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“Waiting for the Barbarians”
A Comparison between John Maxwell Coetzee’s Novel
and Philip Glass’ Opera

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Preface

The aim of this diploma thesis is to compare the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* by John Maxwell Coetzee and the same-titled opera by Philip Glass with a particular focus on the libretto by Christopher Hampton. It is intended to introduce the opera as well as to give a detailed analysis of the texts and to examine the changes with regard to the story's perspective and focus - the adaptation.

The main research questions that will be answered in the course of the thesis are:

- In how far does the focus and perspective of the story change by adapting the original text for the opera?
- Which compositional devices does Philip Glass use to reflect the story's atmosphere through the music? Does his music succeed in enhancing the story's mood and tone?

The first part of this thesis will give an introduction to the theory of adaptation, the novel and the opera. In the beginning the adaptations of texts for the theatre especially music theatre will be discussed. This is intended as helpful background information for the reader as well as to establish the link to the topic of this diploma thesis.

In the second part the focus will be on the comparison between the novel's and the libretto's text. It is the aim to highlight the changes that were made to the text to fit the requirements of a vocal text and the limited time frame of an opera. While exemplifying these alterations, it will be pointed out whether these affect the story's content and

perspective. Besides the external and internal structural differences, it will be explored to what extent the presentation of the characters and their relationships differ in the opera. One subchapter will concentrate on the dreamscapes, which constitute a major element in the novel as well as in the opera. As their implementation in the opera forms a contrast to that in the novel, it appears appropriate to especially concentrate on their analysis in the thesis as well.

In Part 3 the focus will be on the music. Firstly, a short introduction to Philip Glass' compositional style and techniques will be given. Secondly, an analysis of the music with regard to its dramaturgic composition compared to the libretto's dramaturgy will be given, with the aim to find out whether the music follows a similar dramaturgy or develops its own, independently of the libretto. This discussion refers to the criticism Philip Glass has been and is still confronted with, namely that he ignores the libretto and builds a sound frame regardless of the dramaturgy of the opera.

Chapter 1

Introducing the Texts

1.1 Adaptations

The adapted text [...] is not something to be reproduced but rather something to be interpreted and recreated, often in a new medium. It is what one theorist calls a reservoir of instructions, diegetic, narrative, and axiological, that the adapter can use or ignore. (qtd in Hutcheon 84)

According to Hutcheon defining adaptation may be compared to defining translation. "Translation involves a transaction between texts and between languages and is thus 'an act of both inter-cultural and inter-temporal communication' " (Hutcheon 16). This change into a different medium could be seen as intersemiotic transposition or in that respect translation "from one sign system to another" (16). In *Waiting for the Barbarians* the text is transposed from the sign system of words (novel) into the sign system of images and music (opera). On the other hand, Bluestone argues that adaptations apply to the idea of paraphrasing as well. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1933) a paraphrase is "a free rendering or amplification of a passage" (462) which, in addition to being verbal, may be musical. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (2002) gives a definition regarding art as follows: "the representation of a subject in a realistic or other manner so as to convey its essential qualities" (2097). In that sense while in adapting a novel for the opera, the original text must be translated in order to comply with the

requirements of the new medium (fit into the new sign system), its main qualities have to be preserved. This is done by the adapter who subsequently takes over the role of the author. It may, therefore, be seen as his/her interpretation of the original text.

As Reynolds states, the audience has to be aware that by viewing an adaptation, they are confronted with “other people’s novel images” (2). In contrast to this view that the adapter may use the original work as he wishes and may transform it into something new, Christopher Hampton, the librettist of *Waiting for the Barbarians*, compares the adapter to the translator. He also holds the opinion that it is the adapter’s role to serve the original author (in our case J. M. Coetzee) and “to be as faithful to the spirit of his or her work as possible” (Reynolds 9). DeWitt Bodeen claims that “adapting literary works to film is, without a doubt, a creative undertaking, but the task requires a kind of selective interpretation, along with the ability to recreate and sustain an established mood” (qtd in MacFarlane 7). It is the adapter’s task to adapt the work in a way that makes it possible for the audience to experience/follow it with an undistorted view (Reynolds 9). An undistorted view is, however, rather hard to ensure if a novel of about 200 pages has to be reduced to a narrative length of about 135 minutes. This requires a shortening of the text and the cutting of scenes. “The result is a kind of tyranny of the story line, which must be kept clear enough to be grasped in one continuous experience” (Abbott 108).

Since music lacks the speed and verbal dexterity of language, fewer words are needed in opera than would be required in a play of comparable length. [...] This drastic reduction in the quantity of text, in conjunction with the highly sensual nature of music, necessitates a simplification of both action and characters, the emotions expressed in the closed musical numbers occupying a large segment of the time normally reserved for the dramatic events. (Weisstein 9)

This is also evident in *Waiting for the Barbarians*; however, as Hutcheon claims as well, this does not necessarily entail a negative result. Although resulting in simplification of characters and action, the reduction may gain dramatic effect (45) as the music enhances the scene’s atmosphere and reflects the characters’ condition. Thus watching and listening to an opera may be even more effective for the audience than reading

the novel.

One may claim that by adapting a novel into an opera, reducing a text, the interpretative richness is limited. In the opera, a “multitrack medium” (Hutcheon 70), it is, however, possible to appeal to more than one physical sense. As has been mentioned above, the audience, instead of reading the text, is able to hear and see the story. Furthermore, with regard to metaphors and symbolism, music has the ability to convey a great deal of subtext. For example, in Giuseppe Verdi’s *Otello*, when by taking over Iago’s imagery Otello takes over his music as well. In *Waiting for the Barbarians* already in the early scenes when the relationship between the Magistrate and Colonel Joll seems still neutral the music already anticipates the magistrate’s feeling towards the Colonel (percussion).

Reducing the original text and thus omitting certain information about characters does not only result in the story’s simplification but likely entails a redistribution of character functions as well. In the course of the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* the magistrate is eager to distance himself from the Empire, from Colonel Joll and his men, torturing and accusing seemingly innocent native people. This is conveyed in the opera as well. However, the fact that the magistrate is rather critical of himself is not reflected in the opera. Especially in the end he realises that he has not succeeded in his attempt to fully distance himself from the Empire and in many respects is still very similar to the Colonel. It has been the adapter’s choice to leave out that self-reference and thus present a story with a direct moral ‘message’, the characters either being ‘good’ or ‘evil’.

“It is also much harder to get inside a character on stage or on screen” (Abbott 111). This is true as the detailed description of the character is visually and aurally fixed for the audience. However, in the opera music reflects on the emotions and inner dispositions. In that sense “music can represent interiority” (Hutcheon 60). In addition to the music generally creating a special atmosphere or tone, through their singing the characters show their inner perspectives and feelings. This mostly applies to arias in which the characters do not converse with other characters but solely reflect on their

emotions. In plays these private thoughts are presented via soliloquies. In these intimate moments the characters do not speak to themselves but present to the audience, as a narrator would do, their inner thoughts. Abbott, however, claims that these soliloquies (arias) “rarely match the kind of extensive explorations in depth that can unfold over many pages of confessional fiction, letter-fiction, diary fiction, or stream of consciousness fiction” (111). This may be true for plays. In opera, on the other hand, again the element of music takes over a great deal of emotional conveyance. What cannot be conveyed through a few words may, however, be communicated through music.

With regard to focalization it is important to bring to mind that the audience’s focalization in drama is fixed. The audience is following the action on stage from their (fixed) seat and hence has one fixed perspective. In addition, the dramatic action is limited to one stage on which the actors perform in real time. Only through stage technologies the audience’s perspective or focus may be changed or manipulated. This is achieved through light effects (spotlights) or as in *Waiting for the Barbarians* through semi-transparent curtains leaving the audience with a distorted view of what is happening on different parts of the stage.

The perception of adaptations has always been a rather negative and highly critical one. “At every level from newspaper reviews to longer essays in critical anthologies and journals, the adducing of fidelity to the original novel as a major criterion for judging the film adaptations is pervasive” (MacFarlane 8). Even though in this quote McFarlane refers to film, this is true for any opera-novel adaptation as well, leaving the audience with the initial thought whether the opera captured the spirit of the novel. In that sense, MacFarlane claims that in traditional critical circles literature still comes first and that this is restraining critics to discuss adaptations on neutral terms (8). This negative opinion is taken even further and displayed in rather radical terms by Abbott when he claims that “adapters [...] if they are at all good, are raiders; they don’t copy, they steal what they want and leave the rest” (105). This does, however, not comply with Hampton’s view that he as an adapter feels the need to preserve the original work’s spirit as well as possible despite having to reduce the text.

Bluestone claims that “it has always been easy to recognize how a poor film “destroys” a superior novel. What has not been sufficiently recognized is that such destruction is inevitable” (62). This holds for plays, or in our case operas, as well as for movies. As mentioned above, it is necessary to reduce the length and cut scenes or paragraphs in order to fit the new medium. Furthermore, as each medium has a different function, the adapter is obliged to adjust the original text to these functions.

Hutcheon claims that in order to understand adaptation it is necessary to understand why an adapter chose to adapt a story and the creative process (s)he went through in doing so (107). Philip Glass states his intentions in adapting the novel into an opera fairly clearly. He refers to its historical and political reference but disregards it to create an opera that may become “an occasion for dialogue about political crisis” (qtd in Hampton 4¹). In that sense he leaves the reference to South African politics in the 1970s and 1980s aside and refers to events such as the, at the time of the performance in 2005 current, Iraq war.

1.2 The novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*

1.2.1 Origin

“In 1980 I published a novel about the impact of the torture chamber on the life of a man of conscience” (Coetzee, *Doubling* 363).

“[...]a novel about the destructiveness (and self-destructiveness) of an imperial regime - obstructed by one man of conscience” (Head 72).

John Maxwell Coetzee published the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* in 1980. The title is taken from the poem of the same name by Constantine P. Cavafy which was published in 1904. Similar to the novel it explores the view that the fear of an unknown,

¹For full quote see page 20.

invisible enemy is aroused to serve internal purposes.

Coetzee's novel is set in a town at the frontier of an Empire. Neither time nor place of the story's setting is given. The town's magistrate is awakened from his comfortable life when Colonel Joll and his men arrive. They have been sent from the Empire to conduct interrogations and protect the outpost from the barbarians, who they believe are getting ready for war. This "visit" results in imprisonments and torture of seemingly innocent natives who have been picked up on the Colonel and his men's expeditions. Meanwhile the magistrate befriends a barbarian girl who was tortured by Joll and left behind by her people. Their friendship develops into an obsessive relationship in which the magistrate wants to make up for what the militia has done to her and clear his conscience. As an act of atonement and moral obligation, he takes the barbarian girl back to her people. After his return Colonel Joll accuses him of treason and he is imprisoned and tortured. During that time the magistrate intensely reflects on the Empire and his role in its politics.

[...]it is [the magistrate] who focuses the condemnation of Empire, principally through an involved, painful, and ambivalent process of self-evaluation and self-critique: the uncovering of the magistrate's own complicity helps him to a deep understanding of the nature of Empire's imperialism, and to a burgeoning ethical stance. (Head 73)

The magistrate experiences his loss of power in the town and has to helplessly witness the Empire's actions. In the end one expedition of Colonel Joll fails and the town inhabitants flee the frontier in fear of an attack. The magistrate and a few others remain waiting for the Barbarians.

1.2.2 Major Thematic Issues

As the novel does not give the place and time the story is set in, critics have argued whether the story thus reflects on any political situation or whether this imprecision still inevitably provides a direct link or association with the events in South Africa in

the 1970s and 1980s. Concerning this existing or non-existing historical background, Head mentions that the novel has “obvious ramifications for the white opponent of apartheid South Africa in 1980” (72) when it was published. As it lacks specificity of time and place, it may be seen as denoting a form of ethical universalism (Attwell). Attwell, however, clearly points out the difference between “universalism” and “strategic refusal of specificity” (73). Universalism in that sense means a “humanist conception of a transcendent moral consciousness” which stands in contrast to the strategic refusal as one is aware of his or her immediate historical background and location (73). In this case reading the novel in 1980 would inevitably create a link to the events of the previous decade. “Coetzee’s *Empire* represents a continuation of the frontier hypothesis in colonial thinking since the eighteenth century, but specific features connect it to the South Africa of the period when the novel was being written” (Attwell 74). Head also claims that the historical imprecision of the novel is an immediate response to the events in 1970 and even labels it a “parody of [the apartheid regime’s] paranoid machinations” (75). Certain parallels to contemporary events cannot be overlooked. Gallagher points out that, for example, the abandonment of the town at the end of the story fairly obviously reflects the emigration of white South Africans in the 1970s and 1980s trying to avoid responsibility for the threat of violence in their country (Head 76). Furthermore, the initial torture and killing of the elderly native man can be linked to the torture and killing of student leader Steve Biko in 1977 (qtd. in Head 76).

It has also been claimed that the novel is about nowhere and therefore about everywhere. In that sense, not being linked to South Africa and the 1970s/80s, the story may be compared to contemporary issues. In that respect, in 2005, the year of the first performance, the opera clearly responds to the Iraq war and the debate on torture (Guantanamo Bay). This idea of universalism is taken over by JanMohamed as well. In his essay he claims that “the novel thus implies that we are all somehow equally guilty and that fascism is endemic to all societies” (88). As will be discussed in greater detail later, Philip Glass seemingly adopted this view. In his adaption of the novel this “universalism” is very distinct and the reference to South Africa of the 1970s/80s rather obscure.

Another specific and very prominent issue of the novel is torture. Head compares the novel with Kafka's story "In the Penal Colony" drawing attention to the torture scenes in particular. Coetzee himself explains his treatment of torture with reference to the special attraction torture has always had for many South African writers.

Relations in the torture room provide a metaphor, bare and extreme, for relations between authoritarianism and its victims. In the torture room unlimited force is exerted upon the physical being of an individual in a twilight of legal illegality, with the purpose, if not of destroying him, then at least of destroying the kernel of resistance within him. (Coetzee, *Doubling* 363)

In that respect the connection between torturer and tortured may be seen as metaphor for authoritarian oppression and state violence "as response to a specific political situation" (78). Not only torture as action but the torturer as a person forms an important issue of the novel. The magistrate struggles, throughout the novel, to understand how Colonel Joll and Officer Mandel are able to live such a contradictory life. He does not come to understand how, after having tortured and killed people, they are able to return to everyday human activities. This is addressed rather directly in the dialogue between Mandel and the magistrate (WB² 125-126).

Sam Durrant claims that in the course of the story the magistrate develops an unconscious wish to be tortured not, however, to understand the torturer or to be cleared of his own conscience. He desires to undergo the same pain and humiliation as the barbarian girl has. In the process of distancing himself from the empire the magistrate only understands her transmission with "a seemingly perverse desire *to be* [the barbarian girl]" (46). Only by being tortured himself he can understand what the girl has gone through, be closer to her and, thus, distance himself from the Empire.

Furthermore, language and its power is an important theme in the novel. In the dialogue between Colonel Joll and the magistrate (WB 5) it is emphasized that Joll attempts to exercise control through the reductive perception of language. He mentions

²Abbreviation for *Waiting for the Barbarians*

that the tone of truth is the note of pain and that it is his attempt to reduce his victims to that. This belief that reduction of the language results in the tone of truth is, however, ironically contradicted in the scene when the magistrate is tortured and his screams of pain are described and understood as native language. This denotes the native language as being the truth although the natives themselves are perceived as liars and warmongers.

Nashef points out that in the course of the story the magistrate loses the ability to “partake in the jargon of the Empire” and is “unable to uphold the discourse it represents” (9). This indicates his distancing from the Empire and gradual isolation from its politics, which is reflected on by his inability to write a letter before he departs to return the girl to her people (WB 57-58).

With regard to the magistrate and the barbarian girl, the lack of a common language reflects their distance to each other despite their intimate relationship. Only when the barbarian girl is returned to her people and the magistrate hears her talking in her native language, he realizes and regrets not having learned it. Thus she remains an Other “an alien to his own norms” (Head 83). This disinterest in her language reflects the Empire’s attitude towards the natives, which the magistrate so desperately but unsuccessfully wants to distance himself from (Head 83). Furthermore, the magistrate’s desire to read the girl’s body and thus to be able to interpret the marks the torturers left reflects his wish to understand her. This “motif of the girl as text” (Head 85) which the magistrate is eager to decipher in order to be able to come to terms with his role in the Empire is very dominant. Moreover, although he has been trying to read the wooden slips (ancient script) for years, he is never able to decipher them. The Empire, Colonel Joll, however, thinks he can understand this script and consequently believes that he is communicating with the “enemy” through them. Head links Joll’s dismissal of the slips as gambling sticks as the Empire’s disability to read and understand the Other (87). Downgrading them as gambling sticks reflects the Empire’s disregard and contempt for the natives.

Similarly, the magistrate is confronted with the inability to read Colonel Joll’s eyes as he is wearing dark sunglasses. The sunglasses not only keep the magistrate or any

other person from reading his eyes but reflect a coolness, a distancing from reality. They convey anonymity and may even be compared to the image of executioners or hangers wearing black hoods lest they be identified. Only at the end of the story, when Colonel Joll takes off his glasses, the magistrate can look into his eyes, the “window to the soul” (Poyner 56). This scene is important in the novel as well as in the opera. Although in the opera the magistrate’s previous thoughts on the sunglasses and his desire to finally look into Joll’s eyes are not represented, the sunglasses are constantly present. This is achieved by the Empire’s people also wearing sunglasses whenever they act on stage. Furthermore, the scene when Joll finally takes off his sunglasses is rather gripping, the music conveying tension and drama.

The power of the novel lies in part in the Magistrate’s realization that the boundaries between himself and the dehumanizing regime of Empire and the warped notions of reason it promotes are disturbingly unclear (Poyner 54).

Head mentions two different connotations of waiting which are presented in the novel and represent the difference between the magistrate and the Empire’s spokesman Colonel Joll. On the one hand, Colonel Joll is *Waiting for the Barbarians* and needs their arrival in order to be able to validate his mission. On the other hand, the magistrate realizes that for him the barbarians have already arrived in the form of the Empire’s militia. The manifestation of their barbarity helps him to liberate and to absent himself from its ideology of power and justice (75). Eckstein, however, claims that the magistrate is never fully able to absent himself, as he does not refrain from using the word ‘barbarians’ when referring to the native people. By the definition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* a ‘barbarian’ is a foreigner (181) and in the Empire’s sense a stranger in the country the Empire seeks to colonize (191).

Though the magistrate comes to believe that the torturers have inverted animal and angel, barbarity and civilization, he continues, in his narrative voice, to refer to the native peoples as the “barbarians”. His use of this word throughout the text implies the magistrate’s insights cannot undo his habits of being. Neither as character nor as narrator does the magistrate point to the keen irony so evident in the etymology of the word “barbarian” (Eckstein 191).

Furthermore, the issue of the magistrate's struggle to distance himself from Joll when he becomes aware of their similarities, especially with regard to his relationship to the girl, is rather dominant. He himself admits his desire to engrave himself on her as Joll has done (WB 148) but believes that Joll would be the only one she will remember. Poyner points that out rather drastically by claiming that

The Magistrate's desire for the barbarian girl [...] should be read as mad given that it is based on a lack of reciprocity, self-interest and an irrational neglect of truth justified through the Magistrate's wavering belief in his altruistic motivations for taking her in. (Poyner 60)

Although his behaviour does convey a certain madness and self-interest, it is clear that he reflects on that himself and at least at the end of the book is aware of his initial egoistical behaviour.

The dreams the magistrate has throughout the story form a major theme as well. Poyner claims that in them he "struggles to resolve (to interpret) his ambivalent relationship with [the barbarian girl], but which, in actuality, reinforces the failure of reciprocity that colours their relationship" (62). In his essay Head claims that "the dream sequence amounts to an accreted narrative of sublimation and human advancement (which belies the negativity of the final 'nowhere' in the novel)" (92). Both essays discuss the magistrate's dream not only regarding his relationship to the barbarian girl but to the Empire as well. Sam Durrant argues that "in the dreams, both [the magistrate] and the girl take up the question of reparation" (45). In that sense the magistrate aims to imagine the girl as a healthy human before she was tortured and deformed. The dreams reflect on their relationship and emphasize the magistrate's fascination with the girl's "broken" body and his inability to come close to her and to 'move' her.

To conclude, the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*, although ambiguous about time and setting, is rather clear in its reference to South Africa at the time it was written. It may, however, in addition be read as a universal ethical reference to people's cruelty, war, torture and fascism. The themes of oppression, torture and the misunderstanding of the Other are central. J.M. Coetzee presents these themes through one person, the

magistrate, and thus supplies the reader with one very personal view.

1.3 The opera *Waiting for the Barbarians*

1.3.1 Origin

Philip Glass's opera *Waiting for the Barbarians* was commissioned by the Erfurt Theatre and premiered September 10, 2005 with Guy Montavon as director and Dennis Russell Davies as conductor. The libretto was written by Christopher Hampton, an acclaimed writer and adapter, who has already worked with Philip Glass on *Appamatox*. The opera was performed in Amsterdam in September 2006 at the Het Muziektheater and in London on June 12 in the Barbican. In the United States the opera premiered in 2007 at the Austin Lyric Opera in Austin, Texas.

Although the opera was only performed in 2005, Philip Glass decided to adapt the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* and compose an opera as early as 1991 after having read the book in 1989. He started composing in 2002 as he mentions in an interview with Christopher Monk. In this interview Glass explains his way of approaching an opera project and the development of the opera.

Those three years were spread out. Now, the first thing that I do is write what is called a treatment, that is to show an opera producer that this work can work on stage, and that it might be something that interests him. What I will do with the treatment is to divide the story into acts and scenes, identify who the main characters are, by name and by voice part, whether there's a chorus or not, also the instrumentation. [...] Now, I don't wait for the producer to come back to me, I then start talking to writers. I'll give them the treatment as a guide to what the piece should be. [...] The second year is when I write the piece. [...] The third year is the actual building of the piece. That has to be done at least four months before the opening because it has to be built, the costumes have to be made, the singers have to be engaged [...] We were auditioning singers a good year before the event. (Monk 17)

The idea to adapt this novel into an opera developed when Glass first read the book at

a time when he was engaged in composing an opera with a similar topic.

I contacted John Coetzee about adapting his book into an opera back in 1991 and made my first treatment of the opera that same year. I'd begun to do this kind of social/political opera in 1979 with *Satyagraha*, an opera that takes place in South Africa, concerning the life of Gandhi and the possibility of social change through non-violence. (Glass website)

Why he has only finished his work nearly 30 years later, long after *Satyagraha*, is not known. One reason may be that the commission by the Erfurt Theatre in 2005 seemed like a good opportunity to "comment" on recent historical and political events. On the one hand, Erfurt being a former city of East Germany (GDR) and part of the Soviet zone of occupation, on the other hand, the current events in Iraq with insurgents extensively fighting against the US troops, the themes of rebellion, oppression and torture seemed rather suitable for an opera. Concerning the issue of unfounded fear and inciting panic, the Empire declaring without proof that the barbarians plan on attacking, shows a striking parallel to the Iraq war. Although Glass distances himself from any political and historical reference, "it is hard to listen to *Waiting for the Barbarians* without being painfully aware of its relevance to today's headlines" (Rosenblum 86).

My aim then, as it is now, was to preserve Coetzee's bold allegorical approach while dramatizing the classic themes of confrontation, crisis and redemption so the audience itself is left weighing the meaning of good and evil in their own lives. To reduce the opera to a single historical circumstance or a particular political regime misses the point. That the opera can become an occasion for dialogue about political crisis illustrates the power of art to turn our attention toward the human dimension of history. (qtd in Hampton 4)

This statement clearly expresses Glass' motives and goals in composing this opera. The novel has been discussed fairly intensively as to whether it wants to project political opinion or refers to actual historical events. For Philip Glass the opera transmits a general view that is easily intelligible and thus conveys a universal message.

1.3.2 Instrumentation/ Orchestration

There are five principal soloist parts, two sopranos (barbarian girl and cook), two baritone (Magistrate and Colonel Joll) and one bass (Mandel). Furthermore, there are five secondary soloists, three tenors (Soldiers), one baritone (Old Man) and one child.

Instrumentation

Piccolo

2 Flutes

2 Oboes

2 Clarinets in Bflat (2nd doubles Clarinet in A)

Contrabass Clarinet in Bflat (doubling Bass Clarinet in Bflat)

2 Bassoons

4 Horns in F

3 Trumpets in C

2 Trombones

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Percussion (5 players):

Xylophone, Marimba, Glockenspiel, Snare Drum, Tenor Drum, Bass Drum, Tom-toms, Suspended Cymbal, Tamtam, Hi-hat, Anvil, Cowbell, Triangle, Shaker, Castanets, Wook Block, Tambourine, Slapstick

Piano (doubling Celesta)

Harp

Strings

(Full score, Dunvagen Music Publishing 2005)

1.3.3 Philip Glass and opera

“I am a theatre composer. They are very different people from people that write concert music. Concert music writers write in the world of abstract music; theatre writers work from subject matter.” (Walters 274)

Having written more than 23 operas, Glass is one of the major opera composers of the 20th /21st century. According to himself he has become an opera composer by accident (Koopman 256). His first opera project *Einstein on the Beach* was incidentally not conceptualized as an opera. However, it was technically an opera as it could only be performed in an opera house (orchestra pit, wing space). Still Glass would rather call it “Musiktheater” (Glass, *Musik* 144). His initial intention of never becoming an opera composer changed when he realized that his writing was suitable for the voice. He claims that he developed this ability in the time when he was studying at the Juilliard School. Singing in the choir regularly taught him all about how the voice is used in music (Koopmann 257). Despite this seemingly spontaneous or innate gift, he kept ‘practising’ composing for the voice and said that he spent “the last fifteen years learning about the voice” (Koopmann 257) and never hesitated to discuss his compositions with the singers.

In general Philip Glass sees opera as a “populist art form” (Koopmann 261). It is an art form to reach a wide audience which does not “require heavy academic background to understand” (Koopmann 261). Lovisa further claims that Glass applies ‘opera’ in the broader sense of ‘opus’ or ‘work’, ‘piece’. It is his aim “eine historische Verbindung von Komponist und lebendigem Auditorium wieder herzustellen zu Lasten eines intellektualistischen Musikkonzeptes³” (96). This is reflected in *Waiting for the Barbarians* as well, as it was Glass’ aim to compose a universal social/political opera without referring to one particular historic event which has to be known and understood in order to be able to comprehend the opera. On the contrary, it should explore the universal debate about cruelty and injustice. Still the themes of the opera undoubtedly contain

³“to re-establish a historical connection between composer and living auditorium at the expense of an intellectualistic musical concept”. my translation.

reference to the events of 2005. It appears that in his remark Philip Glass wanted to clarify that in adapting the novel the focus shifts from the apartheid background towards contemporary issues.

Chapter 2

Comparing the Texts

2.1 External Structure

The novel consists of six chapters which are divided into several subchapters. (The first and third chapter consist of nine subchapters, the second chapter includes twelve, the fourth fourteen, the fifth six and the sixth chapter includes eleven subchapters).

The opera is divided into two acts, Act One including fourteen and Act Two ten scenes, with an estimated performance time of 135 minutes. This division does not correspond to that of the novel. However, as regards the storyline, there are several parallels.

Like the opera, the novel can be divided into two parts, taking Chapters 1, 2 and 3 as the first and Chapters 4, 5 and 6 as the second part. Such a division shows analogies in content and structure, as the ending of Act One, the centre of the opera, corresponds with the ending of Chapter 3 of the novel. The magistrate returns from the journey on which he was taking the barbarian girl back to her people. In the novel the magistrate realises that things have changed in town as soon as the soldiers approach not in order to greet but to arrest him. He knows that the military which has arrived in town will not leave his actions unpunished. In order to convey the magistrate's presentiment in the opera, a passage from Chapter 4 has been added to Act One. In that passage the

magistrate talks to Officer Mandel who accuses him of treason. Thus the last scene (Scene 14) creates an anticipation of the following events similar to the end of Chapter 3.

Apart from this parallel two-part division, subchapter-endings in the majority of cases correspond to scene-endings in the opera. For instance, at the end of Subchapter 6 of Chapter 1 (WB 11) and Scene 3 of Act One the magistrate talks to the boy who has been tortured and tells him not to make false confessions about his clan attempting to join in a great war against the Empire, "Kinsmen of yours are going to die, perhaps even your parents, your brothers and sisters. Do you really want that?" (WB 11). In the opera he says

MAGISTRATE. I know they hurt you badly
 But you must not do as they ask
 Do not lead them to your people
 The soldiers will ride out
 And many of your kinsmen will be killed (1.3.)

The end of Chapter 1 (WB 25), when the magistrate releases the prisoners, is also the conclusion of Scene 5 in Act One. Equally, the end of Scene 6 and the end of the first subchapter of Chapter 2, in which the magistrate tells the girl he is too tired to find clean bandages for her feet, are parallel. "'I will find clean bandages for your feet,' I say, 'but not now.'" (WB 28). The lyrics in the libretto are

MAGISTRATE. I'll find some clean bandages
 But not tonight
 For some strange reason
 I feel exhausted (1.6.)

Similarly, the end of Act One Scene 8 ends with the girl saying "I'm tired of talking", which is the concluding line of Subchapter 7 of Chapter 2 (WB 41). Furthermore, the ending of Subchapter 7 in Chapter 3 (WB 73) is identical to Act One Scene 13 in which the magistrate and the girl say their last goodbyes.

In Act Two the end of Scene 1 corresponds to the end of the third subchapter of Chapter 4 (WB 86). The magistrate talks to the girl (in the novel a boy) who brings him food. His last words are

MAGISTRATE. Delicious
 Tell your mother
 I always liked her soup (2.1.)

In the novel he asks the boy about the soldier's return as well, which has been omitted in the opera. Nevertheless, both subchapter and scene conclude in a similar way. Thus, even though the words have been changed, the scene's atmosphere and narrative expressiveness remains in the opera.

Furthermore, Act Two Scene 4 is similar to the end of the tenth subchapter of Chapter 4 in the novel. After the magistrate has been beaten for interrupting the public torture of native men, he is invited by Colonel Joll to translate ancient wooden slips that have been found in his office. Their subsequent argument ends with Colonel Joll's words "our interview is over", as he turns to Officer Mandel "he is your responsibility" (WB 114). In the opera in Act Two Scene 4 minor changes in word choice have been made, however, conveying the same sentiment.

JOLL. Our interview is over.
(He turns to Mandel.)
 You know the drill
 I leave you in their hands. (2.4.)

The subsequent scene ends with the same words as Chapter 4. The magistrate is tortured by Mandel. His cries and shouts are compared to the native language: "'He is calling his barbarian friends,' someone observes. 'That is barbarian language you hear.' " (WB 121). In the opera these two sentences are exchanged. Act Two Scene 5 concludes with Mandel's words

MANDEL. That's the barbarian language!
 He's calling out to his barbarian friends! (2.5.)

Concluding, at the end of the first subchapter of Chapter 5 Officer Mandel screams, "You fucking old lunatic! Get out! Go and die somewhere!" (WB 126). In the opera in Act Two Scene 6 Mandel's final words are

MANDEL. Shut up!
 You fucking lunatic!
 Crawl away and die! (2.6.)

All in all, the libretto applies the original structure of the novel, which is reflected in the parallel scene- and chapter-endings. Many passages conclude alike, often even with the same words, maintaining Coetzee's narrative structure.

2.2 Internal Structure

2.2.1 Narrative Situation

The novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* is a first person narrative. The magistrate as protagonist is the autodiegetic narrator, telling the story of his life while experiencing it. As a result, the focus of perception of a character in the story (the magistrate) is adopted (internal focaliser or character focaliser) (Rimmon-Kenan 74-75). Thus the reader witnesses the events as the narrator experiences them. However, the magistrate is only providing a narrow perspective on the events he experiences and is consequently an unreliable narrator. The magistrate as narrator does not know enough to give an accurate account of what is actually happening.

DelConte discusses the novel's "absentee narratee: the illusion (maintained by both narrator and author) that someone within the story world is listening to the narrative even though the narrative structure does not accommodate that someone" (431). He claims that on account of the absence of a narratee in *Waiting for the Barbarians* the reader is obliged to take over that part and is thus actively engaged in the story.

[...]we become a more significant and active participant in the magistrate's narrative than we would be if the text maintained these standard ontological distinctions: we are drawn in, made complicit ourselves in large part because of our role as audience, because "we listened." (434)

As he points out, within this simultaneous narration, the magistrate telling his story while experiencing it, “there is no potential for an audience within the story world apart from the narrator himself to receive the narrative either at the time of narrating or at a later time” (430). In contrast, in opera or theatre there is an audience confronted with a mimetic narrative mode in which the action is directly presented on stage and witnessed simultaneously. The audience in any case is confronted with the story, the narration at the same time as it is being told and is thus actively engaged as narratee. Therefore, the novel seems rather suitable to be adapted as an opera as the basic narrative mode of theatre requires the audience to ‘listen’. With regard to the effect the novel’s narrative situation creates, it has been claimed that

the magistrate’s simultaneous present tense narration, telling the story as it unfolds, highlights the on-going nature of his ethical awakening and his increasing recognition of his own complicity. Rather than encounter an already-completed ethical experience, something that the magistrate could have composed only after the fact through retrospective narration, we instead witness the awakening as it occurs: it is a process rather than a product. (DelConte 434)

The theatrical mode of narrating is highly suitable to convey the ethical awakening. Without a narrator commenting on the story or anticipating certain events, the audience experiences the character’s development as it happens. However, it seems fairly difficult to convey this one-character focalisation, this internal process on stage. In how far is it then possible to maintain the internal focaliser, the autodiegetic narrative situation of the novel? Christopher Hampton and Philip Glass could have adapted the novel presenting an overall view, an outward perspective without the magistrate as focaliser of the story. However, it seems to have been their intention to keep a character focalisation. In order to convey this narrative mode they have chosen the following methods.

The magistrate maintains his central position by being actively engaged in every scene. In this respect, the audience witnesses only the events that are experienced by him, which reflects his leading role as well as the importance of his perspective. In addition, the stage design and direction emphasises this character focalisation. The focus

on the magistrate and his point of view is especially conveyed through the stage design. In passages which are only heard but not seen by the magistrate, he is separated from the action by a semitransparent wall (see Fig. 2.1, Fig.2.2, Fig.2.3). These walls are raised from beneath the stage and can be used to separate the magistrate and the audience from the action. Thus in certain scenes the action can only be perceived through a semitransparent wall. This effect is impressively achieved in Act Two Scene 3 when the magistrate is sleeping in his prison cell and awakened by a turmoil outside. Colonel Joll and his men arrive at the town square and with them "a dozen Barbarian Prisoners, stripped to their waist" (Hampton 24). The magistrate wakes up and walks out of his cell to see what is going on. Only then the curtain between him and the crowd of townspeople is lowered and the magistrate as well as the audience can clearly see what is going on. At the end of this scene the magistrate is brought back to his prison cell and the wall is raised again. The audience can only see through the semitransparent wall how Colonel Joll lifts the hammer attempting to strike the native woman. The light changes, the wall becomes non-transparent and only the magistrate lying on the ground is visible.

Similarly, in Act One Scene 3 Colonel Joll reports on the interrogation of the elderly native man during which he is killed. In the original text the magistrate only reads a letter from Colonel Joll reporting on that incident (WB 6). This narrative mode from the original text is adapted in the opera into a conversation between Colonel Joll and the Magistrate, who are separated by the semitransparent wall. Colonel Joll is standing at the back of the stage and can hardly be seen. This special separation symbolises their personal differences. Similarly in Act Two Scene 4 the magistrate and the Colonel are separated by the semi-transparent curtain during their whole conversation about the native wooden slips the magistrate is supposed to translate for the Colonel. Only right before the Colonel takes off his sunglasses thus lets the magistrate see his eyes and "into his soul" the curtain is lowered.

All in all, although both men are representatives of the Empire they are antagonists in ideology, standing on opposite sides. The raising and lowering of the wall, being on the magistrate's "side", has the effect that the audience is mainly confronted with the



Figure 2.1: *Waiting for the Barbarians* Act One Scene 14, 72:61 min.

magistrate's perception of the events. The action is veiled and in certain scenes only audible just like the magistrate from his position is able to observe it. Thus not only the magistrate as a character is focused on but his perspective as well.

Via the dreamscapes it is possible to show events that are not experienced or witnessed by the magistrate. Although these events really happen or will happen in the story, putting them into a dreamlike setting reflects the opera's intent to keep the autodiegetic narrative situation. These scenes are distinguished from the main plot which is narrated by the magistrate, creating a meta-level to comment on events not experienced by him.

The character focaliser, conveying the magistrate's perspective, is also emphasised by the music. In the opera themes are developed which are linked to characters. These musical themes are able to evoke feelings that are inevitably related to the action on stage and the characters involved in it. In that respect, throughout the opera the music representing Colonel Joll changes remarkably. In the first scenes, whenever the



Figure 2.2: *Waiting for the Barbarians* Act Two Scene 4, 97:41 min.



Figure 2.3: *Waiting for the Barbarians* Act Two Scene 4, 98:38 min.

magistrate converses with Colonel Joll, the music seems rather neutral. However, as the opera progresses and with it the magistrate's repulsion to the Empire, its ideology and politics, the music changes considerably as well. The music accompanying Colonel Joll is aggressive and fairly brutal involving a lot of percussion instruments, the snare drum in particular. This very percussive, rhythmical music creates a military and martial atmosphere not solely mirroring Colonel Joll's character in general but the magistrate's sentiment towards him. The music as well as the magistrate's perception of him becomes militant, cold and violent. In that respect the music adds up to convey the magistrate's feelings and emotions towards the other characters.

To conclude, apart from having adapted the story rather accurately regarding the storyline, the first person narrative situation, as well as the internal focaliser, has been integrated in the opera as far as possible. With the means of stage design, especially the semi-transparent wall, this focus on the magistrate's perspective is enhanced. Furthermore, the importance of the music as transmitter of this perspective is conspicuous. It anticipates certain moods and creates an atmosphere which reflects the magistrate's emotions.

2.2.2 Narration into Dialogue

In opera the main narrative device is dialogue. In adapting the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* as an opera the first person narrative voice has to be incorporated into the mimetic narrative mode. To include the magistrate's reflections on events, his emotions, which are extensively expressed in the novel, and avoiding too many monologues, solo arias, they had to be adapted as dialogues.

One example of this change is Act One Scene 3, in which the information given in the dialogue between Colonel Joll and the magistrate about the interrogation of the elderly native man originally is conveyed through a letter. The magistrate receives a letter reporting on the interrogation (WB 6). In the opera the Colonel informs the magistrate directly about the death of the man. Further, he tells the magistrate about the boy's

interrogation and his confession that their people are planning to attack the Empire's posts. However, in the novel this information is given by the magistrate. He goes to see the boy telling him that his confession, whether true or not, will have severe consequences for his people. In the original text the magistrate directly says what has been reported to him. "They tell me you have made a confession. They say you have admitted that you and the old man and other men from your clan have stolen sheep and horses" (WB 10). In the opera this information is incorporated in the dialogue with Colonel Joll. Only at the end of Scene 3 the magistrate turns to the boy and advises him not to lead the Colonel to his people.

In Act One Scene 5, after Colonel Joll asks him about the sticks in his office, the magistrate mentions his interest in archeology, "My hobby is archeology" (Hampton 11). In the novel the magistrate reflects on his hobby to excavate ruins and contemplates whether they are from ancient native people or white settlers (WB 14). However, in the novel he never directly tells the Colonel about it. Colonel Joll only recognizes the sticks in his office when the magistrate is already imprisoned. In Act Two Scene 4 he asks the magistrate to translate the sticks and, believing he has been sending secret messages to the natives, accuses him of treason.

JOLL. My instinct is that these are coded messages
 Passing between yourself and other parties. (2.4.)

If the sticks only appeared in Act Two, their function in the story would be incomprehensible. Hence, the magistrate's inner monologue in the novel has been adapted into a dialogue with the Colonel in the first act in order to provide enough information for the audience to follow the story.

In Act Two Scene 8, shortly after Officer Mandel has left town, Colonel Joll comes back only to get some more supplies. In that scene he confronts the magistrate

JOLL. You like to think you're my opposite
 But let me just assure you: you are not
 You are the lazy lie we tell ourselves
 When times are easy prosperous and fat

But I, I am the truth the Empire speaks
When harsh winds blow (2.8.)

In the novel, however, the magistrate accuses himself of being “the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy” (WB 135). He reconsiders his role in the Empire and compares his position to the Colonel’s. In that respect, although he desires to distance himself from the Empire after having realised what is happening at the frontiers, he capitulates in the end. In the opera this self-reflection is omitted. Quite to the contrary, it is Colonel Joll who accuses the magistrate of not reconsidering his position. Thus the opera leaves the magistrate’s self-critique aside. In the same scene Colonel Joll announces the army’s withdrawal from town. In the novel this information is contained in a letter which Officer Mandel reads out to the public. However, this change does not affect the story’s progress or atmosphere. It appears that this resulted from practical theatrical reasons as Officer Mandel is not on stage anymore in that scene. Finally, the information given in the novel about the soldiers raiding the town, stealing food, breaking and destroying abandoned houses has been adapted as a speech the magistrate gives to the town’s inhabitants after Colonel Joll and his men have left town.

MAGISTRATE. They have deserted us!
Not before emptying our granaries
Stealing our crops and slaughtering our animals
And now they leave us undefended
But I say this:
Has the army not terrorized this town?
Looted, raped and tortured without trial?
[...]
Let us help each other to survive
And let us remember justice. (2.8.)

In that speech the magistrate’s attitude towards the Empire, especially Colonel Joll and his men, is conveyed. Furthermore, his regained authority and will to lead the people is transmitted. In the novel, however, this scene never happens. In contrast, at the end of the novel he returns to his former habits as magistrate, living a quiet, regular life. Unable to forget what has happened and that he is not able to adjust to these changes,

only his awareness that things have changed remains. He is “a man who lost his way long ago but presses on along a road that may lead nowhere” (WB 156).

To conclude, certain narrative elements of the original text had to be changed in order to convey the information without overloading the magistrate’s part with text, i.e. in operatic terms with solo arias. However, in some instances this change alters the original thrust of the story, as especially Act Two Scene 8 demonstrates.

2.2.3 Cuts

Adapting a novel for the stage leads to an unavoidable reduction of text as the time of performance is limited (usually two or three hours). It is the librettist’s choice as well as responsibility to decide which scenes or parts to omit. As the librettist is bound to use less text, it causes difficulties to convey as much and as detailed information as given in the original text. In *Waiting for the Barbarians* this choice was previously made by Philip Glass himself as he decided, before composing the music, which scenes to include in the opera. In that case it was not solely the librettist’s choice. Thus, Philip Glass did not only compose the music but was actively involved in the opera’s production as well. Although the main plot has been adapted rather accurately in the opera *Waiting for the Barbarians*, many scenes were cut resulting in a shift of focus.

The opera, like the novel, begins with the magistrate welcoming Colonel Joll and showing him the two prisoners. The scene in which the Colonel and the magistrate talk to the old man and the boy is adapted fairly faithfully. The words “His work is to find out the truth. That is all he does. He finds out the truth” (WB 3) have been directly taken from the novel.

MAGISTRATE. Their job is to find out the truth.
That’s all they do:
Find out the truth. (1.1)

Adopting that speech for the opera already anticipates the following scene in which the magistrate and Colonel Joll discuss truth and how to ‘get’ it. The passage in which

the magistrate rides to the dunes that cover “the ruins of houses that date back to times long before the western provinces were annexed and the fort was built” (WB 14) and explains that his hobby “has been to excavate these ruins” (WB 14) has been cut. This is the first of many passages¹ in which the magistrate states his love of archaeology and his interest in the history of the country. This sentiment is only introduced in Act One Scene 5 in the dialogue with Colonel Joll in which he tells him about the discovery of the ruins. He does not know who lived there and whether it had been “destroyed perhaps, who knows, by the barbarians” (Hampton 11). In the novel the magistrate contemplates about the ruins as well: “perhaps ten feet below the floor lie the ruins of another fort, razed by the barbarians, people with the bones of folk who thought they would find safety behind high walls” (WB 15). At this point he already reflects on the frontier town’s situation and whether the Empire’s fear of the barbarians’ attack is justified. In the opera this is reduced to a marginal topic.

The arrival of the first prisoners (fishing people) and their stay in town (WB 17-22) has been cut as well as the magistrate’s disapproving reaction to the imprisoning of the fishing people. Only in Scene 4 he expresses his opinion to the cook. This dialogue does not occur in the novel but has been included in the opera to depict the magistrate’s sentiment and explain the story’s further development.

Another scene that has been omitted is that in which the magistrate buys a fox cub (WB 34). He cannot housetrain it, so it lives roaming around in his room until it is old enough to be set free. In that scene he compares the girl to the fox, “people will say I keep two wild animals in my rooms, a fox and a girl” (WB 34). The parallel drawn between the girl and the fox is fairly apparent. The magistrate can neither train the fox nor convince the girl to stay with him. Maybe by accepting that it is not possible to domesticate the wild animal he gradually starts to understand the girl’s inability to live in town, apart from her people. In the opera the magistrate’s inner conflict, on the one hand accepting that he can never ‘keep’ the girl and, on the other hand, wanting her to stay, is not presented.

¹see *Waiting for the Barbarians* page 148 and page 154.

In the following scene in the novel the magistrate examines the room in which the natives have been questioned (WB 35-37). He talks to the guards that have been on duty during the prisoners' questioning and wants to know exactly what happened to the girl and her father. In the room he is determined to see and read the signs of torture, but everything is clean, all the traces have been removed. This scene, depicting the magistrate's eagerness to understand what happened has been omitted as well.

From page 42 onwards the magistrate tells about "the star" he is visiting regularly during the night. He compares his relationship to the barbarian girl and "the star", asking in particular why he is not physically attracted to the girl. Being with "the star" means experiencing a superficial, mainly physical, sexual moment. On the contrary, with the barbarian girl, he never has the wish to experience such a physical moment. The relationship to the "the star", except for her short appearance in Scene 4, has not been adapted for the opera at all. In the novel it provides a strong contrast to his unconsummated sexual relationship with the girl. When he is with "the star" he experiences passion and lust. The girl, however, seems to block him off.

But with this woman it is as if there is no interior, only a surface across which I hung back and forth seeking entry. Is this how her torturers felt hunting their 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 desire to be close to her, to engrave himself on her like the torturers, is not conveyed in the opera.

The passage in which the magistrate distances himself from the girl and does not share one bed anymore but sleeps in the parlour (WB 55) has been cut as well. In that scene the girl directly asks why he would not sleep with her but does not get a satisfactory answer. Although most of their dialogue has been adopted (Act One Scene 10), the break in their relationship, his alienation, is not conveyed in the opera. In the novel the magistrate expresses his confused feelings towards the girl. On the one hand, her story captivates him. Her traumatic experiences with Colonel Joll fascinate him and nourish his desire to be close to her and 'heal' her. On the other hand her

body repulses him. He cannot develop sexual feelings for her as the fact that she has been tortured by the Empire invokes strong feelings of guilt and responsibility in him. In the opera these inner conflicts are not conveyed. The dialogue between the girl and the magistrate merely expresses a lack of sexual intimacy. It does not depict his wish to move out and break off their relationship.

GIRL. Is there anything else you'd like to do? (*The Magistrate looks surprised; then he sighs and shakes his head.*)

MAGISTRATE. Another time perhaps. (*He lifts her foot gently from his lap, caressing it thoughtfully*)

GIRL. I know you visit other girls
I hear about it at the inn.

MAGISTRATE. It's not the same. (*The girl pulls her foot away, angry now.*)

GIRL. Is this how you treat them?
Or is it because you see me as a cripple? (1.10)

The journey to return the girl to her people has been left out as well. Only the scene when they finally meet the native men who agree to take the girl with them has been included. Furthermore, their return journey during which one of the men falls ill and their unfriendly welcoming by Mandel's soldiers, has been cut as well. It seems fairly understandable to adapt only the scene in which the girl leaves with the native men as this event is more relevant to the story than the journey itself.

The passage in which Colonel Joll reads out the charges that have been pressed against the magistrate (WB 83-84) has also been cut. The Colonel reads statements from the men who have accompanied the magistrate on the trip. Unintimidated the magistrate replies that he will defend himself in court. This rebellious, authoritative act in which the magistrate is still fighting for his position in town is not conveyed in the opera.

The following scene (WB 89) in which the magistrate escapes from his prison cell for 3 days but finally returns has been omitted as well. In those three days he talks to wounded soldiers who have returned from Colonel Joll's expedition, hides under "the star"'s bed for one day and talks to a sentry about the barbarians flooding their

fields. During these few days of freedom he experiences the town differently. Without the authoritative status as the magistrate, unrecognized by the inhabitants he is able to observe the events from a different perspective.

The magistrate's humiliating treatment and torture by Officer Mandel has not been included either. For weeks he is held in prison under worst conditions, left without water for days, beaten up, commanded to run in the yard in the blazing sun. Only the climax of this week-long maltreatment, when the magistrate is mock-hanged with his arms tied behind his back has been adopted. Similar to the treatment of the journey to the girl's people, in consideration of time, solely the most relevant event is shown in the opera.

Furthermore, short passages subordinate to the main plot have been cut. In one scene the magistrate visits the huts of the fishing people and witnesses their destruction shortly after by soldiers (WB 137). On page 139 two of Colonel Joll's horsemen ride towards town. At first people think they are returning but soon they recognise that they have been killed and tied to their horses (WB 140). The fact that the magistrate moves back into his apartment after most of the people have left has been omitted as well.

To conclude, the cutting of scenes results in the story's simplification. Although the opera seems to include the most important passages and conveys the story's essence, the omission of certain scenes prevents a deeper reflection on the characters. On the one hand, certain descriptive scenes of the magistrate's journey or the time he spends in prison are bound to be cut, including only the climactic events (the girl's parting, the magistrate's mock hanging). On the other hand, although the important information on the magistrate is given, it lacks profundity. The magistrate's development and his resentment towards the Empire, which is clearly shown by his decision to return the girl, are conveyed in the opera. However, his personal reflections on the events are only scarcely addressed and his self-doubt is omitted completely.

2.3 Dreamscapes

2.3.1 Novel versus Production

In the first part of this chapter the analysis will be based on the opera's performance in Erfurt² which was directed by Guy Montavon. In this production the dreamscapes do not match the libretto text. Thus, in the second part of this chapter the libretto and the original text will be compared as well.

It has to be mentioned that there are only five dreamscapes in the opera; however, the magistrate describes seven dreams in the novel. Secondly, the function of the dreams in the novel and in the opera is quite different. In the novel the dreamscapes reflect the magistrate's relationship to the barbarian girl as well as his role in the Empire and its colonial politics. Except for the last, the seventh dream, the focus of the dreams is on the girl. In the opera, however, the dreamscapes are implemented differently. They function as prolepsis and analepsis to the story. They are narrative elements, slots between the scenes that recapitulate or anticipate developments of the story through pictures and music. This slightly changes the story as the focus is shifted from the barbarian girl and her relationship to the magistrate to general themes of the story.

Each scene is solely instrumental apart from the choir. However, the choir functions as an instrument. It sings similar eighth-movements as the orchestra and the lyrics are individual vowels or diphthongs such as "ahee". With regard to the staging, in each dreamscape the stage is empty, the background is black and the light is kept in dark blue (see Fig. 2.4, Fig.2.5). The actors, who are moving in slow motion, can hardly be seen. The dreamscapes are visually clearly separated from the other scenes, which create a strong contrast between dream and reality.

In the first dreamscape in the novel the magistrate finds himself in the town square

²source: *Waiting for the Barbarians*: video recording of the final rehearsal. Dir. Guy Montavon. DVD. provided by Theatre Erfurt, 2005.



Figure 2.4: *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Act One Scene 2 'Dreamscape No. 1', 14:31 min.



Figure 2.5: *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Act One Scene 7 'Dreamscape No.2', 41:20 min.

in which children are building a castle out of snow. As he approaches the children, they fade away except for one hooded girl sitting with her back to him. This dream occurs after the old native man has been killed during the interrogation by Colonel Joll. The magistrate has not yet met the barbarian girl. In the first dreamscape of the opera³ Colonel Joll is standing in the front part of the stage and the old man is walking towards him in slow motion. In the background a man (probably Officer Mandel) is standing with a bludgeon in his hands. This scene clearly anticipates the torturing of the old man.

The second dream occurs after the magistrate has talked to a soldier about the torturing of the barbarian girl. In the dream he again approaches the children building a snow castle and this time is able to see beneath the hood of the girl. However, her face is blank “it is not a face at all but another part of the human body that bulges under the skin” (WB 37). In the opera the second dreamscape⁴ shows Colonel Joll holding a native whose hands are tied with a rope and who is kneeling on the floor. Officer Mandel, who is standing in front of the native, lifts a big hammer in slow motion and strikes it down on the native’s head. The scene is repeated several times. This dreamscape is placed after the magistrate has invited the barbarian girl into his flat for the first time and has seen her broken ankles. In that scene the magistrate wants to know exactly what happened to the girl and the old man during the interrogation. He questions the guards (1.3.) about the torture of the old man and relentlessly asks the girl to tell him what Colonel Joll did to her.

GIRL. Can I go now?

MAGISTRATE. No you can’t.

GIRL. You don’t want me

Someone like me

I am ...

[...]

MAGISTRATE. This is not what you think it is.

I want to see what they did to your feet.

³DVD, WB, Act One Scene 2, 12:15 min.

⁴DVD, WB, Act One Scene 7, 39:43 min.

[...]
Show me. (1.6.)

The main subject of the previous scenes is torture, which the dreamscape also refers to. Furthermore, it anticipates the torture and killing of more natives. Although the dreamscape is very well placed in the opera's story, in contrast to the novel, it does not reflect the magistrate's relationship to the girl but functions as a narrative element.

In the third dream of the novel the magistrate approaches the children again. It is still snowing heavily. He cannot speak as his whole body seems to be covered in ice. This time he can see the girl's face, which is young and smiling. He wants to tell her to put people into the fort she has been building but he cannot say a word. This dream occurs after the magistrate talks to Mandel the first time and reveals his rebellious and critical opinion about the Empire's colonial politics. He wishes that the natives would "rise up and teach [them] a lesson, so that [they] would learn to respect them" (WB 51). It seems as if the dream shows that he is finally understanding or at least closer to understand the girl and her story. In stating his increasing resentment against the Empire he positions himself clearly. As a result in the dream, although he has to wade through deep snow, he reaches the girl and finally sees her face. In the opera, however, there is no dream placed after the dialogue with Mandel in Act One Scene 9. However, in Scene 11, after the magistrate talks with the girl about her father and decides to bring her back to her people, a dreamscape is placed⁵. The magistrate and the girl walk arm in arm in slow motion across the stage. This dreamscape functions as narrative element depicting their journey to her people.

The magistrate talks about the fourth dream after he has been accused of treason and imprisoned. In his dream he approaches the girl who is kneeling on the floor, her face covered by the cap of her coat. He takes her disembodied feet and rubs them after she tells him they are sore. At the same place in the story a dreamscape is set in the opera⁶; however, with regard to the content it is again rather different. In Act Two Scene 2 "the star" and another man walk towards each other and leave the stage arm

⁵DVD, WB, Act One Scene 11, 61:25 min.

⁶DVD, WB, Act Two Scene 2, 79:68 min.

in arm. This dreamscape once more anticipates the story's development, namely that in the end most inhabitants, including "the star", will leave town and thus the magistrate. It further foreshadows her leaving the magistrate for another man, which is only addressed in Act Two Scene 9. In the novel the magistrate dreams right after contemplating that he is forgetting the girl, what she looked like, only remembering oiling her body (WB 86). The dream this time seems like a recapitulation of the beginning of their relationship. The girl is wearing the big coat she wore on the day they first met. In the dream everything seems exaggerated. Her coat is so big she is "almost lost" (WB 87) in it, her voice is wailing and tiny and her feet once disembodied are monstrous, "two huge potatoes" (WB 87). This contrast of her huge feet and her small, childlike body expresses the dominance of her injuries, which seemed to be the main reason the magistrate was interested in her. Thus the dream in the opera again anticipates the story's development rather than reflects on the relationship between the magistrate and the girl.

The fifth dreamscape⁷ in the opera is set after the magistrate confronts Mandel and asks him how he is able to live a normal life after having tortured innocent people. In the dreamscape a little girl is walking towards the magistrate who is kneeling on the floor with an empty bowl in his hands. She does not give him food, although he begs for it, but walks past him. This scene depicts the magistrate's condition and life in prison, including suffering from starvation. In the novel the dream occurs later in the story after Mandel has left and the magistrate has regained some of his previous status in town. In the dream the magistrate finds himself flying towards the girl who has turned her back on him. He is afraid he would bump into her. Right before he hits her she turns around. They collide but the impact only feels "as faint as a stroke of a moth" (WB 136). He is carried away from her, feeling relieved. This dream signals his concern for the girl as well as for himself. He is relieved that he did not hurt her but still crashes into her, leaving some impact on her life. Maybe that is why he feels relieved after all. Before the collision he is worried about her not seeing him in time, which seems to convey his anxiety that she never really 'saw' him or was aware of him

⁷DVD, WB, Act Two Scene 7, 112:82 min.

and their relationship. She then, however, turns and looks him in the eye signalling that against his fears she is aware of his presence.

2.3.2 Novel versus Libretto

As has been mentioned above, it is striking that although in the libretto the dreams are adopted as they occur in the novel, the production in Erfurt 2005 implemented them differently. Hence, the aim of the subsequent passage is to analyse the dreamscapes in the libretto and compare them to the original text.

In the libretto the first dream remains close to the original. It occurs right before the magistrate meets the barbarian girl for the first time. Although in the dream he sees her among the other children, larger and perhaps not even a child, he cannot see her face as it is covered by a hood. This dream anticipates the following event, namely their first encounter, when he sees her begging in the streets.

The second dream in the libretto occurs right after he has first met the girl and taken her in. In the novel the girl has already been living with him for a while, working in the kitchen. During that time the magistrate unsuccessfully tries to recall her face among the other (fishing) people when they were brought to town to be interrogated by Colonel Joll. He is desperate to find out what really happened to her. In the dream the magistrate approaches the group of children again but this time is able to look underneath the hood. The child, however, does not have a face. In the novel the narrator describes it as “featureless; it is the face of an embryo or a tiny whale; it is not a face at all but another part of the human body that bulges under the skin; it is white; it is the snow itself” (WB 37). In the libretto the magistrate sees “instead of a face [...] a glistening white surface, like ice” (Hampton 14). There is a difference between an embryo-like face, white as snow and a glistening icy surface. In that respect, the libretto creates a greater contrast and a symbolic link to the following dream in which the magistrate is covered in ice. Furthermore, in the libretto the magistrate holds out a coin but the girl does not react. In the original dream it is left to the reader to decide

whether the girl reacts or not as it ends with the sentence “between numb fingers I hold out a coin” (WB 37). It is not clear whether she takes the coin or not. In the opera “the Magistrate brings out a coin and offers it to her. No reaction” (Hampton 14). Thus the libretto anticipates her reaction, namely her ignoring him, which has a negative effect, depicting her indifference towards him.

In the third dream the magistrate approaches the children through heavy snow and this time the hooded child turns around and smiles at him. It is the girl, “a smiling child, the light sparkling on her teeth and glancing from her jet-black eyes” (WB 53). He wants to talk to her but can neither move nor say a word as he is frozen, covered in ice. In the libretto the dream is very similar, however, in the end “the Girl’s smile dies and she turns away from him, back to the castle” (Hampton 18). In that scene the girl’s reaction, her fading smile expresses their relationship. In the novel the girl keeps smiling at the magistrate but in the libretto her smile dies because he is not able to smile back. This seems to express her unhappiness with his reaction and her discouragement to approach him. In this respect, this short phrase “her smile dies” is rather effective as it creates a negative atmosphere and reflects their unilateral relationship. What is striking as well is the emptiness of the town the children are building, which is never mentioned in the libretto. Although it has great symbolic value in the novel, the barbarian girl building a ghost town expressing her loneliness, without people she can identify with, it has been omitted in the libretto. The empty town also “emphasises the lack of communion” (Poyner 63) which especially the magistrate experiences.

The fourth dream remains close to the original. The magistrate approaches the girl and takes her feet to massage them. His description of them as “monstrous”, “two huge potatoes” (WB 87) is not included in the libretto as it would be impracticable to implement on stage. However, it has the effect of shifting the emphasis away from her feet, the part of her body he seems to be fascinated, obsessed with. Their ritual of him massaging and oiling her broken ankles gave him the opportunity to make up for what the Empire, Colonel Joll, did to her.

The fifth dream in the novel has not been included in the opera. In the dream the

girl is not building a castle but baking bread wearing gold embroidered clothes. The magistrate is overwhelmed by her beauty and filled with gratitude (WB 109). This dream occurs right after he has been beaten up while trying to stop Colonel Joll from killing a native with a hammer. It seems as if dreaming of her in a healthy, happy state depicts his own conscience being partly healed as a result of standing up for the native people and fighting the Empire. It can further be interpreted as “a basic image for community, a kind of vision of basic human endurance” (Head 91). The baking of bread, creating something rather precious in the difficult conditions of the desert, indicates “a beacon of hope” (91) the magistrate is thankful for.

In the sixth dream in the novel, the fifth in the opera, the magistrate flies towards the girl, colliding with her. There is again a striking difference as in the libretto they do not collide but only “brush against each other, their hands briefly grazing as he passes” (Hampton 30). “Then the Magistrate, despite his resistance is unable to withstand the force of the wind and is swept away from her mysteriously immobile body, reaching back towards her in vain” (30). In the novel, however, they do collide but the impact feels just “as faint as a stroke of a moth” (WB 136). Instead of wanting to touch her he tries “to look back, but all is lost from sight in the whiteness of the snow” (136). He is not anxious to leave her and does not try to reach her “in vain”, but is relieved and happy, “then I need not have been anxious after all!” (136). In that respect, the dreamscape in the libretto presents a different sentiment. Instead of refusing to let go of her and seemingly trying to hang on to their relationship, in the novel he finally seems to have made peace and is able to let go of her.

The last dream, which has not been included in the opera as well, occurs after Mandel and Joll and most of the inhabitants have abandoned the town in fear of an attack by the native people. In contrast to the other dreams, the magistrate does not dream of the girl this time. He is standing in a pit filled with water, which they have been digging to search for remnants of ancient settlements. He concludes that the water is poisoned as he finds a jute sack with a dead parrot inside and reminds himself not to drink it. This dream reflects the magistrate’s feelings towards the future, his fear what

it will hold. He is still interested in the history of earlier settlements but is also aware of the danger the 'digging' into the unknown may bring. He is not sure if he really wants to reveal the Empire's, the country's history or wants to go on as if nothing has ever happened. The dream also expresses his consciousness that there is something outside town that he cannot control. Although he does not articulate his fear, the dreams in which he recapitulates the barbarians poisoning their water, signal that he is, like everyone else, waiting for the barbarians to come.

To conclude, in the novel the dreams mirror the magistrate's relationship to the barbarian girl as well as his role in the Empire's colonial politics. As we have seen in the previous discussion, in the opera's production in Erfurt the dreamscapes are implemented fairly differently, functioning as narrative elements, as analepsis and prolepsis. Although the dreams in the novel recapitulate and anticipate the story as well, they primarily focus on the magistrate's relationship to the girl. Comparing the libretto to the original text, the dreams have been adapted rather accurately; however, some changes in word choice affect the story's focus and atmosphere.

2.4 Characters

2.4.1 The Magistrate

The magistrate, a middle aged man, lives a comfortable life in a frontier town at the outer limits of the Empire until Colonel Joll and his men, sent from the Third Bureau, arrive in town. His idea of quiet "sunset years" is shattered when the Colonel starts his mission on interrogating and torturing native people to discover the 'truth' about mysterious incidents that have occurred outside of town and a supposed uprising against the Empire. With the arrival of the Empire's militia the magistrate, apart from realising that the life he knew is never going to be the same, starts calling his prior concept of the Empire into question. The rigorous actions of Colonel Joll and his assistant Officer Mandel shatter his belief in a peaceful life, a peaceful country. The report about a na-

tive man who has been killed during an interrogation initiates his regrets of becoming embroiled in the doings of Colonel Joll.

If I had only handed over these two absurd prisoners to the Colonel [...] if I had gone on a hunting trip for a few days, as I should have done, a visit up-river perhaps, and come back, and without reading it, or after skimming over it with an incurious eye, put my seal on his report, with no question about what the word *investigation* meant, what lay beneath it like a banshee beneath a stone - if I had done the wise thing, then perhaps I might now be able to return to my hunting and hawking and placid concupiscence while waiting for the provocations to cease and the tremors along the frontier to subside. (WB 9)

Never having dealt with serious threats and attacks by the natives, the magistrate does not understand the Empire spreading fear and panic about an upcoming war. Although he is determined to distance himself from the Empire, the magistrate draws parallels between himself and the interrogators (torturers) rather early in the book. After he talks to the boy whose grandfather has been tortured and killed by Colonel Joll, he contemplates: "It has not escaped me that an interrogator can wear two masks, speak with two voices, one harsh, one seductive" (WB 7). As he asks the boy about what has happened and encourages him to stay resistant to the Colonel's methods, he puts on a seductive voice. In the role of the interrogator he wants to console the boy; however, he is also authoritarian by telling him what to do.

The magistrate is aware of his position in the Empire and how difficult it is to 'break free' and act independently. However, at the beginning of the novel his wish to disentangle is exclusively based on egoistic motives. His hatred for the Empire's doings is initiated by the change they caused to his life:

I did not mean to get embroiled in this. I am a country magistrate, a responsible official in the service of the Empire, serving out my days on this lazy frontier, waiting to retire. I collect the tithes and taxes, administer the communal lands, see that the garrison is provided for, supervise the junior officers who are the only officers we have here, keep an eye on trade, preside over the law-court twice a week. For the rest I watch the sun rise and set, eat and sleep and am content. When I pass away I hope to merit three lines of small print in the Imperial gazette. I have not asked for more than a quiet life in quiet times. (WB 8)

At this point of the novel he is loyal to the Empire in his function as a magistrate as long as he is able to live the quiet and routine life he prefers. He feels opposed to the Empire's doings mainly for personal rather than ethical reasons. Especially in the previous paragraph, the sense of personal happiness and freedom, ignorant of the circumstances outside his 'realm', is dominant. However, while Colonel Joll and the militia stay in town, spreading fear and panic about the barbarians, his attitude gradually changes.

After the fishing people's imprisonment the magistrate is determined to find out what really happened in the interrogation rooms. He was never allowed to attend the questionings. Which Colonel Joll explains as follows: "You would find it tedious. We have set procedures we go through" (WB 4). However, he could not avoid hearing the screams from the granary every night. The magistrate's curiosity overpowers his doubt whether it would not be easier to simply ignore and forget what has happened. Thus he begins to ask the guards about the interrogations and cannot help but become more and more embroiled in the Empire's doings. As a consequence he realizes that his role in the Empire's politics is by no means innocent or passive. In consequence of his interest and eagerness to know everything about what has happened to the prisoners and the Empire's intentions, he questions his entire life and work. This desire for clarification becomes apparent rather early in the novel. However, the more the magistrate distances himself and reconsiders his role in the Empire's politics, the more he realises how entangled he is. He only partly succeeds in his attempt to become a different, independent and wiser person. This insight is clearly expressed at the end of the novel when the magistrate recapitulates the past events and is able to reflect on his former self. "If the barbarians were to burst in now, I know, I would die in my bed as stupid and ignorant as a baby. [...] To the last we will have learned nothing. In all of us, deep down, there seems to be something granite and unteachable" (WB 143). He realizes that although the past events have changed his life, he does not feel wiser and is still unable to forgive himself. Undoubtedly he knows that his actions against the Empire were insignificant and will not have changed or influenced the country's history.

In the opera, the first and final thought, the magistrate's yearning for a quiet and peaceful life is never clearly stated. Furthermore, although he is determined to know all about the torturing, especially with regard to the barbarian girl, he does not reflect on his position in town, how his role as the magistrate is representative of the Empire's ideology as well. In Act 2 Scene 3 when he stops Colonel Joll from killing a native woman he declares his position.

MAGISTRATE. I remain the Magistrate
Responsible for justice in this town! (2.3.)

He clearly expresses his opposition against Colonel Joll but as by then he himself is imprisoned, he is powerless to take action. He publicly confronts the Colonel, states his opinion and tries to win back authority of 'his' town. This shows the magistrate's clear positioning and innocence which is depicted throughout the opera, in contrast to the novel in which, despite his clear opinion, he also questions his role as the magistrate.

In the novel, when the magistrate meets the barbarian girl and takes her in, he starts to grasp what Colonel Joll has done. In caring for the girl, consoling her, he also intends to understand which crimes the Colonel committed to her and her people as he cannot imagine what had happened in the torture room. This interest in the girl and her body quickly develops into an obsession. The magistrate seems to be dependent on the nightly ritual of oiling and massaging her. His growing desire to distance himself from the Empire intensifies the relationship to the girl. It gives him comfort and consoles him probably more than the girl because he believes that he is able to clear his conscience by caressing her. Realising his obsessive behaviour he is shocked by the resemblance of his act and the torturers'. He knows that his innermost wish is to engrave himself on her, to leave a mark on her body and soul. He cannot stand the fact that she would never forget the traumatic experience of the torture but will very likely forget the relationship to the magistrate. Thus the reducing of his actions from the selfless wish to help the girl and to ease her pain to an act of egotism and jealousy is fairly apparent.

But with this woman it is as if there is no interior, only a surface across which I hunt back and forth seeking entry. Is this how her torturers felt hunting their secret, whatever they thought it was? For the first time I feel a dry pity for them: how natural a mistake to believe that you can burn or tear or hack your way into the secret body of the other! (WB 43)

He feels sympathy for the torturers, finds himself on the same 'level' with them. His aim is to unforgettably engrave himself on her body. In the opera this obsessive and egoistic relationship is not conveyed very clearly. Mainly his interest in her history and eagerness to reduce her pain are emphasised.

At the end of the novel the magistrate realises that despite all that has happened, he still has not found what he was looking for. The novel concludes with the sentence: "Like much else nowadays I leave it feeling stupid, like a man who lost his way long ago but presses on along a road that may lead nowhere" (WB 156). He wants to understand but is lost without ever being able to find the right track or fully recover from the traumatic experiences. Furthermore, the sentence resonates the magistrate's realisation that his role in the Empire's politics was hardly insignificant. In the opera the last scene ends with

MAGISTRATE. I am a man travelling down a road
Which may lead nowhere
A man lost in a cruel and stupid dream
But still I keep walking
Walking. (2.10.)

There is a major difference in meaning between the last words in the opera and the novel. In the opera the magistrate is a "man lost in a cruel dream" whereas in the novel he has "lost his way long ago". Thus the last words in the opera portray a rather innocent man who is lost in a cruel world. Furthermore, an additional meaning, namely 'caught', resonates in the word 'lost'. The sentence points out that the magistrate did not have a choice but was caught in a cruel dream. The last words in the novel depict the magistrate as still unable to understand but trying to keep going although he is doubtful whether he would ever understand. On the other hand, in the opera he is unintentionally lost in a cruel dream out of which he is still trying to escape.

To conclude, except for a few main character traits, there are differences between the magistrate in the opera compared to the novel. In both texts he is attentive to the Empire's strong ideology and cruel measures and yearns for justice. Furthermore, in both texts the magistrate in the end reflects on the previous events, the torturing and the relationship to the girl, and realises that despite his protest and insubordinate behaviour to the Empire he was unable to save neither the girl and the other natives nor the inhabitants of the town. One reason for this unsuccessful rebellion is his subconscious, deeply rooted commitment to the Empire, which is constantly reflected in the novel. The opera lacks the magistrate's self-doubt and the persistent connection to the Empire. The magistrate is a man who dedicatedly works for the Empire as long as he is able to live a quiet and peaceful life. However, as soon as he experiences injustice, he distances himself from the Empire, becomes its antagonist, opponent without hesitation or inner conflicts. The opera portrays a linear disentangling without drawbacks, whereas in the novel the magistrate is constantly questioning his past and present actions, contemplating the parallels between him and the torturers, the unjust people. Thus the equivocation and complexity of the magistrate's character are not conveyed in the opera.

2.4.2 The Barbarian Girl

The magistrate first encounters the barbarian girl in the streets where she is begging.

She kneels in the shade of the barracks wall a few yards from the gate, muffled in a coat too large for her, a fur cap open before her on the ground. She has the straight black eyebrows, the glossy black hair of the barbarians. What is a barbarian woman doing in town begging? (WB 25).

He takes her in, at first because he is curious about the reason for her residence in town but then becoming obsessed with her story, her history. She belongs to the group of fishing people who have been found guilty of planning to attack the town and consequently have been arrested by Colonel Joll. Colonel Joll, who has killed the

girl's father during an interrogation, has also tortured her leaving her with crippled ankles and partly blinded eyes.

The magistrate describes the girl as a very shy, quiet person who does not like to talk, especially about what has happened during the imprisonment.

I watch her as she undresses, hoping to capture in her movements a hint of an old free state. But even the motion with which she pulls the smock up over her head and throws it aside is crabbed, defensive, trammelled, as though she were afraid of striking unseen obstacles. Her face has the look of something that knows itself watched. (WB 34)

In this paragraph he seems to compare the girl to an animal, possibly a deer, always aware of the threats and scared of being seen or of acting too conspicuously. In the next paragraph in the novel the magistrate talks about the fox he has bought and that he is now "[keeping] two wild animals in [his] room, a fox and a girl" (WB 34). Thus the parallel, the comparison to the wild animal in the previous paragraph becomes even more evident. The girl reflects a certain mystery, the unknown, but at the same time, something wild and uncultured, which attracts the magistrate's interest.

Although in the first moments together the girl seems to merely endure the magistrate's questioning, she does neither see a reason nor obligation to leave him. Being with the magistrate is the alternative to begging in the streets. "Come, tell me why you are here", the magistrate asks the girl, "Because there is nowhere else to go" (WB 40). Eventually, she adapts to her new life with the magistrate and takes in what he gives her. "She herself is oblivious of my swings of mood. Her days have begun to settle into a routine with which she seems content" (WB 33). His massaging, caressing of her body and interest in her life gives her comfort. However, she never fully relaxes, as she senses that his interest in her is equivocal and that "[...] she becomes the catalyst for his journey of self-discovery" (Head 74).

The girl rather painfully experiences the magistrate's quest for self-discovery and conscience-clearing when she wants to intensify their relationship but is rejected. For the first time she attempts to clearly express her wishes and thoughts but is ignored and pushed away by the magistrate.

"Wouldn't you like to do something else?" she asks. Her foot rests in my lap. [...] Her question takes me by surprise. It is the first time she has spoken so pointedly. I shrug it off, smile, try to slip back into my trance [...]. The foot stirs in my grip, comes alive, pokes gently in my groin. [...] Her toes continue to probe; but in this slack old gentleman kneeling before her in his plum dressing-gown they find no response. "Another time," I say, my tongue curling stupidly around the words. As far as I know this is a lie, but I utter it: "Another time, perhaps." (WB 55)

Although she senses his feelings, she does not understand his rejection. She knows that he visits "the star", thus doubts the sincerity of his conciliation "another time, perhaps". In this particular scene the magistrate's equivocal feelings towards the girl are clearly depicted for the first time. This first open discussion about their relationship also initiates a break. Until then their relationship consisted of him questioning her excessively and caressing her body, the girl playing a rather passive part. After their quarrel the magistrate moves out of his bedroom to sleep separate from the girl.

However badly he treats her, even though their relationship is complicated and unstable, her reaction is always modest and enduring. The previous scene is the only one in which she shows her emotions (starts to cry). Nevertheless, the next day she has come to terms with the new arrangements and acts as if nothing has happened, which shows her reserved and controlled character:

She adapts without complaint to the new pattern. I tell myself that she submits because of her barbarian upbringing. But what do I know of barbarian upbringings? What I call submission may be nothing but indifference. (WB 56)

As a result of her reserved manners, the magistrate feels that she is indifferent to him. Although he partly understands her distant behaviour, he is offended by her rejection. This is rather ironic, as he was the one initiating the break in their relationship. Furthermore, their relationship does not develop further; on the contrary, it seems to 'go round in circles'. At first the magistrate feels rejected by the girl because she behaves in a shy and reserved manner. Then, as soon as she wants to intensify their relationship and finally shares her feelings, he secludes himself; and as a consequence to her resigned behaviour he again feels unfairly treated and rejected.

As their relationship is only partly portrayed in the opera, the girl's enduring and introvert character is not represented in great detail. Mainly the magistrate's interest in her traumatic experiences is depicted. His constant prompting to talk about what has happened despite her unease is shown especially in Act One Scene 7:

MAGISTRATE. Does it hurt?

What exactly did they do to you?

Why don't you want to tell me? (*She flinches away from him when he touches the scar; and ignores his questions [...]*)

When he mentions his desire to understand and be able to read the marks on her body, she misunderstands it for his wish to be intimate with her. This notion is not reflected in the novel, yet shows her rather cold and cautious but also indifferent behaviour towards him:

MAGISTRATE. I feel I need to understand

The marks on your body.

GIRL. Look if you want me take me

I'm tired of talking. (1.8)

In the novel the equivalent scene merely shows her discomfort of talking about her traumatic experience. "'That is nothing. That is where the iron touched me. It made a little burn. It is not sore.' She pushes my hands away. 'What do you feel towards the men who did this?' She lies thinking a long time. Then she says, 'I am tired of talking'" (WB 41).

Her enduring and self-controlled behaviour, her strength, is especially well shown on their journey. The following paragraph cannot be read without feeling the magistrate's amazement at the girl's behaviour. It appears unbelievable that this handicapped, traumatised woman is still able to endure such an exhausting journey.

The girl does not complain. She eats well, she does not get sick, she sleeps soundly all night clenched in a ball in weather so cold I would hug a dog for comfort. She rides all day without a murmur. Once, glancing up, I see that she is riding asleep her face as peaceful as a baby's. (WB 60)

This new side of her is also shown in the following scene:

The banter goes on in the pidgin of the frontier, and she is at no loss for words. I am surprised by her fluency, her quickness, her self-possession. [...] she is not just the old man's slut, she is a witty, attractive young woman! (WB 63)

In this passage a new woman is introduced, perhaps the 'real' barbarian girl. For the first time she is not described as the broken human being in need of help but, on the contrary, as a self-confident and buoyant young woman. In the opera, however, this character trait is not shown. She remains a broken, helpless and unhappy woman. Only two scenes are dedicated to the journey, rendering it impossible to focus on her character and the alteration of the magistrate's view.

When the magistrate asks her to return with him at the end, her reaction is very determined. Although they have grown closer during the journey, she knows that she could never return to town. His last description of her is rather prosaic.

I see only too clearly what I see: a stocky girl with a broad mouth and hair cut in a fringe across her forehead staring over my shoulder into the sky; a stranger; a visitor from strange parts now on her way home after a less than happy visit. (WB 73)

"Stranger" is the dominant word in this paragraph. Even though the magistrate has spent months with the girl, she is still a stranger to him. This reveals his limited and partial understanding of her as she was merely the instrument to enable the clearing of his conscience rather than a woman for whom he developed strong feelings. It can be said that their relationship generally reflects the Empire's inability to entirely understand the 'barbarians', the unknown.

To conclude, the barbarian girl, in the novel more evidently than in the opera, is the mysterious character, the woman from outside of town. In her appearance, her disability, she represents the persecuted and groundlessly maltreated natives. Although she is portrayed as a strong and determined woman, she is still, especially in the magis-

trate's eyes, a person in need of help. Thus she becomes his project to compensate the Empire's crimes, the Empire which he is part of.

2.4.3 Colonel Joll

"Joll and his men are torturers and interrogators, driven by the directive to discover the 'truth' " (Head 73-74)

I have never seen anything like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire. Is he blind? I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes. But he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. (WB 1)

The beginning of the novel is a description of the Colonel. What strikes the magistrate, are the sunglasses Colonel Joll is constantly wearing. Against the magistrate's first assumption, the Colonel is not hiding blind eyes behind the sunglasses but trying to conceal his facial expressions. As a person's emotions are uncontrollably projected through the eyes, Colonel Joll can, thus, hide his feelings from the magistrate or any other person. Furthermore, the "dark glasses [symbolise] his mode of perception, his colonialist gaze" (Dickinson 10). Unemotional and cold are the character traits which distinguish the Colonel, which is also clearly conveyed in the opera. Colonel Joll is wearing sunglasses, a long dark coat and black boots (see Fig.2.6). In addition to his military attire, he has a stiff body language and frozen facial expression. He keeps his hands behind his back, hiding them, and is thus limiting his body language in order to keep distance and conceal his thoughts. His appearance and body language on stage depict Colonel Joll's character as described in the novel.

That is what I bear away from my conversation with Colonel Joll, whom with his tapering fingernails, his mauve handkerchiefs, his slender feet in soft shoes I keep imagining back in the capital he is so obviously impatient for, murmuring to his friends in theatre corridors between the acts. (WB 5)

Colonel Joll is represented as the educated, intellectual upper class person going to the theatre, enjoying the fine arts. He is a high official of the Empire residing in the



Figure 2.6: *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Act One Scene 1, 6:45 min.

capital visiting the frontier only to execute orders from the Third Bureau. This contrast between the seemingly civilised man and the officer who would unconditionally fulfil his duties, even torture people, is rather apparent. He is thus a man of two faces, the educated man and the ruthless torturer.

In addition to the Colonel's double-sided character he is also described as truly ambitious. "Vain, hungry for praise, I am sure. A devourer of women, unsatisfied, unsatisfying. Who has been told that one can reach the top only by climbing a pyramid of bodies" (WB 84). In the course of the novel his unexceptional loyalty to the Empire and its colonial politics is emphasised even more. He is determined to find the barbarians who are planning to attack the Empire and is not reluctant to use cruel measures, even against the magistrate, in order to get what he wants:

"I am speaking of a situation in which I am probing for the truth, in which I have to exert pressure to find it. First I get lies, you see - this is what happens - first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth. That is how you get the truth." (WB 5)

When the magistrate returns from his journey Colonel Joll's ruthless and brutal character is displayed. The first encounter with Colonel Joll after the magistrate's re-

turn is during the public torture of native prisoners. When Colonel Joll attempts to kill one prisoner the magistrate stops him. For interrupting the public display of punishment, the magistrate is beaten up by Officer Mandel. Even though Colonel Joll senses the magistrate's arising disloyalty very early in the story, he cannot act according to his wishes and punish him as long as the magistrate is still representing the Empire. Now that the magistrate is imprisoned, he is permitted to physically turn against him. With this public degradation and punishment Colonel Joll's power over the magistrate is shown very clearly. Accusing the magistrate of treason, he can display his authority and does not hesitate to do so.

During their dialogue about the ancient wooden slips found in the magistrate's office, Colonel Joll commands the magistrate to translate the slips as he believes that they "contain messages passed between [the magistrate] and other parties" (WB 110). Although the magistrate is unable to read the foreign script, he starts to 'translate' it, unmistakably to provoke the Colonel. He explains that some of the slips are letters from a man to his daughter telling her about his son being imprisoned, tortured and killed. Finally the magistrate chooses one more slip:

See, there is only a single character. It is the barbarian character *war*, but it has other senses too. It can stand for *vengeance*, and, if you turn it upside down like this, it can be made to read *justice*. (WB 112)

. Even though with this 'free translation' the magistrate clearly accuses the Colonel and condemns his actions, Colonel Joll stays stoically calm. Against the magistrate's expectation, he does not react aggressively but calmly tells him that his life as a magistrate is over without any prospect of reinstatement. This scene shows Colonel Joll as a very reserved and controlled person. He represents the high-level officials who demonstrate their power without smirching their hands, at least in public. Hence, he likes to 'interrogate' his prisoners in private without the magistrate's presence. In contrary to Colonel Joll, Officer Mandel is the active, at all time present torturer who executes the Colonel's commands and does not hesitate to display his aggression. Thus Joll represents the experienced, wiser and reserved Colonel, whereas Mandel is the still young, uncontrolled and passionate Officer.

Colonel Joll's discrediting of the magistrate because of his outward appearance shows his superficial judgement of other people, which is also depicted in the opera. The outward impression of a person is most important to him as it expresses the person's status: "[...] you are simply a clown, a madman. You are dirty, you stink, they can smell you a mile away. You look like an old beggar-man, a refuse-scavenger" (WB 114). In the opera the Colonel establishes his superior position right at the beginning of Scene 2:

MAGISTRATE. Can you really see with those things⁸?

JOLL. Clearer than you
I guarantee I can see clearer than you.

He indicates that even though he is wearing dark glasses, he is more aware of what is happening in the Empire and whether action has to be taken than the magistrate. The naive attitude of the magistrate clearly irritates the Colonel and leaves him with the need to explain the seriousness of the situation.

Similar to the novel, Colonel Joll is portrayed as ruthless and obedient to the Empire's orders in the opera. Although the magistrate states his opinion that the raids and imprisonment of the fishing people is unnecessary and incomprehensible, the Colonel explains that as these are his orders they will be executed.

To conclude, Colonel Joll's character represents the Empire and its ideology. In the novel as well as the opera he is depicted as a civilised, educated official loyal and obedient to the Empire's dictations. However, his ruthless and cruel character is revealed when it comes to 'finding out the truth' as he believes that these measures (i.e. torture) are necessary and justified. His outward appearance, especially his dark sunglasses which exert a fascination for the magistrate from the beginning, shows his impersonal and concealed character. He is the interrogator, the observer, who does not want to be observed by others.

⁸Referring to his sunglasses.

2.5 Character Relationships

2.5.1 Magistrate and Girl

The girl is begging on the streets when the magistrate first notices her. He takes her in and is soon obsessed with her story, especially with what Colonel Joll did to her. She belongs to the fishing people and was arrested by the Colonel and his men. During the interrogation her father is killed and she is tortured. They broke her ankles and injured her eyes leaving her nearly blind. Although she seems rather shy at first, she lets herself be washed, oiled and massaged. From the beginning this massaging bears a fascination for the magistrate. He loses himself in caressing the girl; the oiling and the rubbing becomes a form of meditation and relaxation. In the novel as well as in the opera he is eager to know what they did to her, what really happened in the interrogation room and does not hesitate to ask her. At first the girl's answers are rather short and reserved but gradually she tells him everything about her suffering.

Although their relationship is so intimate, the magistrate never feels the urge to go further, to have a sexual relationship with the girl, which is very nicely reflected in the following paragraph:

I feel no desire to enter this stocky little body glistening by now in the fire-light. It is a week since words have passed between us. I feed her, shelter her, use her body, if that is what I am doing, in this foreign way. (WB 30)

From the beginning, it is evident that the magistrate is eager to understand what has happened to her, "to read the marks on her body" and, thus, realises that the Empire's doings are utterly wrong. "It has been growing more and more clear to me that until the marks on this girl's body are deciphered and understood I cannot let go of her" (WB 31). This sentence shows that it is not his highest aim and desire to know her character. On the contrary, he wants to understand what has happened to her in order to be able to grasp the Empire's paranoid attitude. By reading her body, "deciphering" the marks on her body, he wants to uncover the reasons for the Empire's doings. In

this respect, the girl is only the instrument, the initiator, enabling him to reconsider his positioning. As a result, he does not see her as a woman, which is reflected in the following passage when he thinks of the barbarian girl while he is with "the star":

The body of the other one, closed, ponderous, sleeping in my bed in a far-away room, seems beyond comprehension. Occupied in these suave pleasures, I cannot imagine what ever drew me to that alien body. (WB 42)

"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). He clearly understands that he is not her lover, that he is not interested in her or able to be truly intimate with her. The sentence also resonates the affinity between him and the torturers. He is treating her better than the torturers but the caressing does not develop into a psychological intimacy.

As a consequence of the magistrate's ignorant behaviour, which she cannot overlook, the girl secludes herself more and more. Although she lets her body be caressed, she does not open up to him. This reaction, her distant behaviour is thus depicted as unemotional and calculating.

"Come, tell me, why you are here." "Because there is nowhere else to go."
"And why do I want you here?" She wriggles in my grasp, clenches her hand into a fist between her chest and mine. "You want to talk all the time," she complains. (WB 40)

"I am disquieted. 'What do I have to do to move you?': these are the words I hear in my head in the subterranean murmur that has begun to take the place of conversation. 'Does no one move you?' " (WB 44). In response to her indifference, which was evoked by his cold manners, the offended magistrate starts to distance himself from her even more. It seems like a defence mechanism or act of defiance: "So I begin to face the truth of what I am trying to do: to obliterate the girl. I realize that if I took a pencil to sketch her face I would not know where to start" (WB 47).

This reserved behaviour of the girl is also evident in the opera. However, his seclusion from her, shortly before they go on the journey, his urge to distance himself from

her although she wants to have a consummated sexual relationship, is not conveyed. One reason is that their unconsummated sexual relationship is never really depicted in the opera. It is uncertain to the audience whether they have sexual intercourse. Furthermore, the magistrate's struggle of not being sexually interested in the girl is not shown.

After the girl has left, during his imprisonment, the magistrate recapitulates their relationship. In the opera this is adopted rather effectively in Act Two Scene 1. In this aria the magistrate reflects on the previous events. He feels closer to the girl than when she was with him as he now experiences the same pain and loneliness she must have gone through.

MAGISTRATE. But something must have died in her
Some sympathy some movement of the heart
I understand that now
[...]
If I am left long enough in this room
Perhaps I will succumb to her disease
And find I can believe in nothing. (2.1.)

He compares her coldness to a disease evoked by the traumatising experience in the torture room. As he himself is now experiencing torture, he will "be touched with the contagion and turned into a creature that believes in nothing" (WB 81). In the novel the feeling of being closer to her, as he has to go through a similar process, is clearly expressed as well. Being tortured by Mandel enables him to compare himself to her. It goes as far as that he sees the pain as self-punishment and longs to experience what she has experienced in order to understand and finally disentangle himself from the Empire.

Further, in the novel the magistrate reflects on having felt left out and powerless in the relationship to the girl. Although in the beginning he is hurt and incapable of understanding her reserved behaviour, in the end, long after she has left, he comes to the following conclusion:

From the very first she knew me for a false seducer. She listened to me, then she listened to her heart, and rightly she acted in accord with her heart. If only she had found the words to tell me! "That is not how you do it," she should have said, stopping me in the act. "If you want to learn how to do it, ask your friend with the black eyes." Then she should have continued, so as not to leave me without hope: "But if you want to love me you will have to turn your back on him and learn your lesson elsewhere." If she had told me then, if I had understood her, if I had been in a position to understand her, if I had believed her, if I had been in a position to believe her, I might have saved myself from a year of confused and futile gestures of expiation. (WB 135)

Thus, he realises that he could only have left a mark on her by approaching her in a different way, not by adopting Colonel Joll's measures and questioning her until she could not forbear to protect herself by shutting everyone else out of her life. Because he thought he could help by taking the girl in and trying to understand her instead of genuinely getting to know and love her, he conjured a relationship comparable to that of her and the torturers. This feeling of her not letting him in, not opening up in front of him is also evident in the opera.

To conclude, the struggle of the magistrate to help the girl and finally realising that this attempted help developed into a rather selfish act to enable himself to clear his conscience, is one of the main themes of *Waiting for the Barbarians*. However, in the opera this notion is vaguely conveyed as he does not reflect on his guilt. Although it becomes clear that their relationship can never be fulfilled, his inner struggle as well as the girl's are not explicitly shown.

2.5.2 Magistrate and Colonel Joll

The relationship between the magistrate and Colonel Joll is representative of the relationship between the magistrate and the Empire. Colonel Joll is sent from the Third Bureau to investigate the barbarians who are allegedly preparing a riot against the Empire's frontier post. At the beginning of the novel the magistrate seems open and responsive to the Colonel's intentions. However, he soon finds out about the measures

he takes to find out 'the truth'. After their conversation about truth and how to get it, the magistrate feels the need to distance himself from Colonel Joll but is aware of the difficulty this causes in his position.

On the other hand, who am I to assert my distance from him? I drink with him, I eat with him, I show him the sights, I afford him every assistance as his letter of commission requests, and more. The Empire does not require that its servants love each other, merely that they perform their duty. (WB 5-6)

Apart from his doubts, the magistrate is aware of his role as a 'servant' of the Empire. He already anticipates that as soon as he opposes the Empire's wishes and does not 'perform his duty', he will be convicted. His first public act of defiance against Colonel Joll's measures is when the first prisoners, the fishing people, arrive in town:

Impatiently I wait for the guard who now pushes his way through the crowd and crosses the barracks yard. "How do you explain this?" I shout at him. He bows his head, fumbles at his pockets. "These are fishing people! How can you bring them back here?" He holds out a letter. I break the seal and read: "Please hold these and succeeding detainees incommunicado for my return." [...] "The man is ridiculous!" I shout. (WB 17)

The magistrate immediately realises the injustice and ridiculousness of the Colonel's actions and decisions. Imprisoning peaceful and seemingly harmless fishing people shows that the Empire's aim is not only to protect its posts but to pointedly exercise their power over the native people. This reaction is also depicted in Act One Scene 4 in the opera. The magistrate is sitting in his office writing a letter to the Third Bureau, complaining about "the criminal stupidity of that idiot with the dark classes" (1.4.). Whether he sends the letter, which he does not do in the novel, is unclear in the opera. However, in the dialogue with the cook the magistrate clearly expresses his opinion about the Colonel's actions:

MAGISTRATE. [...] He comes back with all these hopeless prisoners
Half of them from poor fishing villages
Many don't even speak the language
Even the few who might be barbarians

Are clearly harmless.
I told him all this to his face
And all he said was: "Prisoners are prisoners." (1.4)

The magistrate's decision to return the girl to her people is the first deliberate action against the Empire. It clearly shows his resentment to the Empire's ideology and establishes his distance, which is further enhanced after he has returned and is imprisoned for treason. Although the magistrate is aware of his weakness and genuine wish to return to his 'old life', he does not succumb to a martyr state but continues to fight against the Empire.

But with this woman it is as if there is no interior, only a surface across which I hunt back and forth seeking entry. Is this how her torturers felt hunting their secret [...]? (WB 43)

There is nothing to link me with torturers, people who sit waiting like beetles in dark cellars. How can I believe that a bed is anything but a bed, a woman's body anything but a site of joy? I must assert my distance from Colonel Joll! I will not suffer for his crimes! (WB 44)

In these paragraphs the magistrate realises that despite his wish, there is a link between him and the torturers as he is also searching for answers by questioning the girl, trying to solve problems for which she is not responsible. However, he rigorously rejects this idea and feels determined to distance himself from the Empire, especially from Colonel Joll.

When the magistrate returns from the journey, after a few days in prison, he is invited to the Colonel's (the magistrate's former) office. The office has been cleared and completely reorganised by the Colonel with the purpose to demonstrate his power over the magistrate and signal even more clearly that he is now in control.

He is trying, though somewhat too theatrically, to make a certain impression on me. The careful reorganization of my office from clutter and dustiness to this vacuous neatness, the slow swagger which he uses to cross the

room, the measured insolence with which he examines me, are all meant to say something: not only that he is now in charge [...] but that he knows how to comport himself in an office, knows even how to introduce a note of functional elegance. (WB 82)

As the previous paragraph reflects, this display of power does not fulfil its purpose but, on the contrary, seems fairly ridiculous to the magistrate. The superficial boasting of the Colonel is understood as rather immature.

After the incident on the square when the magistrate stops the Colonel from publicly killing native prisoners, a second direct confrontation occurs in the scene in which the magistrate translates the ancient wooden slips. The magistrate once more accuses the Colonel of the unnecessary cruelty committed to the natives and the unjustified panic mongering about a barbarian attack. The Colonel, in response, blames the magistrate of being ignorant of the troubles and ridicules his apparent wish to be a martyr:

“You want to go down in history as a martyr, I suspect. But who is going to put you in the history books? These border troubles are of no significance. [...] People are not interested in the history of the back of beyond.” “There were no border troubles before you came,” I say. “That is nonsense,” he says. “You are simply ignorant of the facts. You are living in a world of the past.” (WB 114)

The magistrate, on the other hand, ridicules the Colonel’s expeditions and definition of enemy:

“Those pitiable prisoners you brought in - are *they* the enemy I must fear? [...] *You* are the enemy, *you* have made the war, and *you* have given them all the martyrs they need - starting not now but a year ago when you committed your first filthy barbarities here!” (WB 114)

Using the word “barbarities” to describe the Colonel’s doings shows the magistrate’s wish to offend the Colonel and depicts his opinion that not the native people but Colonel Joll and his men are the barbarians. “For the magistrate the barbarians have already arrived in the form of the Empire’s militia” (Head 75). Although the Colonel tries to defend the town from the barbarians, he himself commits crimes, “barbarities” to the people. Thus the magistrate shifts the blame for starting a war onto the Empire.

In the opera the magistrate summarizes in a few sentences what is only indirectly projected in the novel.

MAGISTRATE. Before you came there were no border troubles
 For some reason you think we need a war
 You invent imaginary threats
 Which you proceed to put down with state terror
 History will not forgive you! (2.4.)

He directly accuses the Empire of inventing threats in order to execute their power over the natives. Although this notion is indirectly referred to throughout the novel, it is never directly mentioned. Referring back to the historical reference of the opera, this scene contains a clear reference to the 2005 political incidents and discussions about the Iraq War being initiated for different reasons than asserted.

At the end of the novel, in the magistrate's last reflections on the past months, he comes to the conclusion:

[...] I was not, as I liked 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 135)

Interestingly, in the opera this thought is not mentioned by the magistrate but by Colonel Joll, which drastically changes the story's undertone. The magistrate's self-reflection and self-criticism, questioning his innocence and role in the Empire's doings, is largely ignored in the opera. His character is portrayed as the opposite of Colonel Joll. Thus, the line between good and bad is drawn very clearly despite the novel's vagueness.

To conclude, the depiction of the characters in the opera differs to a certain extent from that in the novel. This is, on the one hand, due to the limited time frame of a dramatic work, an opera, which renders it impossible to give a detailed presentation and reflection on the characters and their inner developments. On the other hand, instead of selecting a few characters and focusing on their development, it was Philip Glass'

choice to retell the entire novel with all the characters involved in it. In this case *Waiting for the Barbarians* omits a deeper reflection especially on the relationship between the barbarian girl and the magistrate. In the opera the magistrate's asexual attraction to the girl and his failing attempt to clear his conscience by helping her are not depicted. The main focus is on his eagerness to know everything about her traumatising experiences which, hence, increases his rejection of the Empire's ideology. With regard to the relationship to the Colonel, the fact that the magistrate feels an affinity to the torturers is not shown in the opera. His distance and opposing position is always clearly foregrounded. Consequently, the opera may seem to depict a rather shallow storyline of one good man opposing one bad man, one bad Empire. Nevertheless, the more general opinion, statement of the novel, against torture and the Empire's paranoid and aggressive reactions against the "barbarians" without ever trying to negotiate, is depicted in the opera. Furthermore, this rather general presentation of the story allows a wider range of interpretation but still impressively creates a link to the political events in 2005.

Chapter 3

The Music

3.1 Style

In his early years as a composer Philip Glass, next to his Minimalist colleagues Terry Riley, Steve Reich and La Monte Young, has been described as 'formalist'. During that time, in the 1970s, Philip Glass was mainly concerned with the structure, the rhythmic structure, of his music and how to achieve purity and clarity. This approach was influenced by Ravi Shankar, an Indian sitar player, composer and Brahmin, who Glass met and worked with from 1965 onwards (Lovisa 89). Philip Glass has always been highly concerned with the listener's perspective and eager to work on the audibility of his music. However, gradually he came to realise that his structural music was not perceived as such by the listeners. On the contrary, the audience "were [...] picking up on the sound" (qtd in Potter 305). Instead of recognising the complex structure of his musical pieces, they indulged in the sound, the atmosphere his music created. Having realised that, Philip Glass became interested in the 'psycho-acoustic by-product' of his music and the disengagement of traditional listening habits.

When it becomes apparent that nothing 'happens' in the usual sense, but that, instead, the gradual accretion [sic] of musical material can and does serve as the basis of the listener's attention, then he can perhaps discover

another mode of listening - one in which neither memory nor anticipation [...] have a place in sustaining the texture, quality or reality of the musical experience. (qtd in Lovisa 93)

Confronted with the opinion that his compositional techniques, especially referring to vocal writing, are orthodox, Philip Glass answered: "I found that I was looking for a performance manner that would serve the music, rather than the other way around" (Koopmann 258). In contrast to composers such as Luigi Nono or Luciano Berio, who have experimented with the limits of instrumental sounds, it was never his aim to find new sounds. Instead he wanted to achieve a certain audibility and was very much concerned with the perception of his music.

Philip Glass' music is mostly described as atmospheric, creating a mood. For some critics his compositions are too simple, lacking the intellectual rigour of Steve Reich, and even evoking a déjà-vu-feeling. Furthermore, his music has been criticized as not being progressive enough and lacking a revolutionary impact on the classical music of the 20th and 21st century. In response to that criticism he claimed: "I feel that I've been misunderstood in a certain way. I certainly never set out to change the musical world. I've just been trying to find a line that suited my particular needs" (Koopmann 258). With this statement Philip Glass clearly points out that the criticism of his music being too simple or unsophisticated does not influence him, as the aim of his compositions is a different one. The most important fact for him, which is conveyed in most of his interviews on his style, is that he has found his own voice. Most critics agree that Philip Glass has a distinct and easily recognizable musical language. "I think having a voice of my own is something I've earned, in a way. I've earned it and I cultivate it. I don't think it's a false voice. I think it's an authentic one and that I'm entitled to its confirmation" (Koopmann 258).

To conclude, Ross defines Philip Glass' unusual way of composing fairly well. He claims that it resembles a "quasi-industrielle Fließbandarbeit" (qtd in Lovisa 103): "Glass is really a composer in the spirit of the Baroque, producing music on demand, tailoring each piece to the occasion. He is the determined antithesis of the Romantic

artist, the one who writes in suffering secret for a posthumous public" (2).

3.1.1 Compositional techniques in early operas

In his first opera *Einstein on the Beach* Philip Glass introduced new compositional techniques which influenced his following work considerably. One of these new techniques is the additive process which he developed in his years in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. With this technique Philip Glass, instead of introducing a superior construction principle, wanted to create an acoustic effect (Lovisa 93). One bar or musical group (e.g. 5 notes) is repeated several times. The adjoining bar, however, always adds one more note (see Fig. 3.1). As a result the first bar would consist of 5 notes, the second of those 5 notes plus one, the third of those 6 notes from the previous bar plus one etc. The group may also be reduced by one note. This addition and reduction maintains a basic melodic setting but changes the rhythmical shape (Glass, *Musik* 106-107).

This technique is applied in *Waiting for the Barbarians* as well. For example, in Act One Scene 1 during the magistrate's part "In fact..." the music constantly changes between 6, 5 and 4 quaver bars (see Fig. 3.2). This is easily perceived in the piano as it is playing a constant quaver movement. In *Einstein on the Beach* Philip Glass introduced rhythmical cycles in which two different rhythmical patterns of various lengths are positioned in parallel, one above the other. They are being repeated until they arrive at their starting point again (see Fig. 3.3). This forms a cycle the effect of which many researchers have described as "wheels within wheels" (Glass, *Musik* 107-108).

In *Satyagraha*, Glass' first "real opera" (Glass, *Musik* 183), he concentrated on the technique of the variation form, also known as Chaconne. One harmonic pattern



Figure 3.1: *Einstein* (Glass, *Musik* 107)

Figure 3.2: *Waiting for the Barbarians* (full score 21)

Figure 3.3: *Einstein on the Beach* (Glass, Musik 108)

is repeated throughout the whole piece while the rhythmical and melodic material changes. Glass applies this technique in that he, for example, uses the same harmony in the orchestral parts but changes the solo melody. In that respect the rhythmical and melodic variation is left to be done by the soloists (see Fig. 3.4 and Fig.3.5).

In his third opera *Echnaton* (and in the following operas *the CIVIL wars*, *The Juniper*

Figure 3.4: *Satyagraha* (Glass, Musik 185)

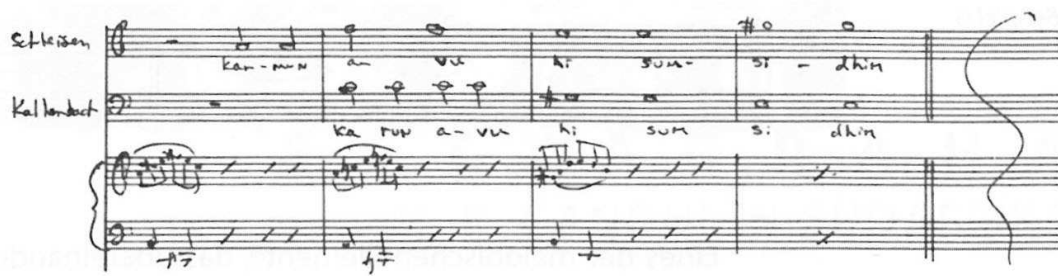


Figure 3.5: *Satyagraha* (Glass, *Musik* 185)

Tree and *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*) Glass worked with leitmotifs that relate to characters or storylines within the opera. These musical themes, melodies that occur throughout the opera, are then put together in the epilogue and further developed into a series of musical events which are unwound in the end (Glass, *Musik* 260-261). This working with leitmotifs and melodic themes can be noticed in *Waiting for the Barbarians* as well. Especially striking is the musical structure and devices connected to Colonel Joll and the Barbarian Girl¹, which reoccur several times in the opera.

In *Satyagraha* the choir plays an important role. Since Glass had been singing in a choir for a long time, he felt particularly confident composing for the voice. With regard to solo parts, he treated them rather conservatively, never going beyond the natural scopes of the human voice. This has the effect of the solo parts seeming to resemble the sound and melody of speech. It has often been claimed that Glass treats the choir as if it were just another instrument (Glass, *Musik* 182). This is particularly interesting for the discussion of *Waiting for the Barbarians* as in the opera the choir likewise may be perceived as an instrument rather than a vocal part².

Philip Glass describes himself as a group worker and in the production of an opera as a co-worker being at the same level as the designer or the light technicians. His operas are normally based on collaboration with other composers, authors and directors with whom he shares the artistic responsibility. On the other hand, if he has initiated a project he sees himself as the main author of the work. He compares this role to

¹These themes will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.4.

²The function of the choir will be analyzed in greater detail in 3.3.

the traditional role of an opera composer. His extensive collaboration with others in the production of an opera is still rather unconventional (Glass, *Musik* 307-308). In his opinion, this collaboration is the major feature of contemporary theatre practice in contrast to the traditional repertoire-opera. However, it has not yet been taken over and approved of by many American and European opera producers (309).

To conclude, *Waiting for the Barbarians* may be compared to Philip Glass' previous operas in that he chooses similar compositional techniques and sticks to the features that distinguish his operas. This is reflected in the way he treats the choir and how he applies the opera as a popular art form by adapting the story in an easily understandable manner. In that respect he is able to convey "classic themes of confrontation, crisis and redemption so the audience itself is left weighing the meaning of good and evil in their own lives" (qtd. in Hampton 4).

3.2 Music versus Libretto

The major aim of this part of the thesis is to analyse in how far Philip Glass' music corresponds with the libretto, the dramaturgy of the story, and whether it has a dramatic composition. Some critics claim that Philip Glass often ignores the libretto and builds a sound frame regardless of the dramaturgy of the opera. As these accusations are rather serious, it is in the interest of this paper to analyse whether Philip Glass' music in this opera ignores or goes beyond the libretto or whether it underlines and emphasises the story's emotional processes; for example, whether in dramatically climactic scenes, the music builds up to a climax as well. "It is hoped that one would be able to perceive the music as a dramatic structure, pure medium 'of sound' " (qtd in Lovisa 93). With regard to this quote, the question arises whether Philip Glass' music follows the dramaturgy of the libretto or whether it creates its own dramatic structure? In general the focus of this part of the thesis will be on the dramaturgy of Philip Glass' music in comparison to the libretto as well as the relationship between word and music.

“Glass’ music failed, with its characteristic diatonic harmonies sounding just a little bit too pat to be able to explore all the moral complexities of the play’s themes” (Morgan).

“While the music here is unmistakably within Glass’ strongest idiom, the orchestration is greatly varied, and the mood consistently married to the progression of the tragic story as it unfolds” (Lewis).

“[...] festive touches in the orchestra, from glittering percussion to booming tuba, ironically undercut the grim imagery onstage³” (Ross 1).

These quotes show the conflicting opinions on Glass’ music in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. It is claimed that the music rarely corresponds with the libretto or the action on stage. The quote by Ross reflects the general opinion of Glass’ music being too ‘soft’, too innocent and naive for serious or brutal subjects.

3.2.1 Selected Scenes

As the detailed analysis of each scene in the opera would exceed the scope of this thesis, in a selection of scenes the relationship between the libretto and the music will be analysed. It will be discussed in how far the music increases the tension and underlines the atmosphere of the story and which musical devices Glass uses to do so: dynamic, close stretto, change of register, instrumentation. Furthermore, the focus will be on whether the music emphasises certain libretto lines or builds up a climax in its own dynamics, independent of the libretto’s dramatic composition.

Act One Scene 6 is a representative example of the music following the libretto rather closely, thus underlining the dramaturgy of the story. In this scene the magistrate invites the girl to his home for the first time. He takes off the bandages on her legs in order to see what Colonel Joll did to her. This scene is very emotional and expressive mostly due to the music, which contributes greatly to the scene’s tension. While the magistrate is unravelling her crippled legs the music reaches a crescendo and

³This quote refers to the opera *Appomattox* by Philip Glass, Libretto by Christopher Hampton.

Figure 3.6: Act One Scene 6 bar 113

accelerates, which reflects the magistrate's impatience and curiosity of what he will find. At the same time the music foreshadows his expectation that what he is about to see is less than pleasant. After the magistrate recites "I want to see what they did to you" the violin I starts with an arpeggio triplet-movement in B flat-minor accompanied by the violoncello in a quaver rhythm producing a feeling of unrest and agitation (see Fig.3.6⁴). Soon after, the viola enters with a parallel triplet-movement to the violin I. The harmonic basis is B flat-minor with an occasional modulation to a diminished chord in A and once to A-major.

Gradually a densification of sound is achieved with the entry of the clarinet, bass clarinet and the violin II augmenting violin I in a lower octave. When the magistrate has finally removed the bandages from the girl's feet, he is stunned by the sight. He stares at the crippled feet; the music has reached its climax. The remaining woodwind section, flute and oboe, enters in the same arpeggio-movement as the violin II, relieving violin I who transitions into a legato melody (see Fig.3.7). The whole orchestra has reached a mezzo forte. After a short interlude of the soloists, the music continues in this arpeggio triplet-movement. The violin I, now accompanied by the horns, is reciting the melody which is assembled by the lowest and highest note of

⁴All Figures in this chapter are taken from the full score *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Dunvagen Music Publishing.

156

Picc. *mf* *dim.* *mp*

Fl. 1 *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Fl. 2 *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Ob. 1 *(2.)* *mf* *dim.*

Ob. 2 *(2.)* *mf* *dim.*

Cl. 1 *(2.)* *mf* *dim.*

Cl. 2 *(2.)* *mf* *dim.*

Bs. Cl. *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Bn. 1 *(a2)* *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Bn. 2 *(a2)* *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Hn. 1 *(a2)* *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Hn. 2 *(a2)* *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

B. T. *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Hp. *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Girl *mf* They

Vn. I *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Vn. II *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Va. *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Vc. *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Cb. *(cresc.)* *mf* *dim.*

Figure 3.7: Act One Scene 6 Bar 156

the arpeggio movement.

In this scene the music is successful in building up the climax and underlining the character's inner processes.

In Act One Scene 10 the magistrate enters his room after having visited “the star”. He is only accompanied by the clarinet, the bass clarinet and the contrabass. The piano quaver-rhythm imitates his quiet sneaking in, trying not to wake the girl. Despite his effort, the girl wakes up and asks: “Is there anything else you would like to do?” insinuating that they make love. As a contrast to the girl’s high, crescendoing melodic line the orchestra stays in piano reflecting the silence of the night. The magistrate answers: “Another time perhaps” and rejects the girl. In that moment the strings enter on a top D and double top D. This accentuated, high pitched entry signals the severe blow that strikes the girl for being so boldly rejected by the magistrate. After he explains “I don’t want to take advantage of you” and the girl replies “I don’t believe you” the music changes its character (bar 51) (See Fig.3.8). A polyrhythmic pattern is achieved between the syncopated sequence in the winds and the violins and the straight crotchet-octaves in the bass instruments. This densification of rhythm and the increased instrumentation indicates a change in atmosphere. The girl gets up and finally reveals that Colonel Joll killed her father in front of her eyes. Concluding her speech the music settles down again and the magistrate decides to bring the girl back to her people.

In Act Two Scene 4 Colonel Joll commands the magistrate to translate ancient wooden slips which have been found in his office. This scene opens very melodically and harmoniously (see Fig.3.9). Colonel Joll and the magistrate are accompanied by the strings and the bass clarinet. A descending half-note phrase forms the melody of the violin I. The bass line, a descending crotchet melody in major thirds which is repeated in a slightly altered way, forms the basis of the piece. The harmonic basis is on A flat.

This calm, homophone rhythm conveys harmony and peace, which certainly do not exist between the Colonel and the magistrate. However, the music, very well imitates the moderate and reserved behaviour both men are still able to display. After the magistrate’s translation, the illusory harmony is destroyed when the provoked Colonel confronts the magistrate: “You are a genuinely tiresome man” (See Fig.3.10). The very

51 **D** Più mosso $\text{♩} = 120$

Bsn. Cl.

Bsn. 1 2

Hn. 1 3 *a2* *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf* *dim.*

Hn. 2 4 *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf* *dim.*

Tbn. 1 2 *1.* *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf*

Tambourine *p* *poco cresc.* *mp* *dim.*

Perc. Tenor Drum *p* *poco cresc.* *mp* *dim.*

Pno. *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf*

Hp. *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf*

Girl *mf* *f*
Those things they did to me And oth-er things I have-n't

D Più mosso $\text{♩} = 120$

Vn. I *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf* *dim.*

Vn. II *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf* *dim.*

Va. *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf* *dim.*

Vc. *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf*

Cb. *mp* *poco cresc.* *mf*

Figure 3.8: Act One Scene 10 Bar 51

characteristic fifth- and quart-quaver pair-movement in this opera sets in simultaneously to a syncopated sequence led by the strings, which creates an acceleration in the music. In addition the entry of the full choir intensifies the atmosphere with chords in minor second clusters based on F minor.

Cl. *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

Stesso tempo

Vc. *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

Cb. *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

Figure 3.9: Act Two Scene 4 Bar 1

Hn. 1 *mp* *mf* *mp*

Tbn. 1 *mp* *mf* *mp*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Hp. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Joll *mf* *f* *mf*

S *mp* *mf* *mp*

A *mp* *mf* *mp*

T *mp* *mf* *mp*

B *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vn. I *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Cb. *mp* *mf* *mp*

You are a gen-u-ine-ly ti-re-some man The sin-gle un-co-op-'ra-tive of-fi-cial In all our posts a-long this

ah ah ah ah ah

Figure 3.10: Act Two Scene 4 Bar 185

At Colonel Joll's line: "You think you are the one just man" the flute and the piccolo enter with an arpeggio-quaver-line simulating a triplet-movement as the four-four time is divided into two three- and one two-beat group. This triplet simulation is intensified by the contrasting straight two-quaver rhythm in the bass. The Colonel's words, accusing the magistrate of being naive in thinking he is a better man, are intensified by

this polyrhythmic pattern and the harmonic dissonances.

3.2.2 Dreamscapes

The focus of this chapter will be the analysis of the dreamscapes' dramaturgy and their staging in the Erfurt production 2005.

The dreamscapes' music clearly forms a contrast to that in the other scenes in the opera. The slow-motion scenes on stage match Glass' atmospheric sound language very well. As an actual activity is missing on stage, there are no lyrics demanding musical emphasis. Therefore, the music is free to build up its own atmosphere and reflect on the story in general, which replicates the function of dreams.

The first dreamscape (Act One Scene 2) opens with a steady quaver rhythm in the violin I and the marimba, which builds a wavelike pulsating sound frame of descending sixth and seventh. The celeste and the harp counter that steady two-part-rhythm with a three-part arpeggio-movement in the range of an octave. This two-against-three-polyrhythmic pattern evokes an unsteady feeling which is further emphasised by the viola's syncopated sequence. Above that rhythm- and sound-frame in A minor, the choir (only soprano and alto) sings long semibreve notes in thirds and quarts on "ah" (see Fig.3.11). This steady pulsating rhythm reflecting a dreamlike state is then interrupted by a tamtam tremolo adding a military character to the music. The horn begins a solo-melody (bar 22) which is later accompanied by the second horn in the lower third.

The steady sound frame of this dreamscape is only interrupted by two harmonic and dynamic intensifications. The choir sings in three parts, rising in a conjunct crescendo-movement from A-minor to B-major, C-major, diminished A, and back to a piano A-minor. These two climaxes seem rather randomly placed in the dreamscape as the action on stage does not indicate any intensification. The only action is the old man walking towards Colonel Joll. However, the wavelike crescendo and decrescendo

The musical score for Act One Scene 2 Bar 19 is presented in a standard orchestral format. The instruments listed on the left are Oboe 1, Clarinet 1, Bass Clarinet, Horn 1, Trombone 1, Percussion (Small Tam-tam), Harp, Soprano, Alto, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score is in 4/4 time. The Oboe 1 and Clarinet 1 parts are marked with a circled '1' and a 'p' dynamic. The Bass Clarinet part has a 'p' dynamic. The Horn 1 part has a 'p' dynamic and a 'senza sord.' marking. The Trombone 1 part has a 'p' dynamic. The Percussion part is marked 'Small Tam-tam' and 'ppp'. The Harp part is marked 'p'. The Soprano and Alto vocal parts have lyrics 'ah ah sim.' and are marked 'p'. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts are marked 'p'. Handwritten annotations include '1, 3' in red, 'gl' in red, and 'A' in blue.

Figure 3.11: Act One Scene 2 Bar 19

creates a tension and an anticipation of what is about to happen, namely the Colonel torturing and finally killing him. Thus, although the link between the action on stage and the music is not clearly comprehensible, the music creates unease and anticipates the story's progress.

The second dreamscape (Act One Scene 7) is a tonal continuation of the previous dreamscape. The quaver-movement in fifths and fourths in an A minor tonality forms the basis (see Fig.3.12). The main motivic structure is a descending minor second, sigh motif, which is recited by the clarinet and later by the trombone. The choir recites again on semibreve notes and has the function of creating a sound frame rather than a rhythmical pattern. In the three-quarter-time middle part of the dreamscape the oboe adopts the theme the horns introduced in "Dreamscape No. 1" and is supported by

Scene 7 (Dream Play No. 2)

Cl. 1 $\text{♩} = 104$

Marimba

Perc.

S. *p* *mar.*
Ohi oh sini.

A.

T.

B.

Figure 3.12: Act One Scene 7 Bar 1

Ob. 1 *p*

Ob. 2

Cl. Bb.

Perc. (Sus. Cym.) (B.D.) *pp* *pp*

Pno.

S. ee ah ee ah ee ah

A. ee ah ee ah ee ah

Vn. I *p*

Vn. II *p* (pizz.)

Cl.

Figure 3.13: Act One Scene 7 Bar 35

the strings. The choir also sings parallel to the upwards and downwards movement of the oboe in augmented form (see Fig.3.13).

Figure 3.14: Act One Scene 7 Bar 51

At the end the music changes back to a four-four time and the minor second motif is in the foreground once more, this time recited by the trombone, emphasised by the augmented minor second treble E and treble F in the soprano (see Fig.3.14).

This descending minor second movement could be seen as reflecting what is happening on stage. In this dreamscape a native man is knocked down by Officer Mandel. The scene is repeated several times. Thus it appears, the descending minor second reflects the movement of Officer Mandel's descending bludgeon. Referring to it as sigh motif, one could also more freely interpret it as imitating the heavy sighs of the tormented natives.

In the third dreamscape (Act One Scene 11) the main tempo is faster, which is also induced by the triplet-movement in the celeste and the soprano (see Fig.3.15).

Figure 3.15: Act One Scene 11 Bar 1

Figure 3.16: Act One Scene 11 Bar 13

The dreamscape in general seems more turbulent as the triplet-movement goes against the two-part-quaver-movement of the harp and the alto creating a rather prominent polyrhythm. The middle part is reminiscent of the other dreamscape as the oboe takes over the theme of “Dreamscape No. 1”, once more accompanied by the piccolo reciting the arpeggio-quaver line in the range of the octave (see Fig.3.16). The choir sings a syncopated sequence emphasising the first, fourth and seventh quaver parallel to the piccolo’s arpeggio. In the third part the contra clarinet, the bassoon and the contrabass adopt the oboe’s descending and ascending motif. In this dreamscape the

link between the music and the action on stage is not as clear. The magistrate and the girl are walking across the stage indicating their journey to the natives. Nevertheless, the music clearly reflects on and refers to the previous dreamscapes. Especially the theme in the oboe, which has been introduced by the horns in “Dreamscape No. 1”, and the arpeggio-movement in the range of an octave simulating a triplet-rhythm are characteristic for the previous dreamscapes. The two next dreamscapes occur in Act Two and introduce slight alteration in musical structure.

The fourth dreamscape (Act Two Scene 2) can be divided into three thematic parts. Two parts are based on a syncopated melody in minor seconds, the third part on a descending and ascending minor second motif, the sigh motif. In the first part the theme is set in the bassoon and the glockenspiel, which are accompanied by a three-against-two quaver rhythm in violin I, the harp and the piano. In the second part, which is adjoined to the first, the theme is recited by the choir (female voices) and the trumpets and is based on a syncopated rhythm as well (see Fig.3.17). The theme of the third part is a syncopated melody led by the clarinet and the horn with short sigh motif-choir entries (descending and ascending second) (see Fig.3.18).

What is striking is that the syncopating rhythm is not perceived as such. Although the bass instruments recite a steady crotchet rhythm the choir and the wind instruments’ melody is in the foreground. Furthermore, the three-part quaver rhythm in violin I simulates a triple-time and stresses the same notes as the melody (first, fourth, seventh) (see Fig.3.17).

In the dreamscape “the star” and another man walk towards each other and exit the stage arm in arm. The music, rather than reflecting the action on stage, creates an individual story. The two first themes seem like a duet between the pair bassoon and glockenspiel and the choir. The adjoining sigh motif refers back to “Dreamscape No. 2” and is the musical answer to the second theme.

The fifth dream (Act Two Scene 7) is in a three-four time, however, the feeling of a two-four time is created as the oboe, the clarinet and the male choir sing steady dotted crotchets. Only with the entry of the marimba and the harp’s straight quaver rhythm

Figure 3.17 shows a musical score for Act Two Scene 2 Bar 6. The score includes parts for Bn. 1, Tpt. 2, Tbn. 1, Perc. (Glock.), Pno., Hp., S., A., Vn. 1, Vc., and Cb. The key signature is B-flat major. The tempo is marked 'mp'. The score shows a complex arrangement of instruments and voices, with dynamic markings like 'p' and 'mp'.

Figure 3.17: Act Two Scene 2 Bar 6

Figure 3.18 shows a musical score for Act Two Scene 2 Bar 20. The score includes parts for Cl. 1, Hn. 1, Hn. 2, Perc. (Mar.), S., A., Va., Vc., and Cb. The key signature is B-flat major. The tempo is marked 'mf' and 'mp'. The score shows a complex arrangement of instruments and voices, with dynamic markings like 'p' and 'mp'.

Figure 3.18: Act Two Scene 2 Bar 20

Figure 3.19: Act Two Scene 7 Bar 25

the triple-time is determined (see Fig.3.19).

The snare drum is rather prominent in the first part of this dreamscape. The music is very steady and repetitive in its structure. There is only one interlude of eight bars forming a transition to the second part, which only slightly differs from the first part. The choir takes over the iambic rhythm of the violin I which puts the stress on the second note. In general the dreamscape's main distinction is its rhythmical complexity. On stage the magistrate lies on the ground when the small girl passes by with a plate. He begs for some food but is denied the plate. In that moment the change in music coincides with the action on stage. When the girl turns away the choir recites the syn-copating rhythm. The choir's vocalization on "ah-ah" and "ee-ee" resembles laughter. Thus it can be said that the choir represents the Empire, denying the magistrate food, rejoicing in his misery.

To conclude, with the dreamscapes Philip Glass wants to introduce a contrasting atmosphere, a different world. This is not only achieved by the different stage setting and slow motion movement of the characters but by the music as well. What is striking is the deliberate use of the celeste in the dreamscapes of Act One. As the celeste is associated with music boxes used to lull children to sleep, its use enhances the dreamlike feeling of these scenes. The celeste plays solely in the dreamscapes and, hence, clearly separates the dreamscapes from the other scenes. Apart from the celeste, the choir has a decisive role as well. Its function is to enhance the orchestral sound and add accents to scenes like in "Dreamscape No.5".

3.3 Choir

During a rehearsal for *Music in Similar Motion* in May 1970 Philip Glass experienced a phenomenon which deeply impressed him and changed his way of composing for the human voice.

While he and his ensemble were rehearsing, Glass suddenly thought he heard someone singing although nobody was there; none of the musicians was singing either. As they continued to play, they heard the female voice again and realised that it was an acoustic phenomenon that occurred as a result of the interplay between Glass' music and the special architecture of the room. "This experience led the composer to investigate the possibilities of using the female voice wordlessly: instrumentally, one might say" (Potter 306). This instrumental use of the voice is also rather typical of this opera. In *Waiting for the Barbarians* the choir mostly sings on single vowels or diphthongs. When acting on stage the 'sound-lyrics' are supplemented by words such as "barbarians" and "barbarian lover". Only in Act Two Scene 5 the choir sings one sentence: "There he goes the barbarian; watch him go". The question remains what effect Glass wanted to achieve with this instrumental use of the choir and whether it enables him to go beyond the text. Does the combination of the choir and the orchestra generate a certain atmosphere that cannot be achieved without the human voices?

Especially in the dreamscapes, the instrumental use of choir has a decisive and expressive effect. It is interesting that in most of the dreamscapes only the female voices sing, thus emphasising the high register of the music. This elevation of register creates a spherical atmosphere. The high spherical sounds form a contrast to the 'earthly depths'. Adding the female voice to the high registered melodies in the orchestra underlines the spherical character even more.

In other scenes the choir, even though reciting only vowels, imitates the sound of the people, the noise of the crowd or creates a tension which could not be achieved instrumentally. The choir then resembles people screaming or crying and thus projects the cruel atmosphere and creates the notion of a huge crowd which is not visible on stage but still present. This is fairly evident in Act Two Scene 8. The soldiers who accompany Colonel Joll are about to leave town forever, but not before raiding the inhabitants' households. At the beginning of the scene they are struck by mummy-like figures and unable to move. During that incident the choir rises to a forte, dominated by the semiquaver-rhythm in the soprano (see Fig.3.20). It sounds like screaming, wailing and clearly imitates the watching crowd's noise.

In Act One Scene 13 the male choir starts to sing before the magistrate argues with his companions about the journey. They complain that they had to go all the way to return a barbarian. The male choir's entry is in piano, thus very subtle and nearly inaudible. However, it does have the effect of emphasising the male characters on stage, the visible and invisible ones, and creates a multiplication of personae. On the one hand, the male choir resembles the invisible barbarians who arrive to take the girl. On the other hand, it reflects the magistrate's companions who appear on stage for the first time. During their argument, although the choir sings in mezzo-piano, the male-vocals are foregrounded as the orchestra is restrained to a low register in piano. Thus the aggressive character of the duet between the magistrate and one of the companions is emphasised.

In some scenes the choir does not only add to the tone of the story but underlines the lyrics of the solo-vocals and even adds lyrics to pure musical scenes. A good

Figure 3.20: Act Two Scene 8 Bar 1

example of this is Act Two Scene 7 “Dreamscape No.5” in which the magistrate begs the girl to give him some food, but is ignored. Exactly as she walks away, leaving him without food, the choir sings “ah-ah-ee-ee” unmistakably imitating laughter. Thus the image of the magistrate being deliberately denied food is clearly depicted.

Another example is Act One Scene 13. Before the girl leaves with her people the magistrate asks her “will they take you?”. When she affirms his question the choir sings “ya ya ya”, imitating her “yes” (see Fig.3.21).

In Act Two Scene 3, similar to the rhythmical delusion in the orchestra in Act Two Scene 7 (see Fig.3.19), the choir creates a textual illusion. In that scene the prisoners are brought to the town square in order to publicly torture and kill them. At the beginning of this scene the choir (male voices) only sings single syllables of the word “barbarian”. Although it takes several bars for the choir to finally articulate “barbarian”, the word is recognizable from the beginning. This imitates an effect which often can be noticed

Figure 3.21: Act One Scene 13 Bar 87

in a crowd of shouting people. At first it cannot be understood what the people are saying; only after they have found a unified rhythm, the words they are shouting are understandable.

To conclude, the choir has a particularly important function in the opera. In contrast to traditional operas, in which the choir mostly depicts a crowd of people or functions as commentator to what has happened in previous scenes, in *Waiting for the Barbarians* the choir is mainly used as an additional instrument, enhancing the atmosphere and emphasising relevant textual phrases. The human voices are interwoven with the instrumental sound so that they are sometimes hardly distinguishable. Nevertheless, this sound of human voices produces closeness to the action although the characters on stage are not singing. Even though it mainly recites single vowels and syllables, the choir has the effect of enhancing the music's narrative function.

3.4 Musical Characterisation

From the beginning the music's characterisation of certain personae is noticeable. This motivic link to the characters is achieved by the choice of instruments, rhythmical patterns, melodic lines and harmonies.

3.4.1 Colonel Joll and Officer Mandel

The musical characterisation of Colonel Joll and Officer Mandel is very distinctive. The dramatic representation of the brutal, military men is enhanced by the music accompanying their character. The main focus is on the percussion instruments, especially the snare, tenor and bass drum. Already Colonel Joll's first appearance is rather representative of his character. The music changes from a straight four-four time to a five-four time producing a sense of restlessness and imbalance. Furthermore, the legato melody that has accompanied the magistrate's previous solo is replaced by staccato interjections of the bassoon and the piano and, coinciding with their crotchet rests, staccato notes of the contrabass, the tenor and bass drum (see Fig.3.22). In general, the high registered instruments are replaced by low-registered instruments. This very distinct change of sound reflects the alteration of mood and character in this scene. As has been mentioned above, the snare drum is the most significant instrument accompanying Colonel Joll and his men. This is especially evident in Act One Scene 3 when Colonel Joll explains that the interrogation of the old man has "arrived at a most satisfactory conclusion". The snare drum accompanying Colonel Joll gives the music a rather distinct atmosphere and creates a strong association with military music.

The musical score for Act One Scene 1 Bar 97 is presented in a multi-staff format. The top staff is for the Bassoon (Bn.), marked *mp*. The second staff is for Percussion (Perc.), featuring Tenor and Bass Drums, both marked *p*. The third staff is for the Piano (Pno.), marked *mp*. The fourth staff is for Colonel Joll (Joll), marked *mf*, with a red box highlighting the word 'Joll'. The fifth staff is for the Voice (Vc.), marked *mp*, with the lyrics 'Un - ties the old man' written below. The bottom staff is for the Contrabass (Cb.), marked *mp*. The score is in 5/4 time and features staccato rhythms and low-register instruments.

Figure 3.22: Act One Scene 1 Bar 97

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Tpt. 2, Perc., and Hp. The Tpt. 2 part is marked 'con sord.' and 'pp'. The Perc. part is marked 'pp' and 'Snare Drum'. The Hp. part is marked 'pp'. The score shows a steady quaver beat in the Hp. part, and short entries in the Tpt. 2 and Perc. parts.

Figure 3.23: Act One Scene 14 Bar 1

Similarly, in Scene 5 of the first Act the snare drum roll is rather prominent. In that scene the magistrate and the Colonel discuss the interrogation of the old barbarian man and the general state of the Empire's frontier post.

In Act One Scene 14 Officer Mandel accuses the magistrate of treason. The instrumentation of the orchestral accompaniment is very spare. The violoncello and the harp form the base quaver-line, the flute, the oboe and the glockenspiel have short entries. However, very distinct and prominent is again the snare drum (see Fig.3.23).

3.4.2 Barbarian Girl

The girl's motif is not based on an instrument but on a melodic and rhythmical pattern, a wavelike triplet-arpeggio transitioning from G minor to B major and back to G minor (see Fig.3.24). On detailed analysis it is striking that before the girl appears the music fairly often simulates a triplet-rhythm, however, is mostly a steady quaver-beat with a shift of stress (see Fig.3.16). In the first scene in which the girl appears on stage (Act One Scene 6) a gradual acceleration of the music can be perceived. The scene opens with a steady, straight legato crotchet-line in a four-four time. Before the girl's first solo entry the crotchet-rhythm changes into a quaver-movement in minor thirds based on G minor first in the violoncello and then moving bar-wise to the viola, the violins, the clarinet and finally the marimba (see Fig.3.25). This acceleration progresses towards bar 49 where the four-four time changes to a three-four time, the violins

This musical score snippet for Act One Scene 6, Bar 156, features a woodwind and brass ensemble. The instruments listed are Piccolo (Picc.), Flute 1 and 2 (Fl. 1, 2), Oboe 1 and 2 (Ob. 1, 2), Clarinet 1 and 2 (Cl. 1, 2), Bass Clarinet (Bs. Cl.), and Bassoon 1 and 2 (Bn. 1, 2). The music is marked with a red vertical line at the beginning of the bar. The woodwinds play a melodic line with triplets, starting at a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and gradually decrescendo (dim.) to mezzo-piano (mp). The brass instruments provide a harmonic accompaniment, with the Bassoon marked (a2) and playing a sustained note. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic.

Figure 3.24: Act One Scene 6 Bar 156

This musical score snippet for Act One Scene 6, Bar 37, features vocalists and a large ensemble. The instruments listed are Clarinet 1 and 2 (Cl. 1, 2), Bass Clarinet (Bs. Cl.), Bassoon 1 and 2 (Bn. 1, 2), Percussion (Perc.), Marimba, Girl, Magistrate (Mag.), Violin I and II (Vn. I, II), Viola (Va.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The vocalists, Girl and Magistrate, have lyrics: "I can see. I am look-ing. Then look at me." The music is marked with a red vertical line at the beginning of the bar. The ensemble includes a Marimba and Percussion, both marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The woodwinds and strings provide a harmonic accompaniment, with the Bassoon marked (a2) and playing a sustained note. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic.

Figure 3.25: Act One Scene 6 Bar 37

simulating a triplet-movement (see Fig.3.26). The music approaches the climax in bar 113 when the music finally develops into a triplet-movement in the violin and the viola (see Fig.3.27). The perceived acceleration of the music is enhanced by an actual accelerando from crotchet = 104 to crotchet = 120. The arpeggio-triplets move stepwise

Figure 3.26: Act One Scene 6 Bar 49

Figure 3.27: Act One Scene 6 Bar 113

in minor and major seconds, the bass accompanying the melodic line in half-notes and crotchets, emphasising the melody. The harmony gradually moves from G minor to B major and A major and back to G minor. The final climax is reached in bar 157 when the orchestra recites the arpeggio-melody in unison (see Fig.3.24).

This new musical structure which is introduced at the same time the girl appears invokes a general transformation of the story. The acceleration of the music induced by the girl's appearance reflects the magistrate's confusion. The girl entering his 'world' causes him to reflect on his former life. Throughout the opera, even in Act Two when the girl has already left town, this triplet-motif in G minor transitioning to a major

The image displays a musical score for Act Two Scene 9, Bar 97. It features six staves for different instruments: Piccolo (Picc.), Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Oboe 1 (Ob. 1), Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1), Bass Clarinet (Bs. Cl.), and Bassoon 1 (Bn. 1). The music is written in G minor and 3/4 time. The Piccolo part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Flute 1 part also starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Oboe 1 part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Clarinet 1 part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Bass Clarinet part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Bassoon 1 part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The music is written in G minor and 3/4 time. The Piccolo part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Flute 1 part also starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Oboe 1 part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Clarinet 1 part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Bass Clarinet part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The Bassoon 1 part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes.

Figure 3.28: Act Two Scene 9 Bar 97

chord and back to G minor reappears several times. For instance, in Act One Scene 8, Scene 10 in which the girl tells the magistrate about the killing of her father and in Scene 12 on their journey. The last time this theme appears in the opera is in Act Two Scene 9. The magistrate talks with the cook about the girl and the barbarians. At the end of that scene the triad-triple-movement is inserted once more (see Fig.3.28).

All in all, the music in *Waiting for the Barbarians* clearly reflects a dramatic composition. In the dreamscapes, the music creates a dreamlike, spherical atmosphere rather independently to the action on stage. Within themselves they form a unit as certain rhythmical structures and harmonic motives reoccur throughout these scenes. Thus it can be said that with the dreamscapes Philip Glass built a separate dramaturgy within the dramaturgy of the main plot. Furthermore, there is a clear correspondence between the libretto and the music in the other scenes. Although only a few scenes could be analysed in greater detail, we managed to show convincingly that and in what way the music enhances the libretto. With regard to the musical characterisation, the music does create motivic links to the characters of the opera. As has been illustrated, this is rather evident with regard to Colonel Joll, Officer Mandel and the girl. Thus the criticism that Philip Glass ignores the libretto and concentrates only on building his own musical dramaturgy, can be refuted with regard to *Waiting for the Barbarians*.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

My aim [...] was to preserve Coetzee's allegorical approach while dramatizing the classic themes of confrontation, crisis and redemption so the audience itself is left weighing the meaning of good and evil in their own lives. (qtd in Hampton 4)

Regarding this quote, it can undoubtedly be said that Philip Glass succeeded in his attempt to convey a universal message with the opera *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Philip Glass did not compose an opera about one political event but created a monumental piece about oppressors and oppressed, leaving it to the audience to "[weigh] the meaning of good and evil" (qtd in Hampton 4).

Analysing the two texts, the libretto and the novel, provided revealing and valuable insight into the opera's creation.

With regard to the external structure, we have seen that there are close parallels between the novel and the opera. Although certain scenes had to be cut due to the different medium and time limitations, the chronological sequence of the scenes and their conclusions in the opera strictly follow those in the novel. Regarding the internal structure, the focus on the magistrate as a narrator and, thus, on his perspective, has been integrated in the opera as far as possible. Although the magistrate does not take over the role of the narrator on stage, his status as the main character who is telling the story from his perspective is achieved very well by the stage design and

the magistrate's constant presence on stage.

Despite the fairly close adherence to the external structure, certain narrative elements of the novel had to be changed in order to fit the opera's mimetic narrative mode. As a result, in certain scenes other characters take over speeches that are originally recited by the magistrate. Even though the information given is the same, the focus on certain character developments is altered and, consequently, the original thrust of the story.

The cutting of scenes also effected the representation of the story. As has been mentioned above, Philip Glass decided to tell the entire story without dwelling on character relationships. Thus mainly scenes which reflect on the relationship between the magistrate and the girl or the magistrate and the Empire were cut. Consequently, a shift of focus could not be prevented, which deprives the story of its elaboration of the characters' inner processes and, thus, its detailed discussion of the suffering and the sense of responsibility of human beings.

To preserve Coetzee's mode of storytelling, Hampton followed his language as closely as possible. In most scenes the characters' words are adopted literally from the novel. Thus, apart from maintaining the original structure of the novel, certain phrases and expressions were taken over, which integrates Coetzee's language and narrative structure into the opera.

The magistrate's dreams form an essential element in the novel and, therefore, have been integrated in the opera as well. They form a striking contrast to the story's other scenes in that they give a detailed insight into the magistrate's psyche and in a sophisticated and subtle way reflect on the relationship between the magistrate and the girl. In the novel the magistrate's dreams always have the same setting, which is also the case in the opera; however, the actual staging of these "dreamscapes" is very different from their description in the novel. In the opera the dreamscapes are scenes kept in dark blue light in which the characters do not sing but move in slow motion accompanied by the orchestra and the choir. The scenes, instead of reflecting on the magistrate's re-

lationship to the girl, function as prolepsis and analepsis to the story. This also reduces the story to the main events without further reflecting on the magistrate and the girl.

Even though the opera tells the story of *Waiting for the Barbarians* in a fairly free manner, focusing more on the general drift of the story as an indictment of cruelty, torture and oppression, it has been made clear that the opera does succeed in conveying this notion. Despite all negative criticism, Philip Glass in his own controversial musical language succeeds in conveying and enhancing the story's mood and atmosphere. Although his music remains rather 'beautiful', atmospheric throughout the opera, it is still able to reach great intensity, create tension and changes of mood very effectively.

Statement of Authentication:

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Ich habe mich bemüht, sämtliche Inhaber der Bildrechte ausfindig zu machen und ihre Zustimmung zur Verwendung der Bilder in dieser Arbeit eingeholt. Sollte dennoch eine Urheberrechtsverletzung bekannt werden, ersuche ich um Meldung bei mir.

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Appendix A

Zusammenfassung

Diese Diplomarbeit vergleicht den Roman *Waiting for the Barbarians* von John Maxwell Coetzee mit der gleichnamigen Oper von Philip Glass. Schwerpunkt der Arbeit ist der Textvergleich zwischen Libretto und Originaltext, wobei speziell Fokusverschiebungen und Perspektivenwechsel im Mittelpunkt der Analyse stehen. Es wird untersucht, wie sich die Hauptcharaktere des Romans von denen der Oper unterscheiden, ob diese Unterschiede das natürliche Resultat einer Roman-Adaptation sind oder ob der Komponist bzw. der Librettist Christopher Hampton gezielt gewisse Charaktereigenschaften verändert haben. Diesbezüglich werden auch die *Dreamscapes*, die einen wichtigen Teil des Romans bilden, sowie ihre Umsetzung in der Oper analysiert. Anhand ausgewählter Szenen der Oper wird erörtert, ob Philip Glass mit seiner Musik eine eigene Dramaturgie aufbaut oder der des Librettos folgt.

Appendix B

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