

国际学术研讨会文集  
Proceedings of the International Symposium

**Coetzee Study  
and Postcolonial Literature  
Research**

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**库切研究  
与后殖民文学**

蔡圣勤 谢艳明 编  
Cai Shengqin Xie Yanming



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

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## 序：“库切研究与后殖民文学” 国际学术研讨会开幕词

尊敬的各位代表，女士们，先生们，  
大家早上好！

今天是“库切研究与后殖民文学”国际学术研讨会顺利举行的日子。首先请允许我代表这次会议的主办方《外国文学研究》杂志社、湖北省外国文学学会对大会的胜利召开表示热烈的祝贺！向国内外各位嘉宾的到来表示热烈的欢迎和诚挚的感谢！

这次会议是一次盛会，是一次重要的学术会议。我们非常荣幸地邀请了国内外多位著名学者与会。他们是英国著名后殖民理论批评家牛津大学的艾勒克·博埃默(Elleke Boehmer)教授、英国科学院院士、约克大学专门从事库切研究及后殖民批评的德瑞克·阿特里奇(Derek Attridge)教授和戴维·阿特维尔(David Attwell)教授、澳大利亚墨尔本大学英语学院的苏珊·考苏(Susan Kossew)教授——考苏教授不仅是2009年在澳大利亚举办的“库切研究国际研讨会”的召集人，而且还是库切的同事及友人——中国社会科学院文学所所长陆建德教授、香港公开大学人文科学学院院长谭国根教授、东北师范大学刘建军教授等。这些国内外知名学者莅临本次大会，让我们感到荣幸，让大会倍增色彩。

此外，本次参会代表中，还有许多国内专门从事库切研究的青年学者、博士生和硕士生，库切小说、文集的翻译者。这次会议得到了出版界的大力支持，如曾经翻译出版库切作品的译林出版社、上外、北外、武大等多家大学出版社的代表。本次研讨会共有来自9个国家及地区150多名国内外学者参会。在此，我们对参加本次会议的所有学者表示热烈欢迎，对他们给予本次会议的支持表示由衷的感谢。

这次会议有如此众多的学者参加，这充分说明库切在中国拥有众多的读者，表明中国有众多的学者在关注和研究他的作品。在中国，在整个世界，库切毫无疑问拥有崇高的文学地位。在21世纪11位诺贝尔文学奖得主中，库切也是最受欢迎的作家之一。他的那些以南非殖民地生活和各种冲突为背景的小说，虽然还未曾经历漫长的历史沉淀，但是却受到众多读者的欢迎和学者的赞扬。库切创作的小说在历史长河中仅仅起航，但是它们已经成为一种经典。库切自己曾经以音乐家巴赫为例说明经典。他说：“我想提醒你们的是，作为经典的巴赫是历史的产物，由多种可辨识的历史作用力，在一个特定的历史语境中，塑造而成的。”按照库切的说法，“经典就是得以存活之物”，成为经典要经历一个“在业内所经受的考验过程”。在他看来，那些“一代一代的人们都无法舍弃

它，因而不惜一切代价紧紧地拽住它，从而得以劫后余生的作品——就是经典”。库切的小说正是如此。在 21 世纪这个引发思考的世纪里，在许多人放弃了阅读而践踏文学的时代里，他的小说变成了经典，库切变成了受欢迎的人。

那么，库切何以受到读书界的欢迎和批评界的赞扬？答案很清楚，那就是库切既是一个严肃作家，也是一个经典作家。因为他是一个严肃作家，因此南非种族斗争的印记，才被库切深刻地记录在他的作品里。库切在他的小说中深刻地描写祖国的苦难，记述普通人经历的种族隔离的悲痛历史，表现出 19 世纪现实主义小说家才有的那种对现实的敏锐、思考的深刻和表现生活的力量。正如诺贝尔文学奖的授奖辞所说：库切小说作品的一个基本主题，是南非种族制度所导致的价值观和行为，在他眼中，这在任何地方都可能出现。的确如此，库切的小说能够揭示普遍的真理。

库切的小说还有一个需要深入挖掘的特点，那就是它们特有的伦理内涵。他的小说《耻》(*Disgrace*)、《等待野蛮人》(*Waiting for the Barbarians*)、《国家中心》(*In the Heart of the Country*)等作品，不仅构思纤美精巧、文白韵味深刻、分析精辟入微，而且在对伪善、欺诈和冷酷的批判方面也是笔锋犀利、入木三分。瑞典皇家颁奖委员会在颁奖辞中对他的肯定是十分中肯的：“在人类反对野蛮愚昧的历史中，库切通过写作表达了对脆弱个人斗争经验的坚定支持。”因此，我们阅读库切的作品，能够分享他的人生经验，得到道德启示。

这次会议是中国(也是亚洲国家)第一次专门讨论小说家库切的学术研讨会，这种重点讨论一个作家的专题会议在中国还不多，因此这次会议不仅有助于中国的库切研究，也有益于中国学术研究的新的模式的尝试。这次会议不仅重点设计了与库切的创作有关的议题，如“库切作品的文本分析及其批评理论研究”、“库切作品的虚构与真实、传记文学与自传体小说研究”，而且在议题设计上还把库切的创作同一些重大的学术问题结合在一起展开讨论，例如“后现代批评话语与后殖民文学的发展”、“后殖民语境下的英语语言变异及文学创作”、“东南亚文学与全球化中的边缘化问题”、“南非文学与加勒比地区文学的后殖民特征研究”等，这表明有关库切的研究具有重要的启迪作用，能够通过库切的研究推动其他文学的研究，说明了库切创作的世界意义。因此我相信，在诸位同仁的共同努力下，这次有关库切的学术会议必将载入史册。

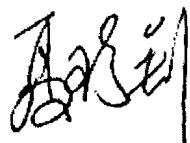
最后我要在此说明的是，这次研讨会是由中南财经政法大学外国语学院承办的。中南财经政法大学外国语学院在学院院长谢群教授的带领下，学院其他领导与全体教师团结一心，不仅积极广泛地开展学术交流，营造良好的、宽松的学术研究环境，而且还建立起一支综合实力很强的研究队伍，取得了可喜的成就，在全国崭露头角。现在他们已经获得了一级学科硕士学位授权，奠定了更好的快速发展的基础。2009 年，这个学院成功举办了第 14 届全国美国戏剧学术研讨会，今天又举办了“库切研究和后殖民文学国际研讨会”，这充分显示出他们的学术实力。这次大会使他们拥有了与本领域的国际一流学者同台发表学术成果的机会。而且，国际一流学者应邀出席本次大会，本身就说明他们的成果获得了国际学术界的认可。我相信，他们一定会在外国文学研究领域做出

更好的成绩，取得更大的成功。

最后，再次对各位代表的到来表示热烈的欢迎和衷心的感谢！祝各位代表在会议期间心情愉快、身体健康。

祝此次研讨会圆满成功！

谢谢大家！



中国外国文学学会副会长  
湖北省外国文学学会会长  
《外国文学研究》杂志社主编

2010年11月20日 武汉

**The Speech Made by Nie Zhenzhao at  
The International Symposium of Coetzee Study and  
Postcolonial Literature Research (2010)  
Wuhan, China  
Nov. 20th, 2010**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good morning!

Today marks the opening of The International Symposium of Coetzee Study and Postcolonial Literature Research (2010). First please allow me to extend, on behalf of, the hosts—Foreign Literature Studies and Hubei Provincial Association of Foreign Literature Studies, warm congratulations on the successful convening of the conference and warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to the participating guests.

This is a grand occasion. This is an important academic conference. We're honored to have with us many prominent scholars from home and abroad: Professor Elleke Boehmer, from University of Oxford, a world-famous postcolonial theorist; Professor David Attridge, member of British Academy and Professor Attwell from University of York, both engaged in Coetzee research and postcolonial criticism; Professor Susan Kossew, from School of English, University of Monash Melbourne, the organizer of The International Symposium of Coetzee Study held in Australia 2009 and also a friend and colleague of Coetzee; Mr. Lu Jiande, Director of Research Institute of Chinese Literature of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Chief Editor of *Foreign Literature Review*; Mr. KK Tam, Chair Professor and Dean of School of Humanities and Social Science of Hong Kong Open University; Mr. Liu Jianjun, Professor of North East Normal University, etc. These well-known scholars' presence adds credit to the conference.

We also see young scholars, doctoral and master candidates specializing in study of Coetzee, translators of his novels and selections and representatives from the presses such as Yilin Press, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Wuhan University Press which have translated and published works of Coetzee. Present today are more than 150 representatives from 9 countries and regions. On this occasion, I'd also like to extend my warm welcome to all the scholars present and express my heartfelt thanks to them for what they have done to the symposium.

So many scholars' presence at this symposium tells us that there're a lot of Coetzee fans in

China and a lot of scholars who are studying Coetzee's works with keen interest. Undoubtedly Coetzee enjoys privileged position in literature at home and abroad. Coetzee is one of the most popular writers among the Nobel Literature Award winners. His novels in which features colonial life and conflicts in South Africa have been well-accepted by many readers and scholars although his novels were not produced for a long time. Coetzee's novels have already become classics although they, like ships, have just set off sailing from the port (the mouth) of the long river of history. Coetzee once took Bach's music as an example to illustrate what "classic" is. He said, "Bach the classic was historically constituted, as I will remind you, constituted by identifiable historical forces and within a specific historical context." According to Coetzee, "the classic is what survives" and "it is the testing process he has been through within the profession" that makes a classic. In his view, a classic survives "because generations of people cannot afford to let go of it and therefore hold on to it at all costs—that is the classic". Coetzee's novels measure up to this standard. In the 21st century while many people abandon reading and tramp literature under their feet, his novels have become classics and Coetzee becomes popular.

Then, why is Coetzee well-accepted by readers and critics? The answer is obvious: Coetzee is not only a serious writer but also a classic one. It's because he is a serious writer that the imprint of South Africa racial fighting is deeply carved in his works. Coetzee, in his novels, describes in depth his motherland's suffering and narrates the misery of the common people who go through racial divide, which gives full expression to the sensitivity to reality, the depth of thinking and the power of representing life unique to the 19th realistic novelists. Just as the presentation speech for the Nobel Literature Award goes: one primary theme of Coetzee's novels is to display the values and conducts caused by the South Africa racial system. To Coetzee's mind, this can happen anywhere in the world. Indeed, Coetzee's novels can manifest universal truth.

There's another feature which needs to be dug up in Coetzee's works, that is to say, their unique ethical values. His novels, say, *Disgrace*, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *In the Heart of the Country*, etc., are with the characteristics of well-knitted structure, power of expressions, penetrating analysis, insightful and poignant criticism on hypocrisy, fraud, deception and indifference. The Royal Swedish Nobel Prize Committee gave moderate appraisal to Coetzee: In the history of human's combating against barbarity and ignorance, Coetzee's writing expresses his unswerving support to fragile individual struggle experience. In this regard, we can share Coetzee's personal experience and obtain revelation of morality by reading his works.

This is the first time to hold a symposium on studying, exclusively, the novelist Coetzee in China, also the first time in Asia. Nowadays there're not too many symposiums of this kind in China. So I'm sure that this conference will not only be beneficial to China's Coetzee studies, but also be favorable to the trial of new models on academic research in China. This conference not only sets topics on Coetzee's writing such as Coetzee's study including textual analysis and



theoretical research, hybridity of fiction and non-fiction, biography and auto biography, but also introduces other topics which associate Coetzee's writing with some other significant research topics including postmodern literary criticism and postcolonial works development, English language dissimulation and literature discourse under the postcolonial context, Southeast Asian literature and its marginalization in globalization as well as difference between South African and Caribbean postcolonial features, etc. It shows that Coetzee-related research, being of great enlightenment, can push forward the research on other topics of literature. It also shows the universality of Coetzee's research. Hence I'm deeply convinced that this academic conference on Coetzee research will be written into history.

Last but not least, I'd like to stress that this symposium is organized by the School of Foreign Languages of Zhongnan University of Economics and Law. United as one mind, Prof. Xie Qun, Head of the Foreign Language School, and other leaders, have been actively conducting various academic exchanges, and have created sound and inclusive environment for academic research, setting up an academic team with full momentum and thus attaining satisfactory achievements. They are emerging nationally in foreign literature studies. At present they're entitled to granting the master's degree of English Language and Literature as the first level discipline, which sets a solid foundation for their better, faster development. After the successful convening of the 14th National Symposium of American Drama in 2009, this School, today, hosts The International Symposium of Coetzee Study and Postcolonial Literature Research, which fully displays their strengthen in academic research. I believe that they will attain greater achievements and success in foreign literature studies in the future.

In closing, I wish to extend again warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to all the distinguished guests present! Wish you a pleasant stay during the symposium.

Wish this symposium a complete success!

Thank you!

**Nie Zhenzhao**

Vice-President of Chinese Society of Foreign Literature Studies

President of Hubei Provincial Association of Foreign Literature Studies

Chief Editor of *Foreign Literature Studies*

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# J. M. Coetzee's Australian Realism

Elleke Boehmer

**Abstract:** The essay investigates the implications for J. M. Coetzee's poetics of his shift from an agonistic if in his case highly mediated settler tradition within South African writing, which is part of his literary and imaginative inheritance, towards a self-consciously acquired Australian mode of realist writing, which however is equally mediated, that came with his move to that country in the early 2000s. The essay will further consider how his knowing engagement with the genre or subgenre of settler realism manifests in both his imaginative geographies as a mode at once of disconnection from and of affiliation to what for want of a better word might be called the nation. What does Coetzee's shift between two established subgenres in postcolonial literature, the farm novel or *plaasroman* of South Africa, in his case refracted through a postmodern lens, and Australian realism, equally postmodern and mediated, equally agonistic, tell us about the ways in which the narrative burden of settler history, of which Coetzee is doubly aware, is inflected in his work? The analysis will be sharpened by reading this work alongside the contemporaneous representation of the matter of Australia by two of Coetzee's prominent contemporaries, Peter Carey and Tim Winton: in particular Carey's post-2000 novels *My Life as a Fake* (2003) and *Theft* (2006), and Winton's 2004 *Dirt Music* and his 2008 *Breath*.

**Key words:** J. M. Coetzee; settler realism; mediation

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## I. Coetzee and the Real

This essay sets out to investigate the implications for J. M. Coetzee's poetics of his shift



from an agonistic if in his case highly mediated settler tradition within South African writing, which is part of his literary and imaginative inheritance, towards a self-consciously acquired Australian mode of realist writing, equally mediated, that came with his move to that country in the early 2000s. The larger question which this investigation will raise, by implication if not always directly, is how a shift of national location within the international republic of letters might impinge on a settler or colonial tradition within postcolonial poetics; or whether it is rather the case that such a strand or tradition operates in cross-border, transnational ways, freely making itself available to writers from different postcolonial domains.<sup>1</sup>

A significant number of the postcolonial novelists and poets who have engaged also in postcolonial literary criticism, often *à propos* of their own practice, Derek Walcott, Salman Rushdie, Seamus Heaney and J. M. Coetzee among them, have commented on the relationship that is reflected in their poetics between their generic and formal choices as writers, and their sense of history, especially national history (Walcott 1998, Heaney 1980, Rushdie 1991). In Rushdie's case, for example, the mode of postmodernist magic realism which he developed most famously in *Midnight's Children* (1981), was knowingly composed in order to cut across the oppressive linearity and rationality implied by colonial European historiography, as well as the tradition of nationalist triumphalism which in part emerged from it (Chatterjee 1983). Yet even his "critical mimicry of national fiction", as Tim Brennan was among the first to point out, involved a simultaneous if paradoxical longing for overarching narrative continuity—a continuity which in turn signified, though obliquely, a longing for national "form" (Brennan 100).

Taking as a starting point South African-born J. M. Coetzee's representation of his new land Australia, that is, of his Australia as an imaginative prospect, a complex of territorial and national memory, this essay will consider how his engagement with the genre or subgenre of settler realism, both knowing and critical, manifests in both his imaginative geographies as a mode at once of disconnection from and of affiliation to what for want of a better word in his case might be called the nation. What does Coetzee's shift between two established subgenres in postcolonial literature, the farm novel or *plaasroman* of South Africa, in his case refracted through a postmodern lens, and Australian realism, equally postmodern and mediated, equally agonistic, tell us about the ways in which the narrative burden of settler history, of which Coetzee is doubly aware, is inflected in his work? The analysis will be sharpened by reading this work alongside the contemporaneous representation of the matter of Australia by two of Coetzee's prominent contemporaries, Peter Carey and Tim Winton: in particular Carey's post-2000 novels *My Life as a Fake* (2003) and *Theft* (2006), and Winton's 2004 *Dirt Music* and his 2008 *Breath*. The comparative perspective will help to demonstrate how in Coetzee allusions to certain genres and forms have produced, or have made an attempt at producing, even if in a jobbing or perfunctory way, a recognizably Australian world. Whereas in the cases of both Carey and Winton the relationship of land and voice, of (Australian) context and