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A REVIEW OF NOVELS OF J.M. COETZEE

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ABSTRACT

J.M. Coetzee is one of the greatest novelists of 21<sup>st</sup> century. He was born in Cape Town, South Africa, on 9 February 1940, the elder of two children. J.M. Coetzee is a South African novelist, essayist, linguist, translator and recipient of the 2003 Nobel Prize in Literature. In 1963, he was awarded a Master of Arts degree from UCT for a dissertation on the novels of Ford Madox Ford. His experiences in English were later recounted in *Youth* (2002), his second volume of fictionalized memoirs. In his first novel *Dusklands* (1974), Coetzee focuses on two setting: one, the US States Department during the Vietnam era and the other, stories of exploration and conquest of Southern Africa in the 1970's by a man named Jocabus Coetzee. These two vastly different locations work together to bring out the alarm and paranoia of aggressors no matter what the location and to show the unthinkable ways in which dominant groups impose their ways upon other culture.

His second novel, *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), delves in the complex relationships that form between the colonizer and the colonized. It takes place on a desolate form in South Africa told through the perspective of an intelligent yet meek European woman. She clashes with her father when he takes an African mistress, causing a rift that leads towards vengeance, violence and a muddling of her own relationship with the Africans.

His third novel, *Waiting for Barbarians* he tells a story of a Magistrate who lives peacefully in a garrison of the Empire which is located in the frontier of a country which from time to time has been attacked by barbarians. South Africa is never mentioned in the novel though suggested. The arrival of a general from the big city, however, it brings horror to the town dragging in barbarians to be tortured. This reveals plots against the Empire. Soon after, the Magistrate attracted to one of the barbarians women. She has been left one- eyed and injured in one foot. The Magistrate takes care of her and the gossip spreads among the settlers. The Magistrate is punished by the Empire. He has exposed to public shame, isolated, tortured. Then he made 'attack plans' with the barbarians and the women, and finally freed, but condemned to live like a beggar. With the same electrical intensity of language and insight that he brought to *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *The Master of Petersburg*, J. M. Coetzee reinvents the story of Robinson Crusoe and in

so doing, directs our attention to the seduction and tyranny of storytelling itself. His first novel to win the Booker prize\_The Life and Times of Michael.

*Keyword: J.M. Coetzee, Petersburg, Barbarians, Magistrate*

## REVIEW AND LITERATURE

Slow Man 2005, by South African Nobel laureate J.M.Coetzee, tells a story of a man of sixty whose name is Paul Rayment. He is a retired photographer and archivist. He has no family and living alone in Adelaide, Australia. First chapter opens on a glorious Australian morning. He is out for a ride on his bicycle. All of sudden he is struck by a car he doesn't see:

The Blow catches him from the right, sharp and surprising and painful, like bolt of electricity, lifting him of the bicycle. Relax! He tells himself as he flies through the air (flies through the air with the greatest of ease!) and indeed he can feel his limbs go obediently slack. Like a vat he tells himself: roll, then spring to your feet, ready for what comes next. The unusual word limber or limber is on the horizon too. (Slow Man 1)

He flees through the air, telling himself to relax, striking the pavement and commencing to skid. The skidding seems to go on forever, and when it's done he feels himself at peace, slack of body. He hears rather than feels his skull bounce on the pavement. The crash is brilliantly described, and is the finest movement:

He hears rather than feels the impact of his skull on the bitumen, distant, wooden like a mallet – blow), he does not spring to his feet at all, but on the contrary slides meter after meter, on and on, until he is quite lulled by the sliding. He lies stretched out, at peace,(1).

He notices that the day is glorious: bright sun, benign temperature, and a good time for a nap. When he awakens he finds his body no longer slack but thick, "ponderous"(1) . His first worry is his bicycle after accident. Since bicycle can be stolen and after thinking this he faints. J.M. Coetzee's sentences are immaculate and in a page and a half the scene.

In an ambulance on the way to the hospital, Rayment is disoriented. What is happening to him? He hears voice and then, weirdly, the clack of a typewriter. This is his imagination at work, a message that seems to be written on the screen of his own inner eyelid. "E-R-T-Y, say the letters, the F-R-I-V-O-L, then a trembling, then E , then Q-W-E-R-T-Y, on and on"(3) . At the hospital, the news is not good. One of Rayment's legs is amputated above the knee. One of the reasons of his leg to be amputated is that he is an old man. But doctors will try to save as much of it as they can. If he were a younger man, they might attempt a reconstruction. But he is not a young man. He is sixty years old man. It is a serious accident and requires considerable aftercare. Paul is unwilling to have the lost leg replaced by an artificial one . He is not in a favour of prosthesis, "Prosthesis, he says, another difficult word, though now that he understands about the jaw that is not broken, merely bruised, he is less embarrassed about difficult words. (7), while preferring to hobble along on crutches and a Zimmer frame. The doctors encourage him to wear prosthesis and continue his life as normal. But he refuses within the book's first pages. Dr. Hansen tells him that he is luckily – it could have been much worse. Night and Day, time spends. One day before his discharge he has a surprise visitor, the boy who hit him, Wayne Blight. Wayne's father in the corridor throughout the visit. He says sorry as his father told Wayne to say Paul says nothing except, " Good of you to come lad but I have a headache and I need to sleep. So good bye" (21).

The operation is successful and Rayment must now endure the after math: the pain, the boredom, the washing, the catheter, the determined good cheer of the nurses, the surgeon's frank admiration the patient can share; he did not give his consent. Before long a "difficult word", is added to his vocabulary: "Prosthesis" (7). With Prosthesis he will be up and around in no time at all, perhaps even riding his bicycle again. He is told that wonderful progress has been made with prosthetic devices, really superb – and this news is unwelcome. Peevish, unsettled, appalled and in pain, Rayment wants no part of prosthesis. Neither is he amused by his nurse's puzzlement – amazement, almost – at his family status. That is to say, he has no family. His parents are dead. His wife is gone. He protests that he has friends, but these do seem to be few in number.

One comes to the hospital for a visit and later turns up at his apartment thinking about sex and then she leaves and that is all we she of the friends.

Certainly Rayment will need rehabilitation, and that inspire yet another question, Would his insurance stretch to "frail care?" (5). No, it would not well then, the social worker says that he will have to budget for it, won't he? Rayment remains in the hospital for days, with plenty of time to reflect on the absence of his leg and time also to search for the meaning of the imaginary typewriter and the truncated message.

Yet Frivolous is not a bad word to sum him up, as he was before the event and may still be. If in the course of a lifetime he has done no significant harm, he has done no good either. He will leave no trace behind, not even an heir to carry on his name.. if none is left who will pronounce judgment on such a life, if the Great Judge of all has given up judging and with drawn to pare his nails, then he will pronounce it himself: A wasted chance.(2).

In a nutshell Rayment is at home. A nurse, recommended by Mrs. Putts is already there. Her name is Sheena, twenty years old. Actually she looks like nineteen. But he does not like her. She keeps radio on while she is in the kitchen and turns the sound lower when she asked for. After living with her care until the end of the week he telephones Mrs. Putts to ask Sheena not to come back and to find another one. He blames his gloom on his painkillers. Before the accident, he did not have gloomy temperament. He might have been solitary, but only as certain male animals are solitary.

There was always more than enough to keep him occupied. He took out books from the library. He went to the cinema. He cooked for himself, He even baked his own bread; he did not own a car but rode a bicycle or walked,(25)

But now he has lost the, "freedom of movement" (25), and it will never be restored to him, with or without artificial limbs.

After Sheena he hired another nurse, named Marijana. She is Croatian and left her birth place twelve years ago. Her training was done in Germany. She has acquired South Australian certificate .She does housekeeping besides her profession of nursing for 'extra money'. She lives in Munno Para with her husband who works in a car assembly plant. They have a son in high school, a daughter in middle school, a third child not yet of school – going age. Marijana is not quite middle aged, wears a sky – blue uniform, and speaks a rapid Australian English. She is a good nurse; she helps him patiently, without baby talks of Sheena. She shops for him, cooks his meals and washes his stump. But he doesn't like to call it stump.

To himself he does not call it a stump. He would like not to call it anything; he would like not to think about it, but that is not possible. If he has a name for it, It is le jambon. Le jambon keeps it at a nice, contemptuous distance. He divides people with whom he has contact into two classes: those few who have seen it, and the rest... (29).

Marijana is attentive when he wants her to be and absent when he wants to be alone. When she smokes she is courteous enough to retract to the balcony. But it is care of le jambon and it's "obscenely curtailed thigh muscles" (30), that endears her to patient, and soon enough Rayment has revised his estimate of her appearance:

More than not unattractive, she is on positively handsome women, well built , sturdy, with nit – brown hair, dark eyes, a complexion olive rather sallow; a women carries herself well. Shoulders squared, breasts thrust forward. Proudful, he thinks, hunting for an English word that will capture her. Her teeth, stained yellow with nicotine, are the only objective flaw.(31)

Each morning she brings him through his exercises, massages his body and wasting muscles and helps him in doing what he cannot do without a helping hand .She treats him delicately; she says that he can tell her if it hurts . But actually it never hurts him.

He goes to the hospital for weekly checkups. One day he shares the lift with an old woman while going to the hospital. He was much attracted by her, in fact she is the first women who provokes his sexual

interest since the accident. One day his friend, Margaret Mccord calls him and offers him Sunday lunch which he agrees. They talk about his life after his accident including his nurse Sheena and Mrs. Putts.

Rayment suggests Marijana to bring Drago to him so that he may show his leg to him. Her husband Miroslav brought him a motorcycle but she doesn't like and afraid of any miss happening g. But he says that she cannot stop him from exploring his limits by their parents. They want to be the fastest, strongest and want to be admired. Drago, sixteen years old, is tall and husky Youngman. He wants to go Defense Force Academy. He wants to join navy. Rayment was born in Europe at France and brought in Australian when he was a child of six by his mother and stepfather. He had one sister of nine years old. She is dead now. This question of taking care of him echoes in his mind. 'Taking care 'does not mean to swallow down his cache of pills twice a day, with a glass of hot milk and to lay down his bed with his hand folded across his breast. These are the only thing he can do for himself.

Rayment is book saver. 'Booker saver' is that what people in Croatia call person like him who saves book. If he has saved something it has been photographs not books actually. He is a photographer by is profession from 1970. He has hundred of photographers of life of Victoria and New South Wales, and South Australia too. They are not of the life of popular one but may be the best in the country, even in the world. He went to bring them to be auctioned. But he is unable to do so therefore he is full of depression.

One thing that is common with them, Rayment and Marijana is that they both are immigrants. They talk about the history of Australia. In Europe people say that Australia has no history, because of the mob of immigrants. Is immigrants have no history of their own, but in Australia he says if someone come and carries with their history they start nothing. He does not want to sell them. The collection will be the name of him 'photographs of Mr. Rayments'. Photographs are more living than name for people saves photographs than name. He would like to give his picture on that collection not in the latest figure but as he used to be.

He begins to take interest in Marijana on the day of book – dusting. He likes in her not beauty instead the perfection of a certain feminine type, “strong as a horse, he thinks, eyeing the sturdy calves and well-knit haunches that ripple as she reaches for the upper shelves. Strong as a mare.”(50). He is much attracted with Marijana because she is very good with his leg stump. Competence trumps beauty. But what we can call this type of sentiments towards Marijana like desire at all. One day Marijana talks about boarding school for Drago. Rayment tells her that it can be very expensive but if she is serious about it and if Drago himself really wants to go. He could help financially. he can make her a loan. She could not understand why he wants this. On asking this he says, “Surely you must know Marijana” .” Surely a woman always knows”. Being enforced by Marijana finally he tells that, “I love you. That is all. I love you and I want to give you something. Let me.”(76).

She says nothing. He has done it . Marijana does not come to his flat next day and after. May be she did not like it. The temperament of gloom which he had through gone forever returns. He writes a latter to her . AT the same time somebody has come his door, a new visitor, a women of sixteen, "wearing a floral silk dress cut low behind to reveal unattractively freckled, somewhat fleshy shoulders" (80). Her name is Elizabeth Costello.Rayment remained puzzled and tries to understand that strange women. Who is Paul Rayment to her? This question rises throughout the novel. She answers only "you came to me" (85).

In certain respects I am not in command of what comes to me. You came, along with the pallor and the stoop and crutches and the flat that you hold on to so doggedly and the photographs collection and all the rest also along with Miroslav Jockic the Croatian refugee – yes, that is his name Miroslav, his friends call him Mel – and your inchoate attachment to his wife.’(81).

He says it is ' not inchoate' attachment to Marijana. Elizabeth knows everything about his life and wants to let him aware of what consequence will be happened after it. He had much irritated by Elizabeth so he warned her to leave in the morning. But she is a model guest as she says. “I will be a model guest. I promise I won't hang my undies in bathroom. I'll keep out of your way. I barely eat. Most of the time you won't know I am here. Just a touch on the shoulder, now and then, left or right, to keep you on the path.”(87).

There is one thing that happens beyond expectations. Elizabeth Costello brings a girl with her in his flat. Her name is Marianna, a blind helpless girl Elizabeth advises him to take her to Alfredo's at five o'clock. Marijana does not want him to see her. Elizabeth pasted flour and water on his eyes and lemon leaf over it so that he may not have a look her. A freshly washed stocking is knotted after. Marijana lost her sight a year ago, as a result of tumor. Before this she was beautiful of at least highly attractive but today one prefers not look on her face. She wants to have the gaze of other. She is in despair she tells even she wants to die. She is full of unhappy lust, "she is in the summer of her womanly life, she moans aloud with lust, day after day, like a cow or a sow in heat (96). Elizabeth fixes a meeting of both. She inspires Rayment to enjoy his life with Marianna, : be advised Paul: the years go by as quickly as a wink. So enjoy yourself while you're still in the pink. It's always later then you think.(99)

Marijana tells Rayment that Drago is agreeing to go Willington School for which Paul will pay. Marijana is a good and an ideal wife and she boasts of her husband in this manner:

In Croatia, you know, Mr. Rayment my husband was famous Man, sort of. You don't believe me? In all newspapers photographs of him. Miroslav Jokic' and mechanical duck. Only man who can make mechanical duck walk, make noise like how you say kwaak, eat' – she pats her bosom – 'other things too. Old, old duck...but here- she casts her eyes up to the heavens – ' who cares? In Australia nobody hear of mechanical duck. Don't know what it is ... (92)

Moroslav will not agree to have his son go off to that Willington College a thousand miles away or agree to have obligations by the man his wife visits six days a week. Marijana is much depressed. Rayment also felt bad to see her in depression. He thinks if he were young he would gather Marijana in his arms and kiss away her tears. "Forgive me, forgive me,"(124). He would say.

Chapter eighteen opens with a visitor at Rayment' flat who is not stranger to him. Someone who is unexpected but undesired? It was Drago Jokic with his bag and baggage comes with any information. Drago wants to know what the reason behind his attachment to his family. Why he is so much concerned? Why he gave assurance of his college fees as everybody want to know. He answers that he has a soft corner for her because she had worked in his flat for him, and because she has made his life with some good colours that has gone after Magill road accident. Therefore he wants to help her. He tells to Drago, "In the time your mother has worked here. I have developed a soft spot for her, Drago. She has made a huge difference to my life. She does not have an easy time of it, we both know that. I want to help where I can" (132).

There had a fight in Jokic's family, so, Drago came here because they had a fight in their house on this matter of Marijana and Rayment. Marijana has gone to stay with his sister in law at Elizabeth North, Miroslav hit Marijana and his daughter not Blanka but his little daughter Ljuba because Blanka sides with her father and say that her mother has an affair because Marijana is a, " faithful spouse" (133). As Elizabeth says about Marijana.

He came here because he had troubling through about his mother and Paul Rayment. He tells him that there is nothing dishonorable between them. He honours her as much as any women on earth. They had not any affair. We must not call it an affair because, "she would not dream of it but what about Rayment who dreams of it daily what about that stories are being whisper in the rather narrow circle of the Croatian community" (136). There is spreading rumors everywhere about their affair. It is gossip not truth because they had not sexual relation. But nobody count sexual inter course nowadays. Nobody can be sure of the truth inside doors. Elizabeth tries to make him understand but he shakes his head. "I don't understand your meaning. You make no sense at all."(137).

Elizabeth wants only to do something with his love while he is old enough for passions. Drago and Elizabeth talk about them and smile to each other as if something is there preplanned between them. There is a long discussion between Drago and Elizabeth. Elizabeth describes that M. Rayment has an accident as a result of which he loses a leg. He engages a nurse to look after him. And in no time has fallen in love with her.

He ever dreams of engendering a son. In this case of Rayment how should be reacted by Rayment and what should be next step of him they discuss this. Elizabeth shouts:

does he blindly follow the promptings of his desire as his desire strives to brings itself to fruition; or, having weighed up the pro and cons, does he conclude that throwing himself heart and soul into a love with a married women be imprudent, and creep into his shell/"(138).

Rayment does not lied their talking and forbade them to talk about him. How he conducts his life is his own business and no stranger should interfere. All are unhappy after this. Drago is unhappy because the ructions at home have forced him to go out of his home. Marijana is unhappy because she must take shelter in her sister in low's house. Miroslav is not happy because people are laughing at him. Everyone is disturbed with Paul's love with Marijana. Nobody can understand his feeling that he feels in a different way and not for Marijana only but for Drago's father he admits. Elizabeth is only with whom nobody feels.

There are all the themes which are obvious in one's life as the tyranny of aging, the appeal of youth, the hope and hope and madness of love, the difficulty in learning to live fully, fearing to be the main character in one's life. J.M.Coetzee has much to say about these matters and many others in *slow man*, beautifully composed deeply thought, wonderfully written. Coetzee has profound things to say about ageing, writing and accepting one's lot in life. It's probably too strange to win another prize. But this seems unlikely to concern him. It is true that Coetzee." He has earned the right to make fun at fiction, and die – hard fans will delight in this *jeu* despite." (Thorne) The one Sensation that stayed with me throughout the book was of loneliness and the desperate, painful flight against it when it seems to be your fate. Neither writing nor life can assuage the pain of dying alone. Rayment a man of sixty years old is struck by a car driven by a young man. One of Rayment's legs has to be amputated. He is at the stage of life when everybody wants to be cured by family or children. But he has no family. Nobody wants to see him. to Marijana he is simply her latest client. A pale – Skinned, stock – thawed old man on crutches. He feels shame before Marijana. Who is, "sallow – faced woman, if not quite middle – aged, exhibits a thickening about the waist that is quite matronly" (27). He is fully frustrated by life. Even so, he feels shame before Marijana and before Marijana too, as if the ruddy good health of the mother and the angelic clarity of the child were pronouncing a joint judgment on him." He finds himself avoiding the child's gaze, hide and out in his armchair in a corner of the living – room as if the flat belonged to the two woman and he were some pest, some rodent that had found its way in" .(39).

He does not care to become the object of any woman's sexual charity. Nor does he care to expose to the gaze of an outsider. He likes Drago, a boy of sixteen. Who is full of enthusiasm? Drago stays out every evening, neglecting his homework, missing meals. He with his friends hangs out practicing skids. As an experienced man he tells Marijana that nobody can stop young men from exploring their limits. They want to be the fastest. Rayment has no children, no family of his own, because he is a divorced now. He and his wife did not get around making family. Before they knew about its need to their life they were divorced. He worries about because in this stage of life when he grew old and children more. As he says himself. "On the contrary, I worried about it more and more particularly as i grew older (42). His marriage was not a happy one. They both did not care about making family even after his wife remarried with a man who was divorce himself and had children of his own. Who is going to take care of him now at this stage of life? Who is going to be his support? While he has no one except his nurse Marijana who is only for the immediate future. He is full of regrets because he doesn't have a son and says himself." It would be nice to have a daughter, girls have an appeal of their own, but the son he have is the only he truly misses (44). If he and his wife had a son, if they cared about each other, their son would be thirty years old by now he thinks. Sometimes they would be chatting on some topic like men's talk. His son would say, "You have done your duty taken care of me, no it is my turn, I will take care of you"(45).

It's a fact that when we are at the stage of growing old we need a support of family, affection of children, and a warm support of young son which is more important at this time. He could be the father of a son by adopt an orphan or by marry a woman but it is not a baby he wants. He wants a son, a proper son, who would b an heir, a younger, and stronger better version of himself. He is much attracted with Drago and wants



to help him in his career. He offers to sponsor Drago, at a private school, Wellington at Canberra. He motives are not entirely straight forward; he lusts after the solid, capable Marijana, and own. While Marijana's husband Miroslav rejects the proposal to sponsor his son at private school, which provokes a family rift and the boy move in with Rayment. At that point Rayment discovers that teenagers are not ideal companions for a childless man in his sixties. He is much attracted with Marijana. But we can call this type of sentiments towards her, is only admiration for the very first. It does not feel like desire at all. Can desire grows of admiration or both are the two quite distinct species? What would it be like lie to side by side, naked, and breast, with a woman one principally admires? May be or may be not answer this question.

There is another theme is 'madness of love' in the Slow Man. He falls in love with Marijana. Sometimes he thinks to touch her but cannot because he does not want to lose her trust for he is prepared to bet that if he could so, he would overcome all that rectitude of hers. He should not even think of it. He loves and reveals his feeling to her despite the fact that she has a family of her own struggling to make it in Australia. He is truly faithful to her. He has an old lover called Margaret, who wished to renew his interest in sexuality. Clearly Margaret is farming his earliest world. He dismisses her. Instead he tries to involve Marijana in a financial deal which will tie her family to him. He becomes very happy having Marijana back when she came after a week. He was so excited and drank that night. At the same time he is drunk with the pleasure of having her back, excited too by the money he is about to give away. He feels jealousy with Mr. Jockic, husband of Marijana. Sometimes he makes jokes about him because he envies him. Sometimes he thinks that Jockic is much richer than him because he has Marijana, the admirable woman, and children who came out from her, Ljubica the pretty middle daughter and the dashing boy. Jockic has them all and he has nothing except a flat full of books and furniture, a collection of photography, images of the dead past. This after his own death will gather dust in the library. He proposes Marijana and let her know his inner feelings for her which she must know, as "Surely a woman always knows". She never answers as she is a faithful wife. He wants to make himself interesting to Drogo. But he has nothing to offer him. A broken bicycle, "A truncated limb, probably more repellent"(76) than attractive and a cabinet full of pictures. While he is an old man without any attraction of young, having no valve, too old for passions, too tired for the job as Coetzee explains here:

Never is he going to have his old resilience. Whatever inside him was given the task of mending the organism after it was so terribly assaulted, first on the road, then in the operating theatre, has grown too tired for the job, too over – burdened need ... the heart, the lungs, the muscles, the brain. They did for him what they could as long as they could; now they want to rest. (53)

He is found of children. He has all the feelings of a mother. Coetzee defines his character as, "He is like a woman who, having never borne a child, having grown too old for it now hungers suddenly and urgently for motherhood. Hungry enough to steal another's child: It is as mad as that" (73)

Sometime Marijana also can feel his eyes on her. She can feel the warmth coming from him, caressing her thighs, her breasts. He thinks sometimes if by some miracle he could embrace Marijana right now. But he can't he sighs. He takes interest Ljuba, a child, for the first time at the day of dusting book selves by Marijana. He offers plum jam to Ljuba who seems to like it. He has never been a man of passions if we see his record in life. He has never been fond of immoderacy, immodesty, wild motions, grunts and shouts and cries. He has been a 'Pukkah little Catholic boy' and had his schooling from the good sisters of Lourdes. As soon as he arrived in Ballarat he was committed to the care of Christian brothers. As a child he was not outstanding at anything, just good. He decided to take science as seemed a good bet in those days. His sister used to teach there. But when his mother died he dropped out of university and gone to Europe and stayed with his grandmother. He found job in a photo lab. There his career in photography began. He had two assistant. One of them falls in love with Rayment. That was not love but adoration. She was a pretty, perfectly intelligent girl, twenty years old. Her name was Ellen. But he did not love her. He took her to bed. She thanked him and crying in his arms with saying thank you thrice. Here, we came to know another girl loved by Rayment. Her father was disagree and summoned her with another man and she obeyed and that was the end of the affair.

He loves Marijana and pays attention to her every activity. But Marijana does not love him even sometimes she does not respond his talking. He cannot remember her ever responding to his humour, he thinks, "Is he too frivolous for her taste? Does she find him too light, too light weight, too much of a joker?" (173). When Rayment is treated by Marijana as she washes his stump which he calls "le Jambon", and help him exercises, he feels that it should go on forever. That time he does not want to imagine God but love to imagine Marijana at this moment.

He knows very well that, "If you love deeply enough, it is not necessary to be loved back" (201). Marijana cares him as it is her profession. She does housekeeping besides her profession of nursing for 'extra money'. She is a good nurse she helps him patiently without baby talk of Sheena. She shops for him, cooks his meals and cleans his house. She soaps and washes his stump. But he does not like to call it stumps:

He is interested to note how devoid of double entendre the exchange is. To himself he does not call it a stump. He would like not to call it anything; he would like not to think about it, but that is not possible. If he has a name for it, it is le jambon. Le jambon keeps it at a nice, contemptuous distance. (29)

Each morning she takes him through his exercises, massages his body and wasting muscles and helps him in doing what he cannot do without a helping hand. She treats him delicately she says that, he can tell her if it hurts, but actually it never hurts him. There is nothing in his life without Marijana. He has barely looked of sun when she does not come to him. He has not eaten properly. He has no appetite and does not bother to take care of himself when she leaves him alone. We can see in the chapter twenty six which describes another accident of Rayment but this time not on Magill Road but at his own both room. He feels unable to sit him up. It was the day when Drago left his flat. He puts things at the right place. Then he takes a shower. In the shower he by accident drops the flask of shampoo. As he bends to pick it up the Zimmer frame, which he always brings into the cubicle with him, slips sideways. He loses his footing and falls, slamming his head against the wall. He is unable to sit up with one leg. He thanks to God that Drago is not here to make jokes. He finds himself being doused with cold. The controllers are beyond his reach. He is shivering due to cold as he has, "old blood, cold blood." Not enough heat in the veins" (208). At this moment what he needs, however, "is not that dismaying and depressing prospect but this soft consoling, and eminently feminine presence" (208).

Lacking of completeness is another reason of his frustration. He thinks that he is not complete man who can deal with any affair of his life. He suspects on his sexual part of his life. On asking to make relation with Mariana by Elizabeth he feels much disturbed:

It is like a sea beating against his skull indeed, for all he knows he could already be lost overboard, tugged to and from by the currents of the deep. The slap of water that will in time strip his bones of the last silver of flesh. Pearls of his eyes; coral of his bones. (100).

There one thing that happens beyond expectations when Costello woman bring Marianna with her in his flat. She is a blind helpless girl like Rayment. Elizabeth proposes that he has sex with a blind woman called Marianna, who will not see his mutilated leg, and indeed he does that. Although he suspects she might just be a call girl pretending to be blind and brought into the story by Elizabeth Costello, who is fairly promiscuous with the truth. Elizabeth inspires Rayment to enjoy his life Marianna, "Be advised Paul. The years go by as quickly as a wink. So, enjoy yourself while you're still in the pink. It's always later than you think." (99). He was not expecting this, He does not wish a next visit of Marianna may be in future Elizabeth has another an alternative story when he wants an assurances, that the woman who came to his flat was truly the woman he saw in the lift, that her name is truly Marianna. He feels bad after hearing this and thinks himself a, "Solemn fool", (116). And thinks that Marianna must have laughed in the taxi all the way home.

Elizabeth treats him like a puppet in all that she makes stories and bullies her characters into playing them out for her. Rayment shouts:



You should open puppet or a zoo. There must be plenty of old zoos for sale. Now that they have fallen out of fashion... you could charge admission. You could make living out of it. Parents could bring their children at weekends to group at us and throw peanuts.(117)

He has faithful desire for Marijana. He finds Elizabeth so colorless, so featureless. He has not looked at Elizabeth Costello in a long while, not properly except one day when he pays most attention and would like to help her in practice at respects. But he is not an exceptional , just for her sake.

There is another main theme of the novel; Slow Man is learning to be the main character in one's life. Everyone wants to be the main character in one's life. Life is full of action, drama, passions. One has to perform it through actions. Rayment is not a hero in life after amputee. He is slow in life. One without a leg does not qualify one for a dramatic role. It's happens in one's life just unfortunately. It's, "neither tragic nor comic" (117). Elizabeth is a professional writer. She writes novels, romances. She is not a friend of Rayment. She hunts around for character to put in a book. She is taking him also. But actually he is not fit for this role but she is trying to make him fit. He thinks that she is trying to take over his life. They met and lived in a flat it's God's will. Elizabeth says herself.

How you and I become coupled God alone knows, for we were certainly not meant for each other. But here we are. You want to be with Marijana but are saddled with me instead. I would prefer a more interesting subject but am saddled with you, the one – legged man who cannot make up his mind. (139).

Costello takes him in her writing while he is such a "small fish", She wants him as a 'model for a character in a book. She is too professional as well as a doctor, a lawyer or an accountant. Rayment says, "But you are a professional, I remind myself, in the business of confidences, like a doctor or a lawyer or on accountant ... or a priest ..." (156). He wants his old life back that came to an end on Magill road. He calls Mrs. Costello "valpine". He came to aware of a certain quality about her, "valpine rather than canine," (123). He was happy in his life if not fully but at least he could cook, shop for himself. Al of sudden his life has been changed itself by Magill road accident by Wayne Blight, an angel of death. He has been haunted by the idea of doing well with others which he calls... "Blessing" (155) within. He says himself in this statement which was going with Elizabeth .

I have no intention of forgiving the boy who drove his car into me, no matter what Jesus may say. But Marijana and her children – I want to extend a protective hand over them. I want to bless them and make them thrive. That is something you ought to take account of in me, and I don't think you do. (157).

Elizabeth calls him a, tortoise character" (228) because he remained very slow in life. He had waited for the coming of second thoughts. In his days at France he had worked outside. His friends were too focus on their aim they were about to achieve, the girls they were going to marry with. At the same time he is proud that he has done no significant harm an lifetime, but aware that he has done no good either. He had sniffed the air for ages before sick his head out. Because every blessed step costs such an effort. Because every blessed step costs such an effect. He should perform like Don Quixote. Don Quixote is not about a man sitting in a chair. It is about a man who claps a basin on his head and clammers onto the back of his faithful old plough – horse and sallies forth to do great deeds. Likewise he should learn by the very well saying of Alonso. "We only live once" an inspired line of Emma, "So let's give it a whirl"! (229). Everybody should live like a hero classics also teach as "Be a main character. Otherwise what is life for?"(299). Costello, as a writer not only knows almost everything about Rayment's about predicament, but can recite lines from the novel in which he is trapped, emphasizing that he is a fictional character and she is his creator.

This is not the first time that Coetzee has employed post modern devices – in Foe (1986) he imagined an alternative version of Robinson Crusoe in with Crusoe in with Crusoe and Man Friday were joined on their island by a woman named Susan Barton – and there is always a danger that such devices can seem unnecessarily tricks, or, in 2005 dated. But Coetzee is so delicate a writer that it's impossible not to enjoy the entertaining scenario he has created here.

No matter how much Castello taunts Rayment, he refuses to behave in an interesting manner, Costello claims she has to sleep rough and eat sparingly while she waits for him to become the hero of his own tale. She tries to warn him off sleeping with his nurse, steering him, instead towards a blind woman he photographed many years before. He finds himself a fool after doing what Elizabeth misleads with Marianna for which he was not fully desired. He says, "But we are grown people, so why we are letting someone we barely know dictate our lives? That is what I ask myself"(111). In fact, Elizabeth's arrival suggests that the stakes in this novel about aging are personal. Since the demise of apartheid, the vegetarian Coetzee has shifted his attention from racial injustice to the atrocities that humans commit against animals. For Elizabeth, his activist alter ego, he even invented *The Lives of Animals*, a collection of 'fictional' lecture. He tries to fulfill his loneliness in whole life. He says himself a godfather to his family. He defines godfather in these words:

The godfather is the man who stands by the side of the father at the baptismal font, or hovers over his head, giving his blessing to the child and swearing his life long support. As the priest... is the personification of the Son and intercessor, and the father is of course the father, so the godfather is the personification of the Holy Ghost(186).

He, a figure without substance, beyond anger and desire wants to help his family while wants nothing in return. He doesn't want to take his children away from Miroslav.

Another important theme in the novel is homesickness of immigrants. Paul Rayment is a Frenchman who has memories of his homeland. He feels sorry that he was not successful. He had missed too much a French schooling, youthful friendship and love. His cousins and other people of his age were already settled into their lives. He is a book collector as well as a memory Saver in the photographs. Some photographs remind him of days with his friends on their Sunday beat. They used to be full of energy, confidence and enthusiasm which seem to have absent from the face of the earth. There is one thing common of both (Rayment and Marijana) we want to add here is that they both are immigrants. In Europe people say that Australia has no history because of the mob of immigrants. Are immigrants having no history of their own? Coetzee himself is an immigrant who currently residing in Australia lived in United States and England, has spent a life in exile. He has no country. and his new cause goes ridiculed. He himself says in *Slow Man*:

'Home ... What does the mean? I told you what I think about home. A pigeon has a home, a bee has a home. An Englishman has a home, perhaps. I have a domicile, a residence. This is my residence. This flat. This city. This country. Home is too mystical for me' (197)

Rayment is not an Australian not French today. Immigrants face problem in new country and always seek affection amongst new people. Coetzee has also no country.

*Slow Man* can be read as the story of a story where author, implied author, and characters play out the drama of their lives either by melting into one another or by pushing one another into difficult spots. Coetzee on his part plays on the convention of multiple narratives and begins by telling the story of Paul Rayment, an accident victim coming to terms with his amputated leg in Adelaide, Australia. The fact that the story of what would otherwise have been a process of rehabilitation becomes the story of his erotic desire – which, in turn, spawns stories of children, family aspiration, teenage dreams, home and displacement, poverty and charity – can be seen as part of Coetzee's by – now familiar informed and ironical use of postmodernist conventions. Yet, as Coetzee's recent critics argue, this ambiguous attempt at a new ethics (Attridge 90)

The victim's nurse, Marijana Jokic, a first generation Australian of East European origin specifically hired on a rehabilitation package, is projected as an elusive woman whose love Rayment must have. He sees Marijana as a sort of willing Madonna who would liberate him from his childless status, an image that echoes Bloom's aching desire for a child in Joyce's *Ulysses*: "A woman built for motherhood. Marijana would have helped him out of childlessness. Marijana could mother six, ten, twelve, and still have love left over, mother-love. But too late now: how sad, how sorry! (34) Elsewhere, "It is Marijana's smile, lingering in his memory that brings about the longed – for, the long – needed changed. At once all gloom is gone, all dark clouds... He is like a woman who. Having never borne a child, having grown too old for it, now hungers suddenly and urgently for

motherhood. Hungry enough to steal another's child: It is as mad as that" (27-30). As Rayment endlessly fantasizes his erotic associations with Marijana, and sees Marijana's love as his real need for any meaningful rehabilitation- and the futility of this desire- he makes what seems to be an unreasonable offer to finance the college education of Drago. Marijana's teenage son. Marijana and her husband definitely need help to send their son to a college that fascinates the boy, but the husband is not willing to accept, at least not without several bouts of moral exhalations, financial help from a stranger.

Given that the offer comes after Marijana herself invites Rayment into what is otherwise private turf for the family is an encouraging sign for him. In fact, when Marijana asks Rayment to speak at Drago about the dangers of careless driving, the temporariness of youth, and the worth of life itself (68 – 69), which he does, but for a price, a whole range of newly- fashioned erotic and moral doubling gets worked into the text. In the first place, Marijana's invitation to Rayment already invests in him a kind of fatherhood of the son by implication, resulting in a father-son, one-to-one association. "Look, I'm nothing to you, just the man your mother looks after and very grateful to her for that... don't take risks with your life, son, it's not worth it... Do you understand?" (69). But as we can see, the moral has an erotic and subterranean double. For, this fatherly role already makes Rayment a claimant to some position, however indistinct, in Marijana's bed.

This doubling further strengthened as Rayment is pushed to the wall having to explain why he wants to favour the children of his nurse, who is ethically bound to him by way of professional service where neither nurse nor patient can seek or offer personal favours. Rayment, already rejected by Marijana, writes a letter to her husband, first of all to apologize to him for his moral indiscretions and to rescue a photograph "stolen" and tampered with by Drago. But he inserts into the letter a piece of fiction that rationalizes his desire to re-sire Marijana's children in his new role as godfather (123-24), a [ppr compensation when compared to what his nurse could have given him: "If we had had but five minutes more, that afternoon, if Ljuba had not come prowling like a little watchdog, Marijana would have kissed me. It was coming.. Home country" (235).

Instead, we are presented with a series of subplots, sub fictional narratives that work as an allegory of writing into what would otherwise remain a story of unfulfilled sexual quests.

The story of Paul Rayment is both advanced and challenged by the appearance of Elizabeth Costello- an old writer looking for a home of settle in, and love and company – who begin to advise Rayment on his affairs. She not only 'interprets' Rayment's offer to support Drago's college education as the first step towards translating his sexual desire into a socially acceptable gesture but also argue that Rayment's attempt is clearly one of creating a moral fiction out of an immoral deed that show how incompatible this desire is in physical terms, given Marijana's fullness and youth and the accident victim's age and handicap.

Elizabeth Costello arrange for Rayment to meet and consort with a woman who is supposed to be blind. The woman is a sort of double for Marijana, and her separate identity is supposed to be marked by the absence of the letter 'j' and the presence of two n's, Costello argues that Rayment cannot have a physical relationship with somebody as full and physically active as the nurse Marijana. She suggests that Marijana's blindness and Rayment's present deformity are logical figuration of physical lacks and compensatory measure. Costello remarks to Rayment on love and sex not only read like an experienced person's tips to a novice but also betray a sense of superiority issues out to the apparent knowledge that Rayment is a character, a figure of fiction that is already limited by its linguistic boundaries, whereas Costello herself enjoys a tacit advantage in terms of relative freedom and ontological positioning. The following two passages show this cold war between character and the implied –author persona, making the fictional divide between author and character, creator and creation, a met fictional paradox :

What Marianna aches for is not consolation, much less worship, but love in its most physical expression. She wants to be, no matter how briefly, as she was before, as you in your way want to be as you were before. I say to you: why not see what you can achieve together, you and Marianna, she blind, you halt (97).

...She lost her sight a year ago, as the result of a malignancy, a tumour. Lost one whole eye, tragically excised, and the use of the other too. Before the calamity she was beautiful, or at least highly attractive; today, alas, she is unsightly in the way that all blind people are unsightly... she is conscious of the gaze of others like fingers groping at her., groping and retreating... (96).

The character-imitating-author-imitating-God operates like the impresario in the plays-within-plays as seen in Shakespeare, especially in a play like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that indicates the novel's affiliation with the tradition of self – conscious fiction. In fact, Costello as the implied author-Goddess gently pushes the character Rayment to situations designed by her. Costello's attempts to manufacture an affair between Rayment and Marianna not only parodies creation myths but also man's ultimate answerability to God. and God's responsibility towards man. The irony is of a male author generation ad gendering a female character and desire irrespective of gender.

As Costello says, "Nothing that happens in our lives is without meaning, Paul, as any child can tell you. That is one of the lesson stories teach us, one of the many lessons. Have you given up reading stories? A You shouldn't "(96) . The fact that Rayment is required – and not requested as he would like to think – to consort with Marianna , the women who in only a shadow, a sort of linguistic double of Marijana.

For, on the one hand, the whole may be seen as an attempt on Costello's part not only to draw Rayment away from Marijana but also to kill his desire for his nurse, already parodying the possible doubling of Freud's representation of Oedipal obsessions through the nurse-patient/mother-son parallel. Coetzee's use of the character of Costello as an implied author-persona not only brings to the fore the problem of the author's supposed objectivity and neutrality but also interrogates the possibility of framing the author's neurotic desires and obsessions.

The story turn on its head when the sub –text of sexual jealousy reaches its climax, forcing Rayment to visit the Jokic family. He is on an express mission to catch Drago for stealing and distorting a prize photo with great cultural value. He sees Marijana's elusive remarks on Drago's role in distorting the photograph as a sign of her moral laxity, and wants to use this fact as a tool to censure her. He wants to have his revenge against Marijana by exposing what he sees as her moral hollowness, more to moral considerations than lack of desire. It is clear that this is ironical because he has in the past bribed a store into desisting from police action against Marijana's teenage daughter for what was clearly an act of shoplifting. The Jokics males imagine Rayment's sexual life after the accident differently. This is a gift that the Jokics seem to offer him out of moral concern for a physically disadvantaged man, and as a mark of gratitude for what he has done for the family.

It is not difficult to see that they know of Rayment's designs on Marijana though the narrative self-consciously plays on this aspect of the story either to plays on Rayment's failure to articulate what he actually feels for Marijana. The fact that they offer him the nonsexual pleasure of bicycle-riding as a practical alternative to his erotic dreams without any bitterness points it is necessary to note that Rayment's accident involved this very cycle, and the time and place of the near-fatal accident as recalled by the narrative several times clearly suggest a periodic insertion of the Joycean Eros-Thant's combination in art, "How did it feel to Wayne, when the missile he was piloting in a haze of loud music dog into the sweet softness of human flesh ? A surprise, no doubt, unexpected, unintended; yet not unpleasurable in its way". The inscription of sexuality into the accident is at once indicative of violent human contact- rape, for example- and violation of social contract- "the riding of pushbikes on busy streets"(20) . It carries the seeds of destruction of morality can be seen from this dramatization of what is perhaps an imagined piece of advice from father to son:" Be respectful to the old bugger, say you're sorry, but at all cost do not admit you did anything wrong' (20) . Rayment wants to reinvest Marijana with sexual functions for his own pleasure, which she, in turn, steadfastly resists. At the same time, the understanding shown by the father- son duo indicates common threads uniting the lives of all men. While all have sexual desires and sexual fantasies, few get the chance to translate them into reality. In other words, a man may understand another man's sexual compulsions and miseries better than any other person. That is called male mythologies. Role- playing – whether of father, caretaker, lover, master, brother, sister, and so on, plays a significant role in the novel.

Rayment allows Drago to use his computer and photography equipment, and this is when the latter 'plays' with an important photograph. The implications are metafictional, no doubt, in that instead of presenting Rayment's sexual desire and uncertainties in straight terms, they are presented as figurations of artistic desire and uncertainty, as done in most modernist texts (Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* are fine examples). The novel plays on the idea of caring for as essentially one of imposing one's fiction on another. The Jokic males gift a symbolic sex-toy to Rayment, whereas Elizabeth Costello wants to take care of Rayment by being his lover, caretaker, manager.

Having seen himself as a character in a book, Rayment looks at a Costello novel and asks: "Why, Why? Why does she ask a question and not give the answer? The answer is simple: the red and the blue and the green will never return because of entropy, which is irrevocable and irreversible and rules the universe. Even a literary person ought to know that, even a lady novelist" (119).

It is possible to look at Rayment's realization that the character is but a plaything in the writer's hands as part of the allegory of writing that we see in metafictional narratives. In fact, one could immediately recall such metafictional works as Willie Mster's *Lonesome Wife* by William Gass.

In this novel the 'leap-frogging' author disrupts the ontological divide which should ideally separate 'story as life' from 'life as story'. In Elizabeth Costello and *Slow Man* the distinction between the author and the implied author gets further complicated by the strategic location of the author as an implied character. This is a dilemma common to Coetzee's fiction and in a way remains the ruling allegorical device. In *Foe* for example, the story of Susan Barton and Cruso, the enigmatic rescuer, master, shadow, and part time lover of the former, is presented as a rescued story that needs, and still needs, revisions and necessary corrections by a writer named Daniel Defoe. Defoe in this case would be a person representing the implied author. But the love story is revised and indeed revisited and reframed by JM Coetzee. By choosing to ignore the boundary between fictional space and what Paul de Man calls "Contractual agreement" (Rhetoric 70-1), the author seems to text. Formalist criticism would consider this a weakness, a fallacy of sorts. In metafictional writing, this weakness is a very subject of writing.

It would be instructive to recall how the narrative began by dwelling on the relationship between an accident, designed by destiny and nobody else, and an event designed by the author, and event insofar as a character is concerned:

An accident: something that befalls one, something unintended, unexpected. By that definition he, Paul Rayment, had an accident. What of Wayne Blight? Did Wayne Blight have an accident too...? A surprise, no doubt, unintended, unexpected; yet not unpleasurable in its own way. Could what occurred at the ill-starred crossroad truly be said to have befallen him Wayne? If there was any befalling done, it was in his view, Wayne who befell him (21).

Surely, in self-referential and discursive passage such as this one finds the text with its metafictional moments. The passages interrogate the divide between the author and his creation, and point to fiction's contractual and contingent bonding with what could be called the possible world. But the possible world is affiliated either to God or to the novelist. Repeatedly, Coetzee's fiction plays on the theme of filiations and anxiety and brings to the foreground such Blooming figures as "Louis and Oedipus at the crossroads" (Anxiety 9). Yet, at the very moment of what would appear to be a metafictional celebration of the supremacy of fiction itself, the insertion of moral issues gives a new sense of urgency to Coetzee's art. *Slow Man* is dark and yet too playful to be considered morose. On the other hand not to see the dark underbelly of the dark humour surrounding creation would violate the very otherness of Coetzee's ethics.

## CONCLUSION

The style of writing creates a special set of conditions where by the reader has to analyze the character's actions against the character's own indications without requiring recourse to extraneous circumstances. Context is merely a back drop which adds flavor to what is in essence, a psychological story. So,

it really doesn't matter where the author lives or sets his novels, and while his writing remains uniquely South African. There are no lengthy flashbacks to Paul's prior life and we are invited to accompany him on a journey to discover fulfillment in life in the face of oblivion. He develops a peculiar affection for the nurse Marijana Jockic, who is a Croatian immigrant. At the same time, Paul bewails the fact that his only legacy—a considerable collection of antiquated, artistic photographs—does not bring him fulfillment. In a vertiginous act, Paul proclaims his love for Marijana, who is married, while offering to pay her teenage son's education.

Anguished by his consuming passion and distraught over Marijana's absence for a few days, however, instead of wanting to pursue his love interest, Paul tries to write a letter which will turn his into a fatherly concern. While he struggles to get his pen going, Elizabeth Costello busts on to the out of nowhere. She literally rings his doorbell and announces that the reason she's there is that Paul, "came to her" our hero is bewildered and that she is going to accompany him.

Elizabeth Costello remains an ontological mystery throughout the book—she is a writer who has come to research Paul as the subject of her next story, or has Paul in his solitude dreamt her up. Another option which Paul considers is that he has actually died in the cycling accident and that Elizabeth Costello has been appointed to oversee his transition into the netherworld. At the same time Elizabeth is JM Coetzee's alter ego deposited into the fictional world of the novel from the real world where she exists as a fiction. "By introducing Elizabeth Costello into *Slow Man*, Mr. Coetzee substitutes dull metafictional questions he has been in the process of asking:

... Certainly the ending of *Slow Man*, which finds Costello and Rayment at an impasse suggests that even fictional lives are less susceptible to manipulation than the reader casually supposes. But there questions are so laboriously posed, and so much less humanity interesting than the relationship between Paul and Marijana, that all Mr. Coetzee finally accomplishes in *Slow Man* is to run a promising novel of the rails. (Kirsch)

Costello first appeared in 1997, in a journal article by Coetzee called 'What is Realism?' later took centre stage in *The Lives of Animals* (1999)—quite literally, being Coetzee's preferred voice for the Princeton Tanner lectures on which that book was based—and has since featured as a *deus ex machina* author figure in his novel, *Slow Man*.

Images and vocabulary of religion fill the book at first, Costello seems to be a kind of author—god an omniscient character, someone with knowledge and control. She comes to seem, though more and more humane, as if she is her own Nietzsche. Characters try to find meaning in life and death; they cling to whatever faith they can. They cling to memories, to stories, to whatever they can grasp onto as somehow being real and authentic.

More important point one discerns here is Coetzee's fiction critically explored the notion that literature as one knows it can promote human ideals. We have a learned prejudice that Western high culture can help twenty-first-century men and women. His work constitutes a radical challenge to this prejudice.

*Slow Man* by contrast, unfolds resolutely in our shared historical present—that is, in the wake of apartheid's collapse. Close in temperament to the sober realism of his most recent novels, *Disgrace* (1998) and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), *Slow Man* also has the whiff of mortality found in his memoirs, *Boyhood* (1997) and *Youth* (2002). Paul Rayment rouses from bitterness when a nurse, Marijana, rekindles his passions. Before romance can bloom, however, the prickly Melbourne novelist Elizabeth Costello enters the scene. She appears at Paul's doorstep to read him the first sentence of a work in progress, which also happens to be the first sentence of *Slow Man*. "You came to me," Elizabeth explains. "Also along with, Miroslav Jockic, the Croatian refugee—yes, that is his name, Miroslav, his friends call him Mel—and your inchoate attachment to his wife." (85) At first blush, this *deus ex machina*—lifted from another Coetzee novel—is an unwelcome interloper.



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