

Creating a New World

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In 2003, when Coetze won the Nobel Prize in literature there were mixed reactions all over. Before however winning the Nobel Prize Coetze bagged twice the prestigious Booker Prize—once in 1983 for his *The life and times of Michael K* and second time sixteen years later in 1999 for his book *Disgrace*. Four years later he had been awarded the highest prize in literature—the Noble Prize—in 2003. Whenever a big prize is declared, immediately after everybody reacts. The same happened to Coetze also.

The Swedish academy while announcing the Nobel Prize said in their citation ‘...he is ruthless in his criticism of the cruel rationalism and cosmetic morality of the Western Civilization.’ Nadine Gordimer, who herself was the Nobel Prize winner in literature in 1991 said : ‘J M Coetze's vision goes to the nerve-centre of being. What he finds there is more than most people will ever know about themselves, and he conveys it with a brilliant writer's mastery of tension and elegance’. Critics of Coetze of course did not spare him and said that he is a politically motivated writer. This *book ‘Waiting for the Barbarians’ was first published in 1980 in Great Britain by Marlin Secker and War burg. Soon after publication the book bagged two prestigious prizes—one—Geoffrey Fabler Memorial Prize followed by CNA Prize.

It's not a big book, only 170 pages by Vintage publishers, not in smaller type font either. The book is an allegory of oppressor and the oppressed, not just a man living through a crisis of conscience in an obscure place in remote times. The story is about a magistrate who has run the affairs of a tiny frontier settlement for decades. He ignored the impending war between the barbarians and the Empire for whom the magistrate works. But when the interrogation experts arrive to the scene, he feels quite shocked to see victims and cannot keep himself controlled. He becomes vocal. He gets sympathetic and into a quixotic behaviour act of rebellion. That lands him into prisens. He is also branded as the enemy of the empire. Coetze pictures the magistrate as an analogue of all men living in complicity. With regime that never cares to think of the victims and that's why ignores justice and even human decency. Graham Green praised the book by saying, ‘a remarkable and original book’.

John Micheal Coetze was born in 1940, in Capetown, South Africa. He attained Ph.D. in literature from the Texas University in Austin and also regarded as a scholar writer. Since 1972 he has been teaching literature in the Capetown University. He is always busy researching on world literature, and also keeps himself busy in writing discourses and write-ups mostly on literature.

Coetze entered the literary field in 1974 with his first ever publication ‘Dusklands’. After this he awaited three years and wrote his second novel *In the heart of the century*. This book under discussion is his third presentation. After Nadine Gordimer J M Coetze is the second person receiving Nobel Prize in literature in South Africa. One would however wonder about Chinna Achiba and his ‘Things fall afast’,who also belongs to South Africa.

He is also brilliant in his expressions as well as coinage of words.

Of course Coetze generates feelings in the reader's heart. He knows how much strong and stone-brained the oppressors are. And so he creates an atmosphere through his story telling where those stone-brained oppressors are bound to expose themselves and are forced to skew human sympathy to the oppressed persons.

It is true that Coetze tries to create a new world. □□□