

6 ALLEGORY AS AN ASPECT OF THE NOVELS OF J.M. COETZEE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the example of Buning (11), the study of Coetzee's novels as allegories will be based on those theories of allegory that are linguistically oriented, since literature is made up of words. Coetzee's approach facilitates a Saussurean awareness of language as a system of signifiers of which the signifieds are essentially arbitrary and therefore manipulable. "Such a structural, semiotic view of language in which every language unit can be defined only in relation to the other units within the system in terms of its syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships, is particularly relevant to the study of literary symbolism in general and to allegory as symbolic form in particular" (Buning:11).

This study will also need to be based on semantics, as allegory belongs, semantically, to the realm of polysemy, or multiple meaning (Buning:12). The reader of allegory is continuously encouraged to look for meanings beyond the literal level. Coetzee's work is essentially deconstructive in nature.

The modern reader demands realism, however fantastic the realism may be (Sadler,1976:9), and Coetzee meets this demand. His realism is fantastic, but nevertheless frighteningly real.

Zamora points out that Coetzee's allegories depict a painfully divided world, a world in which the differences are irreconcilable and unresolvable (2). His first three novels are painfully ugly exposures of the spiritual plight of the West (Gillmer,1984:107).

In charting the nature, implications and consequences of the imposition of power, the Western myth of colonialism in all its forms is dissected and revealed for what it is. All Coetzee's fictions reiterate the basic political allegory defined by Hegel in an essay entitled 'Independence and Dependence of Self-Cons-

ciousness, Lordship and Bondage' in *The Phenomenology of the mind*. Zamora explains that in this well-known essay Hegel proposes that the master and the servant are mutually dependent, but that the servant, not the master, embodies the potential for renewal: the master inevitably grows less productive as he grows more dependent, and the servant's growth in power is directly proportionate to his awareness of his master's growing dependence. The awareness of his own power leads the servant to seek others with whom to ally himself in "new social and political configurations" (3). Watson confirms that this aspect of colonialism, the relationship between master and servant, overlord and slave, dominates Coetzee's fiction (1986:370).

Vaughan points out that Coetzee's novels recognise racial-historical origin as a determining force. He reveals the story of racial domination in South Africa not as perverse, but as symptomatic of the central thrust of Western expansionism (1982:123). "The novels not only allude to an actual historical reality, but they also give us, in fictional form, the type of psyche, the psychology that this reality dictates. If colonialism, at its very simplest, equals the conquest and subjugation of a territory by an alien people, then the human relationship that is basic to it is likewise one of power and powerlessness" (Watson, 1986:370).

In his novels Coetzee can be seen as being consistently but never dogmatically anti-apartheid, and this constitutes only one facet of his being anti-discrimination, anti-violence, anti-oppression in any form. His works are a condemnation of man's cruelty to man and he emerges as a champion of human rights. Without always specifying that he is writing about South Africa, he describes tensions between oppressor and oppressed, and the man caught in between, painting a distressing picture of futility and doom. Watson, in fact, says that "Coetzee allows his fictions to float literally free of time and place, even in the act of seeming to allude to a time and place which is specifically South African. In this way they would seem to enter the realm of myth, of the

archetypal" (1986:374).

Gillmer says that the fictional worlds they present are all countries of the mind, "territories of 'Empire' where sustaining, traditional mythologies have been subverted by the 'master-myth of history'" (107).

Wood declares that exploration of the consciousness is indeed what Coetzee, on his own admission, is concerned with and good at (1979:115), and that the monologue of the mind is a technique which suits Coetzee's purposes (116).

The question whether Coetzee's novels are each a complete allegory, or whether each represents a further facet of the same allegory deserves consideration, and is one of the questions that will be dealt with in the discussion of Coetzee's novels to follow. In his fictions we have mind rather than character, situation rather than action. The reason for this is probably the fact that no one is sure any longer that stock psychology and motivation are of any importance (Christie et al.:181).

Another important aspect of modern allegory is suggested by Federman when he writes that the primary purpose of fiction of the future will be to unmask its own fictionality, "to expose the metaphor of its own fraudulence, and not pretend any longer to pass for reality, for truth or for beauty" (427). He elaborates: "... the elements of the new fictitious discourse (words, phrases, sequences, scenes, spaces, etc.) must become digressive from one another - digressive from the element that precedes and the element that follows. In fact, these elements will now occur simultaneously and offer multiple possibilities of rearrangements in the process of reading" (429).

He explains that this does not mean that the future novel will be only "a novel of the novel", but that it will create a kind of writing, a kind of discourse the shape of which will be an end-

less interrogation of what it is doing while doing it, an endless denunciation of its fraudulence, of what it really is: an illusion (a fiction), just as life is an illusion (a fiction) (430). It will be seen that Coetzee's fictions do precisely this, revealing the fictionality of his fictions.

6.2 DUSKLANDS (1974)

Coetzee's first novel, **Dusklands**, is "a bitter, often troubling but finally exhilarating experience" (Morphet, 1974:58). Peter Knox-Shaw points out that it is unlike the later novels, "in remaining directly answerable to history itself" (1983:65). He explains that "... Coetzee presents distinct historical settings (a state department of propaganda during the Vietnam War, Namaqualand in 1760-2) each replete with documentary detail, from which he allows philosophical abstraction to emerge through tacit comparison and the commentary of his narrators, while in the more recent books abstraction informs even the setting" (65).

Whereas some works reinforce the myths of our culture, **Dusklands** succeeds in dissecting them, for "... the novel confronts the reader with the need for, and it implicates the reader in the activity of, engaging critically in the recharting of the myths of our culture - some of the western world at any rate" (Wood, 1979: 115). **Dusklands** proceeds to examine the psychological experience behind the action. The documentary presentation is an ironic mask to what is essentially an anti-documentary polemic (Knox-Shaw, 1983:66).

Dovey is of the opinion that read as an allusion to Spengler's **Der Untergang des Abendlandes**, the title reveals the novel's concern with history as a cyclical process (1987:17). Repetition is adopted as a strategy of subversion which "while the novel participates in the discursive field of historiography, allows it at the same time to deconstruct certain assumptions implicit

in alternative historiographical methods, amongst these the concept of history itself" (Dovey:17).

The critical issue in this novel is the relation of myth and fiction, the two parts of the novel reinforcing each other notwithstanding the two-century lapse in time. The North Vietnamese and the Namaquas are meted out the same treatment.

The allegory that unfolds itself in this novel is multi-level: it reveals the spurious nature of the myths ostensibly governing Western behaviour; it reveals the reality of the nature and spirit of colonialism; it examines the applicability of Hegel's theory of the reciprocal relationship between master and servant, oppressor and oppressed; it reveals the full extent of man's alienation, the disintegrating effect upon himself of his brutality towards others; and finally, an examination of the fictionality of fiction.

Abrahams identifies the 'dusklands' as the primitive South African landscape, and also the Vietnamese warscape and bureaucratic America 1973, representing the special worlds characteristic of allegory. They are, however, more particularly, expressions of the state of the soul (1974:3). Coetzee picks up his narrative at the point where urban white liberalism has been proved to be inadequate and irrelevant. He re-examines the colonial mythology and compares it with the American dilemma of recent years, a dilemma inexorably resulting from the arrogance of power (Christie et al.:187).

Williams remarks on the inappropriately named "New Life Project", which is a plan to win the war in Vietnam, as inappropriate as the name of the narrator, Dawn, in ironic contrast to the 'dusklands' in which he lives (1985:10), and the darkly subversive nature of his proposals. His name also relates to the time of the day in which he does his 'creative' work.

The term "postmodernism", having been coined after World War II when the threat of total annihilation became starkly possible, becomes applicable in *Dusklands*. Abrahams says that "a familiar undertaking in postmodernist writings is to subvert the foundations of our accepted modes of thought and experience so as to reveal the 'meaninglessness' of existence and the underlying 'abyss', or 'void', or 'nothingness' on which our supposed security is precariously suspended" (1981:110). Man's tenuous grasp on reality, his hovering on the brink of the void, is amply illustrated in both novellas. It is revealing that Dawn mentions that he was a little boy in 1945, suggesting that he is part of a whole generation growing up with a keen awareness and dispassionate perception of the void of expected annihilation.

Wood points out that both Jacobus Coetzee, colonialist, and his descendent, Eugene Dawn, neo-colonialist, are the victims of "attempting to live in accordance with a suspect image of themselves" (1979:116), Dawn seeing himself as having the task of imposing order on chaos, while Jacobus Coetzee lives in the euphoria of his superiority which entitles him to enforce his authority over the aborigines.

Dawn's alienation and deep-lying uncertainty is soon established. The fragility of his assumed self-confidence is suggested by the metaphor he uses to describe himself: "I am an egg that must lie in the downiest of nests under the most coaxing of nurses before my bald, unpromising shell cracks and my shy secret life emerges" (D:1)¹. It is supremely ironic that what is hatching out of this "egg" is a daemonically destructive plan, his "shy secret life" the darkening void, the empty nothingness suggested by Nietzsche in his *Twilight of the Gods*. He strings together a number of mottoes or slogans: "All concessions are mistakes"; "Believe in yourself and your opponent will respect you"; "Cling to the mast"; "People who believe in themselves are worthier of

1. D refers to Coetzee, J.M. 1974. *Dusklands*. Johannesburg : Ravan.

love", etc. (D:1), and this is the essence of the novel: the modern man described by Coetzee has no core. At the centre of his existence there is a void, although Dawn declares that he is trying to fashion a core for himself. His perpetual hope that the future will solve his problems does not reveal faith, but despair.

His decision to stand up to his boss, Coetzee, is an attempt at self-assertion of the self-doubting self. He is making his own bid for power, but the reader, and he, are registering his impotence and inadequacy (Wood, 1979:118). Dawn himself fails to understand that the "liberating creative act" (D:4) with which he is occupied is not creative but destructive, causing depression, not elation.

The surrender of individuality required of modern man is suggested by the fact that Dawn's report has to conform to certain preconceived standards. It must be revised, it must be blander, and failure to conform is threatened with "elimination" (D:1), ironically the same fate envisaged for the Vietnamese, and awaiting the Namaqualand Hottentots.

Dawn's senior official, Coetzee, is described as a hearty man, possessing a kind of virility which Dawn desires but lacks. He, on the other hand, is "hunched and shifty", although for the interview he "wears" his straight shoulders and bold gaze (D:2). Even coffee has an intoxicating effect on his weak constitution. Of his boss Dawn says: "He thinks authoritatively. I would like to master that skill" (D:32). The irony revealed here is that Dawn places his faith in precisely that totalitarianism which is responsible for undermining him (Wood, 1979:118). Wood suggests that the body in revolt may be understood as a revolt against the 'impregnable stronghold of the intellect', in which case Dawn represents "not simply a case study of a casualty of the Colonial inheritance, but more broadly and fundamentally speaking, of the Cartesian inheritance" (119).

When Dawn says, "I must pull myself together" (D:2), he is confirming what the reader has already perceived, that his existence is disintegrating. He identifies himself with his work, which is a plan to bring about the disintegration of a whole people, and this work having been the centre of his existence for a year, he is beginning to suffer from the same malady. His description of his "pubertal collapse" (D:2) suggests a person entirely at odds with himself and his world.

Dawn's reaction to Coetzee's rejection of his report (D:5) is an indication of the extent of his self-deception, even as far as the use of the "bull" metaphor, which implies a certain virility, in ironic contrast to his own proven impotence. His inherent desire is to take the line of least resistance, to conform and surrender his individuality.

The inner conflict to which he is subjected brings about an unbearable tension which manifests itself in physical reactions. He appears to have lost control over his body, and "catches" his left fist clenching (D:4). Having partially controlled this impulse, he notices that his toes have taken to curling into the soles of his feet. Anxiety manifests itself in various tics, so that his body becomes a source of continual irritation, an enemy that has to be fought, like the rest of the world. His alienation is so deep as to include alienation from his most intimate self.

Gillmer suggests that Coetzee's portrayal of alienated rationality is reminiscent of Blake's idea of "Single Vision". To explain what she means, she quotes from *The writings of William Blake* Vol. 2, edited by Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1925:209): "... the restricted ego-consciousness of the isolated individual who broods upon his own abstractions and loses all sense of an infinite and eternal reality perceived by the inward eye of the poetic imagination" (180). This idea of alienation from himself is supported by the fact that he works in the morning when his body

is too sleepy to resist the workings of the brain.

In a magnificent image Coetzee gives concrete expression to the physical manifestation of the ennui which attacks him in the afternoon. The warm library simulates the conditions of an incubator which should allow his "shy inner life" to emerge, but his body, his enemy, betrays him, and what is born is a parasite which freezes and clamps the life out of him. This is the same as the tedium which Jacobus Coetzee experiences, which robs his life of meaning.

In the early morning the creative act is described as thawing and cracking the frozen sea inside him and he, ironically, feels himself the "warm, industrious genius of the household", weaving his "protective fabrications" (D:14), which is ironic in the light of his later abduction and attempted murder of his son. His work has no relation to reality, and he is unable to listen to the newscasts as he cannot bear the intrusion, relating it to the torture of the interrogation chamber.

The basement section of the Harry S. Truman Library where Dawn does his research (D:6) suggests the abysmal depths of Borges's Library of Babel. The library is depicted as being starkly functional: the spiral stairway and echoing tunnel are plated in battleship gray, it is compact, protected by the four security cameras which can, however, be evaded, as they, too, have "blind spots". This section is presided over by a microcephalic who disapproves of books being taken from the shelves. Abrahams says that the presence of this microcephalic masturbator suggests that the transmutation of life into half-life is the disease constituted in the world by aspects of our overbearing Western civilization (1974:3). Ironically, Dawn believes that his work would have been approved by this microcephalic, had he been able to understand it, suggesting that his work is as limited in meaning as the microcephalic is in understanding, which is a further manifestation of the void.

Dawn's life appears to be dominated by the neutral colour of gray, his carrel, bookrack and drawer, his office at the Kennedy Institute, gray desks and fluorescent lighting: "Gray planes, the shadowless green light under which like a pale stunned deep-sea fish I float" (D:7). This image also reflects his alienation, his stunned disorientation.

The author touches on the importance of the reader, who has again become the producer of meaning (Quilligan, 1979:21). Coetzee, Dawn's boss, takes the role of reader, and criticizes Dawn's work, presuming to make some suggestions regarding its presentation. His recommendations are ironic, expecting of Dawn "genuflections of style" and "self-effacing persuasion" as methods of influencing the reader (D:3).

The report is intended to be studied by militarists, while Dawn, subconsciously preoccupied with his efforts to impress his boss, has actually written with him as his implied reader, while the report is eventually read by us, the readers of the novel. One realizes the truth of what Quilligan says in this respect: "After reading an allegory ... we only realise what kind of readers we are, and what kind we must become in order to interpret our significance in the cosmos" (1979:24).

Dawn's relationship with his wife and child registers his general sterility and failure (Morphet:58). His impotence is revealed in his description of intimacies with his wife. Their sexual 'union' is another manifestation of nothingness, so that an inherently creative act becomes a mere "evacuation", as "my seed drips like urine into the futile sewers of Marilyn's reproductive ducts" (D:8).

The description of their marriage unerringly reveals his own incipient schizophrenia. His moral balance is indeed being tipped by the work he is doing, by the "malady of the master". He is the alienated self, and has no human relationship strong enough

to break through his mental solipsism.

Dawn has his own mythological conception of America: it is big enough to contain its deviants, yet ironically, his report is rejected because it deviates from the norm. When his boss is dissatisfied with the report, he ignores him, so that Dawn feels that the word has been put out that he no longer exists. His American myth makes it possible for him to surrender, not exert his individuality: "America will swallow me, digest me, dissolve me in the tides of its blood" (D:9). But, writing his report facing the east, and regretting being himself rooted in the evening lands, suggests his rootedness in an obsolete mythology, which is Western and American.

The nude photograph of his wife which he finds in her writing case while looking for proof of her infidelity, is a parody of pornography - the girl seems to be crying out for help, but he reacts as blandly as to the Vietnam photographs. The war photographs are the "battery-driven probe" which activates his imagination, just as the use of this probe to find "a franker way to touch my own centers of power than through the unsatisfying genital connection" (D:11), takes the place of the sex act and reveals his inherent sadism: "She cries when I do it but I know she loves it. People are all the same" (D:11). He has indeed been morally perverted. The photographs are either, as his wife supposes, responsible for his disordered mental condition, or at least a significant reflection of it (Gillmer:108).

Only one of the photographs is openly sexual. The subject, a bulky U.S. sergeant copulating with a young Vietnamese woman or child, with the ironic caption, "Father makes Merry with Children", is an obvious symbol of America's rape of Vietnam, and by implication the rape of every colony that is invaded and subjugated by the colonizer. It illustrates the myth that Dawn uses 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.

The picture of the severed heads is an emblem of their isolated consciousness (Williams:16). Gillmer is of the opinion that the third photograph, of a prisoner in a tiger cage, is also an emblem of the detached 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" (108). The cool, odourless surface of the print reveals how remote Dawn is from reality, from the stench and flies of the tiger cages. The pictures are bland and opaque, unable to yield to the pressure of his fingers, because they are not real. They have already succeeded in doing to Dawn what he plans to have done to Vietnam. When his report has been turned down, it is these photographs that haunt him in the mental institution. The glint of light in the eye of the man imprisoned in the tiger cage becomes a diffuse patch of light in the blowup, and from the security of the mental institution it seems as if that patch of light has been transmuted into the television screen, which penetrated their home with the reality of Vietnam night after night, "that beast's glass eye from the darkest corner" (150).

Dawn also explores the power of the written word. The fact that he says that the writer is as much abased before him [Print], the hard master, as the reader is, confirms Coetzee's declared opinion that once a book has been written, the writer is simply another reader and has nothing privileged to say about it (Sparks: 1983). The power of the written word forms part of the master/slave relationship that Coetzee explores in his work.

Vaughan points out that "The Vietnam Project" is also about the predicament of the contemporary intellectual, encapsulated within bureaucratic-totalitarian structures, collaborating with hopeless and complicit idealism in "the doomladen projects of the latter-day imperialism" (122). Dawn has the novels *Herzog* and

Voss at his elbow, and spends "many analytic hours puzzling out the tricks which their authors perform to give to their monologues (they are after all no better than I sitting day after day in solitary rooms secreting words as the spider secretes its web - the image is not my own) the air of a real world through the looking-glass" (D:38). Vietnam, in Dawn's idiom, has come to be "Print", existing only in his report, and containing all truths about man's nature. It has no other reality. This explains the reason why he refused a familiarization tour of Vietnam: it needs to remain an abstraction for him, although, ironically, he criticizes his boss, Coetzee, for his lack of knowledge of Vietnam.

He describes his life in terms of books: his home is an illustration out of a décor catalogue, his wife a character in a novel waiting for him in a library (D:15), illustrating his growing inability to come to terms with any reality other than the printed word.

Vaughan says that **Dusklands** is haunted by the concept of freedom, "but this concept is like a mirage in the consciousness of its protagonists. The closer they get to it, the more illusory it becomes" (124). The only way in which he can break free of this illusion of being a slave to the printed word, is to reach for his photographs, which constitute a vicarious sex experience, leaving him trembling and sweating, convinced of his manhood. In fact the image serves to emphasise his impotence.

The breaking down of the human psyche by using drugs to force men to talk, is a horrifying aspect of modern warfare, where personal courage and integrity are no longer factors. Their identities are destroyed, broken down by drugs, so that they will never be free of the sense of betrayal, of shame at having betrayed, and the crumbling of faith that comes with having been betrayed. "They are ghosts or absences of themselves: where they had once been is now only a black hole through which they have been sucked"

(D:18). The feeling of having been exposed to something infinitely foul is illustrated in the image: "Something is floating up from their bowels and voiding itself endlessly in the gray space in their head" (D:18).

This experience is ironically echoed when Dawn recognizes that the Vietnam War has brought about the birth of something inside him, something squat and yellow, sucking his blood, devouring his waste until it has become a hideous mongol boy, a vivid image of the insanity which has now taken possession of him, but is nevertheless but an individual manifestation of the mass insanity of Americans at war in Vietnam.

Coetzee examines the problem of identity, which can only be established in relation to the *other*. These people of the camps, reduced to madness by their interrogation and their feelings of guilt, were originally the best of their generation. Their downfall has been brought about by the Americans, because they would not accept them, thus denying them the chance to establish their identity, their reality, their very existence. The decadence of Western civilization is suggested by the fact that they brought to Vietnam their "pitiable selves, trembling on the edge of inexistence", and needing acknowledgement to restore their identity. They brought with them the only links they knew, weapons, "the gun and its metaphors" (D:18). If the Vietnamese had stood up to the American soldiers, proved themselves invulnerable to their weapons, they would have given substance to the American myth. But by succumbing, by revealing that they too were only human, "since whatever we reached for slipped like smoke through our fingers ... whatever we embraced wilted" (D:18), the Vietnamese provided no solution to the lost reality, the lost identity of the Americans, and drove them to even greater atrocities in their unrelenting search to save themselves from existential nothingness. They killed, burned, raped, all in this attempt to establish some kind of identity until they gave up and surrendered to the pitiless dark of their non-being.

This must be perhaps the most powerful illustration of the master/slave theory: the oppressor is dependent on the oppressed for his identity, which can only be established if the oppressed proves himself capable of resisting annihilation. Unbridled power is self-destructive.

Eugene Dawn's analysis of the Vietnamese myth in the "New Life for Vietnam Project" is devastatingly ironic. He says that it is a mistake to think of the Vietnamese as individuals, while he himself is losing his individuality. The voice projected into Vietnamese homes is not that of the father or the brother, but that of the "doubting self, the voice of René Descartes" (D:21). Watson explains that the fundamental feature of Descartes' thought is a dualism between the ego and the external world of nature. "The ego is the subject, essentially a thinking subject: nature is the world of objects, extended substances" (1986:376). Coetzee describes it as "driving his wedge between the self in the world and the self who contemplates that self" (D:21). Watson believes that Descartes has had a profound influence on modern philosophy: "The alienation that entered modern philosophy with Descartes translates itself, in the field of action, into a will to power whose appetite is voracious, limitless, precisely because there is an unbudgeable void at the very heart of it" (1986:374).

Dawn suggests that the Americans themselves take over the father-voice, which is "authority, infallibility, ubiquity. He does not persuade, he commands. That which he foretells happens" (D:22). From his research he has determined that it is the arbitrary, unforeseeable nature of retribution that is most demoralizing.

Dawn reports that "the myths of a tribe are the fictions it coins to maintain its powers" (D:26). The ironic truth of this 'fiction' is emphasised by Christie et al.: "'The Vietnam Project' is concocted in the heart of a civilization whose ostensible myth is freedom, equality, justice, but whose effective myth is power,

guilt and revenge" (178).

The psychological strategy, "fragment, individualize" (D:25) is urged, but we soon become witnesses to the fact that Dawn is himself fragmenting, becoming an isolated individual. His sustaining self-assertion in the form of "I am my work" (D:2) heralds his loss of self-possession, his psychic breakdown (Wood, 1979:117). Christie et al. contend that the Americans have failed because they themselves are no longer whole people (175). This is a further irony, that Dawn's suggestion that they should "fragment, individualize", is a process that has already taken place in America.

In the section subtitled 'Victory', Dawn's mental collapse begins to manifest itself in the intrusion of personal comments. He calls himself the man of the future paradise. Christie et al. confirm that he is the "New Man, but sterile" (175).

The myth that the mother may not be annihilated, is the last one to be attacked. The climax of the next phase should be, according to Dawn, Prop-12 spraying, Prop-12 being a soil poison which attacks the bonds in silicates and deposits a topsoil of gray ashy grit. This daemonically destructive plan is an ironic reflection of the extent of pollution in the West.

He returns time and again to the question of guilt. The only way to overcome guilt is to acknowledge to themselves the validity of psychological warfare, and by doing that to destroy man's conscience, which is his only redeeming quality. The last lines of the report are devoted, ironically, to a portrayal of his disintegrating self.

Dawn describes his own mental condition with an apt metaphor. The exorbitant formations of a crystal garden flower in his head, beautiful, but devoid of life. He is aware that there is a wound somewhere inside him, poisoning his system, which is also the

system of the war effort: "The boys from M.I.T. are giggling about new ways to contaminate fish" (D:34). This last section of the first novella illustrates the individual's gradual decline. There is no return of the dawn, his 'creative' hour.

By kidnapping the child the injunction to "fragment, individualize" has become intensely private, and he learns that freedom is an inner quality, not dependent on external circumstances. Having left Marilyn, he still does not feel liberated. When his mind eventually gives way and he is taken to a mental institution, he is representative of modern man who is no longer capable of making sense of his life without help from his "shrink", having transferred his dependence to an analyst as the new Shaman.

Wood identifies both Eugene Dawn and Jacobus Coetzee as figures trapped within a revealing kind of power-structure. We perceive the destructive implications for each of them, in terms of their own self-hood, and in terms of their relation to the other selves in terms of whom they live (1979:116). In each case the consequence of their would-be supremacy is a withdrawal into the self, a desolating kind of self-consciousness. This is actually a dependency upon the Exploiter/Exploitee structure (Wood, 1979:116-117). Dawn withdraws into an exploring of the self, with bleak ironic humour encouraging his doctors in their task of aiding his exploration. Wood summarizes the inadequacy of these two 'explorers', for they "penetrate with professedly creative purpose, the interiors with which they respectively are confronted, external and internal landscapes that constitute 'dusklands', but they succeed only in destroying, devouring, leaving wastelands and waste products in their wake" (1979:118).

Proceeding to 'The narrative of Jacobus Coetzee', it may be wise to note Tony Morphet's warning (58) that the first story shows the trajectory, while the second carries the fire-power. The first narrative serves chiefly "to give the contemporary 'international' reference points to a map of consciousness" (59) and

the real exploration of the terrain comes in the second narrative. Dawn is a horror and cannot be rejected. We are tightly bound to him, but even more so to Jacobus Coetzee. Abrahams points out that Eugene Dawn adventures intellectually while Jacobus Coetzee adventures physically. Each is attempting, however, in a style appropriate to his era, to impose his developed Western personality destructively on an alien [and innocent?] world (1974:3). The branched nature of *Dusklands* metaphorically juxtaposes contemporary America and the Dutch colony, as the intruder, and also opposes the exotic and the Western, as victim and aggressor (Knox-Shaw, 1983:76). Wood suggests that the strategy of *Dusklands*'s structure is an attempt to enhance the open-endedness of its impact, revealing Coetzee's structuralist sympathies (1979: 116).

The technique of repetition as reinforcement is employed in this novel. It may appear that the surface level has disintegrated, and that the author has deviated from the Aristotelian model with inner and outward, real and unreal, past, present and future, beginning, middle and end (Watson, 1986:384) but the novel represents a documentary report, each section supported by another more authoritative version. The contemporary version in the 'Vietnam Project' is supported by the historically older revised narrative of Jacobus Coetzee, which is followed by an afterword by an imaginary ancestor of the author's, and finally verified by the authentic original Disposition. The two novellas are identical in the mode of consciousness, the one being the origin of the other. Vaughan calls it "the mode of consciousness of a Northern European Protestant type, with its project of world-colonisation (or world enslavement)" (122). The two protagonists in *Dusklands* are fundamentally unsympathetic, arrogant or intellectually arrogant and cruel in different ways (Rhedin, 1984:6).

According to Abrahams, "each narrator presents us with a critique of the soul of the people he is preparing to destroy - but the very terms of his analysis constitute for us a critique of the

critic and what he stands for" (1974:3).

The dominant theme of Western civilization is revealed in **Dusklands** in the form of a quest (Vaughan:124). This quest has a double object: the knowledge, and the control of nature, so that the quest is ultimately self-contradictory (125). "The search for knowledge implies a desire on the part of the seeker to gain reassurance as to the substantiality and meaning of his place in the ultimate scheme of things ... But the path to knowledge involves the exercise of control: the forms of Nature are broken down in order to be known" (125). The seeker leaves a trail of destruction behind him, with the result that he fails to gain ultimate reassurance. He encounters everywhere images of negation, and hence of self-negation (125). Dovey describes this allegory as a quest for identity (22), being an interior rather than an exterior exploration.

The central dynamic of the consciousness of the male protagonists of **Dusklands** is of racial-historical rather than individual origin (Vaughan:125). It is soon clear that the underlying interest which exercises the author's imagination is the psychic bonds and breaches between the white world and the black (Morphet:59). Both first-person narratives deal with the ill-advised imposition of power (Zamora:3), the second narrative beginning almost at the historical beginnings of South African relations between master and slave, colonizer and colonised. The South African situation becomes a paradigm, a recurring pattern, which is a characteristic of allegory.

Part two is set in South Africa, in a "pre-colonial void" (Christie et al.:176). Armed with his Afrikaner conviction of his privileged status and resolved to impose his will on the land and its inhabitants, Jacobus Coetzee penetrates the country and describes his experiences (Zamora:3). The narrative deals with this early explorer-colonizer, "living out the anarchic individualism of his role in the epoch of the youthful vigour of Western

imperialism" (Vaughan:122). Jacobus Coetzee is the archetype of the frontier settler. It is essential for the author's purpose that his explorer should emerge as representative not only of Afrikanerdom but of Western culture (Knox-Shaw,1983:76).

The world that Coetzee creates is simultaneously the barren landscape of the Northern Cape, and the mental world of Jacobus Coetzee. It is the simultaneity of the two worlds that reveals the wealth of the book. The author has caught exactly the rhythms in the nerves of modern South Africa (Morphet:59). Jacobus Coetzee's remarks on their frontier life and relationship with the indigenous people are an ironic comment on South African life today: "Everywhere differences grow smaller as they come up and we go down ... Our children play with the servants' children, and who is to say who copies whom?" (61).

He regards the one gulf that divides them as being the fact of Christianity, criticizing the Hottentots' acceptance of Christianity for the sake of expediency. The Bushman is described as an animal, and treated like one. Ironically, the cruelty with which they are treated is sub-human, at least un-Christian. The attention is focused on the spurious nature of the colonizers' brand of 'Christianity'. The uncontrolled power provided by his superior weapons leads to the disintegration of his own humanity, and perversion of his Christianity.

Jacobus Coetzee sees himself as the equivalent of the father-voice described by Eugene Dawn: the one who restores order with a firm but fair hand, without whom they would die (68). Ironically, he recognises in the approaching band of Hottentots the integrity and confidence of the free man, in contrast to the shifty, placating attitude of his own servants. The degenerative influence of the white man is unequivocally revealed: "So we could look at each other like men, for the last time. They had never seen a white man" (70).

Christie et al. point out that *Dusklands* needs to be read as a defictionalising of fiction. Jacobus Coetzee's problems of what to do next are also directly the problems of the narrator constructing his own work in progress. In this way attention is drawn to the fictionalising imagination rather than to an objectively presented world (181). When Jacobus Coetzee faces the approaching band of Hottentots, he traces in his heart "the forking paths of the endless inner adventure" (D:70), an obvious reference to Borges's *Garden of the forking paths*, suggesting the various narrative possibilities open to the author. He considers four forking paths, two allowing him to emerge as the victor, two presenting the possibility of being routed.

Jacobus addresses the Namaqua in the clichés in which the words of every explorer have been recorded, but without eliciting the stock responses of either awe and acceptance, or of hostility. The leader is passive, unimpressed, while his followers attempt to enter the wagon with all the glee of mischievous children, whom Coetzee keeps at bay with his flourished whip. His discomfiture is clear: "I fretted and the Hottentots giggled and scratched themselves" (D:72). The Hottentots are revealed as having an irrepressible sense of humour, in contrast to the white man's vile temper, and the dour embarrassment of his servants at the unexpected turn of events. Adonis and the Tamboer brothers are already showing the first signs of their eventual 'desertion'.

The "malady of the master" (D:86) is revealed in scenes like the one in which Coetzee arrives at the Namaqua village, and fails to impress upon the inhabitants the significance of his arrival. Realizing that his masterful presence is ignorable, he attempts to ignore them in turn, but finds this to be impossible as, uncowed, they proceed to intrude upon his consciousness. He loses his dignity, screaming at his servants, revealing his impotence. His threatening attitude fails to impress the bystanders, and they take up the taunting hissing which they use to taunt a cornered animal into jumping. When the Hottentot woman advances to-

wards him in her provocative, taunting dance, she is taunting his very manhood and he responds with his instrument of manhood, his gun, firing into the ground at her feet. Zamora points out how the subsequent events follow the Hegelian process by which power inevitably shifts from the master to the servant (4). Coetzee is unable to order and control the "irrational impulses of instinctual life, personified in the tribal Hottentots" (Gillmer:109).

He falls ill and becomes delirious, and eventually recovers by "withdrawing into himself, casting off all attachments, and learning to play the game of minimal survival. Imitating the 'zeno' beetle, which feigns death and allows its legs to be pulled off without wincing, he represses his sensuality, as well as his rage and anxiety, and survives in the form of a diminished selfhood" (Gillmer:103). Jacobus's illness leaves him at the mercy of the Hottentots, and they strip him of every possession as unsystematically and without malice as the Yahoos do to Gulliver (Christie et al.:177).

Coetzee's delirious ruminations examine one of the themes of the novel, the void that lies at the heart of being. In the revelatory light of the wilderness the narrator is forced to confront, within the dark, infinitely recessive self, a centre of complete emptiness. It is this lack of apparent self that forces him to view his identity as coterminous with the external world: "I am all that I see" (D:84) (Knox-Shaw,1983:78). In doing this he reduces the entire world to his individual anti-being: "I am a transparent sac with a black core full of images and a gun" (D:84).

Jacobus Coetzee is a version of Western empirical man, the enumerator, the maker of orchards out of the wilderness. But he is also, like Dawn, Western man at a limit, alone in the wilderness seeking meaning (Morphet:60). His dependence upon the gun is more than physical, as "the need for [the gun] is metaphysical rather than physical" (D:85). Knox-Shaw points out that only by causing death, other than his own, can man believe in his own life

as separate from that of the universe (1983:78): "The gun saved 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" (D:84).

The ambiguities of power are also revealed in spatial terms. Whereas the savage is enslaved by space, the explorer is the master of space, precisely because the explorer's gun has a longer range than the Bushman's arrow. "This fact of logistics means the eventual and inevitable transformation of savage into servant" (Zamora:4).

Zamora points out that the modernity of the narrator's insights into the psychology of domination and his literary style is obviously anachronistic and belies the authenticity of this 'translation' (5) but not of the realities of the mentality of the colonizer, throughout history.

The death of the hare is Jacobus's "metaphysical meat" because only by taking life can his own existence be confirmed. The hunter and the hunted are complementary, as are prospector and guide, benefactor and beneficiary, victim and assassin, teacher and pupil, father and child. "Our little comedies of man and man" (D:86) suggests a complicity, a tacit accession on both sides to the ambiguities of domination and submission (Zamora:4). This myth of master and servant, with their dependency upon one another, is "the material basis of the malady of the master's soul" (D:86). The fated pattern of the transformation of the savage into the enigmatic follower is wearying, but Coetzee realizes that this fated pattern is also the pattern by which he will become a slave to the system of slavery which he himself has had a part in establishing (Zamora:4).

He develops a swelling on the buttock, a tangible eruption of evil which yields a pleasant itching sensation to gentle stroking and is his sole company in the hut where he is isolated (D:88).

When it begins to throb he describes it as a second heartbeat, seeming to have acquired a life of its own.

Dawn stabs his child and is detained in a mental institution. Jacobus Coetzee bites off the ear of a child, and is driven into the wilderness. Ironically, these representatives of civilization are unable to tolerate children. Having penetrated deep into the land of the Namaqua, Jacobus discovers a kind of horror, compounded of his realization that he cannot impress these people. He is stripped of every possession and dignity and, degraded and humiliated, sent back to his 'civilization'.

"The fictiveness of his fiction" which Jonathan Crewe comments on is illustrated when the narrative unblinkingly provides two versions of Klawer's death. Dovey points out that Coetzee constantly foregrounds the narrativity of the narrative by including such devices (1987:22). Coetzee is employing the postmodernist technique of open-endedness, but is also drawing attention to the predicament and the privilege of the story-teller. Knox-Shaw suspects that this disjuncture is intended rather to alert the reader to the ease with which a sole witness may falsify facts prejudicial to his self-presentation. The narrator's obsession with "the pain of others" which he names as a quality of savagery may be a factor. "Cancelling the story of an accidental drowning Jacobus Coetzee proceeds to linger over an episode that betrays the depth of his callousness" (1983:70).

The narrator falls victim to the author's irony, for he is himself convicted by that indictment of brutality which he levels against Bushmen in the preamble to his journal:

I found [an old Bushman woman up in the mountains] in a hole in the rocks abandoned by her people, too old and sick to walk. For they are not 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).

Klawer's second death completes the cyclic nature of the narrative of the first journey in restating its opening theme: "Every-

where differences grow smaller as they come up and we go down"
(D:61).

Dovey contends that the narrator's jubilant proclamation of alone-ness after he has left Klawer behind undermines itself by its contradictions. The ditty, "Hottentot, Hottentot / I am not a Hottentot" establishes that one **is** by means of reference to what one is **not**. "The self is constructed in language - language of necessity addressed to another within a shared code of meanings"(24). In spite of the fact that Jacobus Coetzee rejects the world outside himself, he has to address himself to God, which contradicts his notion of self-sufficiency.

Once again the narrator illustrates the fictionality of his fiction by enumerating his choices - the various 'games' concerning the progress and outcome of his solitary journey. He also examines the possibility of returning to civilization, to the boring life of being a farmer, or of becoming a white Bushman. Morphet interprets this section to mean that, no longer sustained by a sense of Christian destiny, Coetzee conceives the task of finding his way back to civilization as a game or contest played against an indifferent universe (D:105).

Knox-Shaw interprets Jacobus Coetzee's adherence to the paths of righteousness as a radical commitment to savagery. Ironically, it is as an avowed barbarian that he remains faithful to his God, and chooses home in preference to the wild (1983:72).

When Jacobus Coetzee makes his second journey to take revenge upon the Hottentots and the four servants who have defected, he has become a different man. He is detached, filled with a developing historical perspective and the sense that the interior has become a void before which his imagination fails (Morphet:109). He is also fated to experience a kind of self-withdrawal related to that experienced by Dawn. The only way in which he can maintain his image of himself after his experiences on his first journey

into the land of the Namaqua people, is to destroy those people and their community (Wood,1979:117): "Through their deaths I, who after they had expelled me had wandered the desert like a pallid symbol, again asserted my reality" (113).

The reality he experienced when standing on the threshold of his first encounter with the Namaquas can, however, not be recovered. Then he could believe in himself, take pride in the success of the expedition. Then the exercise of power sustained the self (Wood,1979:117). This time the European and the Hottentot do not ride out to meet each other peacefully. The clash is violent, and the first victim is a child, shot between the shoulders.

The myth of the privileged status of the Afrikaner implies his right to impose his will, and the conviction of his authority over the inhabitants of the country is often expressed in Biblical terms. He confuses himself with God, taking upon himself the right to impose his will. When he addresses his recalcitrant servants, he claims the right to decide the fate of the sparrow, which falls only by the will of God.

It is significant that it is not with Dawn's deranged wanderings that Coetzee's meditation on violence coincides, but with his authoritative diagnosis of American hostilities in Vietnam (D:18-19) (Knox-Shaw,1983:78). Jacobus Coetzee identifies the lack of any resistance, any brake to his power, as the material basis for the sickness of the master's soul, and he has to carry on committing worse and worse atrocities in an attempt to prove his reality, his essential being:

Dejection and enervation settled over me and I moved away from him ... The sun was high and no-one was warmed. Our horses edged right and left and right. The only sound was the cold whistling of images through my brain ... There was nothing that could be torn from them or forced through their orifices, that would be commensurate with the desolating infinity of my power over them (D:108)

The power of the victim over the oppressor is clear.

Wood leaves no doubt that Coetzee has destroyed the myth underlying colonialist motives: "This need in men, throughout a crucial phase of history, and in terms, too, of a whole range of human relationships, to sustain a sense of the self through masterful control, through possessive domination and exploitation ... is subtly and profoundly exposed for what it is: not the inherent creative human strength, the hallmark of self-sufficiency that it is assumed to be, but a desperate bid to conceal or compensate for a human deficiency, a sense of an inner void" (1979:117-118).

Watson believes that both Coetzee's Jacobus Coetzee and Schreiner's Bonaparte Blenkins occupy a world that knows no social restraint, where everything is permitted because nothing can be punished, in which both characters have every opportunity to indulge that sadism through which they assert the reality of their own egos over against a wilderness whose emptiness seems to mock all human endeavour (1986:371).

The violation of the Namaqua village becomes synonymous with the rape of the Hottentot child by the Griqua soldier. The whole procedure conveys a sense of tedium, of lack of purpose, illustrating the nothingness that Jacobus feels at his core. The murders are described in sickening detail, but with a detachment that reveals the sadism at the root of Jacobus's nature. He appears to be experiencing events from a distance, enclosed in his egocentric vacuum, estranged from his own humanity. His ineptness in using his gun serves to emphasise his impotence, particularly as the gun has come to take the place of his manhood.

When Jacobus Coetzee concludes at the close of 'The narrative of Jacobus Coetzee' that he has "other things to think about" (D:114), the power of the intellect is ironically emphasised. His bodily self, his Self-in-the-world, is as much an object of contemplation as are those whom he has killed (Wood, 1979:117).

The colonist's penetration of Africa is a demonstration of the

Fall, interpreted with supreme irony as an illustration of Divine Purpose:

The herder who, waking from drunken stupor to the wailing of hungry children, beheld his pastures forever vacant, had learned the lesson of the Fall: one cannot live forever in Eden. The Company's men were only playing the role of the angel with the flaming sword in this drama of God's creation. The herder had evolved one sad step further toward citizenship of the world. We may take comfort in this thought (D:117).

The known world has undergone a steady process of transformation in this novel. The Bushmen, shown as wily animals to be hunted in Jacobus Coetzee's narrative, transform themselves into impressively resourceful human figures fighting against hopeless odds. The treachery of the Hottentot servants transforms into the recovery of human self-respect by casting off the bonds of slavery. On the other hand, loyalty turns into servility (Morphet, 1974:59). The author's mastery is revealed by the fact that this process of transformation is never directly given in the narrative, but takes place as if by secret collusion between the author and the reader.

Coetzee offers us the evidence of history to damn the entire colonial mythology. He reveals the narrator's 'heroism' to be nothing but sadistic arrogance backed by a certain blind animal courage (Christie et al.:187).

Morphet says that both Dawn and Coetzee can only imagine salvation as a breaking through to a beyond. They are unable to see containment within a stable equilibrium inside Western culture as a possibility. It is going onward or death (61).

Abrahams concludes with an evaluation of the impact of *Dusklands*: "It boldly diversifies our fiction and relates it to modernistic modes. It reveals, as persuasively as anything in our fiction, the foundations of bad conscience in South Africa. It invigorates and substantiates the criticism of Western civilization that both White and Black thinkers among us are conducting - and after all not to a totally negative result, since it so creatively applies

Western methods" (1974:3).

Coetzee has allowed the history of the colonizer to unfold before us. He has revealed the myths governing the colonizer's actions, and proved them to be self-delusory. In this allegory he has stripped the master of his pretences and presented him as being starkly naked, as the 'nothing' he has become. Jacobus Coetzee shoots the servants who have defected from his overlordship but nevertheless fails to restore his own reality. The American soldiers torture and kill the North Vietnamese, and Eugene Dawn works out a plan to destroy the Vietnamese from within their very culture, but succeed only in accelerating their own disintegration.

In juxtaposing the war in Vietnam and the expedition into Namaqualand, Coetzee is not only revealing the historical basis of Western colonialism, but by making use of a wider canvas, gives this work a universality which precludes its relevance to the South African situation only. The illusion of a superiority has weakened Western civilization itself, and endangered its very survival by driving its representatives to ever worse atrocities and perversities in their attempts to fill the void left by the loss of belief. The most disquieting thought of all is the realisation that the spirit of colonialism described by Coetzee is still very much with us, as illustrated by the Vietnam section of the novel, and reveals itself wherever one race regards itself as superior to and claims the right to dominate and change another. The prognosis of this malady revealed by Coetzee is not very encouraging.

6.3 IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY (1977)

In 1973 Federman suggested that in the fiction of the future "all distinctions between the real and the imaginary, between the conscious and the subconscious, between the past and the present, be-

tween truth and untruth, will be abolished. The primary purpose of fiction will be to unmask its own fictionality, to expose the metaphor of its own fraudulence, and not pretend any longer to pass for reality, for truth or for beauty. Consequently, fiction will no longer be regarded as a mirror of life, as a pseudorealistic document that informs us about life, nor will it be judged on the basis of its social, moral, psychological, metaphysical, commercial value, or whatever, but on the basis of what it is and what it does as an autonomous art form in its own right" (427).

In *Dusklands* Coetzee experiments to a limited extent with the idea of the fictionality of fiction, and this fictionality is carried further in *In the heart of the country*. In this narrative everything is fictional, not only the voices and heavenly creatures at the end, but even the most realistic narrations in the beginning. Yet, the very idea of unreality must imply that reality either exists or has meaning as a term (Cohen, 1978:26).

To convey the first-person monologue, Coetzee uses an unusual technique of numbered paragraphs, the numbers providing a link to paragraphs often totally divergent in content, and cohering the confused expression of Magda's thoughts. The technique is a deviation from the typical and draws attention to the artificiality of the book. The style is intense and compact, and allows Coetzee to reveal his proficiency. In Magda's words, "Lyric is my medium, not chronicle" (HC:71)¹. The fragmented structure delineates a protagonist who is splintered, contradictory, miserable. She is practical and impractical, stubborn yet cringing, horribly ill-at-ease in the outside and in her own world (Roberts, 1980:21). The technique is similar to Borges's in which conventional linear time is collapsed, and the reader is confronted with mind and situations rather than character and action (Rich, 1982:69).

In Coetzee's hands the novel becomes a critical tool, aimed not

1. HC refers to Coetzee, J.M. 1977. *In the heart of the country*. Harmondsworth : Penguin.

only at the South African way of life, but also by implication at the literature which has traditionally reflected it (Marquard, 1978:83).

In **In the heart of the country** the protagonist is a woman, the spinster daughter of an Afrikaner sheep farmer in some remote region in the heart of South Africa. Vaughan suggests that the switch of sex from **Dusklands** is significant, indicating Coetzee's growing fascination with the problem of resistance, rebellion, of "the transcendence of ascribed modalities" (125). Magda is a self-conscious interpreter of symbols. The countryside which she inhabits is more psychological than physical. She speaks of "a landscape of symbol where simple passions can spin and fume around their own centres, in limitless space, in endless time, working out their own forms of damnation" (HC:12). Zamora points out that the symbols float just beyond Magda's ability to grasp them. The promise of interpretable meaning is always, and only on the verge of fulfilment (8-9), and this constitutes Magda's tragedy.

The literal level of the novel conveys this spinster's meditations which cover her relationship with her father, their coloured servants, and the country. It appears that her mother died years before, probably at her birth. This ugly woman in her black clothes (white at night) has a consuming love for her father and is driven to the verge of insanity by the thought of another woman in his life. This woman eventually appears in the form of Klein-Anna, young wife of the coloured foreman, Hendrik. Her perception of repudiation is so overpowering that she shoots her father. He dies, and Hendrik has to help her dispose of the corpse. Because she is lonely and afraid, she forces Hendrik and Klein-Anna to sleep in the house. An exchange of roles takes place, and she becomes the slave of her servants, also placing her humiliated body at Hendrik's disposal. The two servants eventually flee, however, leaving Magda alone to communicate with "voices", and then with heavenly creatures who pass over the farm in shining aircraft and

address her in Spanish, which she understands although she does not know the language. In reply she packs out phrases and words in white-painted stones in the veld. Eventually she remains behind in lonely desolation, giving birth, through her meditation and flights of imagination, to the intangible 'I', the eternal word of God, 'I am' (Brink,1980:133).

Watson points out that what Magda calls the "savage torpor" characteristic of life in the heart of the country (or colony) was equally well suggested more than a century ago in Olive Schreiner's **The story of an African farm**. There too, one finds a character (Lyndall) with a frustrated, impassioned hunger for a world with horizons broader than those imposed by the institutionalized mediocrity of the colony (1986:371).

Wilhelm makes an interesting observation when she identifies the farmhouse as the modern representative of that building which has stood at the centre of the South African novel's landscape since Olive Schreiner's **The story of an African farm**. "The farmhouse is an analogue of the South African psyche: in Coetzee's novel the internal adjustments to the building, the physical detachment of the room containing the father's body, are an attempt to jettison his harsh authority and break down an internal wall, so to speak, between white farmers and Khoikhoi servants" (1978b:20). The farm emerges as an analogue of the entire country. The house shaped like an H, for heart or hell, is the "theatre of stone and sun" (HC:3), "a *mise en scène* that assimilates both the colonial ascendancy and Cuban presence" (Knox-Shaw,1983:65), the past and the present.

The fictionality of this narrative is established directly. Magda describes the arrival of her father and his bride by horse-cart, and then follows up her detailed description of the dog-cart, the plumed horse, dusty after the long haul, by remarking: "Or perhaps they were drawn by two plumed donkeys, that is also possible" (HC:1).

The new wife is described in sensuous terms, given warmth, languor and a voluptuous beauty, obviously the antithesis of the ugly, angular spinster-daughter of whose insane jealousy she is a figment. The woman that really comes is Hendrik's young wife, Anna, and Magda is flooded with hate and envy.

When she speaks of her mother, she describes her as a woman "such as any girl in my position would be likely to make up for herself" (HC:2) and she engages in endless fantasies regarding her mother's life and death, and her relationship with her husband. Such conflicting references accumulate until the reader recognises that in this narrative everything is possible, nothing has to agree with reality. It becomes a search for truth through labyrinths of fiction.

Strauss points out that both Magda's story and Sartre's neo-Cartesian philosophy which Coetzee chooses as the basis of this novel's structure, reflect the white South African's sense of impotence (1984:121). Magda's greatest consciousness is an awareness of her absences, for "... instead of being the womanly warmth at the heart of this house I have been a zero, a null, a vacuum towards which all collapses inward, a turbulence, muffled, grey, like a chill draft eddying through the corridors, neglected, vengeful" (HC:2). "I am a being with a hole inside me" (HC:9). "I move through the world ... as a hole, a hole with a body draped round it ... a hole crying out to be whole" (HC:41). This void of which she is so painfully aware is indicative of a greater void: "At the heart of Coetzee's heart of the country, there is nothing. The solid core to his work lies elsewhere, outside the works themselves, in something that is effaced, implicit, barely alluded to" (Watson, 1986:377).

Wilhelm points out that Magda's hell is not private, but endemic (1978b:21): "The land is full of melancholy spinsters like me, lost to history, blue as roaches in our ancestral homes, keeping a high shine on the copperware and laying in jam" (HC:3). The

meaningful, painful components of the truth emerging from this "heart of the country", are total loneliness, the urge to communicate, the anxiety to find "signification", the frightening relationship between man and space, man and silence, man and the Void. When these relationships are expressed in terms of human experience, they become macabre performances of hate and love, hinged by jealousy, driven by anguish (Brink, 1980:134). Her whole life is a fantasy aimed at filling this vacuum in order to become an identifiable "I": "I fight against becoming one of the forgotten ones of history" (HC:3); all her spurious adventures are assiduous lunges after truth, "aching to form the words that will translate me into the land of myth and hero" (HC:4) (Brink, 1980:134).

The novel reveals an absence of parental love. The dead mother and harsh father reflect a society that "glorifies the aggressive principle and crushes its women into sentimentalised mothers" (Wilhelm, 1978:20). The father/oppressor is described as the virile steak eater, the same image Dawn uses to describe his boss, and like him, Magda's father is an object of envy. The father is the boss, the brute, the internal split of the family, the pattern paralleled by the white master in the historical situation (Wilhelm, 1978b:22).

She imagines a mythic past when "beast, man and master lived a common life as innocent as the stars in the sky" (HC:6-7). This novel clearly examines the same Hegelian theory that *Dusklands* does, the relationship between parent and child, master and slave, on the essentially human and also on the specifically South African level. It is a process of total denudation and isolation, while searching for "a dream of a pristine age", and for Innocence. Brink interprets this innocence for which she is searching, to be like De Sade's, existing only in the heart of corruption and terror; a loneliness like the agony which Beckett develops again and again (1980:134).

Magda's preoccupation with words and their relation to reality places her in the postmodernist intellectual climate, raising questions about the relationship between the world and the word. Words are her only identity: "I create myself in the words that create me" (HC:8), but she admits the inadequacy of words when they fail to build up communication between herself and her environment, between herself and the servants, for example. With them gestures and tone of voice tend to overpower the spoken word, "... for they too hear my words only dully, listening for those overtones of the voice, those subtleties of the eyebrows that tell them my true meaning" (HC:7). She realizes the alienation and dehumanization that follow when words become a substitute for living: "Is it possible that I am a prisoner not of the lonely farmhouse and the stone desert but of my stony monologue?" (HC:12). At her first sight of Klein-Anna she realizes that "Words alienate. Language is no medium for desire" (HC:26). "It is only by alienating the desired that language masters it (HC:26) is an observation that reveals the nature of her imprisonment: every emotion is alienated by converting it into words. It is significant that her learning "has the reek of print" (HC:47) and does not smack of human communication. She cannot imagine "the resonance of the full human voice telling stories" (HC:47).

Zamora (8) confirms that words do not describe the world so much as separate her from it: of the flowers, stones and bushes of the veld she says that Magda is "alas forever set off from them by the babble of words within me that fabricate and refabricate me as something else" (HC:48).

Her love for her father verges on the incestuous. Having had to carry out such intimate duties as passing his clothes from behind the screen during his bath, cutting his hair, his is the only male body she can visualise. The Joycean image of their entwined faeces is overtly sexual, revealing her suppressed desires. When she calls herself "an 0" (HC:41), she is also decrying her unfulfilled, virginal condition, one of the consequences of her alienation.

The graphic description of the murder of her father and his bride shocks, until one realizes that he is still alive, and that the 'murder' is a fiction of her fevered jealousy. This raises the question of whether the next murder, the rape and her enslavement to the servants, are not all as imaginary as the heavenly creatures at the end obviously are. Near the end of the novel there are conversations with her father which could be remembered, imagined or real.

Magda's ruminations on colonization and the place of Hendrik and his people as the colonized, reveal this novel to be concerned allegorically with wider themes than the superficial, which is the plight of the spinster. The result of the arrival of the white man and his sheep is that the remaining Hottentots are gathered around them "to be hewers of wood and drawers of water and shepherds and body-servants in perpetuity and where we are devoured by boredom and pull the wings off flies" (HC:19).

Rich points out that *In the heart of the country* may be categorised as an 'anti-pastoral' novel - it takes an idealised rural setting and subjects it to close scrutiny - a Borgesian technique, for "it [the novel] succeeds in that it unravels the unchanging, sterile and ahistorical reality at the basis of white colonialism in South Africa" (1982:70) and it is precisely this underlying theme that makes an allegory of this novel. Coetzee's unravelling of the inherent illusions underpinning both the pastoral ideal and the myth of a progressive civilisation governed by the concepts of linear time, is, as in Borges, a revolt against the Western romantic concept of unilinear history of Spenglerian cycles and part of a search back for racial or tribal folk memories (Rich, 1982:70).

Wilhelm believes that it is in the South African society more than anywhere else that the locking out of the other breeds self-hatred and the destructive spoliation of everything round about (1978b:20). Code and convention keep the two sets of inhabitants

of the farm apart, denying them the comfort of ordinary human intercourse. "We might as well be on separate planets, we on ours, they on theirs" (HC:28). The outcome of deep repressions of self and others is sheer violence. The novel shows a "bleak and loveless society, one in which polarity and division rule out lives and distort our loves" (Wilhelm,1978b:18).

The Hegelian theme has its ready-made counterpart in South Africa, where "two apparently diametrically opposed race or class castes face each other in visible polarization: white and non-white, ruler and ruled, privileged and under-privileged, exploiter and exploited" (Wilhelm,1978b:18). Coetzee consciously and thoroughly assimilates the psychological patterning of colonial society, the psychology of master/servant and father/daughter, into the verbal flow of his central consciousness (Wilhelm,1978b:19). Magda refers specifically to the psychology of the servant and the psychology of the master, the master venting his ill-temper on the servants, the servants passively enduring, and then in turn, as masters, venting their anger and frustration on the animals, who fortunately know no anger, but endure. The poisonous female fruit of this schizophrenic society is "the disintegrating, fantasising, solipsistic Magda, who is innumerable split selves in one" (Wilhelm,1978:19). She too is master in relation to the servants. When Klein-Anna replies "Miss is the Miss" (HC:30) 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.

Magda also suffers from the destructive nature of limitless power: "Am I the one to fear, ravening, immoderate, because here in the heart of the country where space radiates out from me to all the four corners of the earth there is nothing that can stop me?" (HC: 50). As she wanders off after shooting her father, she wonders, "Is the following the key: through the agency of conflict with my father I hope to lift myself out of the endless middle of meditation on unattached existence into a true agon with crisis and

resolution? If so, do I wish to employ the key, or do I wish to drop it quietly by the roadside and never see it again?" (HC:62), implying the element of choice open to any person, also the avenue of violence open to the servant. This element of choice is also suggested when she considers doing something to improve her appearance: "Why ... do I not leap up now ... before it is too late? Is there something in me that loves the gloomy, the hideous, the doomridden?" (HC:23).

Zamora points out that the relations of dominance and subservience in this novel are less racial than familial (9). The psychology of the father-daughter relationship repeats the psychology of the master-servant. In both there is a barrier of hate or convention that excludes real communication.

The wound that Dawn imagines to be poisoning his life becomes a reality in Magda's father when she shoots him in the abdomen, leading to the putrefaction and loss of blood which kills him. When she records killing her father twice, it suggests the measure of exaggerated effort required to break free of the hell she inhabits, at the anti-romantic, absent heart of the country. She perceives her domination not only as parental but as paternal, masculine. "Her narrative ... evokes a feminist perspective of sexual domination, and on a paternalistic system" (Zamora:9). She has to kill off authority, the super-ego, to make way for the new softer self to crawl out and make contact with the servants (Wilhelm, 1978b:23). The story is thus the 'reality' of the South African situation reached through fiction. In broad allegorical terms, Magda frees herself from her past, represented by her father, and then tries to relate to the black people around her. Her father is part of the old code. The walling-up of his room illustrates symbolically what Magda is doing: disposing of the old life in order to begin anew.

Her father is, however, difficult to bury, literally and figuratively. "By trying to bury him (the stubborn past) in a hole in

the ground, she is also trying to fill the void in her life, to unite the divided self by ridding herself of her heritage" (Williams:72). This burial of her father has its counterpart in her early imagining of Hendrik's finding her dead in the veld, bringing her back in a sack, and tipping her into a hole in the ground (HC:53). Her desire to fill the void in her life has now been externalised, and her father and what he stands for have to fill that void. Ironically, the difficulty she has fitting him into the hole in the ground is due to his rigid spine, suggestive of his rigidity in clinging to the past.

Coetzee applies the postmodernist technique of labyrinthine procedure and open-endedness when after this second murder, Magda disposes of her father's body in two ways, convincing the reader that all these horrors have taken place in the tortuous labyrinth of her mind.

Magda's bid for freedom involves an attempt to make contact on a simply human plane of equality, even a plane of love, with the two people with whom she has been brought up in a relation of master and slave. She tries to drop the master/slave relationship in favour of a relationship of friendship, but the attempt fails because a mere effort of will is not enough to overcome centuries of cultural and spiritual deformation (Rhedin,1984:7). "The language that should pass between myself and these people was subverted by my father and cannot be recovered. What passes between us now is a parody" (HC:97).

Magda has the solipsistic conviction that she is the centre of the universe, that all things depend on her for their existence, because they are all part of the fiction produced in her brain. She is the reluctant polestar about which all this phenomenal universe spins (HC:116). "If for one moment I were to lose my grip on the world, it would fall apart: Hendrik and his shy bride would dissolve to dust in each other's arms and sift to the floor, ... my father would float like a black cloud ... I make it all up in order

that it shall make me up. I cannot stop now" (HC:72-73). These words reveal unequivocally the fictionality of this narrative. She is indeed the centre of this particular universe, because she is its creator.

When there is no money forthcoming for wages and the stores have been exhausted, the violence, only just below the surface, erupts. Hendrik rapes her, but the fictionality of even this event is revealed by the fact that she describes it four times, differently each time. It may be the subconscious fear lodged in every white person in this country being brought to the surface - the fear that the servant will one day rise and impose his will, claim his right to equality.

The rape drifts into a nightly episode once Hendrik and his wife have moved into the house and occupy the guest room. The roles are reversed and Magda becomes the servant, willingly serving the servants. The arrival of the neighbours destroys this tottering step to a new relationship, and falling back once more into the old dispensation, Hendrik and Anna leave, leaving Magda to her voices. She appeals to him: "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). The degenerative influence of being enslaved is revealed: "Slaves lose everything in their chains, I recognize, even joy in escaping from them. The host is dying, the parasite scuttles anxiously about the cooling entrails wondering whose tissues it will live off next" (HC:119). This idea has been explored by Donoso in *A house in the country*, and by Etienne Leroux in *Die Mugu*. The ducktails cast off the enslavement to convention, to the establishment, and then construct what is but another convention, another conformity. This sentiment is repeated by the voice from the heavens that will not be stilled: "Every man born in slavery is born for slavery. The slave loses everything in his chains, even the desire to escape from them" (HC: 134). This applies not only to Hendrik and Anna, but also to Magda herself.

Zamora points out that Coetzee directly addresses the capacity of language to convey meaning (8). Magda insists that her "monologue of the self is a maze of words" (HC:16), and she refers to words as her cool, alienating medium. But her creation is also her damnation. Every word becomes a station on her way to hell, precisely as she approaches nearer to communication with **heavenly** creatures, because everything is paradoxical, the kind of paradox that forms the basis of mysticism. Brink interprets the novel as a "sign" of mystical illumination, the discovery of the sanctity in the earthy, even in the perverse and the obscene (1980:135).

The idea of nature speaking to man, having a message for him, is of course not unknown in South African literature. Coetzee himself identifies such instances in **Lineal consciousness in the farm novels of C.M. van der Heever** (1985). He cites various incidents where nature "speaks" to the protagonist, "leading" him to deeper insight (22).

The speaking voices reveal to Magda her fictionality, accusing her of fabricating interest to supplement the boredom of her life, making an enemy of herself in the absence of any other enemy. And returning to the South African situation and also to the problem of identity that Dawn recognises in the Americans, who needed the resistance of the Vietnamese to establish their own reality, Magda defends herself: "As for inventing enemies, the pitiful [imaginary] warrior in the hills was never as formidable as the enemy who walked in our shadow and said **Yes baas**. To the slave who would only say **Yes** my father could only say **No**, and I after him, and that was the start of all my woe" (HC:129). The master's weakness, and not his strength, is in direct proportion to the degree of the servant's subservience.

The voices that Magda hears speaking to her, however, quote, among other things, a passage from Hegel's essay on lordship and bondage: "It is the slave's consciousness that constitutes the master's certainty of his own truth. But the slaves conscious-

master's certainty of his own truth. But the slaves consciousness is a dependent consciousness. So the master is not sure of the truth of his autonomy. His truth lies in an inessential consciousness and its inessential acts" (HC:130). Zamora indicates that here the author literally combines Hegel's critique of power with the narrator's critique of language: "The relations of power between master and servant, man and woman, parent and child, are equivocal and volatile, as is the language upon which those relations depend" (9-10). Magda confirms: "All his commands were secret pleas - even I could see that. How then did the servants come to know that they could hurt him most essentially by obeying him most slavishly?" (HC:130).

The affinity of this novel with the theme explored in *Dusklands* is further confirmed: "Was my father crucified on the paradox the voices expound: that from people who bent like reeds to his whims he was asking, in his way, for an affirmation of his truth in and for himself?" (HC:130). The strength of the servant is revealed: "Was it their provocation to reply **Yes baas** to his provocation, casting their eyes down, biding their time until he overreached himself?" (HC:130). And his overreaching is precisely in exploiting his power as master to the extent of taking the wife of his servant from him, breaking the code without breaking the basic convention that supports the code.

These communications from the sky raise questions, but they do not offer solutions. Rich asks whether in this postmodernist novel, stripping away layer upon layer of the mythology that has overlain the consciousness of white settler society in South Africa, Coetzee has sought to reveal an inner existential dilemma confronting "the inheritors of a European colonial culture that stands without roots or history" (1982:72).

When her Spanish vocabulary proves to be unequal to the task of communicating with the heavenly creatures, Magda arranges her last remaining stones in the shape of a woman lying on her back,

in the attitude of the earth-mother awaiting the sky god. Giller remarks that Eugene Dawn's abstractions of the problem have here become "spontaneous images of the naïve imagination", pointing crudely to the reconciliation of contraries (masculine and feminine, self and world) that the West has lost but "true poetic vision" still commands (113). Mythically, her search for re-integration with the feminine principle and with nature, are all represented by the mother-figure (Williams:72).

When, at the end, Magda refuses to write traditional elegies to the landscape, Morrison suggests that she has succeeded in throwing off her past and in discovering her own identity (1977:900). Her reminiscences on the stoep by her father's side, a father whom she has murdered twice, are the type of memory she would have liked to be able to recall, but have been impossible in the context of the life she has unveiled before the eyes of the reader. Or are these memories the truth that has become twisted in her deranged mind? The fictionality of this fiction remains a teasing enigma to the end.

As does the feeling of pessimism: "We are the castaways of God as we are the castaways of history. **That** is the origin of our feeling of solitude" (HC:135), while all she wanted to be is neither master nor slave, neither parent nor child, but the bridge between, so that in her the contraries should be reconciled (HC:133).

This novel complies with all the requirements of modern allegory. The basic narrative is a fascinating exploration of the consciousness of a woman in isolation, isolated by the remoteness of the farm, by the unsympathetic, domineering presence of her father, by her ugly, repulsive exterior, and by the conventions of a society that separates people on the basis of colour.

Its multi-level nature is always apparent, the reader being kept aware at all times that what is being revealed is in reality the

universality of the problems of repression, isolation and discrimination. Coetzee has created his special allegorical world, the remote sheep farm, and isolated it by its distance, and then dissected the microcosmos to reveal its central void. The novel is an inherently ironical and satirical comment on the myths of colonialism.

Magda is a personification of the desires and frustrations of modern man, and the inner conflict which arises from alienation and uncertainty. The established norms and principles of her 'society' have been proved to be meaningless and she is left with an absence, a nothingness, an O, the Void.

The fictionality of fiction is exposed in this novel, as is the author's/narrator's choice of "forking paths" in constructing a fiction. In examining and suggesting the truth of Hegel's theory of the interdependence of master and servant, Coetzee gives concrete substance to the theory and simultaneously allows his novel to act as a vehicle of criticism of a social system which permits the type of relationships he has revealed.

6.4 WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS (1980)

What are we waiting for, assembled in the public square?

The barbarians are to arrive today.

...

Why this sudden unrest and confusion?

(How solemn their faces have become)

Why are the streets and squares clearing quickly,
and all return to their homes so deep in thought?

Because night is here but the barbarians have not come.
Some people arrived from the frontiers,
and they said that there are no longer any barbarians.

And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?
Those people were a kind of solution (Cavafy, 1975:31-32).

The setting of Cavafy's poem is a decadent Roman empire in decline, waiting to surrender to an anticipated barbarian invasion. In bewilderment the empire realizes that it must face its decadence alone: in the absence of imminent domination or annihilation by the barbarians, it has lost the means by which it defined itself as a superior, civilized culture (Penner, 1986:35). Civilization and barbarism, mastery and servitude, are the subjects which connect Coetzee and Cavafy, and connect both to Hegel (Zamora:6).

The "Waiting" of the title of the novel and of the poem from which it takes its name, suggests the analogous position of this outpost, expecting at any moment to be invaded by barbarians from the north, both the novel and the poem pointing to the horror of "the lack of something that will not show itself, an unfulfilled desire, deferredness of meaning, the inability to know fully, jammed completion, frustrated longing, unknown ends, uncertain features, (im)possibility, foreboding, dread, blocked hope, absence" (Olsen, 1985:49).

Sparks describes the novel as the story of a great Empire's descent into bestial behaviour as it seeks to protect its civilization from the threatening hordes waiting beyond its borders (1983).

The ambiguity of the distinction between 'civilized' and 'barbarian' is, however, clearly revealed: "It always pained me in the old days to see people fall victim to the guile of shopkeepers, exchanging their goods for trinkets, lying drunk in the gutter, and confirming thereby the settlers' litany of prejudice: that barbarians are lazy, immoral, filthy, stupid. Where civilization entailed the corruption of barbarian virtues and the creation of a dependent people, I decided, I was opposed to civilization, and upon this resolution I based the conduct of my administration" (WB:38)¹. He does not spare himself the irony of his own ambiguous situation when he concludes, "(I say this who now keep a bar-

1. WB refers to Coetzee, J.M. 1980. *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Harmondsworth : Penguin.

barian girl for my bed!)" (WB:38).

Harvey points out that in a very real sense the novel is about war and peace, life and death, justice, torture and cruelty, conscience, political policy, history and time, "Empire", sex, love and human loneliness (1981:4), but Coetzee's achievement lies in revealing how all these are inextricably interwoven, and all of one bewildering piece (5). The use of the historic present tense gives it a disturbing immediacy despite the narrative being related to a time in the distant past. The tense and the issues raised give it an intense topicality. Smuts describes the novel as a fusion of two elements, an objective political setting, and a subjective moral response (1984:10).

In **Waiting for the Barbarians** Coetzee's tendency towards ever greater vagueness with regard to "the concrete rendition of an historical subject-matter" (Vaughan:125) is carried still further. The deliberately vague and unidentifiable setting underscores the allegorical nature of the novel. In this mode the author has the freedom to examine a fictitious situation free from the bonds of reality, while at the same time maintaining greater realism than in either of the earlier novels. Coetzee has managed once again to transcend the narrow and consuming South African experience, and explore more universal themes. This work is not about South Africa, or Rome, or Russia or Nazi Germany, but about "the heart of darkness in all human nature" (Sparks:1983). Zamora regards this as Coetzee's most allegorical work (5). **"Waiting for the Barbarians"** is a fable about perennial moral and political issues, and ... there is a South African provenance for the thinking, though Coetzee leaves us to wear that cap if it fits" (Abrahams, 1981:88). Smuts describes the theme of the novel as the effect of the political reality upon the psyche of the Magistrate compelled to act within that reality (1984:10).

Peter Lewis identifies **Waiting for the Barbarians** as a political fable dealing with modern totalitarianism (1980:1270). This no-

vel can be read as an allegory of the political situation in South Africa, although there is a complete absence of local South African imagery. The barbarians could be black people who have been dispossessed of their country and who "want their land back" (WB:50). The novel describes cases of torture, arbitrary arrests, imprisonments without trial, racial prejudice and the conflict between colonising Empire and natives turning into a guerilla war resulting in martial tyranny by the Empire (Williams:95). To limit the novel to such a view of South Africa would be inadequate, although Michael Lee says that the novel is not an escape from, but an escape into South Africa (1981:88).

The novel is not basically political, the politics merely forming the background for a far more profound exploration of the effect of the principles of Empire and of brutality on the individual. Peter Wilhelm argues that the deliberate and masterly universalization of character and place, leads the reader into a meditation on the meaning of literature itself, "its corrupting quest for perpetuation and stability, and its fragility in the face of encroaching barbarism, internal as much as any external menace" (1981:513).

The heart of this allegory concerns the relationship between empire and colony, master and slave/rebel, man and woman, blindness and sight, law and barbarism, expediency and ethics (Penner:35).

Olsen points out that like most postmodern artefacts, *Waiting for the Barbarians* deconstructs and dismantles cultural myths, by revealing their opposite, "by unfolding the repressed, by setting free the absence that dwells in the heart of the country" (47). He describes the void that has become a theme of Coetzee's novels as "the zero" that beats at the heart of civilization, authority, humanism and truth (47). Olsen emphasises the absence at the centre of Coetzee's project, the revelations of nothing that make themselves felt throughout the novel (48-49).

Olsen paraphrases a paragraph from Derrida's *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972:376): "In the model of presence, writing is a process whereby an author sends his message to the world and the reader retrieves that message, tries to find what the author had in mind. But however appropriate this model may appear with regard to speech, Derrida argues, such a model with respect to the written word is at best the confession of yearning for an Edenic world where no system of mediation called language, writing, exists between form and meaning. The very act of writing severs the word from the writer, and without the presence of the writer the word's 'meaning' and 'truth' become absent. Hence to write is to produce gaps that must be supplemented, to produce signs, which provoke the reader to a kind of rewriting. To this extent, writing is cut off from any absolute responsibility, from any ultimate authority; it becomes orphaned from its father, open to alternate parents. It becomes an absence that must be filled" (Olsen:49).

The main absence in the novel, however, is that of the barbarians. The barbarians are said to have committed certain crimes, of which there is no definite proof. The magistrate sees them only once, a small band, when returning the blind girl to her people. "Otherwise, the barbarians remain only a gap that the Empire fills with its own panic" (Olsen:50).

But the barbarians never come. And the magistrate and the reader feel at the end of the text "like a man who lost his way long ago but presses on along a road that may lead nowhere" (WB:156).

The narrator is a minor magistrate of an unimportant town on one of the furthest borders of a great Empire, who is unable to form any significant relationship with the barbarians, and cannot think of himself outside his role of imperial agency (Vaughan:125). The imperial power reveals characteristics of every powerful empire in modern history, and the Third Bureau suggests the KGB, the Gestapo, O'Brien of 1984 (Levin:1980) and certain representatives of our

own local security forces. The date is far back, as is implied by the surprise at the unfamiliar dark glasses worn by Joll, the troops clad in armour and fighting mainly with swords, but Colonel Joll and his deputy Warrant Officer Mandel are unmistakably twentieth century. The geography and climate are equally ambiguous. By telescoping historic time and contemporaneity in this way, Coetzee succeeds in emphasising the universality of his work.

This minor magistrate, through whose consciousness the story is filtered, is interested in archeology, and his hobby of excavating the ruins outside the town has given him a sense of historical perspective, but also bears out the sense of absence that pervades this novel. There is no reference in the barbarians' legends to any permanent settlement near the lake, there is no furniture in the excavated buildings, no sign of a cemetery.

The relaxed, paternal nature of the Magistrate's rule is illustrated by the fact that he has never found it necessary to construct cells. Punishment usually takes the form of a fine or compulsory labour (WB:2). For twenty years or more he has effectively been the independent ruler of the place, and despite his 'paternalism', there are signs of sloppy administration.

The easy-going Magistrate often uses the word "decent" as an index to his moral code, and he lives a life of comfortable concupiscence. "From the kitchen to the Magistrate's bed in sixteen easy steps" (WB:32) suggests the amused tolerance of his weakness by the soldiers, at any rate. Menàn du Plessis raises the question of whether he is not one of Hegel's pseudo-masters - a slave without a master, a master without a slave. She refers to Alexandre Kojève's **Introduction to the reading of Hegel**, in which he explains that in such a case the master-slave opposition simply winds down without a fight. He adds: "This Slave without a Master, this Master without a Slave, is what Hegel calls the **Bourgeois**". Du Plessis believes that this accounts for the Magistrate's placid uncontentious code, in which he searches for noth-

ing more than "a quiet life in quiet times" (WB:8) (Du Plessis, 1981:80).

The ambiguity of the barbarians is never solved. Stories reach the capital about unrest among the barbarians, and there is fear that the north and the west might be uniting. The Magistrate has noted that once in every generation there is a revival of hysteria concerning the barbarians. In South African context the fears of the frontier people are uncomfortably familiar. "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 ca-rouising in his home, breaking the plates, setting fire to the curtains, raping his daughters" (WB:8). The Magistrate regards these fears as the consequence of too much ease.

He attempts to convey what he understands as the barbarians' point of view: that they, the colonizers, are but visitors, transients, who will one day pack their carts and return to where they came from. They know that they will outlast the colonizers. Yet, despite his sympathy, he cannot cast off the inherent feeling of superiority characteristic of the bearer of Western civilization. He cannot really look forward to the triumph of the barbarian way, which he sees as "intellectual torpor, slovenliness, tolerance of disease and death" (WB:52).

The Magistrate is one of the "old men" of Empire, one of those who believed in what they were doing, did their best for the people and adopted a paternalistic attitude towards them. Joll is one of the "new men", "the ones who believe in fresh starts, new chapters, clean pages" (WB:24). 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 (1982:48).

Colonel Joll arrives as official of the Third Bureau, whose members are specialists "in the obscurer motions of sedition, devotees of truth, doctors of interrogation" (WB:9). Joll's work is "to find out the truth. That is all he does. He finds out the truth" (WB:3). "Pain is truth; all else is subject to doubt" (WB:5). This is Joll's dictum.

In the novel Joll emerges as little more than a caricature. "His glasses become a shorthand symbol for his insect-like inhumanity, his inscrutability in personal contact, his imperturbability in the 'impermissible' intimate contacts with his victims" (Smuts, 1984:10). He is the stereotype of the torturer.

Joll's sunglasses introduce the theme of blindness or at least of distorted vision that dominates the novel. Olsen points out that words like blank, blind, space, empty, and words suggesting absence appear with high frequency in the text (49). Joll's sunglasses, such a novelty in this outpost, imply the absence of humanism, his spiritual blindness, the lack behind the "mystery of dark shields hiding healthy eyes" (WB:4) (Olsen:53), which are also unfamiliar to the Magistrate. Penner describes him as being as ethically blind as the Empire he represents (36).

While the image of sight and blindness is developed through the physical devices of Colonel Joll's glasses and the barbarian girl's damaged eyes, the Magistrate's vision is revealed psychologically (Penner:39). He attempts desperately to recall an image of the girl before she was crippled. He appears to be trying to envision an edenic time in which torturers have no place (Penner:39). The only way he achieves this vision is through the medium of his dreams.

Joll embodies the essentially barbarian character of the consciousness of master-empire. His antithesis is the magistrate who

is a servant of that same empire, but at the same time a humane person who is repelled by Joll's barbarities.

Joll is at the outpost under emergency powers. His first recorded conversation is an account of a hunt in which he took part, in which "thousands" of animals were slain, and "a mountain" of carcasses left to rot (WB:1). The antithesis to this wanton destruction is revealed when the Magistrate goes on a hunting trip after Joll's departure, and he and a waterbuck ram stand gazing at each other, and he discovers in himself no desire to kill the animal. He becomes aware that "for the duration of this frozen moment the stars are locked in a configuration in which events are not themselves but stand for other things" (WB:40).

Gillmer remarks that Joll's detached eye is not only shielded from the sun by his dark glasses, but also from the gaze of the Magistrate, who sees himself reflected in them, and will later come to recognize in him his anti-self, the other side of Imperial rule (114).

The Magistrate's initial attitude is to give this representative of the Third Bureau token assistance, detaining for him two prisoners that were taken a few days earlier, dining with him, showing him the sights. In spite of his repugnance and his sympathy for the barbarian victims, he initially turns a blind eye to the activities of the torturers, turns a deaf ear to the screams of the tortured. The report from Colonel Joll concerning the death of one of the prisoners is couched in flat, official, impersonal terms, and the Magistrate cannot resist a nocturnal visit to the granary where the prisoners are kept. In doing this, he becomes irrevocably involved.

The Magistrate has not yet formulated his stance. He is still the responsible official in the service of the Empire, serving out his days on the lazy frontier, waiting to retire. All he has asked for is a quiet life in quiet times (WB:8). His initial assistance

to Colonel Joll bears out his belief in peace, "perhaps even peace at any price" (WB:14), even if that price should be a compromise with the 'barbarians' from the capital.

In the beginning he reacts to the new tensions of his life, particularly to the presence of the prisoners in the yard below his window, by wanting to sleep, to sink into oblivion. He is reluctant to wake up, signifying his unwillingness to accept the reality of a situation developing out of his control. But when Joll leaves for the city to make his first report, and the Magistrate reflects on his belief in civilized behaviour, he is, with the reader, struck by the irony of the situation and sickened by it. His frenzied instructions for restoration and rehabilitation are as much an attempt to salve and cleanse his conscience as they are to bring relief to the victims (Smuts,1984:11).

In choosing to become involved with a girl who has been a victim of the Third Bureau, "the parallel is not so crude as a suggestion that there is little to choose between using a sexual partner as a feelingless object and torturing a political opponent; it is, more subtly, the unconscious drives towards complete possession that are here compared" (Levin:1980), although the Magistrate shudders to think that in her eyes the distance between himself and the torturers is negligible. Zamora sees in the characters of the magistrate and the barbarian girl a portrait of the relations between the possessor of power and the possessed which is both a subtle and a pointed indictment of those relations (5).

His inability to penetrate her dense exterior he relates in some measure to the torturers' futile attempts to penetrate her secret: "I behave in some ways like a lover - I undress her, I bathe her, I stroke her, I sleep beside her - but I might equally well tie her to a chair and beat her, it would be no less intimate" (WB:43). His answer to the question whether no one moves her, he finds in the vision of horror, "in the image of a face masked by two black glassy insect eyes from which there comes no reciprocal gaze but

only my doubled image cast back at me" (WB:44). This reveals his worst moral confusion.

His first act with her is sacramental - he washes, massages and oils her feet and broken ankles. This becomes an oft-repeated ritual. The washing of her feet also suggests the kind of purification ceremony that he imagines Joll to undertake to cleanse himself of the contamination of violence before being able to join in ordinary human activities like dining. Although it is in a certain sense a deed of atonement for her suffering, it is also a means of escape for him. "I lose myself in the rhythm of what I am doing, I lose awareness of the girl herself" (WB:28), and so lulls his feelings of guilt.

His desire for her is not sexual, but perhaps of a perverted kind of sexuality. He desires to minister to her, not to possess her, and the culmination of his ministrations is to fall into oblivion, a dreamless sleep that is like death.

Her movements are not free, but "crabbed, defensive, trammelled, as though she were afraid of striking unseen obstacles" (WB:34), revealing the uncertainty brought about by her semi-blindness, her state of captivity, and the ambiguity of her relationship with the magistrate. Because the magistrate fails to transcend the politics of empire, because he is incapable of seeing the woman as an individual human being, she remains a representative of her class, a barbarian, and merits little more than the benevolent paternalism which characterizes his treatment of the barbarians in general. Zamora points out that despite his recognition of injustice and his good intentions, he is rendered impotent by the political and ethical system of which he is an integral part (6).

The girl's eyes have been damaged, her vision impaired to the extent that she has only peripheral vision. Objects directly in front of her are a blur. Her damaged sight is an ironic reflection of the fact that the Magistrate, with his undamaged eyes,

fails to see her as an individual, an independent personality. The only identity she has is in relation to himself and to the torturers. When he looks into her damaged eyes, all he sees are twin reflections of himself looking back at him.

Their relationship is further complicated by an inability on her side to understand the complexities of his motivations. Concerning the implications of his inability to shoot the waterbuck, her only comment is, "If you had wanted to do it you would have done it" (WB:40), and one senses that this is her evaluation of their relationship as well. If he had wanted her, he would have taken her.

In the bed of another lover, he cannot even recall the other's face - "'She is incomplete!' I say to myself" (WB:42), and the blank impenetrability he envisions is indicative of his inability to understand her. It is his own vision that is incomplete. He cannot decide whether she is pretty or not, trying to see with his "blind" fingertips what his equally "blind" eyes refuse to see.

He is surprised to see her sitting in the kitchen preparing food. He can visualise only the vegetables, not the girl behind them, not the hand holding the knife. If he had to sketch her face he would not know where to start.

Having come to feel revulsion at their present relationship, he seeks release from the present in trying to recall the past, the day they were brought to the town, before she was tortured, but the image refuses to emerge.

Only in the last moments of their relationship does the Magistrate transcend his own myopic view of the girl and recognise her identity other than in relation to himself (Penner:37). Du Plessis suggests that the reason for this is the unhappiness of the master who finds himself in possession only of a slavish 'being'. It is

only when the barbarian girl is in a position to make her choice freely and comes to him of her own accord that they can meet on equal terms, and only then is he assured of 'being' (1981:85).

At the core of the novel is the magistrate's evolving ethical awareness (Penner:41), which parallels his developing sight in relation to the girl. The journey undertaken with her is an illustration of what this narrative is attempting to do, to reveal the true natures of 'civilization' and 'barbarity' and to return to a condition of common humanity. His journey is also an allegorical journey towards a goal of understanding of his own motives. He has "crossed the limits of the Empire" (WB:70), and the experience has taken him beyond acquiescence in the brutality of the Empire (Smuts,1984:12).

The position of the magistrate is riddled with contradictions. On the one hand he wants a return to the life of ease that he had, an imperial life that has been based on conquest. Then he is brought up against the reality of what imperialism is and makes a choice. Hypothetically the choice would be between the police and the Empire and what they stand for, and the barbarian way of life. He cannot choose the barbarian way of life and is left vacillating somewhere in the middle (Rhedin:6-7). The magistrate is both the symbol of empire and its victim; his impotence is figured sexually as well as politically (Zamora:6). "So Coetzee dramatizes the blurred lines between compassion, complacency and complicity" (Zamora:6).

The dramatic change occurs when the Magistrate returns from his expedition to return the girl to her people. He is arrested and interrogated, and when he takes his protest against the treatment of a new batch of prisoners beyond withdrawal to open defiance, he becomes one of the tortured: "I am aware of the source of my elation: my alliance with the guardians of the Empire is over, I have set myself in opposition, the bond is broken, I am a free man" (WB:78). He discovers freedom only through suffering.

The Magistrate's dreams form an interesting substructure to the narrative. Zamora calls them "allegorical dreams with archetypal figures and movements which seem to represent in some meaningful way the waking world of the magistrate" (7). These figures seem phantasmagorical representations of his preoccupation with the barbarian girl. His first dream is of the square, where children play at building a snowcastle. As he approaches the children disappear, excepting one who remains seated, with her back to him, and he cannot visualise the face inside the hood (WB:9-10). This dream clearly foreshadows the frustration he is to experience in trying to remember his first glimpse of her (Penner:39).

In another dream he succeeds in seeing her face, but it is blank and featureless, not really a face at all (WB:37). He gives the girl a coin, an act suggestive of compassion and of guilt (Penner: 39), and echoing his initial treatment of her as a beggar.

In the next dream he is mute and frozen, but the girl is smiling and happy as he has never seen her (WB:53). He sees her in a state of innocence as she must have been before the torturers came. Ironically, he is incapable of expressing himself in the dream, and is reduced to mumbling. It is soon after this dream that he returns the girl to her people, and finally finds the words that eluded him in his dream when he publicly denounces the barbarity of the members of the Third Bureau.

The last three dreams occur after the Magistrate has decided openly to confront Joll. The next dream reveals the beggar girl once more, with her monstrous tortured feet. In this dream Coetzee 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 drooping on the other side" (WB:87).

The following dream reveals the same girl, but this time beauti-

fully dressed, and engaged in baking a loaf, which she hands to him in a gesture as sacramental as his washing of her feet (Penny:40). The last dream is reassuring, when he collides with the girl with the happy, glowing face of a child.

The Magistrate is tantalized by the feeling that through his dreams he is on the verge of a revelation which will explain the ambiguities of his waking world, but he is denied this insight. Zamora points out, however, that though the Magistrate is denied the consolation of allegory, the reader is not. The resistance of the magistrate's dreams to interpretation and translation can be attributed largely to his own blindness (8). "If the magistrate sees the face of the woman in his dreams as blank and meaningless, the reader sees its blankness as full of meaning: her blurred features represent the magistrate's perpetual incomprehension, and the incomprehension of the empire which he serves" (Zamora:8).

The accusation the Magistrate flings at Colonel Joll on the square is that he is depraving the people, by implicating them in the senseless, violent savagery with which the prisoners are treated, and this once again reveals the barbarity of 'civilization'.

When the Magistrate is eventually brought before Colonel Joll, the poplar slips are presented as evidence of his collusion with the barbarians, and he translates them into criticism of the wave of terror that the representatives of the Third Bureau are sending through the country, stressing the ambiguity of their actions. He takes a slip with one character painted on it, and suggests that the symbol means war, but might also mean justice or vengeance, depending on the angle from which it is examined. He stirs the slips in the chest. "They form an allegory ... Together they can be read as a domestic journal, ... 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" (112). This suggests the ambiguous nature of history and of truth, everything depending on perspective. It also draws attention to the multi-level nature of

allegory and the multiplicity of interpretations to which it lends itself.

The poplar slips retain their secret, however, in the nature of the isolated words found among Nietzsche's unpublished manuscripts, "I have forgotten my umbrella". They may have no meaning at all, or lend themselves to endless combinations of meaning precisely because they are "structurally liberated from any living meaning" (Derrida, 1979:131).

There is an obvious parallel between the magistrate's failed attempts to "decipher" the scars on the girl and his failure to decode the language on the slips (Penner:42). He feels that he cannot let her go until these marks have been deciphered, the mark like a caterpillar beside her eye, the criss-cross ridges beneath the skin of her buttocks. But he has to let her go without solving the mystery, just as he will eventually bury the slips where he found them, and leave the task of decoding them to a future generation.

The Magistrate's dilemma is that in Joll's dark glasses he sees a shadowy reflection of himself (Penner:36). Du Plessis also focuses attention on the curiously reciprocal relationship between the Magistrate and Colonel Joll, as revealed, for example, by the following interchange:

"You are an obscene torturer! You deserve to hang!"

"Thus speaks the judge, the One Just Man!" he murmurs. (WB:114).

The Magistrate's words are valid, but, ironically, he seems merely to be transferring to Joll some of the guilt that is his own (Du Plessis, 1981:83-84).

He resists the implication that there is anything to link him with torturers, with people who sit waiting like beetles in dark cellars. "I must assert my distance from Colonel Joll! I will not suffer for his crimes!" (WB:44). But eventually, when he comments, "For I was not, as I like to think, the indulgent pleasure-loving

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:134-5), he is coming to understand that a similar kind of perverted curiosity underlies both his and the Colonel's behaviour, and that the existence of the Empire has somehow motivated them both (Harvey:6). When he has asserted his resistance he is no longer the opposite side of Colonel Joll. He has learnt the spuriousness of "peace at any price". He can then say, "Let it at the very least be said, if it ever comes to be said, if there is ever anyone in some remote future interested to know the way we lived, that in the farthest outpost of the Empire of light there existed one man who in his heart was not a barbarian" (WB:104).

Warrant Officer Mandel's clear blue eyes also suggest distorted vision: the Magistrate remarks that they look as if crystal lenses have been slipped over the eyeballs (WB:118). He is the one who inflicts the crowning indignity on the Magistrate, in a punishment that has hints of the crucifixion in it. The Magistrate becomes the scapegoat for the sins of the Empire, but is forced to confront his own guilt: "What will my own administration be remembered for besides moving the shambles from the marketplace to the outskirts of the town twenty years ago in the interests of decency?" (WB:120).

The brutality and destructiveness of the soldiers, over whom Mandel has lost control, is a further illustration of the ambiguity and relativity of the conceptions of 'civilization' and 'barbarism'.

The futurity of civilization is embodied in the children who are an ever-present feature of the novel. They are present in every scene and in his dreams, and in the tree when he is 'crucified'. Everyone in the town is preoccupied with the approaching end. "Everyone but the children! The children never doubt that the great old trees in whose shade they play will stand forever, that

one day they will grow to be strong like their fathers, fertile like their mothers, that they will live and prosper and raise their own children and grow old in the place where they were born" (WB:133).

The honesty of the author is the honesty of the magistrate when the latter compares himself with the Colonel, considering once again the girl's relationship with him and the torturer, and wondering whether he did not in his heart of hearts regret that he could not engrave himself on her as deeply as did the owner of the last face that she saw clearly.

When Joll and Mandel scuttle back to the capital, they are defeated by their own delusions. The 'man of Empire' yearns for an enemy who will put up an honourable resistance. Du Plessis points out that in the Hegelian philosophy it is only through the negation of another human "I" that "being" can be engendered. The great cunning of the barbarians lies in their refusal to enter into combat, and it is this failure to meet with any opposition that finally unnerves Colonel Joll (1981:83). It would appear that the 'barbarians' are the mythic creations of the Empire, as the 'cannibals' are the creation of the Venturas in Donoso's *A house in the country*.

Staring through the glass at the terrified Colonel Joll, the Magistrate is first filled with a murderous desire to do him harm, but "ultimately he perceived that it is only through seeing the other in the imagination that we are able to overcome such hatred" (Penner:43). He has lost his dark glasses and for the first time the Magistrate is able to see him clearly. The last words he speaks to Joll are an attempt to cure the latter of his blindness: "The crime that is latent in us we must inflict on ourselves, not on others" (WB:146-147).

Penner regards this confrontation as the climax of the novel, and draws a parallel between it and an observation by Dr Rieux in

Camus' **The Plague**: "The soul of the murderer is blind; and there can be no true goodness or true love without the utmost clear-sightedness" (Camus, 1948:121) (Penner:43).

Pathetically, those left behind after the soldiers have fled, employ deception to 'protect' themselves, a row of helmets and upright spears are arranged on the northern ramparts, their position being changed every half-hour by a child. The irony of this pathetic artifice is revealed when the townsfolk, busy with excavations for a well, come upon a mass grave, the bones obviously very old. Du Plessis suggests that this may indicate that the barbarians have been and gone, and that what the men uncover is their own past (1981:86). Coetzee has illustrated the fine line that separates victim and victimiser, and the barbarians will, it seems, eventually destroy the corrupted civilization that is built on so much pain, and which has in fact already destroyed itself from the inside.

Within this allegory there is another allegory, the one which the Magistrate wishes to write, but finds impossible to do. What he wants to write is the history of a world in tune with the rhythms of nature, but what he has already related about the workings of Empire is its direct opposite. "His allegory of natural existence conflicts with the history actually imposed by Empire, a sober history which he has already described" (Zamora:6): "Empire has located its existence not in the smooth recurrent spinning time of the cycle of the seasons but in the jagged time of rise and fall, of beginning and end, of catastrophe. Empire dooms itself to live in history and plot against history" (WB:133).

Neither Coetzee nor his magistrate is a facile optimist (Penner: 43): "To the last we will have learned nothing. In all of us, deep down, there seems to be something granite and unteachable. No one truly believes, despite the hysteria in the streets, that the world of tranquil certainties we were born into is about to be extinguished" (WB:143). The revelation that we feel must be immi-

ment, when all this significance will fall into place, never comes (Harvey:3), and at the end, the inhabitants of the town are still waiting for the barbarians. The events shamble on in a fashion that conveys the bemused apathy of the remaining inhabitants (Smuts,1984:11).

Williams puts it this way: "[It] is not a novel that resolves itself either with a clarification of the Magistrate's position or with the arrival of the barbarians. Instead, the novel is an exploration of the state of confusion, of illusion, and projection of false ideas onto people, and the 'truth' is never reached, for the novel cannot presume to give the truth" (142).

Each of us, it seems, is waiting for the barbarians, and if Coetzee is right, we will not have long to wait (Levin:1980). This cultural masterpiece has focused with irony, eroticism, introspection and fear on the fact that it is not necessary to await an attack from barbarians, because the barbarian is already there, within man himself (Janisch:1981).

Coetzee has managed to evoke the elusive terror of Kafka. "But the stripping of humanity to its last defences, and then beyond them, goes further than the fate suffered by Josef K., if only because in the magistrate's case the experience is so much more conscious" (Levin:1980).

The story is an indictment of South Africa and every other country that is ruled by "people who assert that there are higher considerations than those of decency" (WB:81), but beneath the surface it is timeless, spaceless, nameless and universal (Levin:1980). Coetzee sees the heart of darkness in all societies, and it gradually becomes clear that he is not dealing in politics at all, "but inquiring into the nature of the beast that lurks within each of us" (Levin:1980).

Unlike traditional allegory, this novel does not suggest an ideal

level of meaning at which truth may be interpreted. It repeatedly questions the possibility of interpretation. Whereas traditional allegory involves the interpretation of a set of symbols and the transference of the interpretation to a context beyond the text itself, in *Waiting for the Barbarians* the referential certainty upon which allegory has always stood is repeatedly deconstructed (Zamora:7).

This allegory has the coherent surface meaning with its multiplicity of underlying interpretations that is a feature of modern allegory. This time Coetzee has isolated his protagonists in a border town far from the capital of the Empire and generally free from its influence, and then called into question the myths by which these colonizers exist.

There are elements of the allegorical journey in the Magistrate's journey with the barbarian girl to her people, which is a journey for the Magistrate towards greater understanding and improved vision.

The allegorical battle becomes the non-battle that destroys the representatives of the Empire, because the barbarians decline to become the other "I" that will provide Joll and his men with the "being" without which they cannot establish their own identity, and the search for the barbarians disintegrates into an interior, psychological search for substance. The myths of colonialism are examined and discarded, but not replaced. Hegel's master/servant theory is examined in all its variations, revealing the dependence of the one upon the other.

The South African situation is approached obliquely and the weaknesses in the system revealed, but far more important is the universality attained by the author in which the ethic of the whole of Western civilization is questioned.

The only character that is completely realised, and his inner con-

flict, alienation and uncertainty revealed, is the Magistrate, the other characters acting as foils. When he eventually openly opposes Joll and Mandel and suffers the atrocious consequences of pain and degradation, he is acting in the light of norms and principles of "common decency", but the last lines of the novel reveal that even these norms have lost their meaning: "I leave it [the square] feeling stupid, like a man who lost his way long ago but presses on along a road that may lead nowhere" (WB:156). The only hope projected in the novel is in the children, whose presence is emphasised throughout, and at the end are engaged in building what the Magistrate describes as "not a bad snowman" (WB:156).

6.5 LIFE AND TIMES OF MICHAEL K (1983)

This novel differs from the previous books in that it is a detached account by an omniscient narrator, and not a first-person narrative. It is an allegory that can be interpreted on at least two levels, the universal, and the specifically South African. Patricia Blake interprets the subject of the book to be terminal civil war, and the time the end of the world (1984:56). Smith says it is not apocalyptic vision, not the Big Bang theory of the end of civilization as we know it, but the Continuous Disintegration mode, "of life lived at the lowest common denominator of lawlessness and self-sufficiency" (1983:28).

The streets, the Sea Point beach front and the remote Prince Albert district are all recognisably South African, and Coetzee manages to evoke through his spare narrative the harshness of the Cape winter and the dryness but singular beauty of the Karoo with a sureness of touch only possible to one who is intimately familiar with the region.

But the landscape travelled by Michael K is a cold, unfriendly one. It is a landscape of abandoned beach-front flats, deserted farms, convoys and camps. The restriction of permits, curfews and camps

of a war-stricken country could be anywhere in the world, but the South African reader cannot escape the implications of the story for South African society.

The characters and the action are stripped down to the barest essentials. The looters, deserters and bureaucrats he comes across are all in some way or other attempting to compromise in order to survive.

Michael K's Kafkaesque name prepares the reader for the universality of the issues to be examined, but Michael also means "like God", and he becomes the symbol for man's personal freedom, personal identity and dignity (Müller, 1985:41), which he manages to retain inviolate in spite of all the hardships that assail him. Müller suggests that the K of his name also graphically illustrates the physical "stick-insect" he has become, with all the flesh stripped away from the character until only the essential remains (42). He is a skeletal figure, a universal nobody whom we can never know intimately, though we may feel as he does (Smith, 1983:28). Hill describes Michael K as a minimal character, his material needs slight, his emotional life undeveloped or dormant, and out of this unpromising nobody the author creates a character of heroic stature, using the man's very obscurity, simplicity and unselfconsciousness to do it (1984).

Despite his name, Michael K is given a very personal identity in the first lines of the novel. He is born with a harelip, a lip curling like a snail's foot, and a gaping left nostril. He is neither welcome nor loved, and his first years are spent with his mother, in learning to be quiet. His skin colour is never specified, but he is probably a Cape Coloured. By accident of birth he is "but one of a multitude in the second-class" (MK:187)¹. He is the "have-not", the oppressed, the outcast of society to be found anywhere in the world. (Müller:41), a deformed, maltreated,

1. MK refers to Coetzee, J.M. 1983. *Life and times of Michael K*. Harmondsworth : Penguin.

suffering-and-surviving person (Jones,1983:9), a man for whom there is no place in society. "He has no concept of a social contract, no bearings, only an understanding and yearning for his elusive garden" (Smith,1983:28).

He becomes a condemnation not only of the racist nature of the South African political system, but of oppression of the individual, regardless of colour or race.

While this novel might appear to be occupied with something different, it too examines an aspect of colonialism. Its protagonist is intent on avoiding colonisation in any form, and he embodies the major theme of the novel. It is this drive of the individual to assert his independence, through flight or through non-cooperation, that raises the novel to a revelation of universal truth.

McDaniel suggests that Michael K's "times" are generalized to stand for all war-torn times in history, with degenerate morality as the usual cause and orphaned victims the inevitable consequence, while K's "life" is revealed with an eighteenth-century precision. His mind and emotions, however, are plumbed to a depth one expects in this century's psychological novels. "K's life is dissected under a microscope while his times are telescoped beyond time and place" (1985:11-12).

His childhood he spends at Huis Norenus, a home for variously handicapped children, where he learns the skills that will suit him for his second-class life: the elements of reading, writing, counting, sweeping, scrubbing, bedmaking, dishwashing, basketweaving, woodwork and digging (MK:4). Having been discharged from Huis Norenus at the age of fifteen, he is soon revealed as a creature of solitude, shadow and damp, like the snail that is suggested by his harelip, becoming a gardener, preferring the parks with the tall pine trees and dim agapanthus walks (MK:5).

The conditions in the city are sketched with just sufficient de-

tail to present a picture of war. His mother's employers are not bad people, and are sympathetically inclined towards their faithful but ailing domestic. She has a room, but it is a mere cupboard, always musty, never intended for human habitation.

The hospital in which his mother is being treated for dropsy is inundated with war casualties, and she is neglected by the busy nurses "who had no time to spend cheering up an old woman when there were young men dying spectacular deaths all about" (MK:6), and the humiliated woman weeps tears of relief when Michael arrives to fetch her.

The irregularity of the bus service serves to convey the never overtly stated disruption caused by civil war. Sometimes in the evenings the bus does not come at all, and Michael has to spend the night in his mother's room. This vaguely delineated war is a persistent backdrop to events. In her longing for the peaceful Karoo of her youth, Anna mentions a desire to escape the "careless violence, packed buses, food queues, arrogant shopkeepers, thieves and beggars, sirens and curfew" (MK:10). There is no bread in the shops and no milk. The mission, which had always been a safe haven, has been shut up. One night violence breaks out in their vicinity, and they hide in terror. It is a world at war, undefined, unexplained, seen from the bottom by those fleeing the unemployment, the hunger and the despair that it creates (Dowthwaite, 1984:2).

Spencer points out that the extent and duration of the war is conveyed not by what is said, but by what is not said: the lack of surprise at acts of violence; the absence of typically South African pursuits such as rugby, racing, religion; the golf course that has fallen into disrepair; the race course utilized as a fortress hospital (1983:446).

The journey they decide to undertake to escape the city is one of the oldest allegorical devices, allowing characters to be intro-

duced to changing circumstances, and revealing development of character. The idea of a train journey has to be given up although Michael has bought the tickets, because of the impossibility of penetrating the Kafkaesque bureaucracy, complicated by the war conditions, and Michael builds a barrow in which to push his mother, and begins the journey during which she becomes progressively weaker.

The journey becomes an infernal ordeal. The first time they are turned back by the police, and have to take another, quieter route. They are harassed by would-be robbers, laughed at by passers-by and only once offered a lift. At Stellenbosch his mother becomes seriously ill and he takes her to hospital.

After his mother's death and cremation, he wanders around with his barrow and her ashes, reluctant to move on. His movements are unplanned. Clad in the St John's Ambulance outfit given to him at the hospital, he accepts a chance lift out of Stellenbosch, and is suddenly on his way to Prince Albert.

Robbed first of his barrow, and then of his money, he discards everything except his mother's coat and her ashes. He is systematically being stripped of his material possessions, as his body is being stripped of flesh by the privations of his journey. He hasn't eaten for two days, and then chances upon an orchard of worm-eaten apples and a field of carrots, where he helps himself: "It is God's earth, he thought, I am not a thief" (MK:53). "Living off the land" (MK:63), but mostly going hungry, he feels a strange affinity with this desolate country.

He has a basic sense of the permanence of nature. When his mother remarks of a magazine picture that "People don't eat like that any more" (MK:21) he disagrees. "'The pigs don't know there is a war on,' he said. 'The pineapples don't know there is a war on. Food keeps growing'" (MK:21). On the deserted Visagie farm he acknowledges to himself that he is a gardener, and experiences intense

joy in the activity of tending his little garden and irrigating it from the dam. He appears to be existing in "a pocket outside time" (MK:82).

Reduced to eating insects while tending his pumpkin plants, and feeling no appetite, he tells himself that when food comes out of the earth he will recover his appetite, for such food will have savour (MK:139). He has come so close to the earth that he is able to distinguish the poisonous from the edible roots as if he had once been an animal "and the knowledge of good and bad plants had not died in his soul" (MK:140).

The arrival of the Visagies' grandson reduces him once more to minimal survival: "There seemed nothing to do but live" (MK:91). His body is deteriorating, his gums bleeding, until he can no longer keep down anything, even water making him retch, and eventually he creeps down the mountain, even his stick body revolting against the proximity of death. In Prince Albert 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.

When he has escaped back to the farm he ruminates on the fact that a man who wants to live free cannot live in a house, but must live in a hole and hide by day; he must leave no traces of his living (MK:135).

When he arrives on the farm for the first time, he thinks of one of the parks where he worked, and presumes that the grass has not stopped growing because there is a war. But he has lost his affinity for the dark and damp. He has emerged into the sunlight of the Karoo and found greater affinity with the hardness, the dry yellow and red of his mother's country. When he returns, however, he is gradually compelled to become a creature of the night once again, moving on the darkest of nights with the confidence of a blind person, taking care of his plants, chasing away the wild goats that trample his plants.

The thought that prevents him from joining the men from the mountains is that enough men had gone off to the war saying that the time for gardening was over. He has the mystical feeling that contact with the earth must be maintained, "because once that cord was broken, the earth would grow hard and forget her children" (MK:150).

Eating the first fruit of his labour is an intensely sensual experience, bringing tears to his eyes, his heart overflowing with thankfulness. But the damage to his body has progressed too far, symbolizing the irreparable damage done to the individual by being deprived of his identity, and when the soldiers arrive again, he has no defence, beyond taking with him a packet of seed. The mining of the pump, the platform and the adjacent land is, in this context, the supremely destructive deed.

The individual's right to freedom, the freedom insisted upon by even this most minimal of beings, is emphasised throughout the novel. At Worcester he is picked up for not having a permit, and is assigned to a gang to clear the railway line, until he all but collapses, yet finds the energy to assert his rights, "Why have I got to work here?" (MK:58). The next day, quietly and unnoticed, he mingles with another gang of workers and boards the north-bound train with them.

Standing on Touws River station, the many possibilities that might befall him run through his mind. Not waiting to have any choices forced upon him, Michael simply walks off towards the town, free once more.

The first real kindness he experiences is that of the family that gives him food and shelter for a night in Laingsburg. The man expresses his code of common decency: "People must help each other, that's what I believe" (MK:65). Later K is the only one who reacts when their former guard is stabbed in the leg - perhaps he is after all one of those who believe in helping others.

The arrival on the farm of the owner's grandson ends his illusion, and when there is another assault on his freedom, on his right to his own identity, he moves on. He refuses to be made into a servant by the young deserter, and takes to the road once more, up into the Swartberg this time. He is aware of the cord of tenderness that binds him to his plants, and recognises the necessity of tending even the cord, so that the connection between man and earth is not lost (MK:90). Having to quit the mountain when the hunger becomes too bad, he is taken to a resettlement camp, which is a nightmare return to his childhood, to Huis Norenius.

There is scalding irony in the reply of another inmate of the camp to Michael's question why people stay in the camps: "But why should people with nowhere to go run away from the nice life we've got here? From soft beds like this and free wood and a man at the gate with a gun to stop the thieves from coming in the night to steal your money?" (MK:107).

Robert's comments on the camp system are a bitter indictment of conditions in South Africa, caused among other things by apartheid and the Group Areas Act: "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" (MK:112). He also mentions the system as a source of cheap labour, "and at the end of the day the truck fetches them and they are gone and he doesn't have to worry about them or their families, they can starve, they can be cold, he knows nothing, it's none of his business" (MK:112).

Michael is completely egocentric in his attitude, unaware of anything that does not directly affect his own freedom. Robert comments, "I have never seen anyone as asleep as you are" (MK:115). He has no understanding of, no interest in this war which persists in following him. Robert's is the voice that is slowly penetrat-

ing his sluggish mind, making him conscious, so that looking at the girl who has lost her baby it seems that scene after scene is playing itself out before him and that the scenes all cohere. He has a presentiment of a single meaning upon which they are converging, but he does not yet know what that meaning might be (MK:122). Slowly Michael's thoughts begin to wake as the seed that Robert has planted begins to grow and he recognises the truth of many of his comments. The image of planting and growth is continued as he 'watches' the thought take shape in his mind and grow, like a plant.

It is ironic that the wrath visited upon the camp by the police officer is the result of an explosion in town after which the resultant fire spread to the cultural history museum and burnt it to the ground - ironic because it suggests that that which is preserved in museums, is perhaps all that is left of South African culture.

Michael, with his urge for freedom has, ironically, a feel for fences, and a farmer for whom he repairs fences recommends that he go in for fencing: "There will always be a need for good fences in this country, no matter what" (MK:131). But Michael turns this suggestion down - his calling is to remove fences, not build them.

When he climbs over the fence of the camp to claim his freedom once again, he describes the ground outside as very much like the ground inside, suggesting that the whole country has become a prison, and that freedom is not necessarily physical freedom.

He does not pay much attention to the fact that Visagie has disappeared, although he avoids the house where he is most likely to have made his hideout, probably under the floor or in the attic. It may be that Michael is afraid of what he might find. After the soldiers have blown up the farmhouse, he tells them that a boy was hiding there.

Michael is wary of committing the same mistakes as his predecessors. He resists the temptation to carry the Visagies' rubbish to his home, although he has use for most of the things. "The worst mistake, he told himself, would be to try to found a new house, a rival line, on his small beginnings out at the dam. Even his tools should be of wood and leather and gut, materials the insects would eat when one day he no longer needed them" (MK:143).

As in his other novels, Coetzee explores the Hegelian theme of mastery and slavery, revealed in the oppression of one section of the inhabitants by the other. Another version is Michael's speculation on the role of parasite and host. "It was no longer obvious which was parasite, camp or town ... What if the hosts were far outnumbered by the parasites ... could the parasites then still be called parasites? ... Perhaps in truth whether the camp was declared a parasite on the town or the town a parasite on the camp depended on no more than on who made his voice heard loudest" (MK:159-160). But Michael's voice is too soft to be heard. He is perhaps what Magda desired to be, not master or slave, but the bridge in between.

Müller says that the second part of the book is an unobtrusive presentation of a wide range of South African attitudes (1985:42).

In the conversation between the doctor and Noël, there are ironic echoes of the Magistrate's desire that it might one day be said that there was at least one man in the Empire who was at heart not a barbarian: "Perhaps we think that if one day they come and put everyone on trial, someone will step forward and say, 'Let those two off, they were soft'" (MK:181).

The women overheard in the canteen are expressing their bitterness at having been evacuated, and their fears are those that are expressed of the barbarians in *Waiting for the Barbarians*: "In her dreams of her abandoned home a strange man sprawls on the sheets with his boots on, or opens the deep-freeze and spits into the ice-

cream" (MK:183).

The doctor and his friend represent "the enlightened liberal whose humanitarian efforts fall short of true Christianity because he remains trapped within the system" (Miller:42). At the opposite extreme is the callous Sergeant Albrechts who justifies his cruel inhumanity by saying that he is only acting according to the rules.

Michael K is now known as Michaels, despite his insistence that his name is Michael, symbolizing even the doctor's refusal to recognize his individuality. The world has no respect for Michael K's freedom and identity. The doctor wants to flesh him out to become Michaels, they attempt to make him adopt the identity of a criminal siding with the insurgents, but he refuses to be categorised.

His mother's cremation and the regenerative powers of her ashes are a recurrent image. He tells the doctor that "she makes the plants grow" (MK:178) when the doctor wants to know where she is. He reveals an unexpected resentment at the thought that his mother was taken from him and thrown into the fire when she lost her usefulness. But this image, too, is incorrectly interpreted by the doctor.

Michael appears to the doctor to have transcended the condition of war in the country. He recognises the irony of Michael's being detained as an insurgent when he barely knows that there is a war on. When Michael declares, "I am what I am", he is taking his stand for freedom against these well-meaning bureaucrats who are still attempting to categorise him. He is as unaffected by what has happened to him as a stone, "a pebble that, having lain around quietly minding its business since the dawn of time, is now suddenly picked up and tossed randomly from hand to hand" (MK:185). His reply to renewed interrogation is simply "I am not in the war" (MK:189). But the warning is there - there is no home left for universal souls (MK:207), and compromise is the only way to sur-

vive.

Michael resists their attempts to fatten him, perhaps because he knows that the purpose is not to give him his freedom, but to make him fit for camp life. Even their exaggerated attention he shakes off impatiently, because too close attention also implies curtailment of his freedom. He insists that he is not going to die, but that he simply cannot eat the camp food. On the farm the soldiers had awakened him from his dream. The doctor does not wake him. And then one morning he is no longer there.

The doctor visualises Michael as the rudimentary, elemental, universal man, who has managed "[to pass] 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). The intense irony of their inability to accommodate Michael and his claim to identity is revealed when the doctor asks why they are fighting the war, and Noël replies that it is "so that minorities will have a say in their destinies" (MK:215). To claim that right Michael has to escape, and by his escape he succeeds at least in revealing to the doctor that the only acceptable life is a life of freedom.

Müller points out that in this second part, where the medical officer is the narrator, there are many Biblical references, and Michael's likeness to Christ, as suggested by his name, is emphasised (42).

Soon after his arrival at the hospital, the doctor remarks that "I am not sure he is wholly of our world" (MK:178). When Michael insists that "I am what I am" (MK:179), the analogy with the identity claimed by God, "I am", is evident. He is the obscurist of the obscure, "so obscure as to be a prodigy" (MK:195). The dark pools of his eyes seem to look at the doctor from beyond the grave.

In the 'letter' in which the doctor attempts to express his feelings and observations about Michael, he attempts to reduce him to

the stature of an ordinary man: "Did you think you were a spirit invisible, a visitor on our planet, a creature beyond the laws of nations? Well, the laws of nations have you in their grip now: they have pinned you down in a bed beneath the grandstand of the old Kenilworth racecourse" (MK:206). But he is wrong. His appeal to Michael to **yield** is the wrong appeal. Michael disappears, slips like a wraith, a spirit, through the gate, the fence, or the wall.

The doctor's agonizing after Michael has disappeared comes closest to revealing the Christ-image that he has become, at least to the doctor. He desires intensely to accompany Michael, to be able to move with him into a space outside of history, between the camps, belonging to no camp. He imagines saying to Michael, "Your stay in the camp was merely an allegory, if you know that word. It was an allegory - speaking at the highest level - of how scandalously, how outrageously a meaning can take up residence in a system without becoming a term in it. Did you not notice how, whenever I tried to pin you down, you slipped away?" (MK:228).

In the third section Michael's freedom is compromised once again by the charity of the vagrants he runs into. They too refuse to recognise his identity, and he is called Mr Treefeller, after the name emblazoned on his stolen overalls. They give him food and drink, wrap him in a plastic sheet for his night with them in the open, under the pine trees on the mountainside, and attempt to rob him in the night. They succeed only in scattering his pumpkin seeds, but he manages to recover some of them to take with him again. They catch up with him on the beach, but he remains strangely innocent and inviolate despite the twin temptations of alcohol and sex that they offer him. There is a touch of Kafka and of Etienne Leroux's *Die Mugu* in the idea of being maintained for the sake of the story that can be told, once again an infringement of freedom.

Shirley Milne describes the last section with its single but over-

whelming sexual episode as parallel to and a comment on part II, to which it is both explication and metaphor (1984:9).

Back in his mother's room, the circular journey, the odyssey, has been completed. Michael has travelled from nowhere to nowhere. He has not experienced an advance in learning, or a growth of self-awareness, but he has survived, above all, with his spirit intact. He recognises that he is essentially a gardener. Many seeds from one is what he calls "the bounty of the earth" (MK:162), and Michael feels that the one mistake he made was not to have had more seeds, many kinds, hidden about his person, to escape the eyes and hands of robbers. Roberts says that Michael K is a survivor who has learnt that living life on one's own terms, however minimally, is the only future man can have (1983).

Lying wrapped in another man's blanket in his mother's old room, he fantasizes about undertaking a return to the farm with this (imagined) old man to whom the blanket belongs, to plant his seeds. It doesn't matter that the reader recognises that this will not happen, that Michael K is dying. What does matter is that he has survived the Kafkaesque machinery of oppression and asserted his right to freedom, no matter how minimal that freedom is.

Michael K is an individual, but also the whole black people of South Africa, and, at a further narrative level, the deprived, oppressed, second-class people of the world. His personal destiny figures the destiny of the collective, and the novel is connected to the tradition of allegorical dissent that Zamora has traced in the work of modern novelists (13).

Miller regards the final application of the allegory to be that the true salvation of society lies in the recognition of the basic equality, humanity and individual freedom that Michael K symbolizes (1985:43). Patricia Blake remarks that the author seems to be asking, "Shall the meek inherit the earth?" (1984:43), but like any other profound allegory, *Life and times of Michael K* leaves

the question unanswered, and Michael K himself remains a haunting enigma.

6.6 FOE (1986)

In 1984, while *Foe* was probably in the process of being planned, or in the early stages of its writing, Prof. J.M. Coetzee delivered his inaugural lecture in the Department of English, University of Cape Town, starting with the following words: "Autobiography is a kind of writing in which you tell the story of yourself as truthfully as you can, or as truthfully as you can bear to" (1984:1). In this lecture he reveals his interest in the nature of writing: "An autobiographer is not only a man who once upon a time lived a life in which he loved, fought, suffered; strove, was misunderstood, and of which he now tells the story, he is also a man engaged in writing a story" (5). The predicament of the autobiographer/writer of stories is fully reconnoitred in Coetzee's latest novel, which has been praised as one of the most important works of recent years, and also condemned as a disappointment after the brilliant *Life and times of Michael K*. It is, nevertheless, in true Coetzee-style, a modern allegory which considers themes that have been viewed from other perspectives in his earlier novels, and which extends his exploration of language and meaning, colonialism, sexuality, dominance and subservience (Skinner, 1986a:113), and the nature of fiction and historicity, and writing itself. *Foe* appears to be an investigation of the slippery nature of truth and its relation to story-telling. *Foe* both reiterates and extends earlier explorations, and opens new ground, achieving a rare degree of "storied density and control" (Skinner, 1986a:113). Coetzee's fiction is based upon fiction which has become myth (Wilhelm, 1986:147).

Johnston calls the book an absorbing work on individual, social, parochial and universal levels (1987), while Hough regards it as an exploration of the creative act and the relationships it im-

plies (1987b:12). According to Heather Mackie it is a "reflective novel", concerned with the act of writing (1986:6). Brookes, too, describes *Foe* as an allegory, but finds its only interest in an examination of whites' attitude to blacks (1986:17). Isabel Hofmeyr says that on the surface *Foe* does not connect with South Africa at all, "but below its surface is a dark parable of being dominated, silenced and cast away" (1986:14). Ironically, the secrecy of the novel is deepened by the technique of honesty, or what the reader accepts as honesty, for the author might be holding a trump card up his sleeve. Hough suggests affinities in this respect with the work of John Fowles (1987b:12).

Kinthead-Weekes and Gregor point out that Golding reoccupies R.M. Ballantyne's coral island, and shows Ballantyne's portrayal of the four "English boys" to be false, by repopulating the island with boys who are not idealised, but carry within themselves the essential evil that is inherent in man (1984:21). In *Foe* Coetzee reoccupies another island, this time Defoe's, with a morose master who has taught his slave only sufficient English for him to understand the basic instructions necessary to carry out the simple activities on the island, and Friday himself, a far more realistic primitive than Defoe's Walt Disney-type barbarian. The dumb manservant becomes a focus of the colonial conscience, "an allegory on the function of speech and the meaning of freedom" (Hough, 1987b:12).

Foe consists of four parts, each employing a change in time, place, characters and narrational style. The first part tells the pre-text, *Robinson Crusoe*, from a fresh perspective. *Robinson Crusoe* is generally recognised as the first novel in English literature, which makes it a particularly suitable choice for Coetzee's purpose. His history differs significantly from the original, allowing him to pursue exploration of such problems as a translation and interpretation. The allegory of South Africa is there, but there is much else besides (Skinner, 1986a:113). To the two men on the island, he adds a woman, Susan Barton, who takes over the narrative from Defoe's *Crusoe*, and a subdued but constant note

of sexuality is introduced which was entirely absent from the original (Skinner,1986b:83). Beginning with this motif of an island castaway, the novel becomes a complex of interrelated, multileveled and fragmentary stories. It is also a story about how stories interact and about writing as storytelling (Skinner,1986a:113).

Barry Hough points out that what makes Foe exceptional is the fact that while it is a fascinating story, it also involves the reader in the inner convolutions of the creative process (1987b:12). The novel begins with a story being told. Susan Barton is relating to Foe the story of her arrival and sojourn on the island. She makes a point of indicating the difference between reality and imagination when she focuses attention on the difference between the popular conception of the desert isle with its soft sands and shady trees, "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)¹, and the rocky island where she lands, dotted with drab bushes, with evil-smelling off-shore beds of seaweed and swarms of fleas, and also lizards, apes and birds (F:7). There is also an ironic contrast between the romanticized castaway's "drowsing the days away" and her utter boredom and depression.

Her first action after taking care of her most elementary needs for survival, drinking water and ending the pain in her foot by removing a thorn, is to proceed to tell Cruso and Friday the story of her life. In this narration, a story within a story, she provides her story with a past in relation to the immediate present: she tells of her futile search for her daughter in Bahia, her journey to Portugal which was never completed, the mutiny, and being cast away near the island (F:10-11).

Having told her story, she is drawn into the order under which Cruso lives as master, and Friday as slave (Johnston:1987). Susan

1. F refers to Coetzee, J.M. 1986. Foe. Johannesburg : Ravan.

is relegated to the undefined position of a kind of second slave in the island hierarchy. Cruso is unwilling to tell his story, and when he does relate fragments, he tells a number of versions, which suggest their fictionality. Susan insists that he should have written his history down, with the individual details that would make the story his particular story, and not merely some universal castaway's narrative that could have been anyone's. Friday has no tongue, so that his story cannot be told.

The question of Friday's having no tongue leads to an extended discussion between Cruso and Susan. He gives a multiplicity of reasons why Friday's captors might have done such a thing. Cruso tells Friday to sing, and calls the low, tuneless humming sound "the voice of man", suggesting the inarticulacy of man in the metaphor of the universe. Friday's experience, his whole voice whereby his history might be expressed, has been erased within the mental framework of colonialism. His tongue having been cut out, his voice has been silenced (Clingman, 1986:13), reduced at least to the inarticulate humming that reveals his presence, but conveys no meaning, a sound of infinite sadness.

This discussion leads to another, the question of the necessity of slaves, to the existence of whom Providence has shut its eyes. "If Providence were to watch over all of us ... who would be left to pick the cotton and cut the sugar-cane?" (F:23). This cynical remark reveals Cruso's expansionist, colonising-mercantilist background, and the economic considerations behind the "civilizing" myth of colonialism. Skinner suggests that the analogy of South Africa's imperialistic nationalism presents a relatively accessible complex of allegorical possibilities (1986b:86). "[Coetzee's] choice of re-visioning Defoe and his works by postmodern palimpsest is a highly effective use of historical resonances, allowing him to continue his exploration of colonialism and power in a temporally extended context, not merely in their current and local form" (Skinner, 1986b:86).

This conversation awakens in Susan, who has previously paid as little attention to Friday as to the houseslaves in Brazil, an intense awareness of the inarticulate slave, which is not a feeling of affinity for someone in a plight similar to her own, as slave to Cruso, but a feeling of revulsion. When she sees Friday carrying out some strange ritual, casting petals and buds on the surface of the water, she wakes up, however, to the fact that this strange creature probably possesses a soul.

Having made for herself a cap with earshields, and making use of plugs to shut out the sound of the wind, Susan becomes as deaf as Friday is mute - "What difference did it make on an island where no one spoke?" (F:35). This absence of communication has a bestializing effect on her, and for a while her life degenerates into the sub-human. Cruso impresses a morose silence on her life, yet has patience with her moods. What effect the silence has on Friday cannot be judged.

Cruso has no stories to tell of the life he led as a trader and planter before the shipwreck. He is not interested in Susan's stories and seems not to hear them. He appears to want to pretend that their stories begin and end on the island. He is not interested in anything but survival: "We sleep, we eat, we live. We have no need of tools" (F:32), indicative perhaps of the tunnel-vision suffered by many latter-day colonialists. All Cruso's time and energy appear to be engaged in constructing terraces. There are twelve levels, twenty paces deep, banked with stone walls a yard thick, at the highest the height of a man. A hundred thousand or more stones have gone into the construction. Cruso has prepared the seedbeds, but "the planting is not for us. We have nothing to plant - that is our misfortune ... The planting is reserved for those who come after us and have the foresight to bring seed. I only clear the ground for them" (F:33). This sentiment suggests Coetzee's feeling for history, that no era is ever self-contained, but merely serves as a seedbed for the seed of the next era. There is irony in the suggestion that in Defoe's

era the seedbed for colonialism is prepared with the silent collaboration of the slave, in which the seed of neo-colonialism and eventually of apartheid is sown, and from which its dark fruit is harvested.

Susan also considers the idea of law. Cruso says that laws are meant only to check immoderate desires, and the absence of immoderate desires renders laws unnecessary. But she feels that there have to be certain unknown laws, those which prevent Cruso from casting her into the sea, as she is unproductive and merely an extra mouth to feed, or prevent Friday from bashing in his master's head and freeing himself from slavery (F:37).

After more than a year has elapsed, a merchantman, the **John Hobart** 'rescues' the three castaways. In fact, only Susan is rescued. The men are removed against their will, Cruso because he is too ill to resist strongly enough, and Friday because he has no choice. Cruso suffers from a recurring fever, but he dies of woe, for the kingdom he has been deprived of (F:43), the kingdom of complete, unchallenged power, which is the colonialist's dream.

Susan tells Captain Smith her story, and he urges her to set it down, but she indicates the difference between oral and written literature: "A liveliness is lost in the writing down which must be supplied by art" (F:40). When the captain suggests that a writer may be hired who will add a dash of colour, she insists that "I will not have any lies told" (F:40), which immediately leads to a consideration of the difference between experience and the narration of that experience. "If I cannot come forward, as author, and swear to the truth of my tale, what will be the worth of it? I might as well have dreamed it in a snug bed in Chichester" (F:40). This last is an ironic reference to the fact that Defoe, the author of the pre-text, had never travelled abroad but had based his novel on the published account of the experiences of one Alexander Selkirk who was not cast away, but was, at his own request after a quarrel with his captain, put ashore on the unin-

habited island of Juan Fernandez in 1704, and remained there until he was rescued in 1709 (Drabble, 1985:883).

In the fascinating meta-text, Coetzee explores the relationship between source and author, truth and fiction. He describes the various stages between the actual events upon which a novel is based and the reader's perception of the words in print. The process becomes even more interesting when one considers *Foe* in relation to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, even going so far as to imagine a relationship between the idea on which *Robinson Crusoe* is based, and the modern reader of *Foe* (Hough, 1987b:12). The result of this superimposing of stories is a complex of stories within stories, about stories (Skinner, 1986b:83).

Throughout the novel the reader is presented with the choices and possibilities faced by the author. What does he tell and what does he leave out? Which character's perspective is the most important? How must the novel be written in order to draw the largest number of readers? (Hough, 1987b:12). But it is through tongueless Friday that Coetzee explores ideas and problems of language and writing (Skinner, 1986b:84). Skinner suggests that the book may be seen to consist of a series of extended 'conversations': firstly the initial and stage-setting conversations between Cruso and Barton over the issues of survival and living; then in the second and third sections the strange and shifting debate between Barton and Foe about stories, reality and being; and finally, the lop-sided and anxiety-ridden relationship between Barton and Friday (1986b:85).

The second part of the novel takes the form of letters written to Foe, containing references to the self-consciousness of the author as creator, and his power to make choices: "I think of you as a steersman steering the great hulk of the house through the nights and days, peering ahead for signs of the storm" (F:50). Her letters communicate the problems that she and Friday encounter in their fight for survival, but more important are her attempts to

come to terms with the relationship between narrative and fact, between history, and the time in which the event actually took place. She describes the written account of the year on the island: "It is a sorry, limping affair (the history, not the time itself)" (F:47).

She imagines the interior of Foe's attic, even to the ripple in the glass of the window. This ripple becomes an image of the ease with which perspective may change, and with it the entire aspect of the event to be narrated. His view of the landscape may be changed by something as insignificant as a movement of the head. In the light of this it is clear that she cannot tell Cruso's story, for only he can tell it from his particular perspective. She feels that she should have concentrated to a greater extent on her own story, telling more about herself, less about him, and she then proceeds to name a bewildering number of details and perspectives that she might have employed, revealing the choices with which the author is continually confronted.

The plethora of choices into which her desire to write her island history has precipitated her, appears to dissolve her very life into a maze of illusions, robbing her of her own substantiality, "For though my story gives the truth, it does not give the substance of the truth" (F:51).

She comes to certain insights, recognising as the essence of creativity the ability to remove the self to the imagined world. She also understands that in writing there is more at stake than the history, for it must not only tell the truth, but also please its readers. There is some suggestion of the author's inability to determine the precise identity of his reader, when she tosses pages of one of her letters to Foe out of the window, to be read by whoever will.

Federman has the following to say about writing: "While pretending to be telling the story of his life, or the story of any life,

the fiction writer can at the same time tell the story of the story he is telling, the story of the language he is employing, the story of the methods he is using, the story of the pencil or the typewriter he is using to write his story, the story of the fiction he is inventing, and even the story of the anguish (or joy) he is feeling while telling his story" (1973:43). This is in effect what Coetzee is doing in this novel, and what Susan does when she sits down at Foe's bureau: "I sat at your bureau this morning ... and took out a clean sheet of paper and dipped pen in ink - your pen, your ink, I know, but somehow the pen becomes mine while I write with it, as though growing out of my hand" (F:66-67).

The question of domination and subservience is considered in this novel, and not only in relation to Cruso and his man Friday. When Susan pleads to be taken into Foe's house, offering to be his servant, Coetzee suggests that slavery, degrading as it is, is often entered into voluntarily, purely as a means of survival.

Susan is bound to Friday by her compassion more completely than he was chained by any slavemaster (Mackie, 1986:6). His silence is a constant source of confusion to her, being unable to interpret or understand it. She believes that to live in silence is to drift in an ocean like a whale, or to sit like a spider in the heart of his web, under the misapprehension that his web is the whole world (F:59).

Attempting to break through his silence to his understanding, she tells Friday about the book Foe is writing about the year the three of them spent together on the island, and about as much else as Cruso told her about their life prior to her arrival. Her desire is to build a bridge of words over which he may cross to the time before he lost his tongue (F:60). She also admits though, that although she tells herself that she talks to Friday to educate him out of darkness and silence, she often uses words as the shortest way to subject him to her will, and she understands why Cruso preferred not to disturb his muteness, she can understand why man will

choose to be a slaveowner (F:60-61). Nevertheless, she admits her commitment: "A woman may bear a child she does not want, and rear it without loving it, yet be ready to defend it with her life ... I do not love him [Friday], but he is mine" (F:111).

Skinner points out that Susan's description of her and Friday's life in Foe's house echoes Michael K's existence on the Prince Albert farm, as does the sparse existence on the island (1986a:113).

Considering the story she has to tell, Susan recognises the paucity of interesting detail, and considers those that might be added, which are strongly reminiscent of details in Defoe's novel. An innovation is the arrival of a golden-haired stranger with a sack of corn to plant on the terraces (F:67), suggesting perhaps the European colonizer, in the guise of golden-haired saviour.

Going over the mysteries of her story, she asks herself the questions that a reader might ask, and considers the various ways in which these questions might be answered. The questions she raises concern the futile nature of Cruso's work on the island, the reason for Friday's submission to slavery, her own failure to excite desire in Cruso, and what Friday was about when he paddled out to strew petals on the water. The multiplicity of possible answers illustrates once again the many choices open to the author, while the limited number of events suggests that the historians of earlier castaways have had to make up lies in despair (F:88). She uses the image of a painter grouping together figures in positions and combinations which may be true on one day and not on another, merely to render his composition lively. She feels that the task of the story-teller is more complex: "The storyteller, by contrast ... must divine which episodes of his history hold promise of fullness, and trace from them their hidden meanings, braiding these together as one braids rope" (F:88-89).

The advent of the daughter represents another story: "She is more your daughter [figment] than she ever was mine" (F:75), she writes

to Foe. The 'daughter' tells a story which Susan denies as it has no relation to the truth of her life (F:76). She denies the probability of the story's truth on the grounds that there is no pre-text for it: "The world is full of stories of mothers searching for sons and daughters they gave away once, long ago. But there are no stories of daughters searching for mothers" (F:77). She tells the girl, "you are father-born. You have no mother" (F:91), the father being the author, the mother the pre-text.

In the third section Susan has traced Foe to his hideout, once again in an attic which is not quite as she imagined it would be. Although Foe gives Susan and Friday food and shelter, although he takes Susan to his bed, he is her enemy, as his name implies, because he suppresses her creative impulse, attempting to confine it within his own narrow politics and puritanism. The incident of the daughter reveals that Foe is a devotee of the traditional style in which coincidence plays an important role (Hough, 1987b: 12). He is less interested in the island story than in the possibilities offered by the story of the lost daughter who turns up. This daughter provides a promising basis for a traditionally romantic story. According to Foe's theory, a novel consists of three parts: loss, quest, and recovery: or, beginning, middle and end. The story he wants to tell is the loss of the daughter, the quest in Brazil, the abandonment of the quest, the adventure of the island, the quest by the daughter, and the reunion of mother and daughter. The island episode is to be reduced to a mere novelty (F:117). Foe attempts to explain: "The island is not a story in itself, ... We can bring it to life only by setting it within a larger story" (F:117), which emphasises the importance of context. Peter Wilhelm is of the opinion that Foe is suggesting that the story should be a kind of allegory on the state of man (1986:147).

Johnston points out that Susan's dealings with Foe have brought her to the unresolved brink between the real and the apparent, experience and illusion, and their meetings become a continuing de-

bate about the nature of freedom, and the disputed territory between truth and fiction, stories and history (1987).

Susan cannot come to terms with the fact that Foe wishes to reduce to an episode what she regards as the whole book, the Bahia part of her experience being too large, too varied: "How can you ever close Bahia between the covers of a book? It is only the small and thinly peopled places that can be subjugated and held down in words, such as desert islands and lonely houses" (F:122-123). She insists on the right to be father to her own story.

She asks Foe, "Do you know the story of the Muse? ... The Muse is a woman, a goddess, who visits poets in the night and begets stories upon them. In the accounts they give afterwards, the poets say that she comes in the hour of their deepest despair and touches them with sacred fire, after which their pens, that have been dry, flow" (F:126). When Susan literally mounts Foe in the manner of the Muse when she visits her poets, she asserts her right to dictate the nature of her story, "to father her offspring" (F:140).

Her lament at there not being a man-muse is reflected in her acknowledgement of failure: "I wrote my memoir by candlelight in a windowless room, with the paper on my knee. Is that the reason, do you think, why my story was so dull - that my vision was blocked, that I could not see?" (F:127).

Skinner expresses the questions raised in the reader when he asks whether our being is made out of the stories that people tell about one another and themselves, whether there is any way for us to escape what increasingly appears to be a hall of mirrors (1986b: 85). Susan herself revolts against becoming a mere receptacle of whatever story is stuffed in her, so that she becomes merely a hollow house of words, with no substance. She says, "I am not a story, Mr Foe. I may impress you as a story because I began my account of myself without preamble, slipping overboard into the water and striking out for shore. But my life did not begin in

the waves ... not even to you do I owe proof that I am a substantial being with a substantial history in the world" (F:131).

In spite of this assertion, Susan is full of doubt: "Who is speaking me? Am I a phantom too? To what order do I belong? And you: who are you?" Foe's reply to this is to assure her that no man has reason to believe that there is any more design in life than in the whimsical adventures of the imagination (F:135).

The enigma of Friday's silent and apparently dependent condition provides a pivotal point in the novel (Johnston:1987). The silence at the centre of the story which Susan imagines to be like a buttonhole neatly cross-stitched round, but waiting for the button (F:121), is the loss of Friday's tongue: "The story of Friday's tongue is a story unable to be told, or unable to be told by me. That is to say, many stories can be told of Friday's tongue, but the true story is buried within Friday, who is mute. The true story will not be heard till by art we have found a means of giving voice to Friday" (F:118).

Susan's power as narrator is revealed when she says that whatever Friday is to himself, what he is to the world (the reader) is what she makes of him (F:122). Pienaar points out that because Friday cannot speak, Foe is prepared to relegate him to the status of the eternal slave. The lack of an own story is Friday's final castration (1986:17).

Referring to the incident when Friday paddles his log to where the ship supposedly sank, and scatters petals on the water, Foe uses the image of a great eye, across the dark pupil of which Friday paddles his log with impunity. The pupil represents the silent centre of the story, and it is left to the writer, to Foe and to Susan, to descend into that eye. If they don't do this, they "sail across the surface and come ashore none the wiser, and resume [their] old lives, and sleep without dreaming, like babes" (F:141). This suggests the supreme task of the author: that he

should not only look at events and relate them truthfully, but that he should descend into them and interpret their meaning, so that he and the reader will emerge the wiser for the experience.

The fourth section is different from the rest of the novel, dream-like and visionary. Skinner says that it brings to mind the ending of another island story, *The Tempest*:

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep ...

Mackie says that the last section offers three possible endings to the novel: "did Susan drown with her captain at sea? Or in the arms of Defoe? Is she the Muse, visiting the author, and is her story all a dream?" (1986:6). These questions cannot be answered with any certainty, and neither is it necessary to do so. As it stands, the story has presented a wealth of thought-provoking material in which the 'reality' of the end is the least important factor.

Skinner points out that although Susan Barton's womanliness is thinly realised, it must be conceded that Coetzee's characters have progressively assumed more internal and allegorical than external and experimental qualities. And it is the speechless Friday who is the centre of the work, the heart of the story (1986a: 113). His is the last word, as from his mouth issues the unbroken stream that brushes Susan's face. "Is it the voiceless cry for freedom of the wretched of the earth?" asks Wilhelm (1986:147). The answer is probably in the affirmative, that Friday represents the black nation as well as the oppressed in every society, "Mute but unsilenced, even in death" (St Leger, 1986:30).

In this novel Coetzee has, once again, covered a wide field. In the first place he has revealed the spurious nature of many of the myths ostensibly governing Western behaviour. The myth of Robinson Crusoe, the first formulator of the romantic colonial myth, is proved to be false, having falsified its source to begin with.

This original colonizer does not manage to "make the desert bloom" (*Life and times of Michael K*:217), but keeps himself occupied with futile effort, preparing barren terraces. Despite the presence of a woman he feels no desire and fails to multiply and fill his colony. He dies when removed from this 'colonial paradise'. The true nature and spirit of colonialism has been proved to be domination, not development, its driving force a question of economics, not a burning desire to spread civilization.

In Coetzee's novel Friday does not kneel and place Cruso's foot on his head to symbolize his submission, but has his tongue cut out and is reduced to silence. The cynicism of modern attitudes is revealed: "We deplore the barbarism of whoever maimed him, yet have we, his later masters, not reason to be secretly grateful? For as long as he is dumb we can tell ourselves his desires are dark to us, and continue to use him as we wish" (F:148).

Finally, the importance of the writer in society is stressed. Skinner says that "The importance of J.M. Coetzee's fiction resides in his insights into the historical and philosophical context of our being, and its extension of our sensibilities" (1986a: 113). It is the task of the writer to descend into the dark pupil of the eye, and reveal society to itself. This dark pupil is also the bottom of the sea, among the wrecks, from where the mute voice must be given back its resonance and allowed to ascend.

7 CONCLUSION

Although the novels of J.M. Coetzee have generally been recognised as allegories, this aspect of his work has not to date been afforded the attention it deserves.

It is necessary to re-define the term 'allegory' in its modern context because, despite the many similarities, there is a marked difference between traditional and modern allegory. In order to justify referring to the mode as 'living allegory', its development is traced from its origins to the present time, by this means to arrive at a working definition of modern allegory.

The Greek components of the word 'allegory' alert the reader to the fact that guarded language and elite language is involved. When the emphasis is placed on the **saying** other than is meant, the interpretation of the text is based on a semiotic view, but when the emphasis is on the **meaning** of what it says, it is largely a philosophic or exegetical matter, and allegory is seen to be based on semantics, in the realm of polysemy.

Allegory originates with the ancient Greeks who interpret the gods as personifications of moral principles or of physical or natural forces to account for the foolish behaviour of the gods, and make them morally acceptable. This allegoresis creates the favourable climate in which narrative or compositional allegory develops, and the first allegorists are early Christian poets. There are theorists who would trace the origins of allegory even further, into the vague realm of oral literature, the truth of which may be deduced from the simple allegorical nature of traditional African oral literature.

At the root of the allegorical concept is the traditional notion that it is an essentially didactic device, delighting while it teaches. Narrative is essential to allegory. Allegories tend to resolve themselves into either of two basic forms, 'battle' and

'progress'. In these ancient allegories aesthetic and mimetic elements often appear to be sacrificed to plainness of meaning.

The wide range of material included in medieval allegory, originates from the encyclopaedic humanism of the twelfth century. In this period allegory is distinguished by three related versions of the philosophic tradition, the metaphysical, the relative or generative, and the perpetual or epistemological correlation of opposites. At least three varieties of allegory have been identified in medieval literature, viz. topical, scriptural and personification allegory. These allegories are suited to the expression of both temporal and everlasting truths, and serve as well to preserve the values of a world they felt to be changing. In later medieval allegories there is a close connection between historical or political allegory and satire.

Many early medieval allegories are concerned with the logical argumentation between rationality and pre-rational beliefs. Dreams are an important device, allegories in which they are employed being called visionary allegory.

From the thirteenth century onwards allegories are increasingly based on the encounter of the narrator with a specific individual rather than with a personified abstraction.

Although there is a difference of opinion about whether Biblical allegoresis is in fact merely a continuing of pre-Socratic Homeric allegoresis, the one appears at least to have prepared the ground for the other. Various examples of allegory have been identified in the Bible, both narrative and figural. Typology, however, dominates Christian thought until the Reformation.

In the Middle Ages the moralities are the most important form of allegorical drama. They are morally didactic in nature. The earlier moralities dramatise the process of Christian redemption, while the later moralities often serve more obviously political

purposes.

The first part of *Le Roman de la Rose* is often considered the finest example of medieval love poetry. Allegory is the dominant form in the period 1200 to 1700. The form is laboured and it deteriorates steadily, but is revitalised again and attains a new perfection in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*.

During the Renaissance allegory remains a valuable didactic tool, a useful rhetorical device, and it is useful to half conceal contemporary references. Studies of the term 'allegory' in the period, reveal it to include irony, hyperbole, and other devices, and is often thought to be synonymous with the vague and the technical. The view of allegory as a transparently adorned statement of both tropological and analogical truth is predominant during this period. The fundamental narrative forms are still the journey/quest and the battle/conflict, and the allegories are often based upon a pre-text which forms the allegorical motif.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, allegory undergoes a drastic change, no longer referring to an ordered universe but revealing a sense of hostility to any systematization of life. The allegories of Swift and Pope mock the older forms of allegory and allegoresis, replacing comedy by parody. Allegory survives because it has changed from being an essentially affirmative mode to an increasingly ironic mode. Allegories lose their confident encyclopaedism and become more exclusively "personal odysseys". Coleridge's distinction between symbol and allegory has had a profound influence on subsequent literary criticism, with the result that nineteenth-century allegorists like Melville and Hawthorne feel themselves called upon to apologize for their allegories. Paradoxically, it is precisely this opposition that has led to allegory being carefully defined, and has contributed to its revival.

Over the years a number of contentions have developed around alle-

gory. One of them is whether allegory is a genre or a mode. Persuasive arguments are offered in support of both views, but the idea of allegory as a mode appears to be the most acceptable. It has certain features that could be seen as generic, but, like irony, it is to be found in many genres.

Another contention is the distinction between metaphor and metonymy. In the light of recent post-structuralist and semiotic studies a fundamental opposition between the two cannot be maintained. In allegory they tend to interpenetrate one another.

The need to give allegorical meaning a material form makes symbols an important component in allegory. In modern allegory ordinary events and objects are made to carry a concentration of meaning, and they generally stand for something other and greater than themselves. Symbols tend to be static, while allegory is kinetic.

Allegory shows obvious affinity with myth. It is one of the means used by allegory to give extra force and complexity to its action and significance. Myth is in a sense pre-literary, while allegory uses that past to comment on and explain the present.

Personification is not inherently allegorical, but has come to be associated with allegory because of the proliferation of personified abstractions in medieval allegory. Personified abstractions are probably the most obviously allegorical agents. Daemons dominating the lives of men have traditionally been good and bad, the division into bad daemons and good angels being brought about by Christian writers.

The disfavour into which allegory had fallen is revealed by the derogatory way in which many modern reviewers refer to the mode. A number of critics have, however, undertaken a defence of allegory. In this respect the works of Frye, Hönig, Fletcher and de Man have had most influence, with the result that in recent times allegory, and particularly allegoresis, have once again become

fashionable terms. It has in fact become the representative of the figurative nature of language and even synonymous with the act of interpretation itself. It is the most forthright way of conveying an ethical message in representational form.

Writing changes because its material changes. The mode no longer endorses the conventions and norms of established society, but criticizes, satirizes and rejects them. Hierarchy itself causes fear, hatred and retreat and the sure sense of one's place in the sun has gone. The function of allegory is to communicate certain generalized formulations about the nature of human experience and the organization of the world. Allegory indicates, from the outset, that there is an ideological role to be read simultaneously with the fictional. It perpetually redirects attention to its own arbitrary character, giving rise to the multiplicity of possible interpretations, which is deconstruction. According to de Man each text is the allegorical narrative of its own deconstruction. The visual element is an important means by which the interpretation of allegory is assisted and directed. Allegory consists of a series of linked images which supplies a sub-structure to the surface story. The whole work need not be allegorical for it to be termed an allegory. The relationship between the literal surface and the allegorical meaning of a work is mutually supportive. Allegory easily becomes a vehicle for biased writing, serving non-literary purposes and destroying its literary value.

The allegorical text often echoes an archetypal pattern or pretext, so that allegory incorporates intertextual references in its central polysemous image. Barthes's theory of intertextuality becomes a useful mode of interpretation. The allegorical mode is ironic, often revealing a deliberate ambiguity in the recurrence of double plots and identities. This literary phenomenon relates to semantics, for allegory is essentially a means of structuring language in such a way that the reader is encouraged to look continuously for meanings above and beyond the literal level. It allows for a re-examination of the objective norms of experience.

The basic view of allegory as an essentially polysemous, metaphorical language construct has undergone no change in the course of its history. The greatest similarity between modern and traditional allegory is that they are both analyses of the societies for which they were written. They both create special worlds, deliberately outside the world which we inhabit so that fidelity to common experience is a minor consideration. Coherence and order are not as easily perceived in modern as in earlier allegories. While medieval writers found in allegory a medium for conveying the truth they found in the world, modern allegory reveals the lack of truth. The isolation of the individual is explored, alienation being a central theme in modern allegory.

Modern allegorists continue to make use of many of the basic allegorical precepts, the journey, quest or pursuit. The journey becomes the metaphor for the process of learning which both protagonists and readers undergo.

The presence of a symbol does not make a work allegorical. What it required is a continued or extended symbolism relating symbols and images to each other so that they form a coherent framework. The concern is always with the process.

Literary myth so deals with men as to reveal an archetypal 'truth' hidden below the surface of everyday life. It has, however, to be 'discovered', not yielding its meaning to cursory reading. Myth has come to include, besides Greek and Latin beliefs about the heroes and gods, the recurrent patterns of action and meaning in literature. Jung holds that these archetypal story elements are buried deep in man's psyche.

Allegory is an important mode of fabulation, of which a sense of pleasure in form is also an important characteristic. Modern fabulation suspends realistic illusion in the interests of an allegorical manipulation of meaning. It represents an effort to transcend the limiting effects of realism.

As a result of the development of reception aesthetics, the reader has once again been acknowledged as the producer of meaning. The level of meaning beyond the literal is located in the self-consciousness of the reader.

Allegory, with its multi-level nature, is particularly suited to delivering oblique comment on the fractures in society. It is flexible and is the ideal form to convey the predicament of modern man and examine his inner conflict. Modern allegory is freestyle and allegorical interpretation intermittent.

A working definition of modern allegory acknowledges the need for redefinition in terms of its nature and its purpose. It recognises the following characteristics: its nature is multi-level, being on 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; its nature is inherently ironical and satirical; 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 allegory may be defined as an attempt to examine the relationships between master and servant, the 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 usually being the underlying level of meaning.

The validity of this definition is supported by the study of a selection of European and South African works, revealing that allegory, far from being an anachronism that has somehow survived the middle ages, is indeed a living, dynamic mode, and particularly suited to conveying and interpreting contemporary society and its unique problems.

The allegories of Yeats and Conrad represent a period of transition. **Cathleen ni Houlihan** (Yeats) is an idealistic national and nationalistic allegory, while **The dreaming of the bones** claims equal importance for the conflicts within the colonized society and the psyche, and is closer to modern allegory.

Conrad's **The rover** is an allegory of the fortunes of France during and after the Revolution, but with its idealistic ending, not thoroughly modern.

Kafka may be described as one of the pioneers of modern allegory. **The metamorphosis** studies the psychological effects of transformation, the 'beauty and the beast' fable serving as pre-text. In **The trial** the Law is the symbol, while K.'s involvement in its processes is the allegory. Underlying his predicament is the allegory of man's helplessness in the face of an all-powerful bureaucracy. **The castle** is a further elaboration of this theme. In **The penal colony** the vast retributive machinery recalls the ponderous movement of 'law' and 'bureaucracy'. Together these works are a devastating indictment of uncontrolled power. Hesse's **Steppenwolf** is an allegory condemning intellectual hypocrisy, and recognising the animality which is part of man's make-up. **The Tartar Steppe** by Dino Buzzati is suggestive of the truths of military life and war. Life is reduced to an illusion, a futile exercise.

George Orwell's **Animal Farm** is a profound commentary on modern political philosophy, revealing the effect of unbridled power and the relationship between the powerful and the oppressed. **Lord of the flies** (Golding) is a frightening parody of modern society, revealing allegorically that evil is inherent in man. **The inheritors** is ironic, because the allegory reveals that it is not the meek Neanderthals who inherit the earth, but their killers. In **Pincher Martin** Golding reveals the protagonist's allegorical battle for survival in the sea of life.

Durrell's **Alexandria Quartet** is an allegorical exploration of the

writer's craft, and the influence of perspective and point of view. Most of Iris Murdoch's novels tend towards allegory. **The bell** explores the futility of man's attempts to approach some form of clarity or truth. The evil generated by perverse sexual relationships is illuminated in **The unicorn**, and first Hannah and then Denis become the scapegoat. **The time of the angels** explores allegorically the darkness of evil which isolates and surrounds the protagonists like a black miasma, and also the perils of solipsism. **The word child** reveals a preoccupation with the nature of sin and forgiveness.

The problem of illusion and reality is explored by Borges in **Labyrinths**. The underlying allegory is the labyrinthine, arbitrary nature of life and the decisions which govern it. **The library of Babel** serves to emphasise the futility of man's search for a meaning that does not exist

The hero of Okara's **The voice** undertakes an allegorical journey of which the outcome is disillusionment. He is the unwelcome representative of truth in the world. The Odysseyan journey is the allegorical vision of one man's journey to redemption. It can be seen as an allegory of confrontation between civilization and the last stages of Brazilian barbarism, dramatizing the tension between victim and oppressor.

Donoso's **A house in the country** reveals allegorically and by means of irony and satire the depravity of a society addicted to pleasure and self-gratification, and simultaneously explores the idea of fictionality, and the writer's craft. The relationship between parent and child, master and servant, and oppressor and oppressed is explored fully in this novel.

Allegorical writing is not limited to a particular country or literature, but is used by authors all over the world to examine the underlying motivation for events which stem from the social and political conditions within which the author and his characters find

themselves.

In South Africa allegory has been employed from a very early stage, allegorical traits being recognised in Olive Schreiner's work, and J. Lion-Cachet's *Sewe duiwels en wat hulle gedoen het* serves as a paradigm for much of the later allegorical literature in Afrikaans.

N.P. van Wyk Louw's *Die Dieper Reg* is a traditional allegory, but in *Raka* the underlying allegory can be interpreted as the danger of destruction confronting any culture which is exposed to too many foreign influences.

Etienne Leroux is the most important and prolific exponent of allegory in Afrikaans literature. He bases his novels on a myth or pre-text, which provides a basic structure. His novels are frankly intertextual. In *Die mugu* the protagonist reconnoitres Cape Town, but also his own psyche. Man's failure to prevail against the system is illustrated. In *Sewe dae by die Silbersteins* realism is abandoned in favour of fantasy. In this novel good and evil are subverted into a uniform lack of identity. In *Een vir Azazel* the allegorical theme explored is the problem of blame and moral judgment, while authorship is the theme of 18-44. In *Isis...Isis...Isis* the myth is used, in inverted form, as a term of reference. The search for Isis becomes the quest of Everyman. The allegory of *Magersfontein, o Magersfontein* lies in the prediction of humanity going under while occupying itself with trivialities. The paradigm is a piece of South African history.

The theme of Bartho Smit's *Putsonderwater* is the crisis of faith as experienced by modern man, who is denied confession and therefore forgiveness of his sins.

In Brink's *Lobola vir die lewe* Francois becomes the type of modern man, searching for meaning and eventually finding a kind of perverse certainty in existentialism. In *Miskien nooit* Paris comes to be associated with the underworld, and with the subconscious

mind, the narrator's search for Gunhilde becoming a pilgrimage through the labyrinths of the human psyche.

Die vrou en die bees (Berta Smit) is an allegorical representation of the Christian's perseverance in carrying out his greatest task, which is to love his neighbour. **Een plus een** is a more successful modern allegory, exploring the individual's inner conflict concerning faith. Elsa Joubert's **Die Wahlerbrug** is an allegorical representation of the individual's quest for identity.

In **Kroniek van Perdepoort** Anna M. Louw reveals the seven deadly sins symbolically-allegorically in the family of whom she relates the history. The sins of the sons originate from the patriarch's sin of pride. Social injustice and discrimination form a further level of meaning and the relationship between father and child, and oppressor and oppressed is explored.

Sheila Fugard's first novel, **The Castaways** demonstrates man's final despair, while Karel Schoeman's novel, **Promised Land** describes a man's pilgrimage to an illusory shrine, suggesting the futility of his search for meaning.

Nadine Gordimer subtly explores the master/slave dichotomy in **July's people**. **The expedition to the baobab tree** (Stockenström) is an allegory of bondage and rebellion, and of social dissent. The expedition is an allegorical journey towards freedom.

This study of Coetzee's novels as allegories is linguistically and semantically oriented, since literature is made up of words, and allegory belongs, semantically, to the realm of polysemy.

Coetzee dissects and exposes the Western myth of colonialism for what it is. He also examines the validity of Hegel's theory regarding the dependence of master and servant. His novels are explorations of the consciousness. They also reveal the fictionality of fiction.

Dusklands recharts some of the myths of the western world, and the psychological experience behind the action. The full extent of man's alienation is revealed, and the brutalizing effect of uncontrolled power.

Dawn's impotence and inadequacy are revealed. His existence is disintegrating under the insidious influence of the work in which he is engaged. His drab, grey surroundings, in which he seems to float, reflect his disorientation. His relationship with his wife and child reveals the same sterility and impotence. His incipient schizophrenia is evident.

The war photographs destroy his equilibrium, the bland surfaces indicative of how remote he is from reality. He has reduced the Vietnam war to print. For him it has no other reality. The photographs have already done to him what he is planning to have America do to Vietnam.

The problem of identity, which can only be established in relation to other identities, is examined. The Vietnamese have provided no solution, and by succumbing have driven the Americans to ever greater atrocities. Ironically, the undermining which is being planned in respect of Vietnamese mythology and which will cause the disintegration of a whole nation, is something that has already happened to the American myth. The alienation that entered modern philosophy with Descartes, translates itself into a will to power that is limitless, precisely because there is a void at the heart of it.

The two explorers, Eugene Dawn and Jacobus Coetzee, penetrate their respective interiors with professedly creative purpose, but leave destruction in their wake. They are fundamentally unsympathetic, arrogant and cruel, and they encounter everywhere images of negation, and hence of self-negation. Their journeys are an unsuccessful quest for identity.

The uncontrolled power provided by the colonizer's superior weapons leads to the disintegration of his own humanity, perversion of his Christianity, and also to the transformation of savage into servant. Jacobus Coetzee's conviction of his superiority suffers a setback when he fails to make any impression on the band of Hottentots. The only way in which he can establish his manhood is by using his gun. The wilderness forces him to recognise the void that lies at the heart of being.

Coetzee constantly foregrounds the fictiveness of his fiction by revealing the choice that the author has in determining the progression of his narrative, such as when he considers the possible reaction of the Hottentot captain to his greeting, and when he gives two versions of Klawer's death.

The subsequent events follow the Hegelian process by which power inevitably shifts from the master to the servant. Jacobus Coetzee, like Dawn, is Western man at a limit, in a wilderness, seeking meaning. The horror that he does discover is that to these people he is nothing.

The only way in which Jacobus can maintain his self-image is to destroy the people who have diminished it, and this he does on his second expedition. This time the clash is violent. In the euphoria of his 'privileged status' as Afrikaner, he confuses himself with God. The myth underlying the colonialist motive is destroyed. It is not a creative, civilizing act, but a bid to compensate for a human deficiency, a sense of inner void and is a destructive, not a creative force. The debilitating power of the oppressed over the oppressor, is the brutality brought about by unlimited power, in an attempt to fill the void.

In juxtaposing the war in Vietnam and the Namaqualand expedition, Coetzee reveals the historical basis of Western colonialism, and offers sufficient evidence to damn the entire colonial mythology.

In the heart of the country is primarily concerned with the fictionality of fiction, because in this narrative everything is fictional. The fragmented structure delineates a protagonist who is splintered, contradictory and miserable. The reader is confronted with mind and situations rather than with character and action. The descriptions of the horse-cart, the new bride and her mother, are all obviously fictions, attempts to compensate for the awareness of her own inadequacy, her "absence". Her whole life is a fantasy aimed at filling this vacuum.

Her preoccupation with words and their relation to reality places her in the postmodernist intellectual climate. Her ruminations on colonization and its influence on the lives of the colonized imply wider themes in this novel than the local, although the condemnation of the South African situation is evident. The Hegelian theme has its ready-made counterpart in South Africa. The murder of her father is an attempt to break free of the old order and establish a new, equal relationship with the servants. The attempt fails, however, and she is left an unfulfilled O. A mere effort of will is not enough to overcome centuries of spiritual and cultural deformation, and their relationship is a parody of the normal.

The voices speaking to Magda from the aeroplanes quote, among other things, a passage from Hegel's essay on lordship and bondage, confirming this as one of the dominant themes of the novel. Layer upon layer of mythology that has overlain the white settler consciousness is stripped away. The earth mother which she packs out with stones in reply to the voices, represents her search for reintegration with the feminine principle and with nature.

The reader is kept aware of the universality of the problems of repression, isolation and discrimination. Magda personifies the desires and frustrations of modern man, and the inner conflict arising from alienation and uncertainty, the norms and principles of her society having proved to be meaningless.

Waiting for the Barbarians reveals the ambiguity of the distinction between 'civilized' and 'barbarian'. It is a fable about perennial moral issues, offset by the political issues. The heart of the allegory concerns the relationship between Empire and colony, master and slave, man and woman. It deconstructs cultural myths by revealing their opposites. The void at the heart of civilization which has become a recurrent theme in Coetzee's novels, is revealed once again.

The magistrate, paternalistic and easy-going, is in an ambiguous position. Being a representative of the Empire he is bound to give Joll assistance. While being sympathetic towards the barbarians, he cannot really look forward to the triumph of the barbarian way as he feels superior to them. Joll, on the other hand, is the stereotype of the torturer. His dark glasses introduce the theme of blindness or distorted vision that dominates the novel. By telescoping historic time and contemporaneity, Coetzee succeeds in emphasising the universality of his work.

At first the magistrate attempts to ignore what is happening, but becomes irrevocably involved when he visits the granary where the prisoners have been tortured. His belief in "peace at any price" is soon put to the test. The ritual washing of the tortured barbarian girl's feet is sacramental, and a kind of purification ceremony, an attempt to atone for her suffering.

The girl has been partially blinded, but it is the Magistrate's vision that has been impaired to such an extent that he is unable to see her as an individual. She remains merely a representative of her class.

At the core of the novel is the Magistrate's evolving ethical awareness which parallels his developing sight in relation to the girl. But his position remains riddled with contradictions. When he takes his stand against the representatives of Empire, he cannot choose the barbarian way of life, and is left vacillating

somewhere in a void between the two.

His dreams are a phantasmagoric representation of his initial inability to acknowledge the girl's identity, but as his awareness evolves, her dream-features become visible. When the Magistrate has asserted himself and suffered the consequent torture, he has learnt the spurious shiftlessness of "peace at any price". His inability to decipher the poplar slips foreshadows his inability to decipher the scars on the girl's body.

Joll and Mandel are destroyed by the refusal of the barbarians to put up any resistance. The barbarians decline to become the other "I" that will provide them with the "being" without which they cannot establish their identity. This illustrates once again the self-destructiveness of unchecked power.

The novel does not resolve itself either with a clarification of the Magistrate's position or with the arrival of the barbarians. It is an exploration of the confusion, illusion and the projection of false ideas. It does not suggest an ideal level of meaning at which truth may be interpreted. The referential certainty upon which allegory has always stood is repeatedly deconstructed.

The myths of colonialism are examined and discarded, but not replaced. Hegel's master/servant theory is examined in all its variations, revealing the dependence of one upon the other.

The norms and principles by which the Magistrate lived have lost their meaning and he is left feeling like someone who has lost his way. The only hope that is projected is in the children who at the end of the novel are busy building a snowman, which is a constructive act.

Life and times of Michael K is an allegory that can be interpreted on the universal, and on the specifically South African level. Michael K's Kafkaesque name prepares the reader for the universal-

ity of the issues to be examined. He becomes the symbol for man's personal freedom, personal identity and dignity. He is a suffering-and-surviving person, a man for whom there is no place in society, a condemnation not only of the racist nature of the South African political system, but of oppression of the individual, regardless of colour or race.

The condition of civil war in the country is suggested by various disruptions of everyday life, irregular bus services, inability to purchase certain basic requirements, and the curtailment of movement from one place to another, curfews and road blocks.

Unable to penetrate the Kafkaesque bureaucracy to obtain the necessary travel permit, Michael builds a barrow in which to push his mother to Prince Albert, and thus starts his allegorical journey to evade this particular brand of colonialism.

His mother dies, and he is systematically stripped of every possession, as his body is stripped of flesh by the privations of the journey. The only food he eats with pleasure is the fruit of the dry Karoo earth, the pumpkins which he has planted, after months of waiting for them to grow and ripen.

The individual's right to freedom is emphasised throughout the novel. Michael objects to being forced to work at clearing the railway line. The arrival on the farm of the owner's grandson ends his sojourn there, because he refuses to be made into a servant by the young deserter. Later he climbs the fence of the settlement camp and returns to the farm and starvation, rather than to submit to the humiliation of the camp.

He feels an almost mystical affinity with the earth, experiencing intense pleasure in cultivating the earth, believing that the connection between man and earth should not be broken.

Roger, another inmate of the camp, cultivates Michael's mind, plant-

ing the seeds of awareness which will grow and produce thoughts of their own in his mind.

As in his other novels, Coetzee explores the Hegelian theme of master and slave, revealed in the oppression of one section of the population by the other.

The second half of the book unobtrusively presents a wide range of South African attitudes, that of the liberal doctors, the middle class woman evacuated from her home, the officers in the fortress hospital, and the vagrants whom he meets on the beach.

Even the liberal doctor is unable to acknowledge Michael K's identity, calling him Michaels, and the authorities try to make him confess to siding with the insurgents. Nevertheless, he declares "I am what I am", taking his stand for freedom. He is as unaffected by what has happened to him as a stone.

Michael's fight for freedom is ironic when seen against the background of a war being fought to safeguard the interests of minority groups.

The charity of shelter, wine and sex offered by the vagrants is yet another infringement of his freedom. Back in his mother's room, the odyssey, from nowhere to nowhere, has been completed. He has survived the Kafkaesque machinery of oppression and asserted his right to freedom, no matter how minimal that freedom may be.

The final application of the allegory is that the true salvation of society lies in the recognition of the basic equality, humanity and individual freedom.

Foe is a modern allegory which considers themes that have been viewed from other perspectives in Coetzee's earlier novels, and which extends his exploration of language and meaning, colonialism, sexuality, dominance and subservience, the nature of fiction

and historicity, and writing itself. It both reiterates and extends earlier explorations, and opens new ground, achieving a rare degree of storied density and control.

The history related by Coetzee differs significantly from the original, allowing him to pursue his exploration of such problems as translation and interpretation. The allegory of South Africa is there, but there is much else besides. The novel involves the reader in the inner convolutions of the creative process.

The question of Friday's having no tongue is the dominant idea, and by his very silence he profoundly influences Susan's story. Friday's experience, his whole voice whereby his history might be expressed, has been erased within the mental framework of colonialism. He is inarticulate, capable only of a tuneless humming.

The apparently purposeless occupation of preparing huge terraced seedbeds, not having anything to plant, is an allegory suggesting that no era in history is self-contained, but serves as a seedbed for the seed of the next era, in this case the bed in which the seeds of colonialism will be sown, and the fruit of neo-colonialism and apartheid eventually reaped.

Susan's refusal to allow any embellishment to her story leads to a consideration of the difference between experience and the narration of that experience. Coetzee explores the relationship between author and source, and truth and fiction. Susan experiences difficulty in coming to terms with the relationship between narrative and fact, between history and the time in which the event actually took place. She recognises the importance of perspective.

The advent of the 'daughter' whom she does not recognise, represents another story for which she refuses to claim responsibility, regarding her as Foe's innovation. She says that the story has no pre-text, and therefore has no birthright - an oblique reference to Barthes's theory of intertextuality. The importance of con-

text is also emphasised. A story can only be brought to life by setting it within a larger story.

Susan's dealings with Foe have brought her to the unresolved brink between the real and the apparent, experience and illusion, and they debate the nature of freedom and the disputed territory between truth and fiction, stories and history. Assuming the role of the Muse, she asserts her right to dictate the nature of her own story. The question is raised whether our being has any substance, or whether it is made out of stories that people tell about one another.

The enigma of Friday's silent and apparently dependent condition provides a pivotal point in the novel. The silence at the centre of the story is another manifestation of the existential void which will only be filled when Friday, representative of the subjected ones of earth, regains his tongue, and his voice is once more heard in a system which acknowledges the equality of men.

The supreme task of the author is that he should not only look at events and relate them truthfully, but that he should descend into them and interpret their meaning, so that he and the reader will emerge the wiser for the experience.

The unbroken stream that issues from Friday's mouth is the voiceless cry for freedom of the wretched of the earth, mute but unsilenced, even in death.

In this novel the true nature and spirit of colonialism has been proved to be domination but not development, its driving force a question of economics, not a burning desire to civilize. The cynicism underlying the colonialist myth is the refusal to understand the 'voice' of the slave, for if we can tell ourselves that we cannot understand his desires, we can continue to use him as we wish, while at the same time deploring the act which deprived him of his speech. It is the task of the writer, revealed in this

novel, to expose society to itself, so that the mute voice may be given back its resonance, and allowed to ascend.

"Fiction is as much what is said as what is not said, since what is said is not necessarily true, and since what is said can always be said another way" (Federman:430). What Coetzee has said in the five novels he has published to date might indeed be said in another way, but it would require considerable effort to compress more meaning than he has into these five slim novels. His style is sparse and economical, but the allegorical mode that he has adopted enables him to convey several levels of meaning simultaneously, without sacrificing the immensely readable literal level. His novels are explorations not of events or external actions, but of the consciousness, so that to read them is to undertake an exciting guided reconnaissance of the self and of society, the interest and imaginative appeal of which will not readily be exhausted.

The polysemous nature of Coetzee's allegories has become evident, the reader being continually alerted to meanings beyond the literal level. The essentially deconstructive nature of his work is suggested, as he revises the traditional role of the author, and subverts the role of history. The idea of intertextuality in Derridean deconstruction is illustrated in *Dusklands*, for example, where the narrative devolves from an authentic document, and in the other novels where the reader is constantly reminded by his style and by oblique references to the influence of other postmodernist writers and philosophers like Nietzsche, Heidegger and Hegel.

Coetzee meets the modern reader's demand for realism. Even when his narratives become obviously fictional as in parts of *Dusklands*, in Magda's flights of imagination, and in the final section of *Foe*, his fictions remain frighteningly real, coming as close as they do to conditions in this country and the attitudes and fears of minority groups in contemporary South Africa.

The characters in his novels are often archetypal, but they are not strained or forced into these patterns; they fall naturally into archetypal patterns of behaviour because they have been conditioned to certain reactions that have been repeated from generation to generation. The author does not invent new behavioural structures, but reflects and describes and exposes those patterns with which one is immediately familiar. His protagonists become Everyman and his novels develop into revelations of certain universalities, without sacrificing the intensely personal experience reflected in each.

The question has arisen whether Coetzee's novels are each a complete allegory, or whether each represents a further facet of the same allegory. Spencer, writing before the publication of *Foe*, believes that each of Coetzee's novels is about a different aspect of the the violence experienced in South Africa: the violence of conquest, of language and ideology, of the state and its agents, and the violence of conflict itself (1983:446). In *Foe* violence is implied in the fact that Friday's tongue has been cut out and his voice silenced. Skinner also believes that Coetzee's novels appear to constitute a single, extended work which examines the same few fundamental questions in different ways, and from different perspectives (1986a:113). "Looked at together, Coetzee's novels present a singularly coherent exploration of fundamental human concerns, each book interacting with the others much as ripples in a pool reflect back and forth from the edges to create interference of patterns through which an understanding can be achieved and out of which a unity of reflection and reflected can be attained" (Skinner, 1986b:87).

The novels reveal Coetzee's preoccupation with a number of questions. The first has to do with the writer's craft: the relation of myth and fiction, the relation of language to reality, the relationship between source and author, truth and fiction, and the task of the author in society. He also explores the Western myth of colonialism, the main protagonist of each novel revealing his

particular perspective. In **Dusklands** the attention is focused on the destructive and self-destructive effect of the 'superior' Western culture when it is imposed on a different culture. In the second part of this novel Coetzee also reveals the historical basis of colonialism. In **In the heart of the country** the result of this early colonization is examined, the savage having become servant and shepherd because the land is no longer his to roam. **Waiting for the Barbarians** undermines belief in the superiority of Western culture by revealing 'civilized' representatives of Empire who act like barbarians. **Michael K** warns of the inevitable revolt of the colonized against the colonizer, while **Foe** reveals the tragedy of the voiceless slave, and suggests that the only hope lies in restoring his voice. At the same time, in each of the novels, Coetzee examines man's tenuous grasp on reality, his disillusioned awareness of a void at the centre of his existence, his preoccupation with the question of identity, and finally, his abuse of power. These issues are all linked to Hegel's theory of lordship and bondage, which is examined from every angle in the process. It would therefore appear that these five novels could indeed be regarded as a unit, each exploring a different perspective of a larger allegory.

Coetzee's novels lend themselves very readily to Derridean deconstruction, enmeshed as they are in the complex tracery of allegorical referentiality. They afford haunting glimpses into a constantly interacting and recreative world of meaning, giving credence to a reading of them as a manifestation of the living allegory.

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ADDENDUM I: ABSTRACT

J.M. Coetzee's works can be classed as 'fabulations', a new oblique style of writing particularly suited to the literature of dissent being written in many countries today.

Allegory has undergone many changes, but has retained its typically bipartite design of saying one thing and meaning another. Compositional or narrative allegory has developed out of the allegorical interpretation of the actions of the gods in Homer and Hesiod. Personification allegory has been a particularly popular form. Early allegories tend to resolve themselves into either of two forms, 'battle' or 'progress'.

At least three varieties of allegory have been identified in medieval literature, viz. topical, scriptural and personification allegory. There is a close connection between historical or political allegory and satire. Dreams are an important device, allegories in which they are employed being called visionary allegory. Various types of allegory have also been identified in the Bible, mainly typological, situational and narrative allegory. In the middle ages the moralities are the most important form of allegorical drama, while *Le Roman de la Rose* is the finest example of medieval love poetry. Allegory deteriorates during this period, but revives and attains a new perfection in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*.

During the Renaissance allegory remains a valuable didactic tool, a useful rhetorical device, and it is useful to half conceal contemporary references. The fundamental narrative forms are still the journey/quest and the battle/conflict, and the allegories are often based upon a pre-text which forms the allegorical motif.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allegory undergoes a drastic change, no longer referring to an ordered universe, but revealing a sense of hostility to any systematization of life. The satires of Swift and Pope replace commentary by parody. Al-

legory changes from being an essentially affirmative mode, to an increasingly ironic mode. Coleridge's distinction between allegory and symbol has had a profound influence on subsequent criticism.

Over the years a number of contentions have developed around allegory. One is whether allegory is a genre or a mode. The idea of allegory as a mode appears to be more popular. Another is the distinction between metaphor and metonymy. In the light of recent post-structuralist and semiotic studies, a fundamental opposition between the two cannot be maintained. Allegory shows an obvious affinity with myth. It is argued that personification has come to be associated with allegory, but is not inherently allegorical. Daemons dominating the lives of men have traditionally been good and bad, the division into bad daemons and good angels being a development in Christian literature.

The disfavour into which allegory had fallen is revealed by the derogatory way in which many modern reviewers refer to the mode. A number of critics have, however, undertaken a defence of allegory. In this respect the works of Frye, Hönig, Fletcher and de Man have had most influence, with the result that in recent times allegory, and particularly allegoresis, have once again become fashionable terms.

The function of allegory is to communicate certain generalized formulations about the nature of human experience. The visual element is an important means by which the interpretation of allegory is assisted and directed. Allegory consists of a series of linked images which supply a sub-structure to the surface story. The relationship between the literal surface and the allegorical meaning of a work is mutually supportive. The allegorical text often echoes an archetypal pattern or pre-text, so that allegory incorporates intertextual references in its central polysemous image. The allegorical mode is ironic, often revealing a deliberate ambiguity.

The greatest similarity between modern and earlier allegories is that they are both analyses of the societies for which they were written. While medieval writers found in allegory a medium for conveying the truth they found in the world, modern allegory reveals the lack of truth. The isolation of the individual is explored, alienation being a central theme in modern allegory.

The presence of a symbol does not make a work allegorical. What it requires is a continued or extended symbolism relating symbols and images to each other so that they form a coherent framework. The concern is always with the process. Myth includes the recurrent patterns of action and meaning in literature.

Allegory is an important mode of fabulation, of which a sense of pleasure in form is also an important characteristic. It is an effort to transcend the limiting effect of realism. As a result of the development of reception aesthetics, the reader has once again been acknowledged as the producer of meaning.

A study of the selected modern works supports the hypothesis that allegory has regained its popularity. The allegories of Yeats and Conrad represent a period of transition. **Cathleen ni Houlihan** (Yeats) is an idealistic nationalistic allegory, while **The dreaming of the bones** claims equal importance for the conflicts within the colonized society and the psyche, and is closer to modern allegory.

Conrad's **The rover** is an allegory of the fortunes of France during and after the Revolution, but with its idealistic ending, not thoroughly modern.

Kafka may be described as one of the pioneers of modern allegory. **The metamorphosis** studies the psychological effects of transformation. In **The trial** the law is the symbol, while K.'s involvement in its processes is the allegory of man's helplessness in the face of an all-powerful bureaucracy. **The castle** is a further elabora-

tion of this theme. In **The penal colony** the vast retributive machinery recalls the ponderous movement of 'law' and 'bureaucracy'. Together these works are a devastating indictment of uncontrolled power. Hesse's **Steppenwolf** is an allegory condemning intellectual hypocrisy, and recognising the animality which is part of man's make-up. **The Tartar Steppe** by Dino Buzzati is suggestive of the truths of military life and war, revealing how life is reduced to an illusion.

George Orwell's **Animal Farm** is a profound commentary on modern political philosophy, revealing the effect of unbridled power, while Golding's **Lord of the flies** is a frightening parody of modern society, revealing allegorically that evil is inherent in man. **The Inheritors** is ironic, because the allegory reveals that it is not the meek Neanderthals who inherit the earth, but their killers. **Pincher Martin** reveals the protagonist's allegorical battle for survival in the sea of life.

Durrell's **Alexandria Quartet** is an allegorical exploration of the writer's craft, and the influence of perspective and point of view. Iris Murdoch's **The Bell** explores the futility of man's attempts to approach some form of clarity or truth. The evil generated by perverse sexual relationships is illuminated in **The unicorn**, while **The time of the angels** explores allegorically the darkness of evil which isolates and surrounds the protagonists. **A word child** reveals a preoccupation with the nature of sin and forgiveness.

The problem of illusion and reality is explored by Borges in **Labyrinths**, while **The library of Babel** serves to emphasise the futility of man's search for a meaning that does not exist.

The hero of Okara's **The voice** undertakes an allegorical journey of which the outcome is disillusionment. The Odysseyan journey is also the archetype of which **Sergeant Cetúlio** is a palimpsest, an allegorical vision of one man's journey to redemption.

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Donoso's **A house in the country** reveals allegorically the depravity of a society addicted to pleasure and self-gratification, and also explores the idea of fictionality, and the writer's craft.

Allegorical writing is clearly not limited to a particular country or literature, but is used by authors all over the world to examine the underlying motivation for events which stem from the social and political conditions within which the author and his characters find themselves.

In South Africa allegory has been employed from a very early stage, allegorical traits being recognised in Olive Schreiner's work, and J. Lion-Cachet's **Sewe duiwels en wat hulle gedoen het** serves as a paradigm for much of the later allegorical literature in Afrikaans.

N.P. van Wyk Louw's **Die Dieper Reg** is a traditional allegory, but in **Raka** the underlying allegory can be interpreted as the danger of destruction confronting any culture which is exposed to too many foreign influences.

In Etienne Leroux's **Die Mugu** man's failure to prevail against the system is illustrated. In **Sewe dae by die Silbersteins** good and evil are perverted into a uniform lack of identity. **Een vir Aza-zel** explores the problem of blame and moral judgment, while authorship is the theme of **18-44**. In **Isis...Isis...Isis** the search for Isis becomes the quest of Everyman. The allegory of **Magersfontein**, or **Magersfontein** lies in the prediction of humanity going under while occupying itself with trivialities.

The allegory of Bartho Smit's **Putsonderwater** is the crisis of faith as experienced by modern man. Brink's **Lobola vir die lewe** is an allegorical search for meaning while in **Miskien nooit** the narrator's search for Gunhilde becomes a pilgrimage through the labyrinths of the human psyche.

Berta Smit's **Die vrou en die bees** is an allegorical presentation

of the Christian's perseverance, while *Een plus een* is a more successful allegory, exploring the individual's inner conflict concerning faith. Elsa Joubert's *Die Wahlerbrug* is an allegorical representation of the individual's quest for identity.

In *Kroniek van Perdepoort* Anna M. Louw reveals symbolically-allegorically, the seven deadly sins as manifested in a particular family.

Sheila Fugard's first novel, *The Castaways*, demonstrates man's final despair, while Karel Schoeman's *Promised land* describes a man's pilgrimage to an illusory shrine. Nadine Gordimer subtly explores the master/slave dichotomy in *July's people*. *The expedition to the baobab tree* (Stockenström) is an allegory of bondage and rebellion.

This study of Coetzee's novels as allegories is linguistically and semantically oriented. *Dusklands* recharts some of the myths of the western world, and the psychological experience behind the action. The extent of man's alienation is revealed, and the brutalizing effect of uncontrolled power. Dawn's existence is disintegrating under the insidious influence of the work in which he is engaged and his incipient schizophrenia is evident. The war photo's destroy his equilibrium and the bland surfaces indicate how far removed he is from reality.

The problem of identity, which can only be established in relation to other identities, is examined. The alienation that entered modern philosophy with Descartes, translates itself into a will to power that is limitless, precisely because there is a void at the heart of it.

The two explorers, Eugene Dawn and Jacobus Coetzee, penetrate their respective interiors with professedly creative purpose, but leave destruction in their wake. Everywhere they encounter images of negation and hence of self-negation. The events follow the Hegelian process by which power inevitably shifts from the master to the servant.

The only way in which Jacobus can maintain his self-image is to destroy the people who have diminished it. The myth underlying the colonialist motive is destroyed. It is not a creative, civilizing act, but a bid to compensate for a human deficiency.

In juxtaposing the war in Vietnam and the Namaqualand expedition, Coetzee reveals the historical basis of Western colonialism.

In the heart of the country is primarily concerned with the fictionality of fiction, because in this narrative everything is fictional. The reader is confronted with mind and situation rather than character and action. Magda's whole life is a fantasy aimed at filling the vacuum in her life.

Her preoccupation with words and their relation to reality places her in the postmodernist intellectual climate. The Hegelian theme has its ready-made counterpart in South Africa, and the condemnation of the South African situation is evident. Her attempt to break free of the old order and establish a new, equal relationship with the servants fails, however, and she is left an unfilled 0.

The mythology that has overlain the white settler consciousness is stripped away. The earth mother which she packs out with stones in reply to the voices speaking from the aeroplanes, represents her search for re-integration with the feminine principle and with nature. She personifies the desires and frustrations of modern man, and the inner conflict arising from alienation and uncertainty.

Waiting for the Barbarians reveals the ambiguity of the distinction between 'civilized' and 'barbarian'. The allegory concerns the relationship between empire and colony, master and slave, man and woman. It deconstructs and dismantles cultural myths by revealing their opposites. By telescoping historic time and contemporaneity Coetzee emphasises the universality of his work. The paternalistic, easy-going Magistrate's belief in "peace at any

price" is proved to be spurious. His ritual washing of the barbarian girl's feet is sacramental and a kind of purification ceremony. His position remains riddled with contradictions. When he takes his stand against the representatives of Empire he cannot choose the barbarian way of life and is left vacillating somewhere in a void between the two. His dreams are a phantasmagoric representation of his initial inability to acknowledge the girl's identity.

Joll and Mandel are destroyed by the refusal of the barbarians to become the other "I" that will provide them with the "being" without which they cannot establish their identity.

The novel does not resolve the Magistrate's position, but is an exploration of the confusion, illusion and the projection of false ideas. The referential certainty upon which allegory has always stood is repeatedly deconstructed.

Life and times of Michael K can be interpreted on the universal, and on the specifically South African level. Michael K becomes the symbol for man's personal freedom, personal identity and dignity.

Unable to penetrate the Kafkaesque bureaucracy in a war-torn country to obtain the necessary travel permit, Michael builds a barrow in which to push his mother to Prince Albert, and thus starts his allegorical journey to evade this particular brand of colonialism.

He is stripped of every possession, as his body is stripped of flesh by the privations of the journey. The only food he eats with pleasure is the fruit of the dry Karoo earth. He feels an almost mystical affinity with the earth, experiencing intense pleasure in cultivating it and believing that the connection between man and earth should not be broken.

His fight for freedom is ironic in the light of the purpose of the

war, which is being fought so that minority groups may retain a say in their future.

The final application of the allegory is that the true salvation of society lies in the recognition of basic equality, humanity, and individual freedom.

Foe is a modern allegory which both reiterates and extends Coetzee's earlier explorations. It examines the relationship of narrative and event, truth and fiction. The enigma of Friday's silent and apparently dependent condition provides a pivotal point in the novel. His silence is a manifestation of the existential void.

In this novel the true nature and spirit of colonialism has been proved to be domination not development, its driving force a question of economics, not a burning desire to civilize. The cynicism underlying the colonialist myth is the refusal to understand the 'voice' of the slave so that his plea can be ignored, while at the same time deploring the act which deprived him of his speech.

It is the task of the writer, according to this novel, to expose society to itself, so that the mute voice may be given back its resonance, and allowed to ascend to equality.

The polysemous nature of Coetzee's allegories is evident, and the essentially deconstructive nature of his work is suggested as he revises the traditional role of the author and subverts the role of history. His novels also meet the modern reader's demand for realism. The characters are often archetypal, but naturally so.

Coetzee's novels all explore certain related questions like the Hegelian theme, and the myth of Western colonialism, so that although each novel is self-contained, these five novels could in-

deed be regarded as a unit, each exploring a different perspective of a larger allegory, and all of them together constructing an intertextual unity within the framework of the modern novel - indeed a living manifestation of the topical issue of allegory.

ADDENDUM II: UITTREKSEL

Die werke van J.M. Coetzee kan as 'fabulations' geklassifiseer word, 'n nuwe indirekte skryfstyl wat 'n besonder nuttige styl is vir die versetliteratuur wat vandag in baie lande geskryf word.

Allegorie het deur die jare baie veranderinge ondergaan, maar het sy tipiese tweeledigheid behou van een ding sê en 'n ander bedoel. Kompositoriese of narratiewe allegorie het ontwikkel uit die allegoriese interpretasie van die handelings van die gode in Homeros en Hesiod. Personifikasie-allegorie was ook baie gewild. Vroeë allegorieë het 'n geneigdheid getoon om een van twee vorms aan te neem, nl. die 'stryd', of the 'ontwikkeling'.

Minstens drie soorte allegorieë is onderskei in middeleeuse literatuur, naamlik aktuele, skriftuurlike en personifikasie-allegorie. Daar is 'n noue verband tussen historiese of politieke allegorie en satire. Drome is 'n belangrike stylmiddel en allegorieë wat van drome gebruik maak word visioenêr genoem. Verskeie soorte allegorieë is ook in die Bybel geïdentifiseer, veral tipologiese, situatiewe en narratiewe allegorie. In die middeleeue was die moraliteite die belangrikste vorm van allegoriese drama, terwyl **Le Roman de la Rose** as die beste voorbeeld van middeleeuse liefdespoësie beskou word. Allegorie het in hierdie tydperk gedegenerereer, maar weer 'n bloeityd beleef, totdat dit in Spenser se **The Faerie Queene** 'n nuwe peil van vervolmaking bereik het.

Gedurende die Renaissance het allegorie 'n belangrike didaktiese instrument gebly, 'n bruikbare retoriese stylmiddel, en dit is nuttig om kontemporêre verwysings te verbloem. Die fundamentele narratiewe vorms is nog die reis/soektog en die stryd/konflik, en die allegorieë word dikwels op 'n voorteks gebaseer wat dan die allegoriese motief vorm.

In die agtiende en die negentiende eeue het allegorie 'n drastiese verandering ondergaan. Dit het nie langer verwys na 'n geordende

heelal nie, maar het 'n sekere vyandigheid teenoor enige sistematisering van die lewe openbaar. Die satires van Swift en Pope het kommentaar met parodie vervang. Allegorie verander van 'n wesenlik bevestigende vorm na 'n toenemend ironiese vorm. Coleridge se onderskeiding tussen allegorie en simbool het 'n diepgaande invloed op daaropvolgende kritiek uitgeoefen.

Oor die jare het 'n aantal strydpunte rondom allegorie ontwikkel. Een van hulle is die vraag of allegorie 'n genre of 'n stylvorm is. Die idee van allegorie as 'n stylvorm blyk meer gewild te wees. 'n Ander is die onderskeid tussen metafoor en metonimie. In die lig van resente post-strukturalisties en semiotiese studies, kan 'n fundamentele teenstelling tussen die twee nie meer gehandhaaf word nie. Allegorie toon 'n duidelike verwantskap met mite. Dit word aangevoer dat personifikasie met allegorie geassosieer word, maar dat dit nie inherent allegories is nie. Demone wat die lewe van die mens oorheers is tradisioneel goed en boos. Die verdeling in goeie engele en bose demone is 'n ontwikkeling van die Christelike literatuur.

Die onguns waarin allegorie verval het word getoon deur die kleinerende wyse waarop baie moderne resensente na die stylvorm verwys. 'n Aantal kritici het egter 'n verdediging van allegorie onderneem. In hierdie verband het die werk van Frye, Hönl, Fletcher en de Man die meeste invloed gehad, met die gevolg dat allegorie en veral allegoriese interpretasie in resente tye weer modeterme geword het.

Die funksie van allegorie is om sekere veralgemeende formulerings aangaande die aard van menslike ervaring te kommunikeer. Die visuele element is 'n belangrike middel waardeur die interpretasie van allegorie ondersteun en gerig word. Allegorie bestaan uit 'n reeks gekoppelde beelde wat 'n basis vir die oppervlakteverhaal voorsien. Die verhouding tussen die letterlike oppervlakte en die allegoriese betekenis van 'n werk is onderling ondersteunend. Die allegoriese teks is dikwels 'n weerklank van 'n argetipiese patroon of 'n voorteks, sodat allegorie intertekstuele verwysings in sy

sentrale meerduidigheidsbeeld inkorporeer. Die allegoriese styl-vorm is ironies, en verraaï dikwels 'n opsetlike dubbelsinnigheid.

Die grootste ooreenkoms tussen moderne en vroeër allegorieë is dat albei vorms ontledings is van die gemeenskappe vir wie hulle geskryf is. Terwyl middeleeuse skrywers in allegorie 'n medium gevind het waardeur hulle die waarheid wat hulle in die wêreld ontdek het kon oordra, verraaï moderne allegorie die gebrek aan waarheid. Die isolasie van die individu word verken, terwyl vervreemding 'n sentrale tema van moderne allegorie geword het.

Die teenwoordigheid van 'n simbool maak 'n werk nie allegories nie. Wat vereis word is 'n volgehoue, uitgebreide simboliek wat simbole en beelde met mekaar in verband bring sodat hulle 'n samehangende raamwerk vorm. Dit gaan altyd om die ontwikkeling. Mite sluit die herhalende patrone van handeling en betekenis in literatuur in.

Allegorie is 'n belangrike vorm van 'fabulation', waarvan 'n gevoel van genot wat uit die vorm geput word, 'n belangrike kenmerk is. Dit is 'n poging om die knellende effek van realisme te transendeer. As gevolg van die ontwikkeling van resepsie-estetika, word die leser weereens as die genereerder van betekenis erken.

'n Studie van verskeie moderne werke ondersteun die hipotese dat allegorie sy gewildheid herwin het. Die allegorieë van Yeats en Conrad verteenwoordig 'n oorgangsperiode. **Cathleen ni Houlihan** (Yeats) is 'n idealistiese, nasionalistiese allegorie, terwyl **The dreaming of the bones** aanspraak maak op die ewe belangrikheid van die konflikte binne die gekoloniseerde gemeenskap en die psige, en nader is aan moderne allegorie.

Conrad se **The rover** is 'n allegorie wat die lotgevalle van Frankryk gedurende en na die Revolusie weergee, maar met sy idealistiese einde, is dit nie heeltemal modern nie.

Kafka kan beskryf word as een van die baanbrekers van moderne alle-

gorie. **The metamorphosis** bestudeer die psigologiese effek van transformasie. In **The trial** is die Reg die simbool, terwyl K. se betrokkenheid in die prosesse van die Reg die allegorie is van die hulpeloosheid van die mens teenoor 'n almagtige burokrasie. **The castle** brei verder uit op hierdie tema. In **The penal colony** herinner die reusagtige vergeldingsmasjinerie aan die swaarwigtige beweging van die Reg en die burokrasie. Tesame vorm hierdie werke 'n vernietigende aanklag teen onbeheersde mag. Hesse se **Steppenwolf** veroordeel intellektuele skynheiligheid, en erken die dierlikheid wat deel is van die samestelling van die mens. **The Tartar Steppe** deur Dino Buzzati suggereer die waarhede van die militêre lewe en van oorlog, en toon hoe die lewe gereduseer word tot 'n illusie.

George Orwell se **Animal Farm** is 'n grondige kommentaar oor moderne politieke filosofie, en verbeeld die effek van ongebreidelde mag, terwyl Golding se **Lord of the Flies** 'n skrikwekkende parodie van die moderne gemeenskap is, en allegories die feit verraaie dat die bose inherent in die mens is. **The Inheritors** is ironies omdat die allegorie illustreer dat dit nie die sagmoediges is wat die aarde beërwe nie, maar dié wat hulle doodmaak. **Pincher Martin** beskryf die protagonis se allegoriese stryd om oorlewing in die see van die lewe.

Durrell se **Alexandria Quartet** is 'n allegoriese verspieding van die skrywer se vernuf, en die invloed van perspektief en gesigspunt. **The Bell**, van Iris Murdoch, ondersoek die futiliteit van die mens se pogings om een of ander vorm van klaarheid of waarheid te bereik. Die boosheid wat deur perverse seksuele verhoudings gegeneereer word, word belig in **The unicorn**, terwyl **The time of the angels** die donkerheid van die bose wat die hooffigure isoleer en omring allegories verken. **A word child** toon 'n preokkupasie met die aard van sonde en vergiffenis.

Borges ondersoek die probleem van illusie en realiteit in **Labyrinth**, terwyl **The library of Babel** die futiliteit van die mens se soeke na 'n betekenis wat nie bestaan nie, beklemtoon.

Die held van Okara se **The voice** onderneem 'n allegoriese reis wat op ontgugtering uitloop. Die Odysseeaanse reis is ook die arge-tipe waarvan Ribeiro se **Sergeant Getúlio** 'n palimpse is, 'n allegoriese visioen van een man se reis na verlossing.

Donoso se **A house in the country** onthul allegories die verdorwenheid van 'n gemeenskap verslaaf aan plesier en self-bevrediging, en ondersoek ook die idee van fiktiewiteit, en die kuns van die skrywer.

Allegorieskrywing is duidelik nie beperk tot 'n besondere land of literatuur nie, maar word deur skrywers dwarsdeur die wêreld gebruik om die onderliggende motivering vir gebeurde wat uit die maatskaplike en politieke toestande waarin die skrywer en sy karakters hulle bevind, voortspruit.

In Suid-Afrika is allegorie reeds vanaf 'n baie vroeë stadium gebruik. Allegoriese eienskappe is reeds in Olive Schreiner se werk herken, en J. Lion-Cachet se **Sewe duiwels en wat hulle gedoen het** dien as 'n paradigma vir baie van die allegoriese literatuur wat later in Afrikaans verskyn.

N.P. van Wyk Louw se **Die Dieper Reg** is 'n tradisionele allegorie, maar in **Raka** kan die onderliggende allegorie vertolk word as die gevaar van vernietiging wat enige kultuur bedreig wat aan te veel vreemde invloede blootgestel is.

In Etienne Leroux se **Die Mugu** word die mens se onvermoë om teen die stelsel te seëvier geïllustreer. In **Sewe dae by die Silbersteins** word goed en kwaad tot 'n eenvormige identiteiteloosheid ondermyn. **Een vir Azazel** verken die probleem van blaam en morele veroordeling, terwyl skrywerskap die tema is van **18-44**. In **Isis...Isis...Isis** word die soektog na Isis die soektog na Elckerlyc. Die allegorie van **Magersfontein, o Magersfontein** is geleë in die voorstelling van die mensdom wat ten gronde gaan terwyl hy homself met beuselagtighede besig hou.

Die allegorie van Bartho Smit se **Putsonderwater** is die geloofskri-
sis wat die moderne mens ervaar. Brink se **Lobola vir die lewe** is
'n allegoriese soektog na betekenis, terwyl in **Miskien nooit** die
verteller se soeke na Gunhilde 'n pelsgrimstog deur die doolhof van
die menslike psige word.

Berta Smit se **Die vrou en die bees** is 'n allegoriese voorstelling
van die Christen se volharding, terwyl **Een plus een** 'n meer geslaag-
de allegorie is, wat die individu se innerlike konflik aangaande
geloof ondersoek. Elsa Joubert se **Die Wahlerbrug** is 'n allegoriese
voorstelling van die individu se soeke na identiteit.

In **Kroniek van Perdepoort** toon Anna M. Louw op simbolies-allego-
riese wyse die sewe doodsondes soos vergestalt in 'n besondere
familie.

Sheila Fugard se eerste roman, **The Castaways**, demonstreer die mens
se finale wanhoop, terwyl Karel Schoeman se **Promised Land** 'n man se
pelgrimstog voorstel na 'n heiligdom wat 'n hersenskim blyk te wees.
Nadine Gordimer verken op subtiele wyse die meester/slaaf-digotomie
in **July's people**. **The expedition to the baobab tree** (Stockenström)
is 'n allegorie van slawerny en rebellie.

Hierdie studie van Coetzee se romans as allegorieë is linguisties
en semanties georiënteerd. **Dusklands** herkarteer sommige van die
mites van die westerse wêreld, en die psigologiese ervaring agter
die handeling. Die omvang van die mens se vervreemding word ge-
toon, asook die verdierlikende effek van onbeheersde mag. Dawn
se bestaan is besig om te disintegreer onder die verraderlike in-
vloed van die werk waarmee hy besig is, en sy naderende kranksin-
nigheid is duidelik. Die oorlogfoto's vernietig sy ewewigtigheid
en hulle neutrale oppervlaktes is 'n aanduiding van hoe ver hy van
die werklikheid verwyder is.

Die probleem van identiteit, wat slegs in verband met ander identi-
teite bevestig kan word, word ondersoek. Die vervreemding wat die

moderne filosofie saam met Descartes binnegedring het, herlei homself tot 'n drang na mag wat onbeperk is, juis omdat daar 'n leemte aan die hart daarvan lê.

Die twee ontdekkers, Eugene Dawn en Jacobus Coetzee, dring hulle onderskeie interieurs binne met oënskynlik kreatiewe doelstellings, maar hulle laat vernietiging op hulle spoor. Oral kom hulle beelde van ontkenning en dus ook self-ontkenning teë. Die handeling volg die Hegeliaanse proses waarvolgens die mag van die meester na die slaaf verskuif.

Die enigste manier waarop Jacobus sy selfbeeld kan behou is om die mense wat dit verklein het te vernietig. Die mite wat die koloniale motief onderlê word vernietig. Dit is nie 'n skeppende, beskawende handeling nie, maar 'n poging om vir 'n menslike gebrek te vergoed.

Deur die oorlog in Vietnam en die Namaqualandse ekspedisie naas mekaar te stel, openbaar Coetzee die historiese basis van Westerse kolonialisme.

In the heart of the country is hoofsaaklik gemoeid met die fiktiviteit van fiksie, want in hierdie vertelling is alles fiktief. Die leser word met intellek en situasie gekonfronteer eerder as met karakter en handeling. Magda se hele lewe is 'n fantasie gewy aan die vul van die vakuum in haar lewe.

Haar preokkupasie met woorde en hulle verhouding tot die werklikheid, plaas haar in die postmodernistiese intellektuele klimaat. Die Hegeliaanse tema het sy kitsklaar ewebeeld in Suid-Afrika, en die veroordeling van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie is ooglopend. Haar poging om van die ou orde weg te breek en 'n nuwe, gelyke verhouding met die bediendes te vestig misluk egter, en sy word 'n onvervulde 0 gelaat.

Die mitologie wat die wit setlaar-bewussyn oordek het, word wegge-

stroop. Die aardmoeder wat sy met klippe op die grond uitbeeld in antwoord op die stemme wat haar vanuit die vliegtuie toespreek, stel haar soektog voor, 'n soektog na her-integrasie met die feministiese beginsel en met die natuur. Sy is 'n personifikasie van die begeertes en frustrasies van die moderne mens, en die innerlike konflik wat deur vervreemding en onsekerheid ontstaan.

Waiting for the Barbarians openbaar die dubbelsinnigheid van die onderskeid tussen 'beskaafd' en 'barbaars'. Die allegorie het te doen met die verhouding tussen "Empire" en kolonie, meester en slaaf, man en vrou. Dit dekonstrueer en takel die kulturele mites af deur hulle teendeel te openbaar. Deur historiese tyd en eietydsheid te teleskopeer beklemtoon Coetzee die universaliteit van sy werk. Die paternalistiese, gemaklike Magistraat se geloof in vrede teen elke prys word vals bewys. Sy rituele was van die barbaar meisie se voete is sakramenteel, en 'n soort reinigingsseremonie. Sy posisie bly vol teenstrydighede. Wanneer hy standpunt inneem teen die verteenwoordigers van Empire kan hy nie die barbare se lewenswyse aanneem nie, en bly weifelend iewers huiwer in 'n leemte tussen die twee. Sy drome is 'n fantasmagoriese voorstelling van sy aanvanklike onvermoë om die meisie se identiteit te erken.

Joll en Mandel word vernietig deur die barbare se weiering om die ander "Ek" te word wat hulle van die "wese" sal voorsien waarsonder hulle nie hulle eie identiteit kan bevestig nie.

Die roman bied nie 'n oplossing vir die Magistraat se posisie nie, maar is 'n verkenning van die verwarring, illusie, en die projektering van valse idees. Die verwysingssekerheid waarin allegorie nog altyd geanker is word herhaaldelik gedekonstrueer.

Life and times of Michael K kan op die universele en die spesifiek Suid-Afrikaanse vlak geïnterpreteer word. Michael K word die simbool van die mens se persoonlike vryheid, persoonlike identiteit en waardigheid.

Nie in staat om die Kafkaeske burokrasie in 'n oorlogverskeurde land te deurdring nie, bou Michael 'n stootkar om sy ma Prins Albert toe te stoot, en so begin sy allegoriese reis om hierdie besondere vorm van kolonisasie te ontkom.

Hy word van elke besitting gestroop, soos sy liggaam ook gestroop word deur die ontberinge van die reis. Die enigste voedsel wat hy met genoegdoening eet is die vrugte van die droë Karoo-aarde. Hy voel 'n byna mistieke verbintenis met die aarde, en om dit te bewerk verskaf aan hom intense vreugde. Hy glo dat die verbintenis tussen die mens en die aarde nie verbreek moet word nie.

Sy stryd om vryheid is ironies in die lig van die feit dat die oorlog geveg word juis om minderheidsgroepe inspraak in hulle toekoms te verseker.

Die finale toepassing van die allegorie is dat die ware redding van die gemeenskap te vinde is in die erkenning van basiese geelykheid, menslikheid, en individuele vryheid.

Foe is 'n moderne allegorie wat Coetzee se vroeëre ondersoeke herhaal en uitbrei. Dit ondersoek die verhouding van vertelling en gebeure, waarheid en fiksie. Die raaisel van Friday se woordelose en skynbaar afhanklike toestand is die fokuspunt van die roman. Sy stilte is 'n manifestasie van die eksistensiële niet.

In hierdie roman word bewys gelewer dat die ware aard en gees van kolonialisme oorheersing eerder as ontwikkeling is, en dat sy dryfveer ekonomies is en nie 'n brandende begeerte om te beskaaf nie. Die sinisme wat die koloniale mite onderlê is die weiering om die 'stem' van die slaaf te verstaan, sodat sy pleidooi geïgnoreer kan word, terwyl die daad wat hom van sy spraak beroof het terselfder tyd veroordeel kan word.

Soos dit in hierdie roman ontplooi, is dit die taak van die skry-

wer om die gemeenskap aan homself te openbaar, sodat die spraaklose weer resonansie kry en toegelaat sal word om tot gelykheid te aspiereer.

Die meerduidige aard van Coetzee se allegorieë is duidelik, en die essensieel dekonstruktiewe aard van sy werk word gesuggereer wanneer hy die tradisionele rol van die skrywer hersien en die rol van die geskiedenis omverwerp. Sy romans voldoen ook aan die moderne leser se eis om die realistiese. Die karakters is dikwels argetipies, maar met 'n volkome natuurlike aanslag.

Al Coetzee se romans verken sekere verwante vraagstukke, soos die Hegeliaanse tema en die mite van Westerse kolonialisme, sodat mens elke roman as 'n eenheid op sigself kan sien, maar tog al vyf romans as 'n meerduidige, intertekstuele manifestasie van allegorie binne die raamwerk van die moderne romankuns van J.M. Coetzee kan ervaar - 'n lewende manifestasie van 'n aktuele saak.

tion of this theme. In **The penal colony** the vast retributive machinery recalls the ponderous movement of 'law' and 'bureaucracy'. Together these works are a devastating indictment of uncontrolled power. Hesse's **Steppenwolf** is an allegory condemning intellectual hypocrisy, and recognising the animality which is part of man's make-up. **The Tartar Steppe** by Dino Buzzati is suggestive of the truths of military life and war, revealing how life is reduced to an illusion.

George Orwell's **Animal Farm** is a profound commentary on modern political philosophy, revealing the effect of unbridled power, while Golding's **Lord of the flies** is a frightening parody of modern society, revealing allegorically that evil is inherent in man. **The Inheritors** is ironic, because the allegory reveals that it is not the meek Neanderthals who inherit the earth, but their killers. **Pincher Martin** reveals the protagonist's allegorical battle for survival in the sea of life.

Durrell's **Alexandria Quartet** is an allegorical exploration of the writer's craft, and the influence of perspective and point of view. Iris Murdoch's **The Bell** explores the futility of man's attempts to approach some form of clarity or truth. The evil generated by perverse sexual relationships is illuminated in **The unicorn**, while **The time of the angels** explores allegorically the darkness of evil which isolates and surrounds the protagonists. **A word child** reveals a preoccupation with the nature of sin and forgiveness.

The problem of illusion and reality is explored by Borges in **Labyrinths**, while **The library of Babel** serves to emphasise the futility of man's search for a meaning that does not exist.

The hero of Okara's **The voice** undertakes an allegorical journey of which the outcome is disillusionment. The Odysseyan journey is also the archetype of which **Sergeant Cetúlio** is a palimpsest, an allegorical vision of one man's journey to redemption.

Donoso's **A house in the country** reveals allegorically the depravity of a society addicted to pleasure and self-gratification, and also explores the idea of fictionality, and the writer's craft.

Allegorical writing is clearly not limited to a particular country or literature, but is used by authors all over the world to examine the underlying motivation for events which stem from the social and political conditions within which the author and his characters find themselves.

In South Africa allegory has been employed from a very early stage, allegorical traits being recognised in Olive Schreiner's work, and J. Lion-Cachet's **Sewe duiwels en wat hulle gedoen het** serves as a paradigm for much of the later allegorical literature in Afrikaans.

N.P. van Wyk Louw's **Die Dieper Reg** is a traditional allegory, but in **Raka** the underlying allegory can be interpreted as the danger of destruction confronting any culture which is exposed to too many foreign influences.

In Etienne Leroux's **Die Mugu** man's failure to prevail against the system is illustrated. In **Sewe dae by die Silbersteins** good and evil are perverted into a uniform lack of identity. **Een vir Aza-zel** explores the problem of blame and moral judgment, while authorship is the theme of **18-44**. In **Isis...Isis...Isis** the search for Isis becomes the quest of Everyman. The allegory of **Magersfontein, o Magersfontein** lies in the prediction of humanity going under while occupying itself with trivialities.

The allegory of Bartho Smit's **Putsonderwater** is the crisis of faith as experienced by modern man. Brink's **Lobola vir die lewe** is an allegorical search for meaning while in **Miskien nooit** the narrator's search for Gunhilde becomes a pilgrimage through the labyrinths of the human psyche.

Berta Smit's **Die vrou en die bees** is an allegorical presentation

of the Christian's perseverance, while *Een plus een* is a more successful allegory, exploring the individual's inner conflict concerning faith. Elsa Joubert's *Die Wahlerbrug* is an allegorical representation of the individual's quest for identity.

In *Kroniek van Perdepoort* Anna M. Louw reveals symbolically-allegorically, the seven deadly sins as manifested in a particular family.

Sheila Fugard's first novel, *The Castaways*, demonstrates man's final despair, while Karel Schoeman's *Promised land* describes a man's pilgrimage to an illusory shrine. Nadine Gordimer subtly explores the master/slave dichotomy in *July's people*. *The expedition to the baobab tree* (Stockenström) is an allegory of bondage and rebellion.

This study of Coetzee's novels as allegories is linguistically and semantically oriented. *Dusklands* recharts some of the myths of the western world, and the psychological experience behind the action. The extent of man's alienation is revealed, and the brutalizing effect of uncontrolled power. Dawn's existence is disintegrating under the insidious influence of the work in which he is engaged and his incipient schizophrenia is evident. The war photo's destroy his equilibrium and the bland surfaces indicate how far removed he is from reality.

The problem of identity, which can only be established in relation to other identities, is examined. The alienation that entered modern philosophy with Descartes, translates itself into a will to power that is limitless, precisely because there is a void at the heart of it.

The two explorers, Eugene Dawn and Jacobus Coetzee, penetrate their respective interiors with professedly creative purpose, but leave destruction in their wake. Everywhere they encounter images of negation and hence of self-negation. The events follow the Hegelian process by which power inevitably shifts from the master to the servant.

The only way in which Jacobus can maintain his self-image is to destroy the people who have diminished it. The myth underlying the colonialist motive is destroyed. It is not a creative, civilizing act, but a bid to compensate for a human deficiency.

In juxtaposing the war in Vietnam and the Namaqualand expedition, Coetzee reveals the historical basis of Western colonialism.

In the heart of the country is primarily concerned with the fictionality of fiction, because in this narrative everything is fictional. The reader is confronted with mind and situation rather than character and action. Magda's whole life is a fantasy aimed at filling the vacuum in her life.

Her preoccupation with words and their relation to reality places her in the postmodernist intellectual climate. The Hegelian theme has its ready-made counterpart in South Africa, and the condemnation of the South African situation is evident. Her attempt to break free of the old order and establish a new, equal relationship with the servants fails, however, and she is left an unfilled 0.

The mythology that has overlain the white settler consciousness is stripped away. The earth mother which she packs out with stones in reply to the voices speaking from the aeroplanes, represents her search for re-integration with the feminine principle and with nature. She personifies the desires and frustrations of modern man, and the inner conflict arising from alienation and uncertainty.

Waiting for the Barbarians reveals the ambiguity of the distinction between 'civilized' and 'barbarian'. The allegory concerns the relationship between empire and colony, master and slave, man and woman. It deconstructs and dismantles cultural myths by revealing their opposites. By telescoping historic time and contemporaneity Coetzee emphasises the universality of his work. The paternalistic, easy-going Magistrate's belief in "peace at any

price" is proved to be spurious. His ritual washing of the barbarian girl's feet is sacramental and a kind of purification ceremony. His position remains riddled with contradictions. When he takes his stand against the representatives of Empire he cannot choose the barbarian way of life and is left vacillating somewhere in a void between the two. His dreams are a phantasmagoric representation of his initial inability to acknowledge the girl's identity.

Joll and Mandel are destroyed by the refusal of the barbarians to become the other "I" that will provide them with the "being" without which they cannot establish their identity.

The novel does not resolve the Magistrate's position, but is an exploration of the confusion, illusion and the projection of false ideas. The referential certainty upon which allegory has always stood is repeatedly deconstructed.

Life and times of Michael K can be interpreted on the universal, and on the specifically South African level. Michael K becomes the symbol for man's personal freedom, personal identity and dignity.

Unable to penetrate the Kafkaesque bureaucracy in a war-torn country to obtain the necessary travel permit, Michael builds a barrow in which to push his mother to Prince Albert, and thus starts his allegorical journey to evade this particular brand of colonialism.

He is stripped of every possession, as his body is stripped of flesh by the privations of the journey. The only food he eats with pleasure is the fruit of the dry Karoo earth. He feels an almost mystical affinity with the earth, experiencing intense pleasure in cultivating it and believing that the connection between man and earth should not be broken.

His fight for freedom is ironic in the light of the purpose of the

war, which is being fought so that minority groups may retain a say in their future.

The final application of the allegory is that the true salvation of society lies in the recognition of basic equality, humanity, and individual freedom.

Foe is a modern allegory which both reiterates and extends Coetzee's earlier explorations. It examines the relationship of narrative and event, truth and fiction. The enigma of Friday's silent and apparently dependent condition provides a pivotal point in the novel. His silence is a manifestation of the existential void.

In this novel the true nature and spirit of colonialism has been proved to be domination not development, its driving force a question of economics, not a burning desire to civilize. The cynicism underlying the colonialist myth is the refusal to understand the 'voice' of the slave so that his plea can be ignored, while at the same time deploring the act which deprived him of his speech.

It is the task of the writer, according to this novel, to expose society to itself, so that the mute voice may be given back its resonance, and allowed to ascend to equality.

The polysemous nature of Coetzee's allegories is evident, and the essentially deconstructive nature of his work is suggested as he revises the traditional role of the author and subverts the role of history. His novels also meet the modern reader's demand for realism. The characters are often archetypal, but naturally so.

Coetzee's novels all explore certain related questions like the Hegelian theme, and the myth of Western colonialism, so that although each novel is self-contained, these five novels could in-

deed be regarded as a unit, each exploring a different perspective of a larger allegory, and all of them together constructing an intertextual unity within the framework of the modern novel - indeed a living manifestation of the topical issue of allegory.

ADDENDUM II: UITTREKSEL

Die werke van J.M. Coetzee kan as 'fabulations' geklassifiseer word, 'n nuwe indirekte skryfstyl wat 'n besonder nuttige styl is vir die versetliteratuur wat vandag in baie lande geskryf word.

Allegorie het deur die jare baie veranderinge ondergaan, maar het sy tipiese tweeledigheid behou van een ding sê en 'n ander bedoel. Kompositoriese of narratiewe allegorie het ontwikkel uit die allegoriese interpretasie van die handelings van die gode in Homeros en Hesiod. Personifikasie-allegorie was ook baie gewild. Vroeë allegorieë het 'n geneigdheid getoon om een van twee vorms aan te neem, nl. die 'stryd', of the 'ontwikkeling'.

Minstens drie soorte allegorieë is onderskei in middeleeuse literatuur, naamlik aktuele, skriftuurlike en personifikasie-allegorie. Daar is 'n noue verband tussen historiese of politieke allegorie en satire. Drome is 'n belangrike stylmiddel en allegorieë wat van drome gebruik maak word visioenêr genoem. Verskeie soorte allegorieë is ook in die Bybel geïdentifiseer, veral tipologiese, situatiewe en narratiewe allegorie. In die middeleeue was die moraliteite die belangrikste vorm van allegoriese drama, terwyl **Le Roman de la Rose** as die beste voorbeeld van middeleeuse liefdespoësie beskou word. Allegorie het in hierdie tydperk gedegenerereer, maar weer 'n bloeityd beleef, totdat dit in Spenser se **The Faerie Queene** 'n nuwe peil van vervolmaking bereik het.

Gedurende die Renaissance het allegorie 'n belangrike didaktiese instrument gebly, 'n bruikbare retoriese stylmiddel, en dit is nuttig om kontemporêre verwysings te verbloem. Die fundamentele narratiewe vorms is nog die reis/soektog en die stryd/konflik, en die allegorieë word dikwels op 'n voorteks gebaseer wat dan die allegoriese motief vorm.

In die agtiende en die negentiende eeue het allegorie 'n drastiese verandering ondergaan. Dit het nie langer verwys na 'n geordende

heelal nie, maar het 'n sekere vyandigheid teenoor enige sistematisering van die lewe openbaar. Die satires van Swift en Pope het kommentaar met parodie vervang. Allegorie verander van 'n wesenlik bevestigende vorm na 'n toenemend ironiese vorm. Coleridge se onderskeiding tussen allegorie en simbool het 'n diepgaande invloed op daaropvolgende kritiek uitgeoefen.

Oor die jare het 'n aantal strydpunte rondom allegorie ontwikkel. Een van hulle is die vraag of allegorie 'n genre of 'n stylvorm is. Die idee van allegorie as 'n stylvorm blyk meer gewild te wees. 'n Ander is die onderskeid tussen metafoor en metonimie. In die lig van resente post-strukturalisties en semiotiese studies, kan 'n fundamentele teenstelling tussen die twee nie meer gehandhaaf word nie. Allegorie toon 'n duidelike verwantskap met mite. Dit word aangevoer dat personifikasie met allegorie geassosieer word, maar dat dit nie inherent allegories is nie. Demone wat die lewe van die mens oorheers is tradisioneel goed en boos. Die verdeling in goeie engele en bose demone is 'n ontwikkeling van die Christelike literatuur.

Die onguns waarin allegorie verval het word getoon deur die kleinerende wyse waarop baie moderne resensente na die stylvorm verwys. 'n Aantal kritici het egter 'n verdediging van allegorie onderneem. In hierdie verband het die werk van Frye, Hönl, Fletcher en de Man die meeste invloed gehad, met die gevolg dat allegorie en veral allegoriese interpretasie in resente tye weer modeterme geword het.

Die funksie van allegorie is om sekere veralgemeende formulerings aangaande die aard van menslike ervaring te kommunikeer. Die visuele element is 'n belangrike middel waardeur die interpretasie van allegorie ondersteun en gerig word. Allegorie bestaan uit 'n reeks gekoppelde beelde wat 'n basis vir die oppervlakteverhaal voorsien. Die verhouding tussen die letterlike oppervlakte en die allegoriese betekenis van 'n werk is onderling ondersteunend. Die allegoriese teks is dikwels 'n weerklank van 'n argetipiese patroon of 'n voorteks, sodat allegorie intertekstuele verwysings in sy

sentrale meerduidigheidsbeeld inkorporeer. Die allegoriese styl-vorm is ironies, en verraaï dikwels 'n opsetlike dubbelsinnigheid.

Die grootste ooreenkoms tussen moderne en vroeër allegorieë is dat albei vorms ontledings is van die gemeenskappe vir wie hulle geskryf is. Terwyl middeleeuse skrywers in allegorie 'n medium gevind het waardeur hulle die waarheid wat hulle in die wêreld ontdek het kon oordra, verraaï moderne allegorie die gebrek aan waarheid. Die isolasie van die individu word verken, terwyl vervreemding 'n sentrale tema van moderne allegorie geword het.

Die teenwoordigheid van 'n simbool maak 'n werk nie allegories nie. Wat vereis word is 'n volgehoue, uitgebreide simboliek wat simbole en beelde met mekaar in verband bring sodat hulle 'n samehangende raamwerk vorm. Dit gaan altyd om die ontwikkeling. Mite sluit die herhalende patrone van handeling en betekenis in literatuur in.

Allegorie is 'n belangrike vorm van 'fabulation', waarvan 'n gevoel van genot wat uit die vorm geput word, 'n belangrike kenmerk is. Dit is 'n poging om die knellende effek van realisme te transendeer. As gevolg van die ontwikkeling van resepsie-estetika, word die leser weereens as die genereerder van betekenis erken.

'n Studie van verskeie moderne werke ondersteun die hipotese dat allegorie sy gewildheid herwin het. Die allegorieë van Yeats en Conrad verteenwoordig 'n oorgangsperiode. **Cathleen ni Houlihan** (Yeats) is 'n idealistiese, nasionalistiese allegorie, terwyl **The dreaming of the bones** aanspraak maak op die ewe belangrikheid van die konflikte binne die gekoloniseerde gemeenskap en die psige, en nader is aan moderne allegorie.

Conrad se **The rover** is 'n allegorie wat die lotgevalle van Frankryk gedurende en na die Revolusie weergee, maar met sy idealistiese einde, is dit nie heeltemal modern nie.

Kafka kan beskryf word as een van die baanbrekers van moderne alle-

gorie. **The metamorphosis** bestudeer die psigologiese effek van transformasie. In **The trial** is die Reg die simbool, terwyl K. se betrokkenheid in die prosesse van die Reg die allegorie is van die hulpeloosheid van die mens teenoor 'n almagtige burokrasie. **The castle** brei verder uit op hierdie tema. In **The penal colony** herinner die reusagtige vergeldingsmasjinerie aan die swaarwigtige beweging van die Reg en die burokrasie. Tesame vorm hierdie werke 'n vernietigende aanklag teen onbeheersde mag. Hesse se **Steppenwolf** veroordeel intellektuele skynheiligheid, en erken die dierlikheid wat deel is van die samestelling van die mens. **The Tartar Steppe** deur Dino Buzzati suggereer die waarhede van die militêre lewe en van oorlog, en toon hoe die lewe gereduseer word tot 'n illusie.

George Orwell se **Animal Farm** is 'n grondige kommentaar oor moderne politieke filosofie, en verbeeld die effek van ongebreidelde mag, terwyl Golding se **Lord of the Flies** 'n skrikwekkende parodie van die moderne gemeenskap is, en allegories die feit verraaie dat die bose inherent in die mens is. **The Inheritors** is ironies omdat die allegorie illustreer dat dit nie die sagmoediges is wat die aarde beërwe nie, maar dié wat hulle doodmaak. **Pincher Martin** beskryf die protagonis se allegoriese stryd om oorlewing in die see van die lewe.

Durrell se **Alexandria Quartet** is 'n allegoriese verspieding van die skrywer se vernuf, en die invloed van perspektief en gesigspunt. **The Bell**, van Iris Murdoch, ondersoek die futiliteit van die mens se pogings om een of ander vorm van klaarheid of waarheid te bereik. Die boosheid wat deur perverse seksuele verhoudings gegeneereer word, word belig in **The unicorn**, terwyl **The time of the angels** die donkerheid van die bose wat die hooffigure isoleer en omring allegories verken. **A word child** toon 'n preokkupasie met die aard van sonde en vergiffenis.

Borges ondersoek die probleem van illusie en realiteit in **Labyrinth**, terwyl **The library of Babel** die futiliteit van die mens se soeke na 'n betekenis wat nie bestaan nie, beklemtoon.

Die held van Okara se **The voice** onderneem 'n allegoriese reis wat op ontgugtering uitloop. Die Odysseeaanse reis is ook die arge-tipe waarvan Ribeiro se **Sergeant Getúlio** 'n palimpse is, 'n allegoriese visioen van een man se reis na verlossing.

Donoso se **A house in the country** onthul allegories die verdorwenheid van 'n gemeenskap verslaaf aan plesier en self-bevrediging, en ondersoek ook die idee van fiktiewiteit, en die kuns van die skrywer.

Allegorieskrywing is duidelik nie beperk tot 'n besondere land of literatuur nie, maar word deur skrywers dwarsdeur die wêreld gebruik om die onderliggende motivering vir gebeurde wat uit die maatskaplike en politieke toestande waarin die skrywer en sy karakters hulle bevind, voortspruit.

In Suid-Afrika is allegorie reeds vanaf 'n baie vroeë stadium gebruik. Allegoriese eienskappe is reeds in Olive Schreiner se werk herken, en J. Lion-Cachet se **Sewe duiwels en wat hulle gedoen het** dien as 'n paradigma vir baie van die allegoriese literatuur wat later in Afrikaans verskyn.

N.P. van Wyk Louw se **Die Dieper Reg** is 'n tradisionele allegorie, maar in **Raka** kan die onderliggende allegorie vertolk word as die gevaar van vernietiging wat enige kultuur bedreig wat aan te veel vreemde invloede blootgestel is.

In Etienne Leroux se **Die Mugu** word die mens se onvermoë om teen die stelsel te seëvier geïllustreer. In **Sewe dae by die Silbersteins** word goed en kwaad tot 'n eenvormige identiteiteloosheid ondermyn. **Een vir Azazel** verken die probleem van blaam en morele veroordeling, terwyl skrywerskap die tema is van **18-44**. In **Isis...Isis...Isis** word die soektog na Isis die soektog na Elckerlyc. Die allegorie van **Magersfontein, o Magersfontein** is geleë in die voorstelling van die mensdom wat ten gronde gaan terwyl hy homself met beuselagtighede besig hou.

Die allegorie van Bartho Smit se **Putsonderwater** is die geloofskri-
sis wat die moderne mens ervaar. Brink se **Lobola vir die lewe** is
'n allegoriese soektog na betekenis, terwyl in **Miskien nooit** die
verteller se soeke na Gunhilde 'n pelsgrimstog deur die doolhof van
die menslike psige word.

Berta Smit se **Die vrou en die bees** is 'n allegoriese voorstelling
van die Christen se volharding, terwyl **Een plus een** 'n meer geslaag-
de allegorie is, wat die individu se innerlike konflik aangaande
geloof ondersoek. Elsa Joubert se **Die Wahlerbrug** is 'n allegoriese
voorstelling van die individu se soeke na identiteit.

In **Kroniek van Perdepoort** toon Anna M. Louw op simbolies-allego-
riese wyse die sewe doodsondes soos vergestalt in 'n besondere
familie.

Sheila Fugard se eerste roman, **The Castaways**, demonstreer die mens
se finale wanhoop, terwyl Karel Schoeman se **Promised Land** 'n man se
pelgrimstog voorstel na 'n heiligdom wat 'n hersenskim blyk te wees.
Nadine Gordimer verken op subtiele wyse die meester/slaaf-digotomie
in **July's people**. **The expedition to the baobab tree** (Stockenström)
is 'n allegorie van slawerny en rebellie.

Hierdie studie van Coetzee se romans as allegorieë is linguisties
en semanties georiënteerd. **Dusklands** herkarteer sommige van die
mites van die westerse wêreld, en die psigologiese ervaring agter
die handeling. Die omvang van die mens se vervreemding word ge-
toon, asook die verdierlikende effek van onbeheersde mag. Dawn
se bestaan is besig om te disintegreer onder die verraderlike in-
vloed van die werk waarmee hy besig is, en sy naderende kranksin-
nigheid is duidelik. Die oorlogfoto's vernietig sy ewewigtigheid
en hulle neutrale oppervlaktes is 'n aanduiding van hoe ver hy van
die werklikheid verwyder is.

Die probleem van identiteit, wat slegs in verband met ander identi-
teite bevestig kan word, word ondersoek. Die vervreemding wat die

moderne filosofie saam met Descartes binnegedring het, herlei homself tot 'n drang na mag wat onbeperk is, juis omdat daar 'n leemte aan die hart daarvan lê.

Die twee ontdekkers, Eugene Dawn en Jacobus Coetzee, dring hulle onderskeie interieurs binne met oënskynlik kreatiewe doelstellings, maar hulle laat vernietiging op hulle spoor. Oral kom hulle beelde van ontkenning en dus ook self-ontkenning teë. Die handeling volg die Hegeliaanse proses waarvolgens die mag van die meester na die slaaf verskuif.

Die enigste manier waarop Jacobus sy selfbeeld kan behou is om die mense wat dit verklein het te vernietig. Die mite wat die koloniale motief onderlê word vernietig. Dit is nie 'n skeppende, beskawende handeling nie, maar 'n poging om vir 'n menslike gebrek te vergoed.

Deur die oorlog in Vietnam en die Namaqualandse ekspedisie naas mekaar te stel, openbaar Coetzee die historiese basis van Westerse kolonialisme.

In the heart of the country is hoofsaaklik gemoeid met die fiktiviteit van fiksie, want in hierdie vertelling is alles fiktief. Die leser word met intellek en situasie gekonfronteer eerder as met karakter en handeling. Magda se hele lewe is 'n fantasie gewy aan die vul van die vakuum in haar lewe.

Haar preokkupasie met woorde en hulle verhouding tot die werklikheid, plaas haar in die postmodernistiese intellektuele klimaat. Die Hegeliaanse tema het sy kitsklaar ewebeeld in Suid-Afrika, en die veroordeling van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie is ooglopend. Haar poging om van die ou orde weg te breek en 'n nuwe, gelyke verhouding met die bediendes te vestig misluk egter, en sy word 'n onvervulde 0 gelaat.

Die mitologie wat die wit setlaar-bewussyn oordek het, word wegge-

stroop. Die aardmoeder wat sy met klippe op die grond uitbeeld in antwoord op die stemme wat haar vanuit die vliegtuie toespreek, stel haar soektog voor, 'n soektog na her-integrasie met die feministiese beginsel en met die natuur. Sy is 'n personifikasie van die begeertes en frustrasies van die moderne mens, en die innerlike konflik wat deur vervreemding en onsekerheid ontstaan.

Waiting for the Barbarians openbaar die dubbelsinnigheid van die onderskeid tussen 'beskaafd' en 'barbaars'. Die allegorie het te doen met die verhouding tussen "Empire" en kolonie, meester en slaaf, man en vrou. Dit dekonstrueer en takel die kulturele mites af deur hulle teendeel te openbaar. Deur historiese tyd en eietydsheid te teleskopeer beklemtoon Coetzee die universaliteit van sy werk. Die paternalistiese, gemaklike Magistraat se geloof in vrede teen elke prys word vals bewys. Sy rituele was van die barbaar meisie se voete is sakramenteel, en 'n soort reinigingsseremonie. Sy posisie bly vol teenstrydighede. Wanneer hy standpunt inneem teen die verteenwoordigers van Empire kan hy nie die barbare se lewenswyse aanneem nie, en bly weifelend iewers huiwer in 'n leemte tussen die twee. Sy drome is 'n fantasmagoriese voorstelling van sy aanvanklike onvermoë om die meisie se identiteit te erken.

Joll en Mandel word vernietig deur die barbare se weiering om die ander "Ek" te word wat hulle van die "wese" sal voorsien waarsonder hulle nie hulle eie identiteit kan bevestig nie.

Die roman bied nie 'n oplossing vir die Magistraat se posisie nie, maar is 'n verkenning van die verwarring, illusie, en die projektering van valse idees. Die verwysingssekerheid waarin allegorie nog altyd geanker is word herhaaldelik gedekonstrueer.

Life and times of Michael K kan op die universele en die spesifiek Suid-Afrikaanse vlak geïnterpreteer word. Michael K word die simbool van die mens se persoonlike vryheid, persoonlike identiteit en waardigheid.

Nie in staat om die Kafkaeske burokrasie in 'n oorlogverskeurde land te deurdring nie, bou Michael 'n stootkar om sy ma Prins Albert toe te stoot, en so begin sy allegoriese reis om hierdie besondere vorm van kolonisasie te ontkom.

Hy word van elke besitting gestroop, soos sy liggaam ook gestroop word deur die ontberinge van die reis. Die enigste voedsel wat hy met genoegdoening eet is die vrugte van die droë Karoo-aarde. Hy voel 'n byna mistieke verbintenis met die aarde, en om dit te bewerk verskaf aan hom intense vreugde. Hy glo dat die verbintenis tussen die mens en die aarde nie verbreek moet word nie.

Sy stryd om vryheid is ironies in die lig van die feit dat die oorlog geveg word juis om minderheidsgroepe inspraak in hulle toekoms te verseker.

Die finale toepassing van die allegorie is dat die ware redding van die gemeenskap te vinde is in die erkenning van basiese geelykheid, menslikheid, en individuele vryheid.

Foe is 'n moderne allegorie wat Coetzee se vroeëre ondersoeke herhaal en uitbrei. Dit ondersoek die verhouding van vertelling en gebeure, waarheid en fiksie. Die raaisel van Friday se woordelose en skynbaar afhanklike toestand is die fokuspunt van die roman. Sy stilte is 'n manifestasie van die eksistensiële niet.

In hierdie roman word bewys gelewer dat die ware aard en gees van kolonialisme oorheersing eerder as ontwikkeling is, en dat sy dryfveer ekonomies is en nie 'n brandende begeerte om te beskaaf nie. Die sinisme wat die koloniale mite onderlê is die weiering om die 'stem' van die slaaf te verstaan, sodat sy pleidooi geïgnoreer kan word, terwyl die daad wat hom van sy spraak beroof het terselfder tyd veroordeel kan word.

Soos dit in hierdie roman ontplooi, is dit die taak van die skry-

wer om die gemeenskap aan homself te openbaar, sodat die spraaklose weer resonansie kry en toegelaat sal word om tot gelykheid te aspiereer.

Die meerduidige aard van Coetzee se allegorieë is duidelik, en die essensieel dekonstruktiewe aard van sy werk word gesuggereer wanneer hy die tradisionele rol van die skrywer hersien en die rol van die geskiedenis omverwerp. Sy romans voldoen ook aan die moderne leser se eis om die realistiese. Die karakters is dikwels argetipies, maar met 'n volkome natuurlike aanslag.

Al Coetzee se romans verken sekere verwante vraagstukke, soos die Hegeliaanse tema en die mite van Westerse kolonialisme, sodat mens elke roman as 'n eenheid op sigself kan sien, maar tog al vyf romans as 'n meerduidige, intertekstuele manifestasie van allegorie binne die raamwerk van die moderne romankuns van J.M. Coetzee kan ervaar - 'n lewende manifestasie van 'n aktuele saak.

Donoso's **A house in the country** reveals allegorically the depravity of a society addicted to pleasure and self-gratification, and also explores the idea of fictionality, and the writer's craft.

Allegorical writing is clearly not limited to a particular country or literature, but is used by authors all over the world to examine the underlying motivation for events which stem from the social and political conditions within which the author and his characters find themselves.

In South Africa allegory has been employed from a very early stage, allegorical traits being recognised in Olive Schreiner's work, and J. Lion-Cachet's **Sewe duiwels en wat hulle gedoen het** serves as a paradigm for much of the later allegorical literature in Afrikaans.

N.P. van Wyk Louw's **Die Dieper Reg** is a traditional allegory, but in **Raka** the underlying allegory can be interpreted as the danger of destruction confronting any culture which is exposed to too many foreign influences.

In Etienne Leroux's **Die Mugu** man's failure to prevail against the system is illustrated. In **Sewe dae by die Silbersteins** good and evil are perverted into a uniform lack of identity. **Een vir Aza-zel** explores the problem of blame and moral judgment, while authorship is the theme of **18-44**. In **Isis...Isis...Isis** the search for Isis becomes the quest of Everyman. The allegory of **Magersfontein**, or **Magersfontein** lies in the prediction of humanity going under while occupying itself with trivialities.

The allegory of Bartho Smit's **Putsonderwater** is the crisis of faith as experienced by modern man. Brink's **Lobola vir die lewe** is an allegorical search for meaning while in **Miskien nooit** the narrator's search for Gunhilde becomes a pilgrimage through the labyrinths of the human psyche.

Berta Smit's **Die vrou en die bees** is an allegorical presentation

of the Christian's perseverance, while *Een plus een* is a more successful allegory, exploring the individual's inner conflict concerning faith. Elsa Joubert's *Die Wahlerbrug* is an allegorical representation of the individual's quest for identity.

In *Kroniek van Perdepoort* Anna M. Louw reveals symbolically-allegorically, the seven deadly sins as manifested in a particular family.

Sheila Fugard's first novel, *The Castaways*, demonstrates man's final despair, while Karel Schoeman's *Promised land* describes a man's pilgrimage to an illusory shrine. Nadine Gordimer subtly explores the master/slave dichotomy in *July's people*. *The expedition to the baobab tree* (Stockenström) is an allegory of bondage and rebellion.

This study of Coetzee's novels as allegories is linguistically and semantically oriented. *Dusklands* recharts some of the myths of the western world, and the psychological experience behind the action. The extent of man's alienation is revealed, and the brutalizing effect of uncontrolled power. Dawn's existence is disintegrating under the insidious influence of the work in which he is engaged and his incipient schizophrenia is evident. The war photo's destroy his equilibrium and the bland surfaces indicate how far removed he is from reality.

The problem of identity, which can only be established in relation to other identities, is examined. The alienation that entered modern philosophy with Descartes, translates itself into a will to power that is limitless, precisely because there is a void at the heart of it.

The two explorers, Eugene Dawn and Jacobus Coetzee, penetrate their respective interiors with professedly creative purpose, but leave destruction in their wake. Everywhere they encounter images of negation and hence of self-negation. The events follow the Hegelian process by which power inevitably shifts from the master to the servant.

The only way in which Jacobus can maintain his self-image is to destroy the people who have diminished it. The myth underlying the colonialist motive is destroyed. It is not a creative, civilizing act, but a bid to compensate for a human deficiency.

In juxtaposing the war in Vietnam and the Namaqualand expedition, Coetzee reveals the historical basis of Western colonialism.

In the heart of the country is primarily concerned with the fictionality of fiction, because in this narrative everything is fictional. The reader is confronted with mind and situation rather than character and action. Magda's whole life is a fantasy aimed at filling the vacuum in her life.

Her preoccupation with words and their relation to reality places her in the postmodernist intellectual climate. The Hegelian theme has its ready-made counterpart in South Africa, and the condemnation of the South African situation is evident. Her attempt to break free of the old order and establish a new, equal relationship with the servants fails, however, and she is left an unfilled 0.

The mythology that has overlain the white settler consciousness is stripped away. The earth mother which she packs out with stones in reply to the voices speaking from the aeroplanes, represents her search for re-integration with the feminine principle and with nature. She personifies the desires and frustrations of modern man, and the inner conflict arising from alienation and uncertainty.

Waiting for the Barbarians reveals the ambiguity of the distinction between 'civilized' and 'barbarian'. The allegory concerns the relationship between empire and colony, master and slave, man and woman. It deconstructs and dismantles cultural myths by revealing their opposites. By telescoping historic time and contemporaneity Coetzee emphasises the universality of his work. The paternalistic, easy-going Magistrate's belief in "peace at any

price" is proved to be spurious. His ritual washing of the barbarian girl's feet is sacramental and a kind of purification ceremony. His position remains riddled with contradictions. When he takes his stand against the representatives of Empire he cannot choose the barbarian way of life and is left vacillating somewhere in a void between the two. His dreams are a phantasmagoric representation of his initial inability to acknowledge the girl's identity.

Joll and Mandel are destroyed by the refusal of the barbarians to become the other "I" that will provide them with the "being" without which they cannot establish their identity.

The novel does not resolve the Magistrate's position, but is an exploration of the confusion, illusion and the projection of false ideas. The referential certainty upon which allegory has always stood is repeatedly deconstructed.

Life and times of Michael K can be interpreted on the universal, and on the specifically South African level. Michael K becomes the symbol for man's personal freedom, personal identity and dignity.

Unable to penetrate the Kafkaesque bureaucracy in a war-torn country to obtain the necessary travel permit, Michael builds a barrow in which to push his mother to Prince Albert, and thus starts his allegorical journey to evade this particular brand of colonialism.

He is stripped of every possession, as his body is stripped of flesh by the privations of the journey. The only food he eats with pleasure is the fruit of the dry Karoo earth. He feels an almost mystical affinity with the earth, experiencing intense pleasure in cultivating it and believing that the connection between man and earth should not be broken.

His fight for freedom is ironic in the light of the purpose of the

war, which is being fought so that minority groups may retain a say in their future.

The final application of the allegory is that the true salvation of society lies in the recognition of basic equality, humanity, and individual freedom.

Foe is a modern allegory which both reiterates and extends Coetzee's earlier explorations. It examines the relationship of narrative and event, truth and fiction. The enigma of Friday's silent and apparently dependent condition provides a pivotal point in the novel. His silence is a manifestation of the existential void.

In this novel the true nature and spirit of colonialism has been proved to be domination not development, its driving force a question of economics, not a burning desire to civilize. The cynicism underlying the colonialist myth is the refusal to understand the 'voice' of the slave so that his plea can be ignored, while at the same time deploring the act which deprived him of his speech.

It is the task of the writer, according to this novel, to expose society to itself, so that the mute voice may be given back its resonance, and allowed to ascend to equality.

The polysemous nature of Coetzee's allegories is evident, and the essentially deconstructive nature of his work is suggested as he revises the traditional role of the author and subverts the role of history. His novels also meet the modern reader's demand for realism. The characters are often archetypal, but naturally so.

Coetzee's novels all explore certain related questions like the Hegelian theme, and the myth of Western colonialism, so that although each novel is self-contained, these five novels could in-

deed be regarded as a unit, each exploring a different perspective of a larger allegory, and all of them together constructing an intertextual unity within the framework of the modern novel - indeed a living manifestation of the topical issue of allegory.

ADDENDUM II: UITTREKSEL

Die werke van J.M. Coetzee kan as 'fabulations' geklassifiseer word, 'n nuwe indirekte skryfstyl wat 'n besonder nuttige styl is vir die versetliteratuur wat vandag in baie lande geskryf word.

Allegorie het deur die jare baie veranderings ondergaan, maar het sy tipiese tweeledigheid behou van een ding sê en 'n ander bedoel. Kompositoriese of narratiewe allegorie het ontwikkel uit die allegoriese interpretasie van die handelings van die gode in Homeros en Hesiod. Personifikasie-allegorie was ook baie gewild. Vroeë allegorieë het 'n geneigdheid getoon om een van twee vorms aan te neem, nl. die 'stryd', of the 'ontwikkeling'.

Minstens drie soorte allegorieë is onderskei in middeleeuse literatuur, naamlik aktuele, skriftuurlike en personifikasie-allegorie. Daar is 'n noue verband tussen historiese of politieke allegorie en satire. Drome is 'n belangrike stylmiddel en allegorieë wat van drome gebruik maak word visioenêr genoem. Verskeie soorte allegorieë is ook in die Bybel geïdentifiseer, veral tipologiese, situatiewe en narratiewe allegorie. In die middeleeue was die moraliteite die belangrikste vorm van allegoriese drama, terwyl **Le Roman de la Rose** as die beste voorbeeld van middeleeuse liefdespoësie beskou word. Allegorie het in hierdie tydperk gedegenerereer, maar weer 'n bloeityd beleef, totdat dit in Spenser se **The Faerie Queene** 'n nuwe peil van vervolmaking bereik het.

Gedurende die Renaissance het allegorie 'n belangrike didaktiese instrument gebly, 'n bruikbare retoriese stylmiddel, en dit is nuttig om kontemporêre verwysings te verbloem. Die fundamentele narratiewe vorms is nog die reis/soektog en die stryd/konflik, en die allegorieë word dikwels op 'n voorteks gebaseer wat dan die allegoriese motief vorm.

In die agtiende en die negentiende eeue het allegorie 'n drastiese verandering ondergaan. Dit het nie langer verwys na 'n geordende

heelal nie, maar het 'n sekere vyandigheid teenoor enige sistematisering van die lewe openbaar. Die satires van Swift en Pope het kommentaar met parodie vervang. Allegorie verander van 'n wesenlik bevestigende vorm na 'n toenemend ironiese vorm. Coleridge se onderskeiding tussen allegorie en simbool het 'n diepgaande invloed op daaropvolgende kritiek uitgeoefen.

Oor die jare het 'n aantal strydpunte rondom allegorie ontwikkel. Een van hulle is die vraag of allegorie 'n genre of 'n stylvorm is. Die idee van allegorie as 'n stylvorm blyk meer gewild te wees. 'n Ander is die onderskeid tussen metafoor en metonimie. In die lig van resente post-strukturalisties en semiotiese studies, kan 'n fundamentele teenstelling tussen die twee nie meer gehandhaaf word nie. Allegorie toon 'n duidelike verwantskap met mite. Dit word aangevoer dat personifikasie met allegorie geassosieer word, maar dat dit nie inherent allegories is nie. Demone wat die lewe van die mens oorheers is tradisioneel goed en boos. Die verdeling in goeie engele en bose demone is 'n ontwikkeling van die Christelike literatuur.

Die onguns waarin allegorie verval het word getoon deur die kleinerende wyse waarop baie moderne resensente na die stylvorm verwys. 'n Aantal kritici het egter 'n verdediging van allegorie onderneem. In hierdie verband het die werk van Frye, Hönig, Fletcher en de Man die meeste invloed gehad, met die gevolg dat allegorie en veral allegoriese interpretasie in resente tye weer modeterme geword het.

Die funksie van allegorie is om sekere veralgemeende formulerings aangaande die aard van menslike ervaring te kommunikeer. Die visuele element is 'n belangrike middel waardeur die interpretasie van allegorie ondersteun en gerig word. Allegorie bestaan uit 'n reeks gekoppelde beelde wat 'n basis vir die oppervlakteverhaal voorsien. Die verhouding tussen die letterlike oppervlakte en die allegoriese betekenis van 'n werk is onderling ondersteunend. Die allegoriese teks is dikwels 'n weerklank van 'n argetipiese patroon of 'n voorteks, sodat allegorie intertekstuele verwysings in sy

sentrale meerduidigheidsbeeld inkorporeer. Die allegoriese styl-vorm is ironies, en verraaï dikwels 'n opsetlike dubbelsinnigheid.

Die grootste ooreenkoms tussen moderne en vroeër allegorieë is dat albei vorms ontledings is van die gemeenskappe vir wie hulle geskryf is. Terwyl middeleeuse skrywers in allegorie 'n medium gevind het waardeur hulle die waarheid wat hulle in die wêreld ontdek het kon oordra, verraaï moderne allegorie die gebrek aan waarheid. Die isolasie van die individu word verken, terwyl vervreemding 'n sentrale tema van moderne allegorie geword het.

Die teenwoordigheid van 'n simbool maak 'n werk nie allegories nie. Wat vereis word is 'n volgehoue, uitgebreide simboliek wat simbole en beelde met mekaar in verband bring sodat hulle 'n samehangende raamwerk vorm. Dit gaan altyd om die ontwikkeling. Mite sluit die herhalende patrone van handeling en betekenis in literatuur in.

Allegorie is 'n belangrike vorm van 'fabulation', waarvan 'n gevoel van genot wat uit die vorm geput word, 'n belangrike kenmerk is. Dit is 'n poging om die knellende effek van realisme te transendeer. As gevolg van die ontwikkeling van resepsie-estetika, word die leser weereens as die genereerder van betekenis erken.

'n Studie van verskeie moderne werke ondersteun die hipotese dat allegorie sy gewildheid herwin het. Die allegorieë van Yeats en Conrad verteenwoordig 'n oorgangsperiode. **Cathleen ni Houlihan** (Yeats) is 'n idealistiese, nasionalistiese allegorie, terwyl **The dreaming of the bones** aanspraak maak op die ewe belangrikheid van die konflikte binne die gekoloniseerde gemeenskap en die psige, en nader is aan moderne allegorie.

Conrad se **The rover** is 'n allegorie wat die lotgevalle van Frankryk gedurende en na die Revolusie weergee, maar met sy idealistiese einde, is dit nie heeltemal modern nie.

Kafka kan beskryf word as een van die baanbrekers van moderne alle-

gorie. **The metamorphosis** bestudeer die psigologiese effek van transformasie. In **The trial** is die Reg die simbool, terwyl K. se betrokkenheid in die prosesse van die Reg die allegorie is van die hulpeloosheid van die mens teenoor 'n almagtige burokrasie. **The castle** brei verder uit op hierdie tema. In **The penal colony** herinner die reusagtige vergeldingsmasjinerie aan die swaarwigtige beweging van die Reg en die burokrasie. Tesame vorm hierdie werke 'n vernietigende aanklag teen onbeheersde mag. Hesse se **Steppenwolf** veroordeel intellektuele skynheiligheid, en erken die dierlikheid wat deel is van die samestelling van die mens. **The Tartar Steppe** deur Dino Buzzati suggereer die waarhede van die militêre lewe en van oorlog, en toon hoe die lewe gereduseer word tot 'n illusie.

George Orwell se **Animal Farm** is 'n grondige kommentaar oor moderne politieke filosofie, en verbeeld die effek van ongebreidelde mag, terwyl Golding se **Lord of the Flies** 'n skrikwekkende parodie van die moderne gemeenskap is, en allegories die feit verraaie dat die bose inherent in die mens is. **The Inheritors** is ironies omdat die allegorie illustreer dat dit nie die sagmoediges is wat die aarde beërwe nie, maar dié wat hulle doodmaak. **Pincher Martin** beskryf die protagonis se allegoriese stryd om oorlewing in die see van die lewe.

Durrell se **Alexandria Quartet** is 'n allegoriese verspieding van die skrywer se vernuf, en die invloed van perspektief en gesigspunt. **The Bell**, van Iris Murdoch, ondersoek die futiliteit van die mens se pogings om een of ander vorm van klaarheid of waarheid te bereik. Die boosheid wat deur perverse seksuele verhoudings gegeneereer word, word belig in **The unicorn**, terwyl **The time of the angels** die donkerheid van die bose wat die hooffigure isoleer en omring allegories verken. **A word child** toon 'n preokkupasie met die aard van sonde en vergiffenis.

Borges ondersoek die probleem van illusie en realiteit in **Labyrinth**, terwyl **The library of Babel** die futiliteit van die mens se soeke na 'n betekenis wat nie bestaan nie, beklemtoon.

Die held van Okara se **The voice** onderneem 'n allegoriese reis wat op ontgugtering uitloop. Die Odysseeaanse reis is ook die argetipe waarvan Ribeiro se **Sergeant Getúlio** 'n palimpse is, 'n allegoriese visioen van een man se reis na verlossing.

Donoso se **A house in the country** onthul allegories die verdorwenheid van 'n gemeenskap verslaaf aan plesier en self-bevrediging, en ondersoek ook die idee van fiktiewiteit, en die kuns van die skrywer.

Allegorieskrywing is duidelik nie beperk tot 'n besondere land of literatuur nie, maar word deur skrywers dwarsdeur die wêreld gebruik om die onderliggende motivering vir gebeurde wat uit die maatskaplike en politieke toestande waarin die skrywer en sy karakters hulle bevind, voortspruit.

In Suid-Afrika is allegorie reeds vanaf 'n baie vroeë stadium gebruik. Allegoriese eienskappe is reeds in Olive Schreiner se werk herken, en J. Lion-Cachet se **Sewe duiwels en wat hulle gedoen het** dien as 'n paradigma vir baie van die allegoriese literatuur wat later in Afrikaans verskyn.

N.P. van Wyk Louw se **Die Dieper Reg** is 'n tradisionele allegorie, maar in **Raka** kan die onderliggende allegorie vertolk word as die gevaar van vernietiging wat enige kultuur bedreig wat aan te veel vreemde invloede blootgestel is.

In Etienne Leroux se **Die Mugu** word die mens se onvermoë om teen die stelsel te seëvier geïllustreer. In **Sewe dae by die Silbersteins** word goed en kwaad tot 'n eenvormige identiteiteloosheid ondermyn. **Een vir Azazel** verken die probleem van blaam en morele veroordeling, terwyl skrywerskap die tema is van **18-44**. In **Isis...Isis...Isis** word die soektog na Isis die soektog na Elckerlyc. Die allegorie van **Magersfontein, o Magersfontein** is geleë in die voorstelling van die mensdom wat ten gronde gaan terwyl hy homself met beuselagtighede besig hou.

Die allegorie van Bartho Smit se **Putsonderwater** is die geloofskri-
sis wat die moderne mens ervaar. Brink se **Lobola vir die lewe** is
'n allegoriese soektog na betekenis, terwyl in **Miskien nooit** die
verteller se soeke na Gunhilde 'n pelsgrimstog deur die doolhof van
die menslike psige word.

Berta Smit se **Die vrou en die bees** is 'n allegoriese voorstelling
van die Christen se volharding, terwyl **Een plus een** 'n meer geslaag-
de allegorie is, wat die individu se innerlike konflik aangaande
geloof ondersoek. Elsa Joubert se **Die Wahlerbrug** is 'n allegoriese
voorstelling van die individu se soeke na identiteit.

In **Kroniek van Perdepoort** toon Anna M. Louw op simbolies-allego-
riese wyse die sewe doodsondes soos vergestalt in 'n besondere
familie.

Sheila Fugard se eerste roman, **The Castaways**, demonstreer die mens
se finale wanhoop, terwyl Karel Schoeman se **Promised Land** 'n man se
pelgrimstog voorstel na 'n heiligdom wat 'n hersenskim blyk te wees.
Nadine Gordimer verken op subtiele wyse die meester/slaaf-digotomie
in **July's people**. **The expedition to the baobab tree** (Stockenström)
is 'n allegorie van slawerny en rebellie.

Hierdie studie van Coetzee se romans as allegorieë is linguisties
en semanties georiënteerd. **Dusklands** herkarteer sommige van die
mites van die westerse wêreld, en die psigologiese ervaring agter
die handeling. Die omvang van die mens se vervreemding word ge-
toon, asook die verdierlikende effek van onbeheersde mag. Dawn
se bestaan is besig om te disintegreer onder die verraderlike in-
vloed van die werk waarmee hy besig is, en sy naderende kranksin-
nigheid is duidelik. Die oorlogfoto's vernietig sy ewewigtigheid
en hulle neutrale oppervlaktes is 'n aanduiding van hoe ver hy van
die werklikheid verwyder is.

Die probleem van identiteit, wat slegs in verband met ander identi-
teite bevestig kan word, word ondersoek. Die vervreemding wat die

moderne filosofie saam met Descartes binnegedring het, herlei homself tot 'n drang na mag wat onbeperk is, juis omdat daar 'n leemte aan die hart daarvan lê.

Die twee ontdekkers, Eugene Dawn en Jacobus Coetzee, dring hulle onderskeie interieurs binne met oënskynlik kreatiewe doelstellings, maar hulle laat vernietiging op hulle spoor. Oral kom hulle beelde van ontkenning en dus ook self-ontkenning teë. Die handeling volg die Hegeliaanse proses waarvolgens die mag van die meester na die slaaf verskuif.

Die enigste manier waarop Jacobus sy selfbeeld kan behou is om die mense wat dit verklein het te vernietig. Die mite wat die koloniale motief onderlê word vernietig. Dit is nie 'n skeppende, beskawende handeling nie, maar 'n poging om vir 'n menslike gebrek te vergoed.

Deur die oorlog in Vietnam en die Namaqualandse ekspedisie naas mekaar te stel, openbaar Coetzee die historiese basis van Westerse kolonialisme.

In the heart of the country is hoofsaaklik gemoeid met die fiktiviteit van fiksie, want in hierdie vertelling is alles fiktief. Die leser word met intellek en situasie gekonfronteer eerder as met karakter en handeling. Magda se hele lewe is 'n fantasie gewy aan die vul van die vakuum in haar lewe.

Haar preokkupasie met woorde en hulle verhouding tot die werklikheid, plaas haar in die postmodernistiese intellektuele klimaat. Die Hegeliaanse tema het sy kitsklaar ewebeeld in Suid-Afrika, en die veroordeling van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie is ooglopend. Haar poging om van die ou orde weg te breek en 'n nuwe, gelyke verhouding met die bediendes te vestig misluk egter, en sy word 'n onvervulde 0 gelaat.

Die mitologie wat die wit setlaar-bewussyn oordek het, word wegge-

stroop. Die aardmoeder wat sy met klippe op die grond uitbeeld in antwoord op die stemme wat haar vanuit die vliegtuie toespreek, stel haar soektog voor, 'n soektog na her-integrasie met die feministiese beginsel en met die natuur. Sy is 'n personifikasie van die begeertes en frustrasies van die moderne mens, en die innerlike konflik wat deur vervreemding en onsekerheid ontstaan.

Waiting for the Barbarians openbaar die dubbelsinnigheid van die onderskeid tussen 'beskaafd' en 'barbaars'. Die allegorie het te doen met die verhouding tussen "Empire" en kolonie, meester en slaaf, man en vrou. Dit dekonstrueer en takel die kulturele mites af deur hulle teendeel te openbaar. Deur historiese tyd en eietydsheid te teleskopeer beklemtoon Coetzee die universaliteit van sy werk. Die paternalistiese, gemaklike Magistraat se geloof in vrede teen elke prys word vals bewys. Sy rituele was van die barbaar meisie se voete is sakramenteel, en 'n soort reinigingsseremonie. Sy posisie bly vol teenstrydighede. Wanneer hy standpunt inneem teen die verteenwoordigers van Empire kan hy nie die barbare se lewenswyse aanneem nie, en bly weifelend iewers huiwer in 'n leemte tussen die twee. Sy drome is 'n fantasmagoriese voorstelling van sy aanvanklike onvermoë om die meisie se identiteit te erken.

Joll en Mandel word vernietig deur die barbare se weiering om die ander "Ek" te word wat hulle van die "wese" sal voorsien waarsonder hulle nie hulle eie identiteit kan bevestig nie.

Die roman bied nie 'n oplossing vir die Magistraat se posisie nie, maar is 'n verkenning van die verwarring, illusie, en die projektering van valse idees. Die verwysingssekerheid waarin allegorie nog altyd geanker is word herhaaldelik gedekonstrueer.

Life and times of Michael K kan op die universele en die spesifiek Suid-Afrikaanse vlak geïnterpreteer word. Michael K word die simbool van die mens se persoonlike vryheid, persoonlike identiteit en waardigheid.

Nie in staat om die Kafkaeske burokrasie in 'n oorlogverskeurde land te deurdring nie, bou Michael 'n stootkar om sy ma Prins Albert toe te stoot, en so begin sy allegoriese reis om hierdie besondere vorm van kolonisasie te ontkom.

Hy word van elke besitting gestroop, soos sy liggaam ook gestroop word deur die ontberinge van die reis. Die enigste voedsel wat hy met genoegdoening eet is die vrugte van die droë Karoo-aarde. Hy voel 'n byna mistieke verbintenis met die aarde, en om dit te bewerk verskaf aan hom intense vreugde. Hy glo dat die verbintenis tussen die mens en die aarde nie verbreek moet word nie.

Sy stryd om vryheid is ironies in die lig van die feit dat die oorlog geveg word juis om minderheidsgroepe inspraak in hulle toekoms te verseker.

Die finale toepassing van die allegorie is dat die ware redding van die gemeenskap te vinde is in die erkenning van basiese geelykheid, menslikheid, en individuele vryheid.

Foe is 'n moderne allegorie wat Coetzee se vroeëre ondersoeke herhaal en uitbrei. Dit ondersoek die verhouding van vertelling en gebeure, waarheid en fiksie. Die raaisel van Friday se woordelose en skynbaar afhanklike toestand is die fokuspunt van die roman. Sy stilte is 'n manifestasie van die eksistensiële niet.

In hierdie roman word bewys gelewer dat die ware aard en gees van kolonialisme oorheersing eerder as ontwikkeling is, en dat sy dryfveer ekonomies is en nie 'n brandende begeerte om te beskaaf nie. Die sinisme wat die koloniale mite onderlê is die weiering om die 'stem' van die slaaf te verstaan, sodat sy pleidooi geïgnoreer kan word, terwyl die daad wat hom van sy spraak beroof het terselfder tyd veroordeel kan word.

Soos dit in hierdie roman ontplooi, is dit die taak van die skry-

wer om die gemeenskap aan homself te openbaar, sodat die spraaklose weer resonansie kry en toegelaat sal word om tot gelykheid te aspiereer.

Die meerduidige aard van Coetzee se allegorieë is duidelik, en die essensieel dekonstruktiewe aard van sy werk word gesuggereer wanneer hy die tradisionele rol van die skrywer hersien en die rol van die geskiedenis omverwerp. Sy romans voldoen ook aan die moderne leser se eis om die realistiese. Die karakters is dikwels argetipies, maar met 'n volkome natuurlike aanslag.

Al Coetzee se romans verken sekere verwante vraagstukke, soos die Hegeliaanse tema en die mite van Westerse kolonialisme, sodat mens elke roman as 'n eenheid op sigself kan sien, maar tog al vyf romans as 'n meerduidige, intertekstuele manifestasie van allegorie binne die raamwerk van die moderne romankuns van J.M. Coetzee kan ervaar - 'n lewende manifestasie van 'n aktuele saak.

The only way in which Jacobus can maintain his self-image is to destroy the people who have diminished it. The myth underlying the colonialist motive is destroyed. It is not a creative, civilizing act, but a bid to compensate for a human deficiency.

In juxtaposing the war in Vietnam and the Namaqualand expedition, Coetzee reveals the historical basis of Western colonialism.

In the heart of the country is primarily concerned with the fictionality of fiction, because in this narrative everything is fictional. The reader is confronted with mind and situation rather than character and action. Magda's whole life is a fantasy aimed at filling the vacuum in her life.

Her preoccupation with words and their relation to reality places her in the postmodernist intellectual climate. The Hegelian theme has its ready-made counterpart in South Africa, and the condemnation of the South African situation is evident. Her attempt to break free of the old order and establish a new, equal relationship with the servants fails, however, and she is left an unfilled 0.

The mythology that has overlain the white settler consciousness is stripped away. The earth mother which she packs out with stones in reply to the voices speaking from the aeroplanes, represents her search for re-integration with the feminine principle and with nature. She personifies the desires and frustrations of modern man, and the inner conflict arising from alienation and uncertainty.

Waiting for the Barbarians reveals the ambiguity of the distinction between 'civilized' and 'barbarian'. The allegory concerns the relationship between empire and colony, master and slave, man and woman. It deconstructs and dismantles cultural myths by revealing their opposites. By telescoping historic time and contemporaneity Coetzee emphasises the universality of his work. The paternalistic, easy-going Magistrate's belief in "peace at any

price" is proved to be spurious. His ritual washing of the barbarian girl's feet is sacramental and a kind of purification ceremony. His position remains riddled with contradictions. When he takes his stand against the representatives of Empire he cannot choose the barbarian way of life and is left vacillating somewhere in a void between the two. His dreams are a phantasmagoric representation of his initial inability to acknowledge the girl's identity.

Joll and Mandel are destroyed by the refusal of the barbarians to become the other "I" that will provide them with the "being" without which they cannot establish their identity.

The novel does not resolve the Magistrate's position, but is an exploration of the confusion, illusion and the projection of false ideas. The referential certainty upon which allegory has always stood is repeatedly deconstructed.

Life and times of Michael K can be interpreted on the universal, and on the specifically South African level. Michael K becomes the symbol for man's personal freedom, personal identity and dignity.

Unable to penetrate the Kafkaesque bureaucracy in a war-torn country to obtain the necessary travel permit, Michael builds a barrow in which to push his mother to Prince Albert, and thus starts his allegorical journey to evade this particular brand of colonialism.

He is stripped of every possession, as his body is stripped of flesh by the privations of the journey. The only food he eats with pleasure is the fruit of the dry Karoo earth. He feels an almost mystical affinity with the earth, experiencing intense pleasure in cultivating it and believing that the connection between man and earth should not be broken.

His fight for freedom is ironic in the light of the purpose of the

war, which is being fought so that minority groups may retain a say in their future.

The final application of the allegory is that the true salvation of society lies in the recognition of basic equality, humanity, and individual freedom.

Foe is a modern allegory which both reiterates and extends Coetzee's earlier explorations. It examines the relationship of narrative and event, truth and fiction. The enigma of Friday's silent and apparently dependent condition provides a pivotal point in the novel. His silence is a manifestation of the existential void.

In this novel the true nature and spirit of colonialism has been proved to be domination not development, its driving force a question of economics, not a burning desire to civilize. The cynicism underlying the colonialist myth is the refusal to understand the 'voice' of the slave so that his plea can be ignored, while at the same time deploring the act which deprived him of his speech.

It is the task of the writer, according to this novel, to expose society to itself, so that the mute voice may be given back its resonance, and allowed to ascend to equality.

The polysemous nature of Coetzee's allegories is evident, and the essentially deconstructive nature of his work is suggested as he revises the traditional role of the author and subverts the role of history. His novels also meet the modern reader's demand for realism. The characters are often archetypal, but naturally so.

Coetzee's novels all explore certain related questions like the Hegelian theme, and the myth of Western colonialism, so that although each novel is self-contained, these five novels could in-

deed be regarded as a unit, each exploring a different perspective of a larger allegory, and all of them together constructing an intertextual unity within the framework of the modern novel - indeed a living manifestation of the topical issue of allegory.

ADDENDUM II: UITTREKSEL

Die werke van J.M. Coetzee kan as 'fabulations' geklassifiseer word, 'n nuwe indirekte skryfstyl wat 'n besonder nuttige styl is vir die versetliteratuur wat vandag in baie lande geskryf word.

Allegorie het deur die jare baie veranderinge ondergaan, maar het sy tipiese tweeledigheid behou van een ding sê en 'n ander bedoel. Kompositoriese of narratiewe allegorie het ontwikkel uit die allegoriese interpretasie van die handelings van die gode in Homeros en Hesiod. Personifikasie-allegorie was ook baie gewild. Vroeë allegorieë het 'n geneigdheid getoon om een van twee vorms aan te neem, nl. die 'stryd', of the 'ontwikkeling'.

Minstens drie soorte allegorieë is onderskei in middeleeuse literatuur, naamlik aktuele, skriftuurlike en personifikasie-allegorie. Daar is 'n noue verband tussen historiese of politieke allegorie en satire. Drome is 'n belangrike stylmiddel en allegorieë wat van drome gebruik maak word visioenêr genoem. Verskeie soorte allegorieë is ook in die Bybel geïdentifiseer, veral tipologiese, situatiewe en narratiewe allegorie. In die middeleeue was die moraliteite die belangrikste vorm van allegoriese drama, terwyl **Le Roman de la Rose** as die beste voorbeeld van middeleeuse liefdespoësie beskou word. Allegorie het in hierdie tydperk gedegenerereer, maar weer 'n bloeityd beleef, totdat dit in Spenser se **The Faerie Queene** 'n nuwe peil van vervolmaking bereik het.

Gedurende die Renaissance het allegorie 'n belangrike didaktiese instrument gebly, 'n bruikbare retoriese stylmiddel, en dit is nuttig om kontemporêre verwysings te verbloem. Die fundamentele narratiewe vorms is nog die reis/soektog en die stryd/konflik, en die allegorieë word dikwels op 'n voorteks gebaseer wat dan die allegoriese motief vorm.

In die agtiende en die negentiende eeue het allegorie 'n drastiese verandering ondergaan. Dit het nie langer verwys na 'n geordende

heelal nie, maar het 'n sekere vyandigheid teenoor enige sistematisering van die lewe openbaar. Die satires van Swift en Pope het kommentaar met parodie vervang. Allegorie verander van 'n wesenlik bevestigende vorm na 'n toenemend ironiese vorm. Coleridge se onderskeiding tussen allegorie en simbool het 'n diepgaande invloed op daaropvolgende kritiek uitgeoefen.

Oor die jare het 'n aantal strydpunte rondom allegorie ontwikkel. Een van hulle is die vraag of allegorie 'n genre of 'n stylvorm is. Die idee van allegorie as 'n stylvorm blyk meer gewild te wees. 'n Ander is die onderskeid tussen metafoor en metonimie. In die lig van resente post-strukturalisties en semiotiese studies, kan 'n fundamentele teenstelling tussen die twee nie meer gehandhaaf word nie. Allegorie toon 'n duidelike verwantskap met mite. Dit word aangevoer dat personifikasie met allegorie geassosieer word, maar dat dit nie inherent allegories is nie. Demone wat die lewe van die mens oorheers is tradisioneel goed en boos. Die verdeling in goeie engele en bose demone is 'n ontwikkeling van die Christelike literatuur.

Die onguns waarin allegorie verval het word getoon deur die kleinerende wyse waarop baie moderne resensente na die stylvorm verwys. 'n Aantal kritici het egter 'n verdediging van allegorie onderneem. In hierdie verband het die werk van Frye, Hönig, Fletcher en de Man die meeste invloed gehad, met die gevolg dat allegorie en veral allegoriese interpretasie in resente tye weer modeterme geword het.

Die funksie van allegorie is om sekere veralgemeende formulerings aangaande die aard van menslike ervaring te kommunikeer. Die visuele element is 'n belangrike middel waardeur die interpretasie van allegorie ondersteun en gerig word. Allegorie bestaan uit 'n reeks gekoppelde beelde wat 'n basis vir die oppervlakteverhaal voorsien. Die verhouding tussen die letterlike oppervlakte en die allegoriese betekenis van 'n werk is onderling ondersteunend. Die allegoriese teks is dikwels 'n weerklank van 'n argetipiese patroon of 'n voorteks, sodat allegorie intertekstuele verwysings in sy

sentrale meerduidigheidsbeeld inkorporeer. Die allegoriese styl-vorm is ironies, en verraaï dikwels 'n opsetlike dubbelsinnigheid.

Die grootste ooreenkoms tussen moderne en vroeër allegorieë is dat albei vorms ontledings is van die gemeenskappe vir wie hulle geskryf is. Terwyl middeleeuse skrywers in allegorie 'n medium gevind het waardeur hulle die waarheid wat hulle in die wêreld ontdek het kon oordra, verraaï moderne allegorie die gebrek aan waarheid. Die isolasie van die individu word verken, terwyl vervreemding 'n sentrale tema van moderne allegorie geword het.

Die teenwoordigheid van 'n simbool maak 'n werk nie allegories nie. Wat vereis word is 'n volgehoue, uitgebreide simboliek wat simbole en beelde met mekaar in verband bring sodat hulle 'n samehangende raamwerk vorm. Dit gaan altyd om die ontwikkeling. Mite sluit die herhalende patrone van handeling en betekenis in literatuur in.

Allegorie is 'n belangrike vorm van 'fabulation', waarvan 'n gevoel van genot wat uit die vorm geput word, 'n belangrike kenmerk is. Dit is 'n poging om die knellende effek van realisme te transendeer. As gevolg van die ontwikkeling van resepsie-estetika, word die leser weereens as die genereerder van betekenis erken.

'n Studie van verskeie moderne werke ondersteun die hipotese dat allegorie sy gewildheid herwin het. Die allegorieë van Yeats en Conrad verteenwoordig 'n oorgangsperiode. **Cathleen ni Houlihan** (Yeats) is 'n idealistiese, nasionalistiese allegorie, terwyl **The dreaming of the bones** aanspraak maak op die ewe belangrikheid van die konflikte binne die gekoloniseerde gemeenskap en die psige, en nader is aan moderne allegorie.

Conrad se **The rover** is 'n allegorie wat die lotgevalle van Frankryk gedurende en na die Revolusie weergee, maar met sy idealistiese einde, is dit nie heeltemal modern nie.

Kafka kan beskryf word as een van die baanbrekers van moderne alle-

gorie. **The metamorphosis** bestudeer die psigologiese effek van transformasie. In **The trial** is die Reg die simbool, terwyl K. se betrokkenheid in die prosesse van die Reg die allegorie is van die hulpeloosheid van die mens teenoor 'n almagtige burokrasie. **The castle** brei verder uit op hierdie tema. In **The penal colony** herinner die reusagtige vergeldingsmasjinerie aan die swaarwigtige beweging van die Reg en die burokrasie. Tesame vorm hierdie werke 'n vernietigende aanklag teen onbeheersde mag. Hesse se **Steppenwolf** veroordeel intellektuele skynheiligheid, en erken die dierlikheid wat deel is van die samestelling van die mens. **The Tartar Steppe** deur Dino Buzzati suggereer die waarhede van die militêre lewe en van oorlog, en toon hoe die lewe gereduseer word tot 'n illusie.

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Waiting for the Barbarians openbaar die dubbelsinnigheid van die onderskeid tussen 'beskaafd' en 'barbaars'. Die allegorie het te doen met die verhouding tussen "Empire" en kolonie, meester en slaaf, man en vrou. Dit dekonstrueer en takel die kulturele mites af deur hulle teendeel te openbaar. Deur historiese tyd en eietydsheid te teleskopeer beklemtoon Coetzee die universaliteit van sy werk. Die paternalistiese, gemaklike Magistraat se geloof in vrede teen elke prys word vals bewys. Sy rituele was van die barbaar meisie se voete is sakramenteel, en 'n soort reinigingsseremonie. Sy posisie bly vol teenstrydighede. Wanneer hy standpunt inneem teen die verteenwoordigers van Empire kan hy nie die barbare se lewenswyse aanneem nie, en bly weifelend iewers huiwer in 'n leemte tussen die twee. Sy drome is 'n fantasmagoriese voorstelling van sy aanvanklike onvermoë om die meisie se identiteit te erken.

Joll en Mandel word vernietig deur die barbare se weiering om die ander "Ek" te word wat hulle van die "wese" sal voorsien waarsonder hulle nie hulle eie identiteit kan bevestig nie.

Die roman bied nie 'n oplossing vir die Magistraat se posisie nie, maar is 'n verkenning van die verwarring, illusie, en die projektering van valse idees. Die verwysingssekerheid waarin allegorie nog altyd geanker is word herhaaldelik gedekonstrueer.

Life and times of Michael K kan op die universele en die spesifiek Suid-Afrikaanse vlak geïnterpreteer word. Michael K word die simbool van die mens se persoonlike vryheid, persoonlike identiteit en waardigheid.

Nie in staat om die Kafkaeske burokrasie in 'n oorlogverskeurde land te deurdring nie, bou Michael 'n stootkar om sy ma Prins Albert toe te stoot, en so begin sy allegoriese reis om hierdie besondere vorm van kolonisasie te ontkom.

Hy word van elke besitting gestroop, soos sy liggaam ook gestroop word deur die ontberinge van die reis. Die enigste voedsel wat hy met genoegdoening eet is die vrugte van die droë Karoo-aarde. Hy voel 'n byna mistieke verbintenis met die aarde, en om dit te bewerk verskaf aan hom intense vreugde. Hy glo dat die verbintenis tussen die mens en die aarde nie verbreek moet word nie.

Sy stryd om vryheid is ironies in die lig van die feit dat die oorlog geveg word juis om minderheidsgroepe inspraak in hulle toekoms te verseker.

Die finale toepassing van die allegorie is dat die ware redding van die gemeenskap te vinde is in die erkenning van basiese geelykheid, menslikheid, en individuele vryheid.

Foe is 'n moderne allegorie wat Coetzee se vroeëre ondersoeke herhaal en uitbrei. Dit ondersoek die verhouding van vertelling en gebeure, waarheid en fiksie. Die raaisel van Friday se woordelose en skynbaar afhanklike toestand is die fokuspunt van die roman. Sy stilte is 'n manifestasie van die eksistensiële niet.

In hierdie roman word bewys gelewer dat die ware aard en gees van kolonialisme oorheersing eerder as ontwikkeling is, en dat sy dryfveer ekonomies is en nie 'n brandende begeerte om te beskaaf nie. Die sinisme wat die koloniale mite onderlê is die weiering om die 'stem' van die slaaf te verstaan, sodat sy pleidooi geïgnoreer kan word, terwyl die daad wat hom van sy spraak beroof het terselfder tyd veroordeel kan word.

Soos dit in hierdie roman ontplooi, is dit die taak van die skry-

wer om die gemeenskap aan homself te openbaar, sodat die spraaklose weer resonansie kry en toegelaat sal word om tot gelykheid te aspiereer.

Die meerduidige aard van Coetzee se allegorieë is duidelik, en die essensieel dekonstruktiewe aard van sy werk word gesuggereer wanneer hy die tradisionele rol van die skrywer hersien en die rol van die geskiedenis omverwerp. Sy romans voldoen ook aan die moderne leser se eis om die realistiese. Die karakters is dikwels argetipies, maar met 'n volkome natuurlike aanslag.

Al Coetzee se romans verken sekere verwante vraagstukke, soos die Hegeliaanse tema en die mite van Westerse kolonialisme, sodat mens elke roman as 'n eenheid op sigself kan sien, maar tog al vyf romans as 'n meerduidige, intertekstuele manifestasie van allegorie binne die raamwerk van die moderne romankuns van J.M. Coetzee kan ervaar - 'n lewende manifestasie van 'n aktuele saak.

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Die mitologie wat die wit setlaar-bewussyn oordek het, word wegge-

stroop. Die aardmoeder wat sy met klippe op die grond uitbeeld in antwoord op die stemme wat haar vanuit die vliegtuie toespreek, stel haar soektog voor, 'n soektog na her-integrasie met die feministiese beginsel en met die natuur. Sy is 'n personifikasie van die begeertes en frustrasies van die moderne mens, en die innerlike konflik wat deur vervreemding en onsekerheid ontstaan.

Waiting for the Barbarians openbaar die dubbelsinnigheid van die onderskeid tussen 'beskaafd' en 'barbaars'. Die allegorie het te doen met die verhouding tussen "Empire" en kolonie, meester en slaaf, man en vrou. Dit dekonstrueer en takel die kulturele mites af deur hulle teendeel te openbaar. Deur historiese tyd en eietydsheid te teleskopeer beklemtoon Coetzee die universaliteit van sy werk. Die paternalistiese, gemaklike Magistraat se geloof in vrede teen elke prys word vals bewys. Sy rituele was van die barbaar meisie se voete is sakramenteel, en 'n soort reinigingsseremonie. Sy posisie bly vol teenstrydighede. Wanneer hy standpunt inneem teen die verteenwoordigers van Empire kan hy nie die barbare se lewenswyse aanneem nie, en bly weifelend iewers huiwer in 'n leemte tussen die twee. Sy drome is 'n fantasmagoriese voorstelling van sy aanvanklike onvermoë om die meisie se identiteit te erken.

Joll en Mandel word vernietig deur die barbare se weiering om die ander "Ek" te word wat hulle van die "wese" sal voorsien waarsonder hulle nie hulle eie identiteit kan bevestig nie.

Die roman bied nie 'n oplossing vir die Magistraat se posisie nie, maar is 'n verkenning van die verwarring, illusie, en die projektering van valse idees. Die verwysingssekerheid waarin allegorie nog altyd geanker is word herhaaldelik gedekonstrueer.

Life and times of Michael K kan op die universele en die spesifiek Suid-Afrikaanse vlak geïnterpreteer word. Michael K word die simbool van die mens se persoonlike vryheid, persoonlike identiteit en waardigheid.

Nie in staat om die Kafkaeske burokrasie in 'n oorlogverskeurde land te deurdring nie, bou Michael 'n stootkar om sy ma Prins Albert toe te stoot, en so begin sy allegoriese reis om hierdie besondere vorm van kolonisasie te ontkom.

Hy word van elke besitting gestroop, soos sy liggaam ook gestroop word deur die ontberinge van die reis. Die enigste voedsel wat hy met genoegdoening eet is die vrugte van die droë Karoo-aarde. Hy voel 'n byna mistieke verbintenis met die aarde, en om dit te bewerk verskaf aan hom intense vreugde. Hy glo dat die verbintenis tussen die mens en die aarde nie verbreek moet word nie.

Sy stryd om vryheid is ironies in die lig van die feit dat die oorlog geveg word juis om minderheidsgroepe inspraak in hulle toekoms te verseker.

Die finale toepassing van die allegorie is dat die ware redding van die gemeenskap te vinde is in die erkenning van basiese geelykheid, menslikheid, en individuele vryheid.

Foe is 'n moderne allegorie wat Coetzee se vroeëre ondersoeke herhaal en uitbrei. Dit ondersoek die verhouding van vertelling en gebeure, waarheid en fiksie. Die raaisel van Friday se woordelose en skynbaar afhanklike toestand is die fokuspunt van die roman. Sy stilte is 'n manifestasie van die eksistensiële niet.

In hierdie roman word bewys gelewer dat die ware aard en gees van kolonialisme oorheersing eerder as ontwikkeling is, en dat sy dryfveer ekonomies is en nie 'n brandende begeerte om te beskaaf nie. Die sinisme wat die koloniale mite onderlê is die weiering om die 'stem' van die slaaf te verstaan, sodat sy pleidooi geïgnoreer kan word, terwyl die daad wat hom van sy spraak beroof het terselfder tyd veroordeel kan word.

Soos dit in hierdie roman ontplooi, is dit die taak van die skry-

wer om die gemeenskap aan homself te openbaar, sodat die spraaklose weer resonansie kry en toegelaat sal word om tot gelykheid te aspiereer.

Die meerduidige aard van Coetzee se allegorieë is duidelik, en die essensieel dekonstruktiewe aard van sy werk word gesuggereer wanneer hy die tradisionele rol van die skrywer hersien en die rol van die geskiedenis omverwerp. Sy romans voldoen ook aan die moderne leser se eis om die realistiese. Die karakters is dikwels argetipies, maar met 'n volkome natuurlike aanslag.

Al Coetzee se romans verken sekere verwante vraagstukke, soos die Hegeliaanse tema en die mite van Westerse kolonialisme, sodat mens elke roman as 'n eenheid op sigself kan sien, maar tog al vyf romans as 'n meerduidige, intertekstuele manifestasie van allegorie binne die raamwerk van die moderne romankuns van J.M. Coetzee kan ervaar - 'n lewende manifestasie van 'n aktuele saak.