

***The Complexities if Suppressive Ambivalent Experience and Its Cultural  
Dichotomies in J. M. Coetzee's Waiting for the Barbarians***

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## Abstract

This paper tries to explore cultural ambivalence in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982). The study examines the dichotomous relationships among the novel's characters that continuously suffer from suppressive treatment. It perceives cultural ambivalence as a means of appropriating these relationships in the light of the plot's discrepant cultural differences. That is, it highlights three interrelated topics. First, it identifies the complex affinities combining the characters' cultural backgrounds. Second, the study approaches these affinities as complex human social affairs because the characters' share the same destiny. Third, it looks into the cultural ambivalence, whereby the characters are suppressed by military and social agitations that suppress them. Therefore, the study's objective is to explore the characters' complex ambivalent relationships. This is achieved when they treat each other on the grounds of mutual appreciation and respect. Hence, the study's methodology will be qualitative in order to interpret the both the novel's narrative point of view and the characters' cultural ambivalence.

**Key words:** Ambivalence, Coetzee, Culture, Suppression, South Africa

تعقيدات التجربة القمعية المتناقضة وثنائياتها الثقافية في رواية "في انتظار البرابرة" لج. م. كوتزي

### الملخص

تحاول هذه الورقة البحثية استكشاف التناقض الثقافي في رواية "في انتظار البرابرة" لج. م. كوتزي (1982). وتبحث الدراسة في العلاقات الثنائية بين شخصيات الرواية التي تعاني باستمرار من المعاملة القمعية. وترى الدراسة التناقض الثقافي كوسيلة للاستيلاء على هذه العلاقات في ضوء الاختلافات الثقافية المتضاربة في الحكمة. أي أنها تسلط الضوء على ثلاثة موضوعات مترابطة. أولاً، تحدد الدراسة التقاربات المعقدة التي تجمع بين الخلفيات الثقافية للشخصيات. ثانياً، تتناول الدراسة هذه التقاربات باعتبارها شؤوناً اجتماعية إنسانية معقدة لأن الشخصيات تشترك في نفس المصير. ثالثاً، تبحث في التناقض الثقافي، حيث يتم قمع الشخصيات من خلال الاضطرابات العسكرية والاجتماعية التي تقمعها. لذلك، فإن هدف الدراسة هو استكشاف العلاقات المعقدة المتناقضة للشخصيات. وهذا يتحقق عندما يعاملون بعضهم البعض على أساس التقدير والاحترام المتبادلين. ومن ثم فإن منهجية الدراسة ستكون نوعية لتفسير وجهة النظر السردية في الرواية والتناقضات الثقافية للشخصيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التناقض، كوتزي، الثقافة، القمع، جنوب أفريقيا

## 1. Introduction

The concept of cultural ambivalence refers to the mutual relationship between two or more ethnicities or social entities. It has been tackled from critical approaches in the context of culture and society. It is commonly perceived as the dual nature between the oppressed and oppressor. In postcolonial contexts, for example, it is interpreted through the position of the oppressed that represents the weak aspect of ambivalence. The oppressors are also discussed as the strong aspects of ambivalence which “acts as an influential proxy on suppressed people. The oppressor is undoubtedly motivated by a desire to impose his power on the oppressed” (Abu Jweid 531). In this respect, both the oppressed and the oppressor entities are differently tackled as discrepant ethnic backgrounds. On the one hand, the oppressed are considered inferior but they have the privilege of being the right owners of their priorities to be equal to any other ethnicities. On the other hand, the oppressors are strong because they have the means of power, like hegemony, advanced technology and so forth, however, they are oppressors and they violate the oppressed entities’ natural rights.

The essential relationship between the oppressed and oppressors concerning cultural ambivalence originates the postcolonial implications of the concept. As a matter of fact, the concept of ambivalence has cultural traits concerning the binary relationships between the oppressed and the oppressors. This is because it attempts to bridge the gap between them; and it genuinely unites them in one cultural path through which “binary ambivalence is present in the majority of post-colonialism discourses. The internal structure of identity’s narrative explores the congruent relationship between the colonized people and identity. The thematic representations of identity and colonialism that is relative to the postcolonial qualities in the bulk of postcolonial writings” (Al-Fartoosi *et al.* 4468). Consequently, the binary relationships between the oppressed and the oppressors are governed by the representative dichotomy

prevailing their social affairs. To clarify, the concept of ambivalence has multifarious facets that primarily include culture, traditions, ethnicity, language, society and the like. This dichotomy, in the long run, unites the oppressed and the oppressor within one cultural ambience which is devoid of any form of ethnic discrimination. The current study, therefore, tries to explore the common ethnic and cultural ambivalence in South Africa depicted in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982).

## **2. Literature Review**

Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982) has been a subject to diverse critical interpretations. Ajitpaul Singh Mangat, in *The Therapy of Humiliation: Towards an Ethics of Humility in the Works of J.M. Coetzee* (2011), applies the concept of psychic alienation to discover the portrayal of colonial empire in the novel's plot. Mangat claims that psychic alienation has profound deep "emphatic epiphany lays bare the Magistrate's obscure reality, his ethereal existence. Alienation, above all, characterizes life in Empire. It reduces reality to matters of fact that Empire writes with a submerged mind" (9). Being so, Mangat's study follows a textual analysis of the novel's character, especially the magistrate, to explore the colonial role in shaping the characters' psychic alienation. That is, the imperial dominance over the colonized people's homeland makes them psychically alienated from their spatial milieu.

Similarly, Dawn Grieve, in *Confrontation and Identity in the Fiction of J.M. Coetzee* (1999), studies the colonial residuals of the imperial presence in South Africa. Grieve maintains that Coetzee offers a precise and profound depiction of the characters' psychic implications about the inherent stimuli of the characters' psychic problems. Therefore, the characters develop deformed psyches because they encounter severe and undesired colonial experience. Unlike Mangat's study, Grieve does not focus on the

psychic complications of alienations. Instead, she looks into the duality of colonial regimes and apartheid systems which deformed the characters' psyches: "the deformed and mutilating relations between human beings, which have been created by the colonial regime and which have been exacerbated under what one summarily calls apartheid, find their psychic reflection in an internal life that is deformed and mutilated" (113).

Grieve's study is utterly qualitative since it concentrates on the textual elements of the novel including the characters. In "J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*: Hermeneutics and Literary Theory" (2012), Shadi Neimneh *et al.* study the allegorical traits of the novel. Moreover, the study tackles the novels' main characters to explore the inherent fictional of literary allegory utilized by the author's narrative style. As such, Neimneh *et al.* found that the novels has a deep didactic lesson concerning the intricate relationships between the author and his allegorical insights projected in the main course of the fictional events: "we learn from such an allegory that readers approach texts differently and that one text signifies different ideas to readers. The triangular relationship between the barbarian girl, the magistrate, and Joll is one among many other clues in the narrative that make Coetzee's novel a 'plural' allegory of reading and interpretation" (2). As a result, Neimneh *et al.* study the essential narrative points to identify Coetzee's appropriation of colonialism in South Africa in a fictional context.

This study, however, will not tackle the technical characteristics of Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982). It will interpret the novel's thematic characteristics in favor of its narrative techniques to examine Coetzee's treatment of cultural ambivalence through which he offers a vivid and obvious picture of how different ethnicities co-exist with each other in South Africa. Furthermore, the study will

highlight the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor in the novel to reveal the authorial attempt to demolish the cultural barriers between the oppressed ethnicities and their oppressors portrayed in the main narrative events. Consequently, the study will follow a qualitative interpretation of both the characters and settings to explore Coetzee's concern with creating cultural ambivalence among many South African social groups.

### **3. Analysis and Discussion**

The concept of cultural ambivalence refers to the process of co-existence between two or more ethnic groups. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha argues that cultural ambivalence identifies the nature of the close affinities among different ethnicities for the sake of bridging the gap between them. Furthermore, the concept has implied impression about politics that exerts certain control over suppressed nations: "as literary creatures and political animals we ought to concern ourselves with the understanding of human action and the social world as a moment when something is beyond control, but it is not beyond accommodation" (13). In this case, the diverse nature of cultural ambivalence results in the appropriation of the suppressed nations' positions within more advanced or prosperous life conditions. Bhabha maintains that the concept of cultural ambivalence includes the author's "act of writing the world, of taking the measure of its dwelling" (13).

Bhabha's discussion of the "dwelling" fact of the concept of cultural ambivalence refers to the way by which author perceives their social circumferences through drastic changes dominating the entire cultural scenes. In *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982), Coetzee depicts these scenes via the complex affinity among the characters. The regional circumferences relate to the Magistrate's predilection to be

alone in his room: “we sit in the best room of the inn with a flask between us and a bowl of nuts. We do not discuss the reason for his being here. He is here under the emergency powers, that is enough. Instead we talk about hunting” (4). The Magistrate’s life of loneliness exemplifies Coetzee’s treatment of the characters in the light of cultural ambivalence. The Magistrate, later, develops a good relationship with a barbarian girl who also has a strong predilection to be alone; the Magistrate recounts this kind of living in the following lines: “tells me [the barbarian girl] about the last great drive he rode in, when thousands of deer, pigs, bears were slain, so many that a mountain of carcasses had to be left to rot” (4).

The concept of cultural ambivalence, consequently, appears in the complex relationship between the Magistrate and the barbarian girl. On the one hand, the Magistrate is from an imperial background. On the other hand, the girl is from a native background where she lives in her native land. Both of them live on South African regional circumferences. Cultural ambivalence, in this sense, unites them on the grounds of good social symbiosis and mutual respect. Notwithstanding, they share the same suppressed experience as they undergo bad life conditions created by imperial domination. In the same way, Bhabha claims that the concept of cultural ambivalence encompasses various ideological, political, and pedagogical factors combining the native traditions and their foreign counterparts; Bhabha writes: “it also requires a shift of attention from the political as a pedagogical, ideological practice to politics as the stressed necessity of everyday life - politics as a performativity ... the banalities are enacted - the fuss over births, marriages, family affairs with their survival rituals of food and clothing” (15). Bhabha’s explication of the concept of cultural ambivalence is reinforced by the regional and social properties comprising native and foreign life styles.



In *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982), the barbarian girls attempts to establish cultural ambivalence with the Magistrate. In doing so, she thinks that she will be able to emulate his race as a foreigner. This is due to the benign nature of cultural ambivalence; where opposing ethnicities could be equal and co-exist with each other on one regional circumference. The barbarian girl pays much effort to be on the side of the Magistrate who intermittently takes care of her; she describes her relationship with the Magistrate as follows: “I tell him about the great flocks of geese and ducks that descend on the lake every year in their migrations and about native ways of trapping them. I suggest that I take him out fishing by night in a native boat” (4). The barbarian girl, who embodies the native South African ethnicity, is in deep accord with the Magistrate. They share the same bitter experience as they live in colonial and imperial atmosphere: “that is an experience not to be missed,” I say; “the fishermen carry flaming torches and beat drums over the water to drive the fish towards the nets they have laid.... He nods. He tells me about a visit he paid elsewhere on the frontier where people eat certain snakes as a delicacy, and about a huge antelope he shot” (4-5). In this quotation, the barbarian girl incarnates the native and pure national ethnicity before the advent of colonial power. The Magistrate, who is a product of this imperial power, represents this dual position; and he insists on being with a good relationship with the girl. The lurking impetus of having this relationship is his tendency to confront the girl’s suppressive experience. As previously argued, the general hallmark of cultural ambivalence in the novel is the suppressive experience inflicted by imperial hegemonic presence in South Africa.

In this way, the barbarian girl and the Magistrate are in good social accord but they are separated by their ethnic roots. The concept of cultural ambivalence, accordingly, comprises the original motivation of creating dichotomous aversion



among many ethnicities. In *Nation and Narration* (1990), Bhabha further explicates the concept of cultural ambivalence. He accentuates the regional criterion of cultural ambivalence because they are affected by imperialism. He adds that some negative social phenomena, like patriarchy, are created by the power of imperialism: Bhabha comments “land and water margins, home, body, individualism” — providing another inflection to her quarrels with patriarchy and imperialism” (5). In this sense, the geographical attributes of cultural ambivalence are sustained by the presence of imperialism in all its implications. Yet, the political factors of imperialism also play a significant role in identifying the nature of cultural ambivalence “that abjures the rationalism of universals, while maintaining the practicality, and political strategy, of dealing professionally with local situations that are themselves defined as liminal and borderline” (6). As such, cultural ambivalence has a good and peaceful plan regarding the possibility of creating a social co-existence among different aversive ethnicities.

The peaceful qualities of the concept of cultural ambivalence are hindered by the suppressive practices against the oppressed groups. Coetzee parades these aversive ethnicities in *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982). Colonel Joll, for example is one decisive factors that hinder the possibility of creating cultural ambivalence between the barbarian girl and the Magistrate. He holds responsible for separating them since he does not have any feature of cultural ambivalence: “Colonel Joll is from the Third Bureau.... I tell them. “The Third Bureau is the most important division of the Civil Guard nowadays.... That is what we hear, anyhow, in gossip that reaches us long out of date from the capital. The proprietor nods, the maids duck their heads.... We must make a good impression on him” (5). As the quotation indicates, Colonel Joll holds a political position. He does not practice any benign care towards the girls or the Magistrate. He departs from the original humanistic insights of the concept to

contradictory implications concerning the relationship between the girl and the Magistrate.

Bhabha, in *Nation and Narration* (1990), supports his political arguments about the concept of cultural ambivalence. Moreover, he tackle the role of race in shaping or demolishing the formation of cultural ambivalence. He maintains that race is the core essence of ethnicity that distinguishes one nations from another one. In other words, the formation of one nation in the light of cultural ambivalence depends on the way by which authors try to detach it from race because “race is confused with nation and a sovereignty analogous to that of really existing peoples is attributed to ethnographic or, rather linguistic groups” (8). Such sovereignty, according to Bhabha, is governed and influenced by the historical social stereotypes. Consequently, the formations of any human nation on the grounds of cultural ambivalence “vary in importance and size but will never be wholly confused with each other” (9). In this sense of the term, cultural ambivalence has implied peaceful considerations about the ability of establishing new nations without being spoiled by any form of race or racial segregation. For this reason, Bhabha mixes the historical, racial, and cultural peculiarities of cultural ambivalence to remove any borders among ethnically different nations.

In *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982), Coetzee employs the barbarian girl and the Magistrate as exemplification of the typical fact of ethnic differences in South Africa. The novel reflects the rife crime after the appearance of negative experience depicted in the course of the plot. The barbarian girl is not in perfect agreement with her oppressors because she is not able to cope with her negative reality: “she is not much crime here and the penalty is usually a fine or compulsory labour. This hut is simply a storeroom attached to the granary, as you can see. Inside it is close and smelly. There are no windows. The two prisoners lie bound on the floor. The smell comes from

them, a smell of old urine. I call the guard in: Get these men to clean themselves, and please hurry” (6). The barbarian girl is at odds with her society because it is dominated by the suppressive treatment brought by imperial systems in her homeland. Coetzee, therefore, uses the barbarian girl to put her with contradictory line with the imperial system. In other words, she does not absorb the advent of cultural homogeneity. Yet, she finds it when she interacts with the Magistrate on the basis of mutual appreciation of each other.

The concept of cultural ambivalence, as being projected in the novel's plot serves as the combination of the native South African ethnicity and its imperial counterpart. The concept indicates some racial phenomena, like slavery. Stephanie Smallwood, in *Saltwater Slavery* (2008), discusses the imperial characteristics of cultural ambivalence. She argues that cultural ambivalence conveys the true sense of slavery experience through which the suppressed ethnic voices are mistreated: “we can obtain just as true an understanding of the slave experience by examining that modest tributary” (3). As such, the concept of ambivalence involves the suppressive and racial nuances of imperial systems. Cultural ambivalence incarnates the suppressive features of migration and captivity that are strongly associated with cultural ambivalence; Smallwood describes cultural ambivalence “as a kind of mirror in which we can see reflected aspects of the human experience of captivity and migration” (5).

Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982) approaches cultural ambivalence through racial lens. But it does not completely relate it to racism or migration. Furthermore, it does not connect it with imprisonment. It partially combines it with captivity due to the suppressive treatment of the barbarian girl. She falls victims of racial prejudice; and, as a sequence, she suffers from severe bias against her race. In this case, she indirectly suffers from the racial dominance of imperial hegemony. The

novels' narrative point of view describes her in bad living conditions. She is exploited as a slave to work for the benefit of other people. She does not find her freedom or liberty to cope with any form of independence. Her life is restricted by suppressive orders given to her by her the dominant system: "I show my visitor into the cool gloom of the granary itself .... We hope for three thousand bushels from the communal land this year. We plant only once. The weather has been very kind to us.... We talk about rats and ways of controlling their numbers. When we return to the hut it smells of wet ash and the prisoners are ready, kneeling in a corner" (6). Being so, Coetzee depicts the barbarian girl as being dependent; she only obeys the orders of the prevalent dominance. She exemplifies the authentic racial suppression that makes her devoid of any form independent entity. Coetzee, moreover, uses her personality on a national spatial setting, namely, the South African regional circumferences. She lives on her own homeland's regions, yet, she is restricted by the prevailing and imposed imperial residuals.

The barbarian girl's work is a direct indication of Coetzee's portrayals of the possible ways of gaining peaceful relationships among conflicting cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The characters are meticulously used by the author to comment on this ambivalent reality. In essence, the concept of cultural ambivalence has a close relationship with captivity which might be exerted indirectly by suppressive systems that "also unwittingly reveal part of the slaves' own stories.... can excavate something of the slaves' own experience of the traffic in human beings and of life aboard the slave" (Smallwood 5). In this way, cultural ambivalence basically includes a type of negative experienced undergone by the suppressed voice or minorities. This experience represents these minorities' position as being independent and deprived of their natural right because they "alike confronted the universal contradiction inherent in the idea of

human beings as property; conceding that the slave had a will, in order to better devise means to control it, was not an acknowledgment of the slave's personhood" (182). In the light of this claim, the contradictory nature of suppressive systems requires a kind of response to mitigate the effect of any oppressive system.

Cultural ambivalence, therefore, functions as a remedy for such oppressive systems in order to save the lives of suppressed voice or minorities. Coetzee, in *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982), deals with this fact by shelling light on the characters, especially the barbarian girl and the Magistrate. In addition, he depicts their ordeals and sufferings in relation to regional surroundings that are the nexus of the novel's spatial setting. The primary spatial setting is the South African territories dominated by imperial systematic rules; and these rules embody the suppressive authority over the native ethnicity. The natives, like the barbarian girl, are victims of blundering suppressive movements intimidating the natives. The narrative point of view recounts this reality through the barbarian girl's harsh experience: "they were taken a few days ago," I say. 'There was a raid not twenty miles from here. That is unusual. Normally they keep well away from the fort. These two were picked up afterwards. They say they had nothing to do with the raid. I do not know. Perhaps they are telling the truth. If you want to speak to them I will of course help with the language" (6). This harsh experience is not only connected with the girl's life, but also with other natives including an innocent boy. He is ruthlessly beaten by the oppressors that violate the natives' rights and freedom: "the boy's face is puffy and bruised, one eye is swollen shut. I squat down before him and pat his cheek" (6). The brutal torment of the boy incarnate the position of the suppressed South African voices and minorities of the time. They are fictional miniatures of how the lack of cultural ambivalence could lead to the destruction of their lives. This is because they are restricted in negative regional circumstances where they

are deprived of their basic living conditions and human needs. That is, they are not sufficiently aided by any ambivalent tendency.

The function of cultural ambivalence, accordingly, is very massive. Such function is evidently explicated in Avtar Brah's *Cartographies of Diaspora* (1996). Brah argues that the concept of cultural ambivalence become a necessity, especially when conflicting powers do not co-exist with each other. It is the essence of creating any reciprocal peaceful co-existence between contradictory social groups. Brah claims that there should a basic and peaceful neighbourhood between the contradictory social entities to construct good appreciation of each other because cultural ambivalence "signifies the social and psychic geography of space that is experienced in terms of a neighbourhood or a home town. That is, a community 'imagined' in most part through daily encounter" (4). Consequently, the geographical aspects of cultural ambivalence represent the need for creating a society free of any contradiction. To put it another way, it should posit the contradictory social entities within equal cultural trajectory for the sake of finding perfect home or place for the suppressed minorities' lives; and this "this 'home' is a place with which we remain intimate even in moments of intense alienation from it. It is a sense of 'feeling at home'" (4). As such, Brah emphasizes the regional attributes of cultural ambivalence. This is true to the importance of locating the regional places uniting different cultural backgrounds in one or limited geographical terrains.

Brah's discussion of the geographical attributes of cultural ambivalence corresponds to the spatial setting of Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982). The major events are in set in South African territories where the contradictory relationship between the imperial systems and the natives stakes place. The novel's spatial setting involves many geographical components that make the natives capable of asking for

peace and good life. The novel portrays some regional places, like rivers that belong to the natives who are the authentic owner of their cultural traditions, however, they are suppressed by the surrounding imperial systems: “normally we would not have any barbarians at all to show you. This so-called banditry does not amount to much. They steal a few sheep or cut out a pack-animal from a train. Sometimes we raid them in return. They are mainly destitute tribes people with tiny flocks of their own living along the river” (8). In this case, the natives are treated as barbarians; and they are subjects to continuous raids. They are not in stable living conditions, or as the barbarian girl describes them, they “are the only prisoners we have taken for a long time (8).

Being prisoners and suppressed minorities, the natives are considered as stereotypical fictional replicas of South African social minorities. They comply with the hegemonic dominance because they are not able to emulate their hegemonic rulers. In *Nation and Narration* (1990), Bhabha highlights the essential necessity of having cultural ambivalence to get rid of this form of suppression. Cultural ambivalence's remedial role in belittling the negative influence of suppressive systems appears when marginalized “nations, in this sense of the term, are something fairly new in history” (9). According to Bhabha, cultural ambivalence is achieved by the concept of nationalism. Here, nationalism as a comprehensive concept comprising different attitudes regarding the establishment of mutual respect and appreciation among conflicted social entities. Nationalism, therefore, unites these social entities; and it provides them with viable cultural ambivalence which “is something other than imperialism writ as large as this. It is, quite specifically, the battery of discursive and representational practices which define, legitimate, or valorize a specific nation-state or individuals as members of a nation-state” (138). Being so, the sense of nationalism



reinforces the creation of cultural ambivalence on the grounds of perfect co-existence among conflicting social entities.

The concept of cultural ambivalence, consequently, has multifarious ethnic considerations. It perceives the suppressed entities as the native ethnicity politically dominated by the suppressive “other.” The notion of being other, in this case, indicates the reality of the dichotomous existence among conflicting nations. In the first place, the concept of cultural ambivalence encompasses the historical colonial roots of nationalism in the suppressed society, or as Michelle Keown *et al.* argue, cultural ambivalence “should approach hotly contested political issues concerning ethnically ‘other’ migrants in their society with a critical backwards look towards their past, as well as an ongoing attention to colonial history” (38). Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982) has similar implied considerations of cultural ambivalence by dint of suing precise spatial elements of the setting as well as the characters and narrative point of view.

As for the characters, the barbarian girl is an obtrusive example of cultural ambivalence since she leads a relatively good life with the company of the Magistrate. This company gives her much social space to be in the typical atmosphere of cultural ambivalence. Strikingly, she and other natives become relatively accustomed to harsh life as they get comprehensive impression about the way they live together with the suppressive systems; the novel’s narrative point of view describes it as follows: “It becomes a way of life. The old man says they were coming to see the doctor. Perhaps that is the truth. No one would have brought an old man and a sick boy along on a raiding party” (8). Coetzee appropriate the whole ambivalent scenario via native South Africa n regions that need good and stable life way from any violence or conflicting powers. The barbarian girls recounts this life in the following lines: “from under the

walnut trees on the square I still hear the murmur of conversation. In the darkness a pipe glows like a firefly, wanes, glows again. Summer is wheeling slowly towards its end. The orchards groan under their burden. I have not seen the capital since I was a young man" (5). Hence, Coetzee renders South African conflicting powers with the sense of nationalism sustained by cultural ambivalence as a peaceful replacement of hegemonic suppressive systems.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This paper studied the potential attributes of cultural ambivalence Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982). It analyzed the interrelated characteristics of culture and society that have concomitant relationships among each other on the grounds of ethnic discrimination. Therefore, the study revealed the authorial peculiarities of cultural ambivalence in order to demonstrate Coetzee's interest in the radical cultural and social changes in South Africa. It approaches the implicit nuances regarding the emergence of new social and cultural norms in the broad social contexts of South African ethnicity. Moreover, the study unraveled the latent literary insights about the position of South African societies that had been a subject to dual ambivalent relationships. As a result, the study came up with three concomitant findings.

First, the study examined cultural ambivalent between the oppressed and the oppressor in the selected in the novel. It highlighted the core conceptual implication of ambivalence that unites the oppressed and the oppressor depicted in the course of South African ethnicities. Therefore, the discussion of cultural ambivalence provided authentic discussion of South African people's native identity, which is rarely tackled in previous studies. The interpretation of cultural ambivalence would yield in new and unprecedented comprehension of the South African society which abounds with

different cultural backgrounds in one regional patch. Here, cultural ambivalence was discussed as a way of offering social equilibrium among these ethnicities. The analysis of cultural ambivalence, therefore, is a key factor of uncovering the possible way of appropriating the different and opposing points of view among social groups portrayed in the novel.

Second, the study identified ethnic identity in terms of cultural ambivalence conveyed to the reader by means of the main characters. The discussion of ethnic identity resulted in polarizing textual analysis of the native South African ethnicity in the light of ambivalence, which is not completely approached in previous studies on the selected novel. At this point, cultural ambivalence and ethnic identity are dually interpreted as the major component of the native South African culture affected by the advent of imperial hegemony. Third, the study explored cultural ambivalence via the suppressive relationship between the oppressed people and their oppressors. In this case, the complex and tense relationship between the oppressed South African minorities and their oppressors was explored as a way of mitigating the aversive perception of each other, which is hardly found in any related study conducted on the selected novel.

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