features in his works, especially novels, lies in short sentences that are full of deep meanings. He tends to address events in short and complex sentences which are far from direct and the reader must work to find clarity. His fictions call them to engage with the representation of political torture and violence during and after the period of apartheid in South Africa. *Waiting for the Barbarians* is written in response to the violence, torture and pain in apartheid South African. So this novel is composed to talk about the language and the body in pain. The postmodern novels of Coetzee reconstruct the history of apartheid from the periods of colonial through post-colonial to damage or disrupt it. In his works, the struggles between binary oppositions such as colonizer/colonized, master/slave, self/other, torture/tortured, male/ female, white/black, civilization/barbarism, justice/law, and oppressor/oppressed, play a major role. In feminist literature, he is as regarded as one of the major icons of post-colonial writers. In his works, he employs female characters, paying too much attention to the treatment of black women by the colonizers to mirror both gender and racial schism. Not only regarding feminism, but he also doesn't shy away from the aspect of sex as a symbol of repression and exploitation.

## **2. Methodology**

Derrida in his famous work "Letter to a Japanese Friend" reponds to the theorists and the critics about the nature of deconstruction because there is a struggle about it, by stating that: "Deconstruction is neither an analysis nor a critique.... I would say the same about the method. Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed

into one.... I must also be made clear that deconstruction is not even an act or an operation..." (273). This quote suggests the different and various perspectives that deconstruction may trigger. Derrida believes that deconstruction is not a textual reading method, a technique, or a species of critique. It reveals that not only deconstruction has a complex nature but also language itself. He accepts that deconstruction is rather textual interpretation. Deconstruction, as a term, is related to 'deconstuire' (Ibid.), a French verb, which means in English to take to piece and to undo the development of, or the improvement of. However, in philosophy, the deconstruction word was coined by Derrida, as a reply to the idea of 'destructive' analysis in the late 1960s. This idea is rendered by Martin Heidegger's German word which literary means de-building or destruction. This word, thus, is genealogically connected to Martin Heidegger. Some critics mention that as Derrida is a French Philosopher, the term deconstruction is taken or derived from the French verb 'deconstuire' while the others remind that it comes from the term 'destruction', in section VI of 'Being and Time', which was used by Martin Heidegger. This concept was the most argumentative one in the sixties and onwards. Instead of stratifying the idiom of Heidegger to textual readings, Derrida chose the deconstruction term. The foundation of deconstruction comes from the argument that people usually cross their thoughts or ideas in binary oppositions terms. For instance, they may depict an object as true but not false, masculine and not feminine, or white but not black. He supplies his famous theory that the word (signifier) and its reference (signified) have a random and arbitrary connection. Deconstructing text searches to reveal the conflict between signifier and signified.

Deconstruction has appeared as a reaction against the priority of French Structuralism (Levi-Strauss), intellectual system, and a repressive academic that firmly manage a definitive and unique interpretation of the literary text. What most features this approach is its textual concept and the language view as it is found not only in books but also in speech, culture, and history, specifically in written language. According to Derrida in *Of Grammatology*, there was "nothing outside the text" (158). For him, deconstruction is a beneficial or valuable means and instrument of saying new and modernistic things about the text. He believes that the text can be approached through double reading because deconstruction is a nigh reading of the text. Derrida, one of the most complex and effective thinkers in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, becomes a very well-known French Philosopher after the publication of his three prime critical works which attract global respect and consideration as well pursue the attention of the readers in another way, for which he institutes himself as the father of modern or new thinking method in the West: *Of Grammatology*, *Speech and Phenomenon and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, and *Writing and Difference*. The idiom of deconstruction was presented by him after the publication of his best work *Of Grammatology* in 1967. *Of Grammatology*, which is a substantial book carrying a heavy template of philosophy, has been translated by Spivak. It strictly talks about the privilege or distinguishing of speech over writing. Derrida, in this work, claims that Western thought and philosophy have a wish or desire to look for a meaning, a centre or a 'transcendental signified'. This center is called by Derrida 'Phonocentrism' or 'logocentrism' (Ibid. 11). For Derrida, all the Western ideas from Plato till now try to establish their basis on meaning, 'existence' or 'presence'. The difference between phonocentrism and logocentrism, according to Derrida, is that logocentrism is the word written while phonocentrism is the word spoken. M. Habib writes that "deconstruction is a way of reading, a mode of writing, and, above all, a

way of challenging interpretations of texts based upon conventional notions of the stability of the human self, the external world, and language and meaning" (649).

Deconstruction has its idioms including: 'Transcendental signified', 'Closure', 'Produced', 'Supplement', 'Values writing over speech'...etc which will be applied to Coetzee's novel in the discussion. For Derrida, writing becomes needful when speech flops or fails to protect presence. Writing, in this case, then works as an extension that takes the place of speech. He privileges writing over a speech by the allegation that it is the prerequisite of language. According to Derrida in *Of Grammatology*, there is writing in speech. He coined the arche-writing term to depict the time before the distinction between writing and speech was made and to deconstruct the binary opposition of speech/writing. Deconstruction, for him in *Of Grammatology*, "the movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim. Deconstruction should necessarily operate from the inside" (24). He claims, to operate from the inside of the text, there are two methods: the first one is to refer to the careless portions, and interrogate them, and discover their contradictions while the second one is to transact the 'binary oppositions' contained in the text. To explain this belief, he makes a comparison between the text and its structures arguing that in some texts, there are dishonourable and neglected cornerstones that require to be deconstructed. In another way, if someone, a critic or a reader, needs to deconstruct the text, he must discover some important ignored parts or cornerstones and then question them from various and different viewpoints to make alternative meanings. Derrida believes in ruining hierarchies and the rules in binary oppositions (speech over writing, identity over difference, presence over absence, meaning over meaningless). The concept of binary oppositions is changed with Derrida's major shifts made in the 1960s in the Western discipline. In his *Positions*, Derrida summons that there has always been an opposition between two notions or concepts in Western thought and one of them always dominates and rules the other, or "has the upper hand" (41). Binary opposition is the idea of structuralism that admits the tendency of humans to believe in it. According to Saussure, it is the "means by which the units of language have value or meaning. With this categorization, terms and concepts tend to be associated with a positive or negative" (newderrida.wordpress.com). The binary oppositions, for Derrida, are inherently unstable and arbitrary. The text's structures start to clash and overlap deconstructing themselves inside the text. From this concept, deconstruction is seen as an anti-structuralist forum. Binaries, Derrida argues, depend on the presumptions that that presence is privileged over absence. Kelly Oliver mentions that Derrida is regarded as "the star witness of metaphysics of presence" (112). To deconstruct binary opposition, Derrida uses such hinge words: *différance* 'means difference and deferral meaning', supplement 'both excess and lack', trace 'presence and absence', arche-writing 'both speech and writing'...etc. Supplementary means to fill a gap (to add what is missing) and the logic of supplement does not only mean challenge the binary oppositions, but also the logic that they are based on.

For Derrida in *Margins of Philosophy*, our use of language is recognized by what he calls '*différance*', a term coined from a French word '*différence*' (7-21). This French word carries the meaning of both 'deferral' and '*différance*'. As deconstruction, a movement of thought is concerned to pay attention to the fact that language is unstable, the meanings of both 'deferral' and '*différance*' cannot be recognized in speech but only in writing. In the deconstruction theory of Derrida, which is concerned with the relationship between text and meaning, *différance* is a central concept. He insists that the meaning of any word is made possible through its

relationship with other words. Deconstruction theory with difference distinguishes and completes the notion of binary opposition trying to establish meaning. While Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche are regarded as the founding fathers of the terms *différance* and difference, these two idioms are considered the most important key terms given by two renowned philosophers, Jacques Derrida and Ferdinand de Saussure. Those philosophers, despite the differences in their thoughts, try to understand the languages on their own accord. In his philosophy, Derrida stresses difference in a very distinguished and exceptional sense by confirming the vagueness of the verb 'to refer'. He mentions that this verb in some cases refers to the sameness of things, but in other cases, it signifies non-identity or may also refer to a delay (an interval between time and space) and a present uniqueness.

Derrida, in the first two decades of deconstruction, didn't write about political notions or politics and, instead, he focused on the questions of textual interpretation that is why some critics accuse him of frivolity. The reluctance of Derrida to deal with political issues and concepts started at the end of the 1970s. In 1976, a lecture at Virginia University was given and then published entitled "Declarations of Independence" which is considered an experimental application to political issues. After publishing a series of texts in 1980, his efforts to address political notions are developed, reaching its climax in *Force of Law*, he states that, in contrast to law, the thought of justice is bound with the deconstruction possibility (13-42). Derrida, from that time, developed detailed analyses about political and ethical issues and notions such as equality, friendship, hospitality, democracy, and forgiveness. In addition to that, he spoke out in defense of imprisoned writers and intellectuals, he also campaigned against apartheid. Derrida, in his statements on the relationship between deconstruction and justice, claims that "justice is impossible and not deconstructible, the law is deconstructible, the undeconstructibility of justice, the ability to deconstruct the law to ensure the possibility of deconstruction, and deconstruction is justice" (Ibid. 15). While law and justice are different, they have been epistemically associated with each other for the reason that justice makes itself imminent within the law. Like deconstruction itself, justice is displayed as both possible and impossible at once. Thus, if justice is impossible, it will not be able to intervene with the law, but on the other hand, if it is possible, it will already be in the justice field as law. Therefore, it can be seen that the passion for impossible justice is what makes Derrida's theory of deconstruction a movement towards the future. The determination of deconstruction with justice opens the door to the application of new terms of art such as trace, iterability, phonocentrism, logocentrism, *différance*, undecidability, and arche-writing. Derrida announced that "it is just that there be a law (Droit)" (Ibid. 22). While deconstruction means that there is always something that is not finalized and fixed in this system, justice, for him is not something that is simply present, fixed and finalized.

Because deconstruction can be applied on most of the fields or sciences; literature, social, political...etc, it can be regarded as the centre around which the rest of the theorists revolve. In other words, critics can deconstruct a text either from feminist, postcolonial, or psychoanalytical perspectives. This means that Derrida has psychoanalysis, feminist, and postcolonial ideas and this is what will be clarified in the discussion. Deconstructing any text is mainly dependent on mentioning the elements of deconstructionist technique utilized by the writer, including allegory, intertextuality, fragmentation and other postmodern elements. Allegory is a deconstructionist technique that refers to the way or method of writing and interpreting literature, highlighting the contrast between a visible or an apparent

meaning and an intentional one that often obtains privileged. It's to say one thing, but at the same time means another. Derrida mentions that allegories are used as a marker to the work of *différance*. Allegories, in this case, is given tremendous field or scope because it can deal with the conditions which underlie the creation of all meanings (Wilson 144). Intertextuality is another technique of this approach which accepts that interpretation of any text is the reader's matter and this reader and the text interact with each other to produce an unlimited and infinite influx of meanings. Therefore, it presents the text as a "growing, evolving, never-ending process" (Irwin 232). In the work of Derrida, this element can be read through the term supplementarity (without which the text cannot be itself). He argues that intertextuality has some related concepts such as re-writing, imitation, adaptation, and quotation (Jurvan 83). Fragmentation is also a technique of Derrida's theory that can be either formal (structure) or thematic. One can allow his text for an open ending leaving it for the reader to decide which will be the best, instead of offering only one outcome of his work, by "breaking up the text into short fragments or sections, separating by space, titles, numbers or symbols" (Sim 127). Characters, narrative form, images, plot, and grammar can be dispersed and broken throughout the entire work; whether novel or drama or poem. When the author/writer makes a fragmentation in his/her character, this will lead to the conflict of the identity of this character. He argues that nothing has a basic and simple meaning, and no single cause behind an event for the reason that everything is fragmented.

### **3. Background of the Novel and The Novelist**

J. M. Coetzee published his novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) which is his third novel during one of the bleakest times in South African history. For anyone who reads it, the first question that comes to his mind is that why Coetzee writes this novel focusing on the barbarians by choosing the verb "wait" depending on some works? The answer to this question is that he aims to reflect his life on his writings, even in *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, he claims that "all writing is autobiography, everything you write; whether fiction or criticism, writes you as you write it" (17). This means that he utilizes particular events from his own life and perform them in his works or narratives. Accordingly, M.S. Kochin realizes that most of the works of Coetzee are full of what is called "author-figures" (79). Therefore, he chooses the Magistrate as the protagonist of *Waiting for the Barbarians* whom nearly all the events are revolve around. Having lived in a postcolonial period, the writer creates the Magistrate to live in the same period. Coetzee's purpose for writing this text, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, is to show how it is applied to the facts of an apartheid state in South Africa where nationality and citizenship were given to the small minority who are white people. Coetzee was greatly influenced by some critics and writers including Jacques Derrida, Samuel Beckett, Ronald Barthes, Ezra Pound, Hawthorne, Lawrence, Defoe, Kafka, and Constantine P. Cavafy. C.P.Cavafy is a Modern Greek poet who lives in Alexandria, Egypt who talks about the barbarians who never come in his poem because of his living in a fear of attacking them. Coetzee takes the title of his novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians* from the title of Cavafy's poem:

Because night has fallen and the barbarians have not come. And some who have just returned from the border way say there are no barbarians any longer. And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians? They were those people, a kind of solution. (20-21)



He transforms to an African intertext Cavafy's poem, entitled *Waiting for the Barbarians*, by recontextualizing this poem and inviting the readers to visit his novel from different perspectives. Thus intertextuality is apparent in the repetition of the title of Cavafy in Coetzee's title. Borrowing the title from this poem, Coetzee admits that Cavafy's poem is considered as the pre-text of his novel. In this regard, one can ask himself why Cavafy choose to write about barbarians and the Empire?, the answer to this question is that he was originally Greek and lived in Alexandria, Egypt, but worked for British Empire service to earn a living. Martin McKinsey, in this regard, calls him a "civilized barbarian" (qtd. in Boletsi 147). George Savidis explains that the major historical source for Cavafy's poem was the book of Gibbon titled *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (96-97). The wait of barbarians, in Coetzee's text, is similar to the wait in Beckett's play for the arrival of Godot, who never appears. While the waiting in Coetzee's novel is considered a kind of solution, waiting in Beckett's play is regarded as a kind of hope. The word "ENEMY", which is written on the prisons(barbarians), in Coetzee's fiction is like the scarlet letter worn by Hester in Hawthorne's novel as a symbol for her shame and adultery. As barbarians, who never appear in Cavafy's poem, Coetzee repeats its ending in his novel, and even a few nomads and fishermen are captured and tortured on a charge of being barbarians in this novel. Both Coetzee and Cavafy bring the barbarians with the verb 'wait' in their works thinking that those people will be a kind of finding a solution. Cavafy's poem's events revolve around the expectation of the invasion or the attack of the barbarians which never take place and the result of this anticipation is structured and presented in a collection of questions and answers that take place between two persons or participants, the first speaker asks and the second answers. Therefore its events are structured as a dialogue between them. They spend most of their time frightened of being invaded by those barbarians who are considered as an enemy. Waiting for their arrival which is in vain is repeated by Coetzee in his text *Waiting for the Barbarians* when the Empire lives in a fear of being attacked by the barbarians. The novel's setting (time and place)is not specified. Accordingly, H.M.Tiffin explains that the barbarians are unknown and they remain unknown and neither the Magistrate's(narrator of the novel) trying at restitution and love nor the brutalities which are applied on them can "bring them closer" (70). Coetzee rejects the realist devices such as close ending and clear setting. Despite his rejection to locate his novel in any specified setting, this doesn't prevent many of his critics from attributing the status of allegory to this fiction. Those unique elements encourage critics and readers to look beyond their literal meanings.

One of the unique characteristics that make Coetzee differ from other writers is that he makes the novel narrated by an unnamed Magistrate utilizing the first person to personalize him and through him, he allows the readers to witness conscience workings, but at the same time, he employs third-person narrator. What makes Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* differ from other novels is that he creates a male character, the Magistrate, to be the narrator while other novels are narrated by a female. It is a kind of irony in patriarchal societies that are dominated by men. But despite that, he gives a wish for the Magistrate to try to understand the viewpoint of the feminine. He, in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, writes about the colonization of barbarians (blacks), specifically women. In addition to that, he never reveals the name of the Empire(non-specific Empire). His aim from doing this is that he wants to make his narrator with the Empire apply to many others, whether societies or persons. Thus, he provides his novel with a special feature called universalism. Anthony Burgess states that Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* "isn't about South Africa. It isn't

about anywhere, and hence it is about everywhere" (88). The deconstructionist technique, allegory, is employed by its writer not only at the level of structure but also at the thematic level. Teresa Dovey declares that Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* is "an allegory of allegories" (138). Its allegorical nature leads critics to search for political and moral messages. Coetzee, in *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, describes *Waiting for the Barbarians* by saying: "it was about the impact of torture chamber on the life of a man of conscious" (363). In other words, this novel is about the Magistrate who works in the service of the old Empire, but as a result of arriving colonizers guided by Colonel Joll, an officer in the Third Bureau, he loses his career. This colonizer arrives because there was a rumour claimed that barbarians are gathering to attack the Empire. He starts tormenting nomads and fishermen on a charge of being barbarians. One of his victims is the barbarian girl whom the Magistrate helps. The Magistrate begins hating Colonel Joll and the new Empire for torturing innocent people. As a result of defending the Magistrate for those people, he is imprisoned and tortured. But at the end of the novel, he comes back to his former post after Colonel Joll's defeat.

#### 4.

#### Discussion

This paper takes the second side of deconstruction which is deconstructing the writer's text itself without re-deconstructing a text written previously. It displays this side by picking Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Even though he doesn't re-write an earlier text, it shows that he depends on some sources taking either their titles, the verb of their titles, or even some events. To support the theory of Jacques Derrida is viable to Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, (WB)\*, this study will clarify how Coetzee thematically and structurally repeat the title of Cavafy's poem aiming to explain that waiting for the arrival of barbarians are in vain at any time and putting the idea of their coming in any mind bring nothing, but mistreatments such as the women's punishment and many other people even the destabilizing of the state. This paper tackles the most important thoughts of Coetzee depending on the deconstruction approach as they are mirrored in the following quotes:

I have never seen anything like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire. Is he blind? I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes. But he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. He tells me they are a new invention. "They protect one's eyes against the glare of the sun," he says. "You would find them useful out here in the desert. They save one from squinting all the time. One has fewer headaches. Look." He touches the corners of his eyes lightly. "No wrinkles." He replaces the glasses. It is true. He has the skin of a younger man. "At home everyone wears them. (Coetzee, WB, 4)

---

*Waiting for the Barbarians*, (WB); followed by line number.

The novel starts with a differentiating between sight and blindness which is presented during the first arrival of Colonel Joll and with the Magistrate's uncomfortable and nervous of being seen by the eyes of Colonel Joll while he is unable to see Joll's eyes. When he arrives from Third Bureau to the Empire with his men wearing sunglasses to safeguard the Empire from being destroyed by the barbarians, the Magistrate comments on him by interrogating "is he blind?". While Colonel Joll is trying to explain to the Magistrate the reason behind utilizing sunglasses which is represented by protecting skin from getting wrinkles and the eyes from the harsh light of the sun in the desert, one can fathom that this invention is employed as an allegory for the Empire's rejecting to be old and is the colonialist production. From the Magistrate's commentary above, one can see that he is a seeker

of hidden meaning, observant of his surroundings and a searcher for signs in everything. He wants to make sure if Colonel Joll is blind or not. Even he examines the torture chamber of Colonel Joll closely by gazing at the chamber's ceiling and its walls: "What signs can I be looking for?" (Coetzee, WB, 50). He attempts to find signs of violence and torture in this room. Coetzee, in telling the story, utilizes narrative devices that attract the reader's attention to complex considerations of power and to explore colonialism and the issues of postcolonialism which are largely focused and centred on the distance between self and other. Coetzee tries to deconstruct the philosophical assumptions of colonialism by writing "the colonial experience from the point of view of the victims" (Ashcroft et al 33-34). That is why the Magistrate is employed as an interrogator who tries to know the colonial experience from Colonel Joll's victims' points of view. Despite the Magistrate's broad knowledge of Joll's torturing methods, he has left outside the full knowledge and the experience of other. One of the Magistrate's unsuccessful attempts to know the other is his trying to understand one of the victims of Colonel Joll who is a young woman. She is the key figure in Coetzee's text. When the Magistrate finds her begging in the street with blinded eyes and smashed feet, he feels sympathy towards her. He takes her to his apartment finding her something to do instead of prostituting her body and begging in the street. In his house, he sees the signals of torture on her body and begins treating her with oiled massages:

First comes the ritual of the washing, for which she is now naked. I wash her feet, as before, her legs, her buttocks. My soapy hand travels between her thighs, incuriously, I find. She raises her arms while I wash her armpits. I wash her belly, her breasts. I push her hair aside and wash her neck, her throat. She is patient. I rinse and dry her. (Coetzee, WB, 43)

By making sure that the torturers do that, he starts to interrogate her about what has happened, but she refuses to discuss. He sees her body as a text to be read or a story filled with significance. He attempts to treat her tortured body like a text which needs to be deciphered, read, and written. He tries to read the scarring at the corner of her eyes and fingers her misshapen ankles. He tries to reconstruct her image before torturing her, but he fails. He also attempts to remember her face and what she looks like before the torturing, but he can't:

I cast my mind back, trying to recover an image of her as she was before. I must believe that I saw her on the day she was brought in by the soldiers roped neck to neck with the other barbarian prisoners. I know that my gaze must have passed over her when together with the others[...] My eye passed over her, but I have no memory of that passage. On that day she was still unmarked; but I must believe she was unmarked as I must believe she was once a child[...] Strain as I will, my first image remains of the kneeling beggar-girl. (Ibid. 47)

Even in his dreams, he is unable to see her face, his dreams are chased by her masked figure. He recalls some prisoners who are imprisoned with her and her father who dies because of the torture in front of her to interrogate them: "But besides him, where the girl should be, there is a space, a blankness" (Ibid. 65). The Magistrate's frustration of interpreting the girl's body to a climactic stage when he insists to know how the torturers blind her and break her ankles. This means that he hankers for knowledge, but he still stays unconvinced. The more the barbarian girl remains in his home with him the more the Magistrate becomes obsessed with knowing everything about her torment and her life: "It has been growing more and more clear to me that

until the marks on this girl's body are deciphered and understood I cannot let go of her". Even he interrogates her: "What did they do to you?". When she refuses to clarify, he questions her more industriously: "Why don't you want to tell me?". The girl remains impervious and passive without responding to the Magistrate's insist and effort because she thinks that his interrogating is another form of colonization. Upon his failure to interpret the secret of the barbarian's tortured body, the Magistrate believes that her body for him is "obstinate, phlegmatic body". Her body is a "closed ponderous", something "beyond comprehension". When he unwraps the dirty bandages, he finds that her feet are "broad, the toes stubby, the nails crusted with dirt" (Ibid. 40). Then he tries to wash her body to wash away the traces of her torture, but his efforts are in vain because he learns that this washing can't heal the traces. Because of the girl's silence in refusing to tell the Magistrate the truth, her presence, in the term of Derrida, is disserved by her absence. Coetzee, in his text, makes the woman's role pivotal and takes Derrida's theory from a feminist perspective trying to mock the devalued women in a patriarchal society in which the priority is given to men. He defies the patriarchal societies by tackling difficult themes as the conflict between binary oppositions; men/women. Derrida in *Limited Inc.*, thinks the most essential thing you can do to deconstruct the Western's thought in binary oppositions is to give the priority to the second over the first (21). Coetzee, as a feminist, creates the Magistrate's character to give chance for the girl to speak. The scenes of torturing her draw the consideration of readers to the power dynamic between the victim (girl) and oppressor (Joll and the torturers).

Even though there is a difference between the Magistrate and Colonel Joll, they are merely two sides of the same coin, both of them work for the Empire. In their relation to the barbarian girl, they act as interrogators. They are considered as two readers of the same text which is the body of the girl. The triangular relationship between Colonel Joll, the Magistrate, and the girl can be read as a plural allegory of reading and interpretation that leads the readers to learn that texts are treated differently and each text signifies various ideas to them. Coetzee utilizes allegory as a deconstructionist technique in his novel for the aim of revealing the hidden meanings. The Magistrate, in trying to interrogate the girl, attempts to discover and interpret her secret or hidden torture. The secret meaning of the girl's tortured body can be interpreted by close reading and by depending on Derrida's term 'différance'. The most important function of Coetzee's employing allegory is that it confirms the multiplicity of interpretations. Coetzee's purpose of making the Magistrate fail in interpreting the world around him is to invite his text for more readings and opens it for more interpretation paradoxically.

The Magistrate spends most of his spare time wandering outside the settlement among the ruins of an archaeological dig for the aim of looking for signs of a prior civilization. He tries to interpret and decipher the ruins in any way: "[I] laid them out, first in one great square, then in sixteen smaller squares, then in other combinations[...] I have even found myself reading the slips in a mirror, or tracing one on top of another, or conflating half of one with half of another" (Coetzee, WB, 23). Coetzee's goal from the wooden slips (ruins) is to present an allegorical activity that relies on translation in addition to the fact that the effectiveness of allegory is greatly dependent upon the ability of readers to recognize the signs and decode and interpret their meaning. It is a matter of creating an important notion of deconstruction theory that each text must have a gap supplemented by readers. They can be supplemented by an endless number of readings and interpretations. In his book *The Political Unconscious*, Fredric Jameson asserts that "interpretation here is explicated as an essential allegorical act" (10). Thus interpretation is an act of searching for "transcendental signified" that will be revealed

in terms of truth. The Magistrate's image of excavating and deciphering them without being able to discover fixed meaning, and a presence as well a special historical trace evokes Derrida, the famous critic of western metaphysics with his prominent essay titled "Difference". Derrida, in this famous work *Margins of Philosophy*, explains that he "compares the Egyptian pyramid with textual meaning, a pyramid announces the death of the tyrant or pharaoh that is empty inside just as language always has its death within it since meaning is repeatedly deferred" (4). The Magistrate, in searching for meaning, finds nothing but a lack of meaning. This means that the ruins refer to open interpretation.

Following deconstruction theory in analyzing this novel, one can find how this novel has broad interpretations. As a response to that, Robert Spencer describes this novel by asserting that interpretation and reading practice is the central and essential theme of this text (183). In her studying of deconstruction theory in the novel, Teresa Dovey explains that the text of Coetzee traces the Magistrate's failed in trying to give a meaning for both the girl's suffering and the script. In other words, it traces a "crisis of interpretation" (141). His quest for meanings can easily be read in terms of the statement of Derrida in "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" "metaphor doesn't reduce syntax, but sets out in syntax its deviations. Metaphor always has its death within it" (71-74). The narrator's looking for meanings leads to more uncertainties and interrogations than fixed truths, he is led into a maze. Creating or articulating a text causes lies or falsehoods to have appeared. When the narrator looks for meanings, he confronts nothing only blankness. His linguistic and sexual failures are references for neither he can read the text of his world nor create it. In an attempt to give an excuse for his failure, Coetzee, in his novel writes: "whatever can be articulated is falsely put" (88). Hence, the Magistrate, as Derrida states in "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" "endlessly constructs his destruction" (71). Even he fails in reading the text of his identity: "I try to look into myself but see only a vortex" (Coetzee, WB, 65). Accordingly, he calls the barbarian girl: "the only key I have to the labyrinth" (Ibid. 118). The Magistrate perhaps hints to the labyrinth of deconstruction where meanings are permanently searched, interrogated, and spread. This can be applied to Derrida's claiming in *Writing and Difference*, that "The absence of the transcendental signified expands the play and the domination of signification infinitely" (280).

Derrida thinks that one can operate the text from the inside in two ways: either by interrogating it or transacting binary opposition. In an attempting to operate the girl as a text, he interrogates and transacts the binary oppositions of centre/margin. It can be recognized that the Magistrate's aim from repeated questions during her interrogation is to fill the blank text (girl) with multiple readings. Thus, Coetzee creates the barbarian girl's character to destroy and deconstruct the binary oppositions of men/women, master/servant, colonizer/colonized, centre/margin...etc on the one hand and to refer to a major term called multiple or layers which means that each text has forked meanings on the other hand. The frustration of the narrator with interpreting the barbarian girl as a closed text is developed because of the nature of his strange desire and attraction to her:

But of this one there is nothing I can say with certainty. There is no link I can define between her womanhood and my desire. I cannot even say for sure that I desire her. All this erotic behaviour of mine is indirect: I prowl about her, touching her face, caressing her body, without entering her. (Coetzee, WB, 59)

Although the Magistrate has a sexual relationship with her, he feels uncomfortable toward her femininity or womanhood. It is a strange desire that neither can be determined nor he can define. He can't decide whether he is sexually attracted to her or not. By focusing on the character of the barbarian girl, it can be concluded that Coetzee tackles the deconstruction theory from a post-colonial perspective. Spivak declares that we can't find anyone better than Derrida in his political ideas. Her essay titled "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is affected by the thoughts of Derrida and deconstructionist analysis is applied to the studies of Subaltern. As the Subaltern term is utilized to describe people whose voices are unheard, it can be applied to the barbarian girl. Despite her presence, she chooses to be silent (absence). Being an intertextualized text, depending on many sources, the silence of the girl is similar to the silence utilized in *Waiting for Godot*. This means that Coetzee tackles deconstruction theory from feminist perspective. The Magistrate, commenting on his textual and sexual impotence, says: "Not only that; there were unsettling occasions when in the middle of the sexual act I felt myself losing my way like a storyteller losing the thread of his story" (Ibid. 62). As a storyteller who loses the thread or track of his story, the Magistrate, in the middle of a sexual act, loses his way. His failure in linguistics goes hand in hand with his inability and failure in the sexual act. He, accordingly, plays the role of what Derrida in *Writing and Difference* calls: "the deferred reciprocity between writing and reading" (11). When the Magistrate comes back from his journey after delivering the girl to her people, he finds the officials of the Empire gathering for a war against the barbarians, thinking that they will attack their Empire. After returning the girl to her tribe, he is imprisoned and tortured in shameful ways: he is in a dark cell deprived of toilet facilities and clean clothes. Because of this torment, he loses to utilize his hands, "licked his food off the flagstones like a dog" (Coetzee, WB, 165). He fathoms that his torture and imprisonment will turn him into "a creature that believes in nothing". Even he losses confidence in himself: "I walked into that cell a sane man sure of the Tightness of my cause [...]but after two months [...] I am much less sure of myself" (Ibid. 129). In addition to that when the Magistrate objects, after escaping from his cell, on Colonel Joll's torturing of the prisoners in the square in front of the citizens, he is arrested again. Then Mandel (another colonizer), who is assigned the Magistrate's case, with his assistant, forces a tube down the Magistrate's throat and sloshes salted water into his stomach "till it coughs and retches and flails and voids itself". He is forced to place a bag of salt over his head balancing on the top step of stairs "trying not to waver". He is dehumanized by hanging in a tree with tied arms, and dressing a smock of a woman with a bag in his head like "a great old moth" (Ibid. 160-162). His hanging has occurred in front of the crowd to be a kind of mocking him:

Here," says Mandel, and hands me a woman's calico smock. "Put it on."  
"Why?" "Very well, if you want to go naked, go naked." I slip the smock over my head. It reaches halfway down my thighs[...]"The time has come, Magistrate," Mandel whispers in my ear. "Do your best to behave like a man.(Ibid. 157)

In other words, it is a matter of reducing the value of women. The Magistrate can't return the watcher's gaze which puts him in the position of an object. The critics of feminism state that "Women in societies are deprived of a gaze, deprived of subjectivity and repeatedly transformed into the object of a masculine scopophilic desire. The term scopophilic is an idiom that "means to look at something and get

pleasure" (Doane 2). Those critics connect the term criticized by Derrida, 'logocentrism' with the ideology focused on the phallus, 'phallogocentrism'. 'phallogocentrism' gives the superiority to the phallus. Feminist critics thus utilize deconstruction theory for deconstructing the binary oppositions of logic/emotion, courage/weakness, and masculinity/feminism. And Coetzee, by tackling this, is regarded as one of those feminist critics. By hanging the Magistrate half-naked in front of the folk and equating him with the women, he is represented as an object of the scopophilic pleasure of Colonel Joll which empowers authority, subjectivity and mainly masculinity of Joll. By hanging him half-naked, he loses all his authority and power as a man. Hanging him is considered a symbolic castration. The torturers want to show the Magistrate that because he has spoken out against the new Empire, he is no better than a woman.

Applying Derrida's claim, in *Force of Law*, "law is deconstructible" (15), Coetzee creates the Magistrate character for deconstructing law that serves colonizers and doesn't protect the individual from their power. Even they utilize this law against the Magistrate: "They will use the law against me as far as it serves them, then they will turn to other methods. That is the Bureau's way [...] legal process is simply one instrument among many" (Coetzee, WB, 113). The Magistrate tries to undergo law to deconstruction in the name of justice. For Derrida, Justice and law are complementary to each other. The Magistrate, therefore, attempts to deconstruct law in the name of justice.

Coetzee, in his text, tackles the deconstruction theory from psychological perspective and this is what displayed the relationship between these two approaches. According to Derrida, there is no text without a psyche origin (Derrida and Roudinesco 209). The Magistrate, in *Waiting for the Barbarians* tries to read the barbarian girl, as a text, because of her destroyed psyche from being tortured and from killing her father in front of her. Her psyche pushes him to interpret her as a text. Practising torture on the barbarians is psychologically affected them leading them to confess to doing evil actions while they have nothing about these actions. This is clear in the son with a sore confession; after being tortured and his father's death, he confesses not only that they steal sheep and horses, but also his clan (barbarians) is preparing to attack the Empire. Upon their arrival to the Empire for medical treatment, Colonel Joll catches and tortures them on a charge of theft. When the Magistrate interrogates them, the old man informs him: "we know nothing about thieving. The soldiers stopped us and tied us up. For nothing" (Coetzee, WB, 7). As a result of the old man's clarification, the Magistrate asks Colonel Joll: "What if your prisoner is telling the truth", but Colonel Joll replies to him: "Prisoners are prisoners" (Ibid. 31). The Magistrate from the beginning till the end suffers from dreams in which he sees a group of children building a snowman. One of these children is a girl whom the Magistrate believes is the barbarian girl. Seeing her in his dreams is regarded as a matter of hallucination. When he approaches those children, they are immediately melting away. They are considered as an allegory for the barbarians. Their melting is similar to the death of the barbarians (prisoners) who leave the Magistrate's life. The Magistrate, in the last scene of the novel and after he comes back to his former post, completes his repeated dream, but he comments by declaring: "This is not the scene I dreamed of. I leave it feeling stupid, like a man who lost his way long ago but presses on a road that may lead nowhere" (Ibid. 207). The Magistrate in all his dreams sees a girl and wishes to remember the face of this girl obviously before the torture, but he can't because her face is "blank, featureless" (Ibid. 52). Despite his dreams, he fails to repeat what he has seen in his dream. So, one can

realize that the Magistrate, as Derrida in *Writing and Difference* states, seems to lose "meaning by finding it" (26).

Upon his arrival, Colonel Joll and Mandel face him carrying a wooden slip in a bag. They accuse him of becoming an outlaw and collaborating with the barbarians (betrayal). They believe that those wooden slips are secret messages between the barbarians and the Magistrate. That is why the moment he arrives, he is arrested and imprisoned. Therefore, those slips are considered an allegory for practising torture by the officials of the Empire. When they make sure that those slips are messages between the Magistrate and the barbarian, Colonel Joll asks him to reveal their hidden meanings. The Magistrate has no idea about them, even he spends much time trying to deciphering them. Accordingly, he asks himself: "How will I ever know?" (Coetzee, WB, 23). To satisfy the wish or desire of Colonel Joll for fact rather than something the Magistrate satisfies with, he offers and displays arbitrary reading and interpreting. He has no idea how to read them "from right to left or from left to right". Once, in interpreting a slip that consists of a single character, the Magistrate tries to decipher it according to the satisfaction of Colonel Joll by stating:

Now let us see what the next one says. See, there is only a single character. It is the barbarian character [...] It can stand for vengeance, and, if you turn it upside down like this, it can be made to read justice. There is no knowing which sense is intended. That is part of barbarian cunning. (Ibid. 150)

Concerning of signifier and signified, Coetzee employs the Magistrate to play the game by the state's rules and that is why the Magistrate gives different allegorical readings for wooden slips. In other words, the stable relationship between signifier and signified is disrupted, having an infinite shift in meanings that goes and jumps from one signifier to another. When he deciphers them, he declares that they mean either justice, vengeance, or war—a matter of multiplicity of meanings, perpetuate interpretation and ambiguity. They depend on how you can read and interpret them. This proves that the novelistic strategy of Coetzee differs from other liberal novelists or writers in that he presents his novel as an interpretation rather than representation. The wooden slips are described as forms of open meanings. According to Derrida's claim, there is no single cause behind an event and nothing that has a simple meaning. For this reason, the wooden slips can be read as a form of employing fragmentation, which is a technique of deconstruction used by the writer. They have no basic or simple meanings.

Coetzee, in narrating his novel, utilizes first-person narration by employing the character of the Magistrate and the historic present tense. First-person is very obvious in the opening of the novel when the Magistrate comments on Colonel Joll sunglasses: "I have never seen anything" (4). The function of employing the present tense is to enable the narrator, the Magistrate, to deform the events as little as possible, and to get as close as possible to them. The utilizing of the present tense in narrating the novel makes it sophisticated text which calls for multiple rather than a fixed one. He does not only employ the first person in narrating *Waiting for the Barbarians*, but also the third person: "He Chews again, a single scythe of the jew, and stops" (Ibid. 55). The multiplicity of narration; first and second is a major characteristic of postmodern writers.

In *Ellipse of University: An Introduction to Postmodern Fantasy*, Lance Olsen supplies a Derridean look at the representation of Coetzee's novel of 'the metaphysics



of presence and absence' by claiming that metaphysics of presence and absence is the centre in which this text is revolved around. Derrida utilizes such terms as trace; presence and absence, and supplement; excess and lack to deconstruct what is called binary oppositions. Olsen claims that:

Joll is a false reader, a misreader, and a believer in the metaphysics of presence because he makes sure about the presence of the barbarian enemy and their conspiracy against the Empire whereas the Magistrate is a believer in the thought that truth and meaning must be permitted to float free, and in the metaphysics of absence. (110)

Following Derridean thought in deconstructing the binary oppositions which valued one over the other (he wants to deconstruct the evaluating of the metaphysics of presence over the absence) by giving the superiority to the second, Coetzee in his novel aims to give the priority to the Magistrate's believing in the absence of the barbarians. Following Derrida's idea that each text has ambiguity (has more than one meaning) or a gap to be supplemented, Olsen declares that to write is to produce signs and gaps to encourage the readers to a kind of supplementation and rewriting (Ibid.107). Therefore this idea supports an important notion of Derrida's deconstruction which is 'produced'. This notion means that meaning is produced by readers, it isn't found in any text. Therefore Coetzee employs the wooden slips as signs leaving gaps in them for encouraging readers to supplement them and produce meaning according to their points of view.

The writer is influenced by *The Penal Colony* of Kafka (an intertextualized text of this short story), whereby the inmates' bodies become a material surface for engraving, Colonel Joll follows the same method with the prisoners, he forces four of the barbarians to "kneel on the grounds" (Coetzee, WB, 140), then he scrubs dust into the backs of those prisoners and writes "ENEMY" word with a charcoal stick:

The Colonel Joll steps forward. Stooping over each prisoner, in turn, he rubs a handful of dust into his naked back and writes a word with a stick of charcoal. I read the words upside down: ENEMY... ENEMY... ENEMY. . . ENEMY. . . (Ibid. 141)

Intertextuality means that writers or novelists affect each other. Julia Kristeva mentions that a text has two axes that are linked with each other through shared codes. These axes are vertical that link the text with others, and horizontal that connects the reader with the writer/author of this text (69). Coetzee takes these two axes by connecting his text with many sources as mentioned before, and by linking his readers with his novel by leaving the novel open to add their points of view. Kristeva, like Derrida, believes that meaning isn't fixed or stable and that is why both of them give readers a chance to add their points of view. In addition to the fact that deconstruction theory completely frees the text from the author's hegemony.

Coetzee's text can be considered as a written text that gives readers a chance to be active rather than passive. The readers, in this text, will be producers rather than consumers. Coetzee's aim is to highlight writing over speech. He calls readers to rewrite his novel by leaving it open-ended. In the title of the novel, there is a reference to two deconstructionist terms: 'sign' and 'difference'. It can mean that the novel is about the barbarians who never take place (the anticipated invasion of the Empire never takes place). The title refers to their arrival, but the content proves that they will never

arrive. Even when Colonel Joll goes with his army to fight against people in the desert thinking that they are barbarians, he returns without reaching his target. This title is used as a sign to suggest rich meanings. This means that there is no one particular meaning taken for Coetzee's text. There is no barbarian at any time in the novel because they are no more than "pastoralists, nomads, tent-dwellers" (Coetzee, WB, 22). They are desert nomads, fisher people, or unsettled farmers, living near the borders of the Empire. Anyone who looks at this title without reading the text, he will believe that the barbarian will arrive. But when he reads it from the beginning to the end, he will discover that waiting for them is endless. So this can be applied to Derrida's speech that there is no meaning outside the text. A reader can't reach the meaning of their arrival without reading the novel.

Fragmentation, in the novel, occurs within the character of the Magistrate. He is stuck between two opposing realities; he is in the service of colonizers and the Empire for about thirty years carrying out their colonial duties, but with the arrival of Colonel Joll, he begins to sympathize with the natives who are described as barbarians by the colonizers. His face takes two directions, he is both imperial official and imperial outcast, protector and enemy, judge and judged, and law and transgressor. The fragmentation in his personality causes double consciousness which grows to control a large part of his personality. W.E. Du Bois, to describe the double consciousness which is one of the major characteristics of African American identity, utilizes a metaphor called "the veil" behind which "the soul is imprisoned" (124). Because of this double consciousness, the identity may also suffer inconsistency and division. And this is what happens with the Magistrate. His delay, as a postmodern man, to make a decision whether to be colonizer or colonized has brought him a disorder and causes him to have multiple personalities. What the Magistrate needs to relieve himself free from this fragmentation is to decide to which side he belongs and to lift the veil between colonizer and colonized. Thus, he is unable to think of himself outside his role in the Empire service and to make any relation with the barbarians. While he gets angry at Colonel Joll's capture of the nomads or fishermen, he at the same time depicts them as "savages" (Coetzee, WB, 166). That is why the Magistrate, because of the fragmentation, as Derrida states in *Writing and Difference*, loses "meaning by finding it" (26) in his dreams. This means that fragmentation can occur in the character— a matter for the open ending— leading to a conflict within the Magistrate's identity.

## **5. Conclusion**

Jacques Derrida, who was the twentieth-century French literary critic and theorist, pioneered a school of thought and idea in philosophy and literature called deconstructionism. As a deconstructionist, he was a part of this movement which is known as a postmodern theory. This approach searches to discover the hidden and total meanings of a piece of literary and philosophical work by examining the smaller parts of this work. It breaks the work down to its most accurate portions to develop an understanding of it as a whole. Almost any piece of literature, whether novel, drama, poetry, film, and even music, can be deconstructed depending on the school of thought of this French theorist. Deconstruction isn't synonymous with destruction, but it is a way of criticizing and analyzing; it is close in meaning with analysis. Derrida's theory is utilized to prove that texts are written to be productive of meanings rather than having stable meanings. Because it opens the way to produce a wide range of meanings, it demands close reading and the text must be objective. This means that the author's or writer's subjectivity must be omitted. In other words, deconstruction frees

the text from the subjectivity of its writer or author. Therefore, deconstruction can be described as an enemy of authoritarian or authorized texts.

Applying Derrida's thoughts on Coetzee's, postmodern and deconstruction novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, it is easy, to sum up, that Coetzee's adaptation of a single event, which is waiting for the barbarians in vain from an earlier poem and its title, also occurs for finding a solution for this waiting which is considered a criticizing for colonizers and their treatments for another people. Coetzee doesn't reconstruct a previous text from the beginning till the end as other writers do, he only adapts an earlier text's title and its single event. In addition, his text is influenced by many other sources. This means that interpreting Coetzee's novel can be easy through comparing it with those sources (with other literary works and this creates the deconstructionist term 'différance'). Although Coetzee deconstructs his text itself, his text is intertextualized by an earlier written text because he depends on some sources. He, in his text, creates an ambiguity which is embodied in the ruins and the signs of torture the Magistrate found on the barbarians people, especially the barbarian girl. The marks of torment found on the girl is a reference to colonialism.

In addition to that Coetzee presents an event, which is regarded as a reference to insulting women, when the Magistrate is tormented by wearing woman's clothes. It is a matter of criticizing the treatment of women at that time, but this doesn't last because the colonizers are defeated and the Magistrate comes back to his former post. Coetzee, as a feminist writer, rescues women from the ill treatment of men. His purpose is to rescue women from the inferiority and the superiority of men. Thus, he tackles deconstruction from a feminist perspective. He creates the barbarian girl as an absent character although her presence. He presents her as an absent character by making her remain silent giving no interpretation for the Magistrate about the torture signs on her body. Her absence or silence is a sign of her strength because no matter how hard the Magistrate tries to interrogate her, he cannot take any word from her and this is the reason that pushes the colonizers to torment her; they cannot interrogate her about the barbarians. She doesn't respond to the Magistrate's question because she believes that he is the same as the rest of the colonizers. In other words, Coetzee gives priority to absence over presence. Hence, he does as Derrida suggests that deconstructing binary opposition can occur by valuing second over first. Analyzing Coetzee's text with deconstruction theory, it is seen that he focuses on themes, narration, and characterization show another side of the old stories that they depend on in writing his novel. He presents characters and themes from an opposite point of view since this approach concentrates on the story's other side in its first step to reverse binary oppositions.

### **References**

- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Boletsi, Maria. *Barbarism and its Discontents*. Stanford: California University Press, 2013.
- Burgess, Anthony. "The Beast Within: 'Waiting for the Barbarians'". *New York: New York Magazine, News Group Publications*, 15.17(26 April, 1982): 88-90.
- Cavafy, C. P. *The Essential Cavafy*. Trans. E. Keeley & P. Sherrard. New Jersey: The Ecco P., 1995.
- Coetzee, J. M. *Doubling the Point, Essays and Interviews: J. M. Coetzee*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- . *Waiting for the Barbarians*. United State of America: Penguin Books, 1999.

- , & Scott, Joanna. *Voice and Trajectory: An Interview with J.M. Coetzee*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Derrida, J. Force of Law: 'The Mystical Foundation of Authority'. In *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed., Durrill, Michel Rosenfeld and David Carlson. London: Routledge, 1992.
- . "Letter to a Japanese Friend". In *A Derrida Reader*. Ed., P. Kamuf. New York: Columbia University Press, (1991): 269-276.
- . *Limited Inc*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988.
- . *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago University Press, 1982.
- . *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- . *Positions*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- . "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy". *New Literary History*, 6.1(1974): 5-74.
- . *Writing and Difference*. Chicago University Press, 1978, Print.
- , & Roudinesco, E. *De que amanhã. Diálogos de Derrida e Roudinesco*. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Jorge Zahar, 2004.
- Doane, Mary Ann. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Dovey, Teresa. *Waiting for the Barbarians: Allegory of Allegories*. Critical Perspectives on J.M.Coetzee. Ed. Graham Huggan and Stephen Watson. New York: St Martin's Press, 1996.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Signet Classic Printing, 1969.
- Fadhilah, Lia. "Deconstruction Analysis on Major Female Character in the Film A Destiny of Her Own". M.A. Islamic University, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, English Letters Department: M.A.Thesis, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.
- Habib, M.A.R. *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Irwin, W. "Against Intertextuality". *Philosophy and Literature*. 28.2 (2004): 227-242.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Jurvan, Marko. *History and Poetics of Intertextuality*. Purdu University Press, 2008.
- Kochin, Michael S. 'Literature and Salvation in "Elizabeth Costello" or How to Refuse to Be an Author in Eight or Nine Lesson'. *English in Africa* 34.1(2007):79-95.Web.18 June 2018.
- Kristeva, J. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.
- Nixon, Rob. "South Africa's reclusive Nobel Laureate" .J.M. Coetzee. NOV 05, 2003. slate.com/news-and-politics/2003/11/j-m-coetzee-nobel-laureate.html.
- Norris, Christopher. *The Deconstruction Turn, Essays in the Rhetoric of Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 1983.
- Oliver, Kelly. *Subjectivity Without Subjects: From Abject Fathers to Desiring Mothers*. New York: Rawman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998.
- Olsen, L. *Ellipse of Uncertainty: An Introduction to Postmodern Fantasy*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.
- Savidis, George. *Cavafy, Gibbon and Byzantium*. Mikra Kavafika, 1985.
- Silverman, Kaja. *The Subject of Semiotics*. New York & Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Sim, S. *Derrida and the End of History*. New York: Totem Books, 1999.
- Spencer, R. "J.M.Coetzee and Colonial Violence". *Interventions*, 10.2(2008):173-87.

Tiffin, H.M. *J.M.Coetzee: Overview: Contemporary Novelists*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Central Oregon Community: College Library, 2004.

Timibofa, Ayebanoah. *A Critical Appraisal of the Deconstruction Theory*. University of Uyo, Department of English. [https://www.academia.edu/25278169/A\\_CRITICAL\\_APPRAISAL\\_OF\\_THE\\_DECONSTRUCTION\\_THEORY](https://www.academia.edu/25278169/A_CRITICAL_APPRAISAL_OF_THE_DECONSTRUCTION_THEORY), 2015.

Wilson, Andrew P. *Transfigured: A Derridean Rereading of the Markan Transfiguration*. New York, NY, 2007.

<https://newderrida.wordpress.com/2007/11/19/some-key-terms/>.

<https://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-literature/jm-coetzees-waiting-for-the-barbarians-english-literature-essay.php>.