

Horizontal and Vertical Intertext: J. M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to show J. M. Coetzee (1940-) as a modern prolific writer and recipient of the 2003 Noble Prize in Literature that has a hand in different literary genres. Coetzee's novels present a whole range of textual and intertextual practices which he considers essential in creating a dialogue between past and present to provide a better understanding of how these texts function. *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) is an example of Coetzee's novels which is involved in an intertextual relationship with other works. As a text, it is the continuum of other texts not only by Coetzee himself, but also by the other writers. The intertexts are connected to each other both horizontally, through quotation, allusion and parody, and vertically, through references to other media such as film, song and so on. *Diary of a Bad Year*, in Roland Barthes' viewpoint, as an 'open-ended' novel and a dialogue among several writings, contains multiple voices and different writings interacting with each other. Having an eye on horizontal and vertical intertextuality in claiming that each text is full of 'quotations without quotation marks,' this paper analyzes *Diary of a Bad Year*. Such points are to be analyzed based on the viewpoints of Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895-1975), Julia Kristeva (1941-) a French semiotician, and Roland Barthes (1915-1980). Moreover, it shows that each text is connected to previous and future texts. Each sign does not live in isolation, but it carries limitless previous written and unwritten texts.

Keywords: Text, Intertext, Textual, Intertextual, Horizontal Intertextuality, Vertical Intertextuality.

INTRODUCTION

John Maxwell Coetzee, a novelist, essayist, linguist, translator, and winner of Nobel Prize in Literature is honored as the fifth African and the second South African writer. Coetzee, the white South African, in 2007 wrote *Diary of a Bad Year* (DBY), a complex narrative structure in which he weaves multiple voices. *Diary of a Bad Year* in many ways is a continuum of Coetzee's previous novels such as *Disgrace* (1999) and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003) in the way that in each novel respectively an intriguing evolution with a complementarily narrator's viewpoint is obvious. In *Disgrace* it is the protagonist, university professor David Lurie, who tells the story. In *Elizabeth Costello* there is an interplay between the writers, Elizabeth Costello's lectures and an anonymous third person narrator. In *Diary of a Bad Year* any page is divided into two parts and three separate interrelated narratives related to the writer, whose written contribution to a book called '*Strong Opinions*' and his secretary's, Anya, thoughts about both JC's opinions and her employer's circumstances. It is somehow difficult to accept the novel as fiction while JC, the main character, is clearly a representative of the author and the opinions expressed in the essays are likely his own.

Not only *Diary of a Bad Year* contains literary intertexts, but also covers many fields of study such as philosophy, psychology, biology, and cultural studies. In *Diary of a Bad Year*, Coetzee creates an aging Australian writer of South African origin, writing a set of opinions on self-chosen subjects for a German publisher for a book entitled '*Strong Opinions*,' in which the main focus is on the relation between some of these essays and the others, in horizontal and vertical ways. All of Coetzee's works incorporates a heavy self-referential component. *Diary*, is a mixture of both

Elizabeth Costello, consisting essays to pose a novel, and *Slow Man* a novel with some philosophical contents, reading smoothly from the beginning to the very end. This very feature, the perfect welding of fiction with philosophical debate, makes *Diary of a Bad Year* simultaneously special and interesting. 'Strong opinions,' the first part of the book, on top of the page presents opinions on freely chosen subjects that an aging Australian writer, JC, composes for a German book. This article explores how Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* is in many ways a continuum of the previous novels in an intertextual way.

Horizontal intertextuality, giving references that are of the same type, is evident in *Diary of a Bad Year*, especially in his utilization of 'parody,' 'quotation,' and 'allusion.' The novel's complex narrative structure masterfully weaves multiple voices and viewpoints into a beautifully textured literary counterpoint. In Coetzee's novels, the protagonists are often readers and/or writers themselves, and make stories through their reading and writing. As early as *Dusklands* (1974), we are introduced to this narrative strategy in Coetzee, where the author/ narrator/ translator/ protagonist all share the same last name, and their identities seem to overlap somewhat. Following his debut, almost all of Coetzee's protagonists have been writers, or are at least narrators of their story, and in *Diary of a Bad Year* the author/narrator/protagonist identifies himself as the author of *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Coetzee admits to going back to look with a critical eye on his writings, and he also seems to speak back to his fictional works through his critical works. Thus Coetzee's self-referential traits are not confined within each work of fiction, but transcend them and negotiate between them.

The division of pages in *Diary of a Bad Year* and the writings with several voices or polyphonic parts can be understood as a purposeful bridging between two types of text, which though disruptive and possibly even confusing, show the discrepancy between writers/public intellectuals way of expressing. Moreover, the division of *Elizabeth Costello* into eight distinct lessons and a postscript is also by no means of unimportance. The concept of a public intellectual has been present in Coetzee's work even prior to publishing *Diary of a Bad Year* and *Elizabeth Costello*. In the introduction to a collection of essays, "J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual," Jane Poyner (1863-) points out that "[e]ach of Coetzee's novels portrays a (troubled) writer-figure or intellectual" (2) and further he asserts that "[b]y engaging self-consciously with the ethics of writing.[...] By so doing, he deliberately places himself in the public domain, if one understands writing as necessarily a public activity" (ibid). Although Coetzee is part of the public debate about the ethics of writing, intellectualism and the writer's authority, he constantly undermines these very concepts and in fact never use the rostrum in order to express his opinions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The concept of intertextuality, which emerged during the 1960s, is one of the principal critical tools in literary criticism and also becomes influential and important in the field of literary criticism. This paper relies mainly on the theories of Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, and Roland Barthes who are among poststructuralist critics. This paper employs intertextuality as its main approach, which covers many kinds of relationships among works. Besides intertextuality, other related and specific terms are applied to the study such as horizontal intertextuality and vertical intertextuality. Introducing the semiotic term of intertextuality, Kristeva believes that texts have two axes: a 'horizontal axis' and a 'vertical axis' which connects a text to other texts like every other text. These two axes have shared codes. Every text depends on prior codes or intertexts.

Bakhtin believes that "I live in a world of other's words" (143). He proposes that the text lives only by coming into contact with another text (with context); hence, one can consider a character in the dialogic novel as one who transmits a collection of specific social, cultural and ideological codes. In *Diary of a Bad Year*, Coetzee refers to and alludes to other texts, thereby creates a relationship between his texts and his sources. Under the study of Kristeva, "each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read" (37). *Diary of a Bad Year* is replete with transformation and assimilation of another text or group of other texts.

Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* provides an example of this complex phenomenon of intertextuality as defined by these critics. *Diary of a Bad Year* in Barthes' words is a "multidimensional space" (146), not a closed system, but rather interrelated in a dialogue with other texts. This may be related to Coetzee's purpose of intertextuality to establish a dialogue between his works and those from the Western and Eastern literature as well as reacting against them. *Diary of a Bad Year*, in Barthes' viewpoint, is as a dialogue among several writings. It contains multiple voices in which different writings interact with each other. According to Barthes, meaning does not originate in the author's self but in a larger linguistic and cultural system. This idea is what led to the death of the author and the birth of the reader or the world of intertextuality. Having an eye on Eco's argument, this paper is going to "break, dislocate, and unhinge" *Diary of a Bad Year* into its component intertexts to find "their original relationship with the whole" (395). This paper shows the similarities between *Diary of a Bad Year* and its included intertexts from different aspects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Horizontal Intertext: "On national shame" in Diary of a Bad Year

Diary of a Bad Year is in many ways a continuum of the previous novels Elizabeth Costello and Disgrace, regarding the theme of shame, guilt and redemption. In Elizabeth Costello there is an interplay between the writer Elizabeth Costello's lectures on various topics, and an anonymous third-person narrator who connects her ideas with her everyday life. In Disgrace it is the protagonist, University professor David Lurie, who tells the story. In Diary of a Bad Year the narrative is threefold, divided among a writer, his written contribution to a book called "Strong Opinions," and his secretary's thought about both the opinions in the manuscript and her employer's circumstances. Seen from the poststructuralist perspective co-inaugurated by Kristeva, "all texts are intertextual; one text pointedly refers to another, its 'pretext'" (qtd. In Plett 210). She also believes that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity" (qtd. In Moi 37).

In Elizabeth Costello the theme of shame is globalized which reflects Coetzee's emigration to Australia in 2002. Elizabeth Costello is an Australian writer of international renown, travelling around the world giving lectures on issues such as animal rights, evil and Eros. In Disgrace the shame, a personal shame, concerns the protagonist, David Lurie, the white South African Professor of communication, who after an affair with one of his students is dismissed in disgrace. In Diary of a Bad Year, the plot circles around the protagonist JC, an aging immigrant Australian writer suffering from Parkinson's disease, is asked to contribute to a book called Strong Opinions. JC finds an opportunity to reflect his own philosophical and political viewpoint. The theme of shame functions on two levels in Diary of a Bad Year: personal and national. The personal level concerns JC who meets Anya and employs her to type his manuscript; the first play of desire between them happens till the end of novel which impels JC to change the focus of his writing from "Strong Opinions" to "Second Diary" by Anya. On the other hand Anya's companion, Alan, plays an important role in the plot, as Maggie Gee (1948-) argues in her review: "Alan is evil precisely because he is without shame" (1). That is to say JC and Alan represent the old order against the new; a person living with his feeling of shame, facing a shameless person. At first JC is disappointed in his secretary's lack of interest in what she is typing, since he has told her that he wants a person with "an intuitive feel" (DBY 18) while at the end she confesses: "I was the one he was in love with [...] I was his secret aria secretary" (DBY 225).

Kathryn Harrison (1961-) in the case of shame states that "Coetzee's fiction, and, Diary of a Bad Year suggests, his psyche, has always manifested a fault line. On one side of divide is reason, [...] On the other lie the passions, especially lust, that undermine and sometimes trump intellect" (28). "On national shame," the tenth strong opinion in Diary of a Bad Year, JC talks and shows his disapproval of the war against terror by frowning upon the United States government which is authorizing the torture of the prisoners being suspected of terrorist connections, trying to disparage laws prohibiting torture. To commit themselves to such proceedings, they must be shameless:

Their shamelessness is quite extraordinary. Their denials are less than half-hearted. The distinction their hired lawyers draw between torture and coercion is patently insincere, pro-forma. In the new dispensation we have created, they implicitly say, the old powers of shame have been abolished. Whatever abhorrence you may feel counts for nothing. You cannot touch us, we are too powerful. (DBY 39)

JC notices that the American government feels they are beyond anyone's reach; they possess power which nothing and no one can undermine:

In the new powers of policing that the Australian government is in the process of awarding itself, one detects a comparable contempt for the rule of law. These are extraordinary times, runs the mantra, and extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures. It may not take much of a push for Australia to slide into the same condition as America argues JC, where on the basis of denunciations from informers ('sources') people simply vanish or are vanished from society, and publicizing their disappearances qualifies as a crime in its own right. (DBY 43).

In "On the hurly-burly of politics," JC talks about the disappearances and arrests happened in his native country, South Africa under apartheid, which were done "in the name of a struggle against terror" (DBY 171). As he says, "I used to think that the people who created these laws that effectively suspended the rule of law were moral barbarians. Now I know they were just pioneers, ahead of their time" (DBY 171), hence they should feel shame.

In such a condition, JC mentions only by active participation against the inhumane methods, even if they are "for the sake of a greater good," (DBY 17) people will be able to save themselves from disgrace. JC himself, however, is not able to live free of guilt and shame. The source of this feeling is the country of his origin, South Africa under apartheid. The crimes committed in his name result in him carrying an enormously heavy burden on his shoulders that grow larger and stronger every day. The trick used by the British generation nowadays, "[t]he Empire was long ago abolished, they say, so what is there for us to feel responsible for?" (DBY 44). Then he remembers Jean Sibelius's, a Finnish composer of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, fifth symphony to the creation of

Guantanamo Bay, the national pride next to the national shame. "Musical creation on the one hand, a machine for inflicting pain and humiliation on the other: The best and the worst that human beings are capable of" (DBY 45); hence, it can be considered as a vertical intertextuality, which refers to music.

JC feels shame to be a part of society that favors global inhumanity, cruelty and ruthlessness. When he speculates about the possibilities of saving one's honor, he assumes that American people indeed feel shame and guilt when observing their government's actions. As he says, he would not be surprised if there has "perhaps already been a Stauffenberg plot, record of which will at some time in the future emerge into the light of day?" (DBY 41) against the ones sitting in the high offices. He does not believe that there is no one who would feel the same disgust as he does. To be precise, JC's discontent with the state of being is reflected in all his opinions. In "democracy does not allow for politics outside the democratic system. In this sense, democracy is totalitarian. If you take issue with democracy [...] who is the servant, who the master?" (DBY 15). Coetzee denounces the situation of those "men in orange suits, shackled and hooded, shuffling about like zombies behind the barbed wire of Guantanamo Bay" (DBY 140) and also the less well-known situation of Australia's refugees in "Baxter Detention Centre" (DBY 112). At the end according to Coetzee, by confessing one can save his honor. He refers to an Australian intelligence officer, Rod Barton, who made his story public and resigned from his function as a torturer of Iraqi scientists: "[o]ne Australian intelligence officer, a man Rod Barton, a scientific intelligence officer [...] interrogation of Iraqi scientists broke ranks, made his story public and to his credit resigned from the service" (DBY 42). This Australian, by making his story public, apologizes and his resignation is his restitution. He has thus saved his honor and avoided shame through apology with restitution.

A Horizontal Intertext: "On the slaughter of animals" in Diary of a Bad Year

Coetzee has a deep concern with humanity and considers it as the most important aspect in human's life. He mentions, "I, as a person, as a personality, am overwhelmed, that my thinking is thrown into confusion and helplessness, by the fact of suffering in the world, and not only human suffering" (1992: 248). In *Waiting for the Barbarians* it is the Magistrate who shows his reawakening from the state of empire and his kindness by releasing the barbarian girl. The same act of compassion is obvious in *Diary of a Bad Year*. Although JC influences Anya's life, it is Anya who saves JC by assuring him that she will stay till the very end. However, Coetzee's notion of humanity applies also to man's treatment of animals specifically dogs, which are multivalent thematical elements in Coetzee's writing. Animals have always occupied an important place in Coetzee's fictions but animal's rights and cruelty to animals emerged as a distinct theme in *The Lives of Animals* and *Elizabeth Costello*, where Coetzee provocatively compared the Holocaust to the killing of animals in slaughterhouses and animals' suffering to that of people. For Coetzee, cruelty to animals is one of the manifestations of aggressiveness and violence in men.

In 1997, Coetzee was invited to present the Tanner Lectures in Human Value at Princeton University. He did indeed focus on the ethical issue, the way human beings treat animals. Elizabeth Costello keeps two lectures on the exploitation and organized, industrial slaughtering of the animals. These lectures were published in 1999 as *The Lives of Animals*. The title of them are *The Philosophers and the Animals* and *The Poets and the Animals*. Coetzee, a vegetarian man, uses Costello to speak about the cruelty to nonhuman animals. In *The Lives of Animals* Elizabeth Costello, a novelist, who is invited to present two lectures on a topic of her choice, chooses to present them on a subject close to her heart, the cruel, merciless treatment that animals suffer by man. She presents herself as 'a wounded animal' and uses a range of different examples to express the wound she experiences herself as carrying in her body.

Elizabeth Costello begins by referring back to a previous lecture in which she discussed Franz Kafka's (1883-1924) story, *Report to an Academy*, in which an educated ape Red Peter is asked to talk about his life as an ape prior to his education into human life. He is unable to do so; life is closed to him by the very process of education, so that now he can only talk about what he is and how he becomes that rather than what he was. In fact, Red Peter himself accepted that in order to continue to be in control of his life he needed to conform to that of a human lifestyle. Lastly, he will never be able to return to life as he formerly knew it because of the choices he made in order to ensure his survival. Elizabeth Costello is wounded and haunted in a similar way that men do to animals. She makes a comparison between herself and Red Peter and emphasizes her isolation, and her sense of difference. However Elizabeth Costello wishes her own presence to be taken literally, she is asking her audience to understand the motivation behind her speaking as both drawing attention to an inner state and seeking to hide it.

Costello's opinion is that man's cruel behavior towards the animals largely resembles the way people generally behave towards the defeated enemy, war prisoners and slaves. In her most controversial lectures, Elizabeth Costello likens the fate of animals to the fate of millions killed in Nazi extermination camps. She believes that the slaughterhouses are for animals what Treblinka was for Jews. Based on her views, animal slaughter and the slaughter of human beings are like each other. She says:

They went like sheep to the slaughter. They died like animals. The Nazi butchers killed them. Denunciation of the camps reverberates so fully with the language of the stockyard and slaughterhouse that it is barely necessary for me to prepare the ground for the comparison. The crime of the Third Reich, says the voice of accusation, was to treat people like animals. (Coetzee 1999: 20).

Costello believes that man's language reflects his attitude toward the lives of animals and often it reflects his attitude toward animals in ways that he is unaware. Costello's argument is that it is about opening, or rather, closing man's heart to the other. She tries to prompt people to realize their humanity, to open their hearts to the suffering of animals. She says "the horror is that the killers refused to think themselves into the place of their victims" (ibid 34). In opening their hearts men enter into an empathetic perception of the lives of others, fictional as well as real. She objects to treating animals as equivalent to severely retarded human beings. Costello's argument is that all human beings are akin to animal beings. Against the arguments that human beings have capacities, and animals do not in particular the capacity to reason, Costello posits that the most important human capacity is that of sympathy. Specifically, she grounds her assertion of the kinship of living beings with one another on the ability of human beings to recognize a kinship with imaginative or fictional beings. Animals exist, feel, and think on a different plane from humans. That difference does not make one superior, Costello claims.

In *Disgrace*, at the very beginning of the novel, animals do not seem to be important to David at all. When he talks about the Animal Welfare League with Lucy, he says: "[t]hat's wonderful, then. I'm sorry [...] after a while you itch to go off and do some raping and pillaging. Or to kick a cat" (Coetzee 2000: 73). With this statement, David not only says that he is not interested in animals but also that he does not approve of welfare organizations and does not like the people who work for them. As it is clear the situation for animals is so harsh in Lucy's farm, the dogs are killed by the three intruders, the sheep are slaughtered for Petrus's party, the animals in the clinic are killed, etc. Then near to the end of the novel there is a radical change in David's behavior with regard to animals as her daughter was raped by three black men. Shortly after this scene, however, David falls asleep in Katy's cage. This shows that he feels comfortable being with the dog. Finally he seems to sympathize them when he asks if they are all going to die.

In *Disgrace*, Coetzee involves Lurie in disposing of the dead dogs' corpses, making it Lurie's ultimate act of kindness. He volunteers to work in a clinic where stray dogs are put to death in a humane way and then incinerated. David takes care of the corpses of the dogs – the unloved ones, because he is repelled by the disrespectful treatment of their corpses by the workmen of the clinic who beat and cut dead dogs' bodies with shovels. David's evolving sensitivity, ambiguous as it is because it extends not to people but to animals, seems to possess capacity to effectuate change of man's attitude to his environment especially in the South African reality where racial oppression has been practiced for centuries and empathy for people has been thwarted, man must, as if from the scratch, learn the meaning of elementary ethical values. Change of attitude to animals is, perhaps, a beginning that may lead to setting up a new type of relations between individuals.

In *Diary of a Bad Year*, Coetzee a vegetarian not a meat-eater makes his protagonist sensitive to animal issues. Since JC draws the reader's attention to them in his essays and shows that he also acts based on his beliefs by leaving his money to the animals. One of the measures of humanity for Coetzee is the human treatment towards animals. Thus humanity in Coetzee's eyes is not only being kind to another human being; it means taking all the living beings into account. In his essay, "On the slaughter of animals" in *Diary of a Bad Year*, JC points out that men are so used to seeing cooking programs on television, that the process of transforming raw food into cooked "looks perfectly normal" (DBY 63), men have become habituated to this daily practice to the extent that it appears natural. But, JC continues, "to someone unused to eating meat, the spectacle must be highly unnatural. For among the fruit and vegetables and oils and herbs and spices lie [...] creature killed purposely and with violence" (DBY 63).

"On the slaughter of animals" in *Diary of a Bad Year*, shows, however, JC's love and respect for animals. When JC discusses a cooking program one can recognize how unnatural the idea of consuming animals is for him. Furthermore, he talks about cattle transportation from Australia to Egypt and the brutalization of the cattle during this trip, and shows his humane approach towards the animals as well as his resignation when it comes to fighting for animal rights. The cattle, that are transported in order to keep them calm and easier to control, have their tendons hacked. He states:

The notion of compassionate killing is riddled with absurdities. What well-meaning welfare campaigners seem to desire is that the beast should arrive before its executioner in a calm state of mind, and that death should overtake it before it realizes what is going on? But how can an animal be in a calm state of mind after being goaded off a ship into the back of a truck and driven through teeming streets to a strange place reeking of blood and death? The animal is confused and desperate and no doubt difficult to control. That is why it has its tendons hacked. (DBY 65)

He believes that the meat comes from an animal that was "killed purposely and with violence" (DBY 63). These words show simply that the animal was murdered to satisfy human lust for meat. Moreover, the animal was killed

with violence showing no regard for its existence or its suffering. Therefore according to JC, as there is no difference in appearance between the flesh of a human and that one of an animal, it seems, for the vegetarian like he himself, that the piece of meat comes from the human body, he sees animals as equal to himself.

A Vertical Intertext: "On the origins of the state" in Diary of a Bad Year

Coetzee is a silent man, on the contrary to those who keep silent have nothing to say, he keeps silent since he knows when to speak until the right moment. He mentions, in *Diary of a Bad Year*, that man's predicaments emanate from such ills that are presented through the various facets of life ranging from politics, religion, crime, justice and punishment and above all, shame and dishonor which Coetzee refers to as sufferings. This work can be considered as a confessional one showing man's situation in today's world by means of a comedy which makes one laugh at what is not actually funny. Comedy is a literary work that aims primarily to provoke laughter. Unlike tragedy which seeks to engage the audience into profound emotions and sympathies, comedy strives to entertain chiefly through criticism of man's customs and institutions. Coetzee and his subject of interest, in *Diary of a Bad Year*, make one question on what African literature is. This is because he does not write only about the plight of the Africans, but proceeds to x-ray the problems of the world at large.

In *Diary of a Bad Year*, Coetzee satirizes Africa, America, British and Muslim societies. Coetzee through JC satirizes African leaders and their way of handling the economy, and through Alan he satirizes Western way of maintaining the economy which he calls "Shielding the economy" (DBY 97). "On the origins of the state" in *Diary of a Bad Year* is the first argument presented to the reader in which Coetzee seeks to demonstrate that the state of world politics is nothing but a comedy. In view of this, Coetzee notes in "On the origins of the state":

If despite the evidence of our sense, we accept the premise that we or our forebears created the state, then we must also accept its entailment: that we or our forebears could have created the state in some other form, if we had chosen; perhaps. Too, that we could change it if we collectively so decided. But the fact is that even collectively, those, who are 'under' the state, who 'belong to' the state find it very hard indeed to change its form; they-we-are certainly powerless to abolish it. (DBY 3)

Coetzee's diagnosis of the state is comic as he ridicules the state which though was formed by 'we,' cannot be changed by the same 'we' despite its devastating state.

In addition to horizontal intertextuality, vertical intertextuality has occupied some dimensions of the novel. As John Fiske, in his book *Television Culture* (1987), mentions "vertical intertextuality is that between a primary text, such as a television program or series, and other texts of a different type that refer explicitly to it" (108). *Diary of a Bad Year's* first essay "On the origins of the state," alludes to the story of *The Seven Samurai*, a film by Akira Kurosawa which he terms the "Kurosawan theory of the origin of the state" (DBY 5). By referring to Baradaran Jamili (1965-), a book refers to other media such as "painting, film or song or vice versa" (14); therefore, it is about the references, which are not of the same types a vertical intertextuality. The story is about a village in times of war when no state exists any longer. This village becomes a source of wealth and booty to a group of armed bandits who have established a time table of coming to these people, raping their women and making away with stored up food supplies. They do this after a good number of times and these visits become parasitic. This village becomes their tax base. Coetzee notes that "kurosawa is thus laying out for our consideration a very early stage in the growth of the state" (DBY 6).

JC argues that "The Seven Samurai offers JC no less than the Kurosawan theory of the origin of the state" (DBY 5), and by using the film as an example, JC shows that entering the state cannot be seen as voluntary. He explains that 'we' enter into the world powerless; 'we' are born into the state, and therefore, 'we' have no choice but to submit 'ourselves.' He distrusts the state because entering its discourse happens without our knowledge of it. "The state is always there before we are," 'we' referring to "some generic we so wide as to exclude no one" (DBY 3). According to JC, the courageous samurai who rescued the inhabitants of the village that was plundered by a group of bandits and offered the villagers to take them "under their wing [for a certain price] that is to say, will take the place of the bandits" (DBY 6) become the new scrounger of the village under false pretenses. While the bandits were obviously the bad guys empowered by the inhabitants' fear, the samurai were empowered by the villagers' need for protection. The outcome, however, stays the same. Although the villagers refuse the samurai's offer, and ask them to leave, which JC calls a "wistful ending" (DBY 6), it shows that whether the empowered group has good or bad intentions, it always results in creating supremacy. Once the supremacy has been chosen, and the state has been created, there is no turning back. As JC says, the form of the state can hardly be changed and its abolishment is impossible. Therefore "the handover of power to the state is irreversible" (DBY 4).

As it shows, JC feels strongly about allowing the state to take over power. He feels that the handover of this power, which happened long before we were born, disables us to choose otherwise. Then JC, after his analysis of the lack of freedom that the citizen has vis-à-vis the state, adds:

Why is it so hard to say anything about politics from outside politics? Why can there be no discourse about politics that is not itself political? To Aristotle the answer is that politics is built into human nature, that is, is part of our fate, as monarchy is the fate of bees. To strive for a systematic supra-political discourse about politics is futile. (DBY 9)

The state exists in order to protect the equality of its citizens. If all the members of a society feel free and secure to express their political opinions and go ahead with their political beliefs then those people will understand that they are free, and freedom is synonymous with equality. The function of the state is the protection of human rights which include the right to life, the right to liberty, and the right to property and so on. The state in *Diary of a Bad Year* mentions by Coetzee is exactly parallel to the mentioned film that after the Samurai have succeeded in their mission, they propose to take the village under their wings thus indirectly trying to take the place of the bandits but the villagers deny.

It is comic that the laws of the state protect the enemy soldier but fail to protect its citizen, who takes up arms against what is wrong within this state, “[t]he enemy soldier inasmuch as he is the representative of a rival state shall not be put to death if captured” (DBY 4). But the state fails to protect its own citizen. Thus, “there is no law to protect the outlaw” (DBY 4). If the state exists because the people ceded their right to it, then it should protect the people’s rights. The state refers to a branch of the government of the United States in charge of foreign affairs. Through its ideals it is said that this state is hypocritical. In *Diary of a Bad Year* the essay “On national shame,” Coetzee notes that the United States administration sanctions the torture of prisoners taken in the war on terror, but is not ready to respect this law proscribing torture:

An article in a recent *New Yorker* makes it as plain as day that the US administration, with the lead taken by Richard Cheney, not only sanctions the torture of prisoners taken in the so-called war on terror but is active in every way to subvert laws and conventions proscribing torture. (DBY 39)

The state in this case is illegal and illegitimate. Coetzee, by talking on the issue of the outlaw, depicts the state of politics especially in Africa. African states are very dictatorial. It is very difficult to stand up and criticize the wrongs of the state. He states:

The Kurusawan story of the origin of the state is still played out in our times in Africa where Gangs of armed men grab power – that is to say, annex the national treasury and the mechanism of taxing the population – do away with their rivals, and proclaim Year One. (DBY 7)

Diary of a Bad Year reminds the point that at birth citizens are given a birth certificate which gives them a sense of belonging, proving that they were born in a particular state to which they automatically belong. According to JC, the impersonalization begins at birth, just like entering the state:

From the moment of our birth we are subject. One mark of this subjection is the certificate of birth. The perfected state holds and guards the monopoly of certifying birth. Either you are given (and carry with you) the certificate of the state, thereby acquiring an identity which during the course of your life enables the state to identify you and track you (track you down); or you do without an identity and condemn yourself to living outside the state like an animal (animals do not have identity papers). (DBY 4)

Birth certificates which are given by the state to its citizens protect the citizens and give a sense of belonging, but ironically they are also used by the state to track down its citizens:

The state pursues the certification of death with extraordinary thoroughness—witness the dispatch of a host of forensic scientists and bureaucrats to scrutinize and photograph and prod and poke the mountain of human corpses left behind by the great tsunami of December 2004 in order to establish their individual identities. No expense is spared to ensure that the census of subjects shall be complete and accurate. Whether the citizen lives or dies is not a concern of the state. What matters to the state and its records is whether the citizen is alive or dead. (DBY 5)

Whether the citizen lives or dies is not a concern of the state, what matters to the state and its

Records is whether the citizen is alive or dead. What matters is whether we are “alive or dead” (DBY 5). The state’s issuing of birth and death certificates is to have a record of how many people are living and to know for how many people it should cater. The point here is that the individual is not able to change such a system, or to abolish it, “those who are ‘under’ the state, who ‘belong to’ the state, will find it very hard indeed to change its form; they—we are certainly powerless to abolish it” (DBY 3). He feels that in such a kind of state ‘we’ are born into “is part of our fate, as monarchy is the fate of bees” (DBY 9). This portrays Coetzee as a writer of comedy as he tries to create a world free of turbulence, reconciliation and a new humanity.

CONCLUSION

The paper reveals the notion of intertextuality, so that it shows that the works of J. M. Coetzee provide an example of intertextuality in which he cites, quotes, imitates, alludes, parodies and engages in a dialectic relationship with other texts from the major Western as well as Eastern literatures. All of Coetzee's work incorporates a heavy self-referential component with other texts whether horizontally or vertically. It reveals that Coetzee's choice of ageing individuals in his novels, mostly in *Diary of a Bad Year* and *Elizabeth Costello*, was purposeful which served his project of undermining their status as public intellectuals. In his novels, both JC and Elizabeth Costello are required to pronounce their opinions on affairs in which are not specialists. The fact that they are well-known writers and are elderly makes them, supposedly, the most appropriate candidates for the status of a sage, of a public intellectual. However, the way Coetzee represents these individuals shows them as unfitted to step up and perform as expected from them because he sees himself as a "mere writer" whose "grasp of the facts" is "incomplete or unsure" (DBY 126). Not only in *Diary of a Bad Year*, "On the slaughter of animals," but also in his other works like *Disgrace* and *Elizabeth Costello* love and respect for animals is in a high degree. His approach to animals as being equal to human beings visualizes Coetzee's humane position and behavior which is not just directed towards his own species, but taking all the living beings into account.

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