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## **Meursault and Musa: An Intertextual Reading of *The Stranger* and *The Meursault Investigation***

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### **Abstract:**

In this paper, I intend to examine the various facets of intertextuality, and discuss some of the theorists' propagated views with reference to the novels, *The Stranger* (1942) by Albert Camus and *The Meursault Investigation* (2015) by Kamel Daoud, that I hope to discuss at length. The two novels are bound together through the discourse of intertextuality, prima facie. The novels, separated in time, with seven decades between them, encapsulate the shared tropes of existential theory to being partly psychological and a whole lot postcolonial in discourse. The two works share an undeniable dialogic relation between them. Written as a discreet (yet obvious, with the title) sequel to Camus's *The Stranger*, I wish to locate the two novels within their orbit of functioning to observe and see how intertextuality acts as a synthesizing element at various levels.

**Keywords:** intertextuality, palimpsest, language, literature, influence.

“What matter who's speaking, someone said, what matter who's speaking?”

(Samuel Beckett)

“Fiction reveals the truth that reality obscures.”

(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

In her article *Intertextuality: An Introduction*, Elaine Martin writes “Intertextuality, which has occasionally been used somewhat blithely to designate interdisciplinary and comparative investigations of various sorts, may, in its theorization and historicization, not be blithe at all” (1). Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* is an intricately layered text, which re-views Albert Camus's novel, *The Stranger* as well as makes one ponder upon the blatant reality that the Algerian war was. It makes one re-consider the atrocities, the history and politics- of both reality and literature; colonialism and post colonialism; language and perspective, through the trope of intertextuality. My intertextual reading of the two novels, I

think, systematically tracks the movement of discourses that took place within the gap of seven decades between the two novels.

For Harun, the narrator-protagonist of Daoud's novel, Meursault's versions of the events play as a pre-text to his situation, formation of *being* and national identity. The architecture of Camus's writing lends itself to layer complexities and synchronicity with Daoud's fiction. One of the main tenets of Julia Kristeva's and Harold Bloom's theories on the study of intertextuality is the fact that all texts in some way or the other owe allegiance, whether we accept or not, to other, preceding texts. Julia Kristeva defines intertextuality as "*a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another*" (Kristeva 37). The term Intertextuality itself was coined by Kristeva in the 1960s, the epoch that saw the transition from structuralism to poststructuralism. Kristeva in her theory imbibed ideas from Saussure's systematic components of language and Bakhtin's views on the social context of language as well as Derridian, Lacanian and Barthes's theories.

Intertextuality in its essence deals with the idea that each reader's interpretation of the text is subject to their idiosyncratic perspective, experiences and history. From the very first line of Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*, one notices the evident usage of a counter-approach to Camus's *The Stranger*.

Maman died today. Or yesterday. (Camus 1)

Mama's still alive today. (Daoud 1)

A clear, evidential marker of intertextuality- the former narrator's existential, indifferent view is juxtaposed with the latter's challenge, in some ways of taking on the occident's work and of his narrative truth. Literature is often described by the formalists as mere contestation of language, but it is very well one's representation of reality- a *simulacra* that provides a substitute of reality. Literature is all about truth in all its facets (social, cultural, historical). The truth of Daoud's fiction lies in its capacity to extend and blend together the reality of the world at large and taking on one of the greats of French canons. There is kind of distillation, if one could call that, in Daoud's preoccupation to address one major issue- the realities of post-war, postcolonial Algeria, through the viewfinder of *The Stranger*.

One of the uniting features of these two novels, is that the authors voices seem to merge with the voice of the first person narrator, yet, the voices are distinguishable from each others. One can easily identify Meursault's, Musa's and the secondary character's voices,

like the interrogators and the religious priest's. This is evidential of heteroglossia in which "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intention but in a refracted way" takes place. Critically analyzing the novel, I came to the conclusion as Bakhtin is of the opinion, "the characters were not an object of authorial discourse, but rather a valid carrier of his/her own autonomous world", which is Bakhtin's idea of the *polyphonic*- which describes a literary tradition, open to various interpretations and voices. The outlook supports well, my view of seeing the latter novel as an integral tradition to which *The Stranger* belongs to. While at the same time, *The Meursault Investigation*, brings in more than just the angst of the central character but also the emerging vortex of post colonialism. The sense of existence and angst is also in the postcolonial sentiment of the latter novel. Central to Bakhtin's work is the workings of the simple yet complex concept of language and its philosophy. His studies have also helped widen the knowledge and understanding of the other and how the self is always in dialogue with the other- as is Musa with Meursault. Identity becomes dialogic and the enjoining spirit becomes the ideology- which also becomes the vehicle that enables the dialogue.

The author has traditionally been seen as the originator of the meaning of the work. Barthes's theory instead, disrupts the claim and suggests that the meaning behind the words of the author does not originate from the author's own self (consciousness) but from the wide minefield of linguistics which is open to many an interpretation by the reader-critic. The literary word becomes textual surface rather than a point.

Camus's novel *The Stranger*- a product of the pre-postcolonial era, published in 1942, more than seventy years before *The Meursault Investigation*, is often read within the realm of the existential school of thought, the very perception of which is poles apart from the postcolonial angle that the latter novel brings in. A reading of the two novels, separated in temporality, albeit united in discourses through an intertextual reading, can be also read as artefacts that stand to show from a view point, how intertextuality in itself, broadens the scope of working- from the existential to the postcolonial. The perspectives and perhaps the relationship with the other is fundamentally challenged in Daoud's text.

Kamel Daoud's *re-vised*, counter-narrative can be seen as a way of re-constructing and destabilizing the established (fictional) truth as well as the truth of reality as we know. The latter novel questions and interrogates the truth claims and easily accepted excuses, often through the view of existentialism- a blinkered vision of seeing the Other. The latter novel,

furthering the story, endows on the voiceless Arab- killed by Meursault- with an identity and interiority of his own.

Daoud's novel draws in the absurdist and postcolonial sentiments with much vigour into the recuperating, formerly colonized Algeria. His novel occupies the contested French-Algerian space, marked by years of hostility and violence and unrest. A space that is replete with historical, cultural and social baggage, which in many ways carries intertextual elements of analysis- the former on the latter- a palimpsestuous<sup>1</sup> relation in some sense. Daoud's novel is in a constant, complex and inventive dialogic engagement with Camus's. Daoud uses the device of intertextuality most inventively, almost on a multidimensional scale, while bringing in multitude of references, to *The Stranger* and subtly referring to Camus (though he never really uses his name or the title of the novel, *The Stranger* explicitly), to Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and many a hermeneutical references to the Bible and the Qur'an. He doesn't take a Camusian approach to the many facets that he subtly discusses, in his rework. Both novels, in the spaces that they occupy and through the interception of intertextuality, the spaces that these works conjoin together, in their own respective ways address some of the pertinent questions of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, namely, existentialism, belief in God, and postcolonialism.

Harold Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence* says "...one poet helps to form another..." "...so as to clear imaginative space for themselves." Bloom refers to the inevitable, shared interdependence followed by a need for *misprision*, which I elucidate in the paper through the tracing of the narrative lineage- this influence that he talks about- transcending varied cultures and hundreds of years between it. I think, even though Daoud's novel is in some ways an extended, angled reflection of Camus's *The Stranger*, he manages to stave off of being entirely influenced by the classic. The exoskeleton is Camus's but the essence is Daoud's. Palimpsests as an extended intertextual idea that Gerard Genette proposed, never does feel more apt than here. As a literary mechanism, according to Michael Riffarte, intertextuality produces significance, much more than linear reading. Daoud's take on the classic then, incurs more than just the immediate inheritance of taking forward the narrative, but also takes forward the inheritance of history, dissent, loss, unheard voices and perspectives- all the affects of postcolonialism.

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<sup>1</sup> The word *palimpsestuous* was coined by Philippe Lejeune; Genette uses the word in his work *Palimpsests*. According to Genette, the word connotes to a relational reading of texts.

The “revisionary insight” that Bloom mentions in the essay, reflects closely Daoud’s own revisionary view, which extends the version beyond what Camus, himself had perceived. The strong poets (writers) read their predecessor inaccurately through a different subjective paradigm and idiosyncratic interpretation of the proceeding texts. The swerve that Daoud undertakes, admittedly acknowledges the prior influence of Camus, yet builds his experience anew, which “antithetically ‘completes’ his precursor”.

An idea that constantly questions the workings of intertextuality is that of truth. What is true in intertextuality? Can an earlier statement be refuted and de-stabilized by newer claims. The notion of truth itself is a problematic supposition. My reading of the truth would be through the reality of the texts. Harun while constantly referring to Meursault’s version in *The Stranger*, tries to counteract the latter’s truth claims as falsity. All of Meursault’s statements in the first novel, of his mother buried in Marengo, of the Arab being killed on the beach, of the presence of his friend Raymond’s problematic girlfriend (who in Camus’s novel is the Arab’s sister) because of whom the killing ultimately takes place; everything is refuted by Harun as a “tall tale invented by your hero” (Meursault). He accuses him of making very light of killing the Arab, and drowning it conveniently in his angst ridden existential view of life. The connection between the classic French existential novel and the 21<sup>st</sup> century extension of the same, in many ways is the over-lapping but one cannot deter the possibility of them being narratives, independent of each other. I feel they are two very well crafted novels, able to be read as singular entities. But a question then comes up- would the second novel, *The Meursault Investigation* have been written had not Camus not written his existential magnum opus? Would there ever be a Meursault, Musa and Harun, then? The two works share a dynamic and critical connection to each other, which probably should be sufficient enough to them being seen as intertextual works for a better understanding of the larger politics behind it. It is the same as Aristotle’s analogy of the *jack-knife*, where the shadow of the relational structure is evident but on a closer look one is not necessarily like the other.

One of the focuses of the ‘investigation’ is on examining Meursault’s ‘testimony’ and correcting it. Early on, Harun informs us that he has no sister, and that the woman who provoked the incident was probably a prostitute. It’s a minor detail, but it’s to prove the thin end of the wedge, with Harun (and Daoud) using the doubt. This event inspires to examine other ‘facts’ of the story, even questioning Meursault’s presence at his mother’s funeral. We only have Meursault’s word as to what happened, and if one detail is wrong, how can we be

sure that the rest is true? The truth of the actual experience is more often than not the leitmotif of most postcolonial (fictional) literature.

On a deeper level, though, *The Meursault Investigation* is about challenging the oppressor's version of events. When Harun questions the validity of Meursault's story, he's actually asking whether the voice of the colonialists can be trusted – in their own language:

Therefore I'm going to do what was done in this country after independence: I'm going to take the stones from the old houses the colonists left behind, remove them one by one, and build my own house, my own language. The murderer's words and expressions are my unclaimed goods. (Daoud 2)

The author, Daoud vis-a-vie Harun, then becomes, as Graham Allen says, the “compiler or the arranger of pre-existent possibilities” within the wider language system.

As a reader, I was also drawn to the analogy of the paternal-used by Barthes and Bloom to elucidate the theory. Daoud's novel is clearly a re-take, of Camus's *The Stranger*, as well as is a tragic *Robinsanade*. According to Daoud, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* itself is a tale that is traced back to the Andalusian philosopher, Ibn Tufayl, an Arab who had re-written it from a fable titled *Hayy ben Yaqzan*, which translates to “The Living, Son of Vigilant”. This narrative lineage is based on the universal position of man's in a foreign land and his ability to discover God and rebuild civilization. This tracing of lineage is resonated in Bloom's *A Map of Misreading*,

You cannot write or teach or think or even read without imitation, and what you imitate is what another person has done, that person's writing or teaching or thinking or reading. (32)

Intertextuality in its succinctness rejects the idea of authorial-intent and instead, shifts the onus on to the reader-critic (Barthes), an individual who would approach a text through a reader response, objective and in a theoretical manner. The Beckettian quote at the onset of the paper, sheds light upon one of the basic principles of writing, which sees writing as an ongoing practice and focuses the reader to the unfinished product. A text is composed of many systems through which its varied meanings are constructed in and with the death of the author, there is more freedom to interpret a text, any which way.

Camus's *The Stranger*, written in 1942, well before the French-Algerian war- takes into the fold of operation, the angst, absurdity, the existential and opaque view of life (by products of the Second World War). But Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* offers a revisionary take, extending the field of discourse to postcolonial studies, which itself was formally established well after 1942.

Analyzing the shared intertextual overlapping in these two novels through Aristotle's reference of "breaking up" of the narrative, gives way to seeing the two works through a syntagmatic direction (*The Stranger*) vis-à-vis the paradigmatic direction (*The Meursault Investigation*) that the narrative challenges.

The fact that the court ultimately convicted Meursault on the charges of expressing a remorseless disposition towards his mother's death, and followed up by indifferently indulging in recreational activity rather than being convicted for killing the Arab, the deflection is what really angers Harun throughout his narration. The killing itself gets clubbed between his lack of belief and affection towards God and his mother- the very severity of his act gets lost in the annals of transacting judgment. On the personal level for the Harun and his mother, the tragedy and loss becomes a form of suffering that the Algerian nation itself underwent during colonialism. As Harun recalls, "...he (Musa) was the one who was killed in the first place and who is still being killed to this day." (11-12) "Algiers is only a shadow in my mind. I almost never go there...there's no geography in this story." (52) The killing becomes a metaphor of the (continuous) reminder of the sufferings of the Arab population as well as an act of forgetting, done by the justice system but never for the family.

"Arab-ness" says Harun, "is like negro-ness in the white man's eye." Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* often viewed as the archetypal of the colonial enterprise, in essence after the establishment of postcolonial theories, is seen through the looking-glass of the post-colonial, showing in truth the de-humanizing othering by the colonialists. Just as Robinson Crusoe forecloses any possibilities of understanding Friday's experiences as does Meursault towards the Arab. Postcolonial theorists and critics like Homi Bhabha have tried to disclose the many negations innately present in colonial discourses in order to shed light on the colonizer's ambivalent position with respect to the colonized other. Hence, in this vein the postcolonial literature becomes an intertextual space of writing back to the empire and Daoud's novel becomes a counter-narrative, a critique of one of the magnum opus' of French literature.

The novel develops a particular kind of Algerian experience of the absurd/ angst ridden individual, whose experience is both the ill-effect of post colonialism as well as the personal loss of his brother which in many ways has hindered his mother and him, to grow and move past the past events. Meursault in *The Meursault Investigation* becomes the infamous yet pervasive myth about humanity, a role that the unnamed Arab too is involuntarily assigned with. Harun accuses Meursault of being very cunning with his language and narration, in projecting only those parts which sought him pity from the readers for his existential self. He believed his psychic intensity is balanced out, consciously with his intellect edge. The spectral Arab, unjustly killed by Meursault in Albert Camus's *The Stranger* is a daily reminder to his younger brother Harun. The very act of Harun giving a name to the Arab, his dead brother becomes an act of intertextual christening of sorts. His existence for the 'two hours' and death is altogether effaced in the French classic and Harun's continually reinstating his name, becomes an act of reclaiming an individuality, a personality, a basic evidence of existence, for his brother. Musa in the macrocosm becomes a symbol of race, culture, the orient, the other for the Eurocentric society.

I could not help but notice the many times, Daoud's protagonist, Harun- the eventual vindicator of his brother's death-be crafted by the novelist in such a manner that he appears to unconsciously metamorphose into a post-colonial, quasi-angst ridden Meursault, himself. He becomes the person he hates the most. He, within the subterfuge of the textual layer, accuses Meursault of having stolen his own description, sentiments, life and memories, relegating him as the *murder's double*. Such an accusation of his comes across as similar to what Bloom in his influential essay calls, "Anxiety of Influence" a transference of personality, though with the alteration of alluding it to the characters of the work.

The unsolicited residual effect on Harun and his mother is damning. They are, due to the repercussions of Meursault's actions, relegated to the position of the outlier themselves. I see a kind of intertextual effect; in the same manner that Meursault himself is the outcast of his society because of his constant angst ridden self, his actions cause the same, in fact more morose effect on the Arab's kin, who themselves lead a ghostly existence in their society.

There is also a subtle intertextual reference to Camus's work, *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Harun uses the reference to connote the absurdity that is involuntarily thrust upon him. Harun's constantly angered self, is due to the many injustices that he has had to face, which

can be seen as being in some cosmic manner directed towards the *pied-noirs* themselves, for the long history of atrocities on him as well as his nation.

Daoud adapts the image of Sisyphus from Camus's essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus* on absurdism "The absurdity of my condition . . . consisted in pushing a corpse to the top of a hill before it rolled back down, endlessly." (47) The a priori need to express author-function, makes the voice of the author subtly present, behind the shadow of the character. The narrative voice of the novel is the singular Harun, who in his recollection of his side of the story, along with excerpts from dialogues with other characters, narrates in such a manner as if he's actually talking to the reader himself, and not the unnamed listener present in the bar where he is narrating. The reader- listener becomes privy to all his secrets, his admonishing of all those specially the listener, of carrying around and constantly fawning over the book (*The Stranger*) almost like a fetish.

The question of religion has transcended the debates of epochs and which continue to be discussed, since antiquity. Harun's sentiments towards religion are in some ways similar to Meursault's. Religion becomes an intertextual motif as both the characters share an atheist-existential view. Harun's main contention is with the fanatical Islamism which had emerged in the country after independence. As he says, "I'll go so far as to say that I abhor religions. All of them! Because they falsify the weight of the world." His disillusionment with religion is propelled by the lack of justice in this world, and equality, especially in his brother's death. For him religion is a "public transportation" that he never uses.

There are two evident Biblical and Qur'anic intertextual references that Daoud mentions in his novel. The first is the naming of the two Algerian characters as Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) the two great prophet- brothers; one of whom, Moses, had parted the Red Sea and carried out the Israelite exodus into safety from the wrath of the Egyptian enemy. The other reference that Harun himself states is that of Cain and Abel. Harun also uses verses from the Qur'an to appropriate to his own personal perspective. He thinks the one verse that resonates with him is, "If you kill a single person, it is as if you kill the whole of mankind." Quoting this particular verse could be his way of establishing Musa's death as well as the death of the mankind that has treated him, his mother and his brother most unjustly, which he thinks he'd atone by his killing the Frenchman. What Daoud really does in his version is to create a more humanist, othered version of Meursault.

Daoud really goes above and beyond to make the time reference, 2 o'clock a pervasive part of his text. It is at this time, in the afternoon that Meursault kills Musa on the beach while Harun himself kills the Frenchman, at the same time, in the early morning. A significant postcolonial feature I thought would be worth mentioning is that, Meursault has the freedom to kill in broad day light, not worry, in least till he commits the crime. But Harun does not have the liberty to do so, and has to resort to the shadows of night, as he is the *other*, doubly marginalized. It also transmutes the idea of power play and the Eurocentric strong hold, acting as God-like to the orient occupants.

Harun kills the named Frenchman, as an act of retribution, with two bullets and subconsciously thinking it to be seven instead; Meursault had killed Musa with five bullets and Harun counting it in totality I felt, became an intertextual carrying over in the later novel. It also seemed uncanny how after Meursault kills the Arab, he realizes of having disturbed the "harmony of the day" while Harun killing the French, Joseph Larquais, with vindication, he imagines it to having finally restored the order of things, that Camus's protagonist had stirred. Another noticeable fact is that unlike Meursault never really naming the Arab and thereby effacing his very existence, Harun makes it a point to name his victim, to at least give him the dignity and individuality that his brother wasn't justly accorded. Though his killing of Joseph, which could have been swept under the rug of revolution, comes a few days too late, so that he could be declared a *martyr* for the greater good of liberating the Algerian nation, both his dead brother and him in their drastically different manner are denied the status of the martyr. He has a similar sense of injustices being meted out when his own crime is classified as insignificant, and he doesn't get the ending that he wishes for, just as Musa was almost obliterated under the garb of his indifferent and atheistic view.

Intertextuality becomes a discursive space, which helps make texts more coherent. The two texts besides being classic cases of intertextuality are also good examples of *simulacra*. Taking a Deleuzian approach to the concept, in which an accepted position, privilege, is "overturned and challenged". Barthes's main idea in his essay was to destabilize the long contended obsession, assigned to the omniscience of the author. The textual space of interaction is re-emphasized by intertextuality, thereby extending the ground for inclusivity and heterogeneity. This "multi-dimensional spaces", according to Barthes, "in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash". The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes 146).

One of the ways through which reality itself gets transmuted to the textual yet fictional surface is through the referencing of the French-Algerian War (1954-1962). The bone of contention between the two countries reached climax with the war. The direct referencing to the war can itself be seen a classic case- of a kind of intertextual moment, especially where facts of the realities of the world are used in direct knowledge to the non-fictional events of the war. An apartheid-esque, white dominance over the occidents. Harun having read umpteen times Meursault's account of his last days before the trial in *The Stranger*, finds himself becoming more and more like his brother's killer. Religion and death become two tropes that unites Meursault and Harun in their divide form the society. For both of them death, is indifferent and something they themselves are used to.

Daoud's narrative takes Camus's text and extends it, almost suggestively of an alternate ending to Meursault's fate. Even though Camus ends the novel in ambiguity, Daoud suggests that Meursault does in fact escape execution by guillotine, only to pen down his version of events in the book, *The Other*.

There are many an instances replete with direct lines, situations, sentiments and similar characters for a more exactitude intertextual reference to the parent novel, *The Stranger*. One of the starkest characters that Daoud borrows with aplomb, is that of Meriem, the intertextual counter to Marie, Meursault's love interest. Some of their shared sentiments and feelings are directly mirrored in Daoud's novel, to the point of Meriem parroting Marie's lines of, "I am darker than you" followed by the subsequent Meursault and Harun, diverting it by asking them out, instead. The re-creation of instances, situations, feelings similar to Meursault in *The Stranger*, on the part of Harun is an attempt to claim an individuality for himself, his identity as an Algerian; there is a constant tussle to be his own self while measuring it with the yardstick of Meursault for himself- it is nothing short of intertextuality.

The intertextual elements play an important role in the reader's perception of "looking back" at the French masterpiece; the view is more than merely through existential purview. The intertextual lends itself a view, "through a glass, darkly; but then face to face" (I Cor, 13;12). The impossibility of locating the source of the original should be taken up as a queue for the multiplicity of meaning that it renders, with each different context. The meaning of a text then, becomes an ever-widening gyre- an abyss of multitudinous meanings and meaninglessness.

Though in varying degrees, Meursault and Harun both share a varied sense of existentialist view of life. Meursault's sense of angst is in-built in his ever-nonchalant and indifferent outlook of life. Harun's on the other hand is propelled through his personal tragedies as well as the atrocities that endanger his national identity as an Algerian. Harun's estrangement is the effect of Meursault's direct act of killing Musa. Daoud ingeniously crafts his take to extend this aspect of intertextual element beyond the surface; almost like the domino effect of one's natural malaise being the cause of the other's man-made angst.

Harun's language is pervasively marked by Musa's death. It is his death that propels him to learn and write in the *other's* language, to have some kind of control over appropriating his side of the story using French, the language of the colonizer. It also gave him an upper-hand in re-constructing the systems left behind after the war. This sentiment expressed by the narrator, inevitably resonates with all that intertextuality is about and stands for- the idea of creating something new, from the already existing construction and what many postcolonial nations are, in nutshell. As Roland Barthes rightly says in, *The Death of the Author* "Writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin..." It was also at times an uncanny experience reading Daoud's novel for its direct acknowledgment of the reader-listener figure that in some ways broke the 4<sup>th</sup> wall, as Brecht would call it. In one instance Harun haughtily says, "She (Meriem, his brief love interest) was preparing a thesis-like you...". Almost as if he knew. Such is the kaleidoscopic viewfinder of intertextuality that allows a myriad of disciplines to converge and permeate, psychoanalytic approach being one of them. The dynamics of language usage, I think become a space of intertextual exchanges. It becomes a kind of subversion when Harun tries to distort Meursault's name by using French, "What does "Meursault" mean? Meur seul, dies alone? Meurt sot, dies a fool? Never dies?"

Hence, understanding the temporality of words, the meaning making tools of language, the texts, through the synchronic and diachronic approaches, as propagated by Ferdinand de Saussure, helps one comprehend the interpretation as well as how it exists within the broader historical, cultural spaces, helping in understanding better the context.

In some ways then, the intertextual element of the novel contains elements of the empire writing (in this case speaking), back. Assessing through what Genette terms as the paratext, the epigram given in the novel is taken from E.M. Cioran, "The hour of crime does not strike at the same time for every people. This explains the permanence of history." An

understanding of it could be that because the hour of crime strikes differently for everyone, history gets created with every passing present moment. The absurdity unfortunately is that history would remember Meursault's story to have lived on, according to Harun, for he has written his story, most aesthetically, for the whole world to read.

The main thrust of this paper was to look at the classic French existential, *The Stranger* and trying to demonstrate the concept of intertextuality, while reading an extension of it, seen in Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*, a product of post colonialism. Separated in temporality, the latter fiction takes up the daunting task of lending a challenging voice, a critique of the Eurocentric priorities, through Harun's own experience of the losing a brother and a homeland in war. The novel then becomes an "example of an effective presence of one text in another" (Genette, 82). It is within these frameworks of existential, power play, postcolonial ties that these two novels configure as, existing as they do, within the intertextual discourse.

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