



J.M. Coetzee: A Post-Apartheid Writer

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Abstract : J.M. Coetzee's novels protest against racial differences, discrimination and socio-political and cultural surroundings prevailing in South Africa, mainly injustice and critical conditions created because of imperialism, apartheid and post-apartheid violence. His works deal with issues of loss of identity and struggle for existence.

Keywords - Post-Apartheid, Racial Discrimination, Resistance, Prejudice, Dispossession, Deprivation

I. INTRODUCTION

J.M. Coetzee is also known as John Maxwell he occupies a prominent place and position as a novelist of racial discrimination. Most of his novels are popular for their powerful resistance against racial differences, discrimination and socio-political and cultural surroundings prevailing in South Africa, mainly injustice and critical conditions created because of imperialism, apartheid and post-apartheid violence. The novels of Coetzee are mostly morbid in tone and touch treating the issues of loss of identity and struggle for existence. In terms of literary achievements, he has achieved the pinnacle of success by being the first author to win the Booker Prize twice. In addition, he took home the prestigious Prize in Literature in 2003. His father's experience with prejudice and his opposition to the apartheid regime were passed on to him.

There are a lot of prestigious awards that Coetzee has received for his writing. He won the CAN Prize three time, and his work *Waiting for the Barbarians* won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1980. The Irish Times International Fiction Prize went to his book *The Master of Petersburg* in 1995, while the Sunday Express Book of the Year Prize went to his other Masterpiece, *Age of Iron*. In addition to the Jerusalem Prize for writing on individual freedom from racial discrimination in society, he has also been honoured with the French Femine Prize, The Faber Memorial Award, The Commonwealth Literary Award.

Through his writing J.M. Coetzee shares his historical experience and social identity of the South African people. They all are influenced by traditional social, racial and political problems and situations of South Africa like the apartheid element which was deeply rooted in South Africa, the sexual exploitations and the racial discrimination by the Whites as we find in his novel, *Disgrace*, the crisis developed by the civil war as in *Life and Times of Michael K* etc. J.M Coetzee's travels have brought in a detached perspective to his works. His outsidership combined with his marginality establishes his own authority that leads him nearer to the truth. He challenges the power of the empire or any other totalitarian regime as is more concerned with the true meaning of life.

Coetzee's a great advocate to fight against injustice and racial discrimination. He's won who "deconstructs the old structures of power and inequality, and defines his sense of individual authority. *Waiting for the Barbarians* is a post-colonial journey around the world. Like most diaspora writers, Coetzee sets human existence in an ambiguous post-modern and post-colonial frame, trying to come up with a solution. Even though he has not been successful in finding a solution, he finds satisfaction in disentangling the uncertainties about the human world, and acknowledging the provisionality of all knowledge while constructing a subjectivity that is plural, contingent and scrupulous". (Baral 2008). Coetzee novels are the cavalcade of the torture of being oppressed and marginalized. They reveal the real picture racial discrimination; the political and social climate of his home country South Africa, particularly apartheid have supplied Coetzee with a wealth of material for his novels, many of which focus on the connection between the oppressor and oppressed. The apartheid regime's horrors and racial inequality figure big in his early writings. Farmers and women were hit worst by the apartheid system. The natives were being "reduced to a state of dispossession and deprivation, not only of the land but also of their essential traditions preserved by them over the ages." Ngugi in his books, *Decolonizing the Mind* has observed that the colonizers not only controlled the wealth of the colonized people but also controlled their race and culture. The colonizers could not estimate as they deserved "Art, history, religion and literature of the natives and with the results they were called the 'other'".

Coetzee successfully combines strong ideas with a polished style, keen insight into the past, and deep moral conviction in his work. Coetzee's grasp of the historical, racial, political, and social forces acting and interacting within the frame work of South Africa is informed introspective self-consciousness that runs through all his writings. One of the constitutive factors of that consciousness is both theme and language. Language for Coetzee is an unstable category different from his themes. Finally it can be said that J.M. Coetzee has portrayed and presented the life and society, power and politics, racial discrimination and humanity in South Africa of

the post-colonial period. He has used the sharp witty weapons of irony, allegory, metaphor, symbol and images in his pros to expose the follies and foibles of the societies.

Reference:

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