

Principles of Literary Study  
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Office hours: Mondays 2:00–3:00 or by appointment

April 29, 2021. Coetzee.

## realism

The novel, the traditional novel, she goes on to say, is an attempt to understand human fate one case at a time, to understand how it comes about that some fellow being, having started at point A and having undergone experiences B and C and D, ends up at point Z. Like history, the novel is thus an exercise in making the past coherent. Like history, it explores the respective contributions of character and circumstance to forming the present. (“The Novel in Africa,” 38–39)

All these critical formations in relation to Achebe’s work can be perceived as united in subtle maneuvers that take the culture of the realist novel as most truthfully inscribing the space and time of history. (Quayson, 122)

## J. M. Coetzee

1940 b. Cape Town, South Africa. English-speaking

1961 English and math major UCT

1968 Ph.D. UT-Austin on Beckett

1972 returns to South Africa (UCT)

1974 *Dusklands* (first novel)

1983 *Life & Times of Michael K* (Booker prize)

1999 *Disgrace* (Booker)

1998 “The Novel in Africa” (lecture, Berkeley)

2002 emigrates to Australia

2003 *Elizabeth Costello*

2003 Nobel Prize

2013–19 *Jesus* trilogy (not what you think)

## finding your way (I)

- ▶ Identify a problem in “The Novel in Africa” that analysis and interpretation might solve.

## framing/perspective

- ▶ How does the framing create an alternative to Egdu's view of "the novel in Africa"?
  - ▶ Why doesn't he just say it straight?
  - ▶ "She finds the idea muddled at its very core." (53)
  - ▶ "She no longer believes very strongly in belief." (39)

# episodes

1. Elizabeth's talk
2. Egudu's talk
3. Steve and Shirley
4. penguins; the albatross
5. the Russian singer
6. flashback

- ▶ penguins?
- ▶ Kuala Lumpur?

break

## finding your way (2)

- ▶ What concerns does “The Dog” share with “The Novel in Africa”?



next

- ▶ Two Bulawayo stories (Sakai)