

Tribhuvan University

TEXTUALIZATION OF CONTEXT: A NEW HISTORICAL READING OF  
COETZEE'S *DUSKLANDS*

A thesis submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus,  
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By

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Approval Letter

This thesis, entitled TEXTUALIZATION OF CONTEXT: A NEW HISTORICAL READING OF COETZEE'S *DUSKLANDS* by Mani Ram Rai, has been submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Kathmandu, Nepal. It has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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## Abstract

With reference to the theoretical tools of New Historicism, this thesis aims to understand J.M. Coetzee's *Dusklands* as a novel of relations. From the reader's initial difficulty in trying to reconcile the seemingly divergent constitutive narratives to its exploration of the failed relationships between subject and object, Self and Other, and the corporeality of the body and the incorporeality of the mind, *Dusklands* demands that the readers pay close attention to the sets of associations and connections that it establishes. And it is in this context that this thesis argues that *Dusklands* presents the narratives of two men who begin to experience the failure of such fundamental relationship as they begin to uncontrollably oscillate between the ontological states of the known-subject and the incomprehensible-Other. Under such conditions, an analysis of the relationship between the body and the "event" of pain that circulates upon it reveals that this complex state of affairs is highly detrimental to the integrity of the philosophical principles of the Enlightenment that underscored the structural imperatives of European colonial discourse. Indeed, it seems certain that without the guarantee of a conceptual Other with which to construct world reality, the claim to "truth" maintained by scientific rationality begins to stutter.

With a gaze of The New Historical approach, one can straightforwardly unearth in the text that history is unveiled here, and the mainline history is exposed to be mere propaganda in the service of the colonial power in the past and nuclear superpowers at present.

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