

John Maxwell Coetzee, J.M Coetzee is a South African author, known for being the winner of many prizes, most notably the 2003 Nobel Prize of literature. He currently lives in Adelaide, Australia.

One of his most well-known works is In the Heart of the Country, which is written in the form of a diary. It tells the story of Magda who lives in a farm, with her father and his servants. The story treats of racial conflict and the deterioration of the mind. For instance, the reader may doubt Magda’s narration as it is from her point of view only in the story. Some events might thus be unclear. The story ends up with Magda alone in the farm, raped by one of the servants. (So, not well.) The work had a film adaptation, called Dust, in 1985.

Other well-known works include: Waiting for The Barbarians, published in 1980. An unnamed colonialist empire is set in opposition with s u b j e c t i v e l y named ‘barbarians’. The novel criticizes the horrors of colonialism,

Disgrace, published in 1999, which is set in South Africa and tells the story of a teacher who lost everything, is reputation, job, dreams, after having an affair with one of his students, which the title ‘Disgrace’ refers to.

I think that the narrative that Coetzee wrote of Africa does not change the views someone from Europe may have. Indeed, his works treat of rape, trauma, atrocities of colonialism, and otherwise mainly things that were already in the minds of occidental society during the writing of his works. However, the works are often narrated from an African point of view (Waiting for The Barbarians is a great example of that), which shows that in Africa, horrors do exist, but that there are also vulnerable people that are the victims, and not culprits, of them.