
Summaries in English

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Summaries

J.M. Coetzee

The Novel in Africa

In Coetzee's story, Elizabeth Costello, an Australian writer, boards an ocean-liner to entertain its passengers by giving talks about literature. Her fellow-entertainer is Emmanuel Egudu, a Nigerian writer lecturing on "The Novel in Africa". In his talk Egudu emphasises his Africanness, a special African identity. In conversation, the two characters discuss the novel in Africa; Elizabeth opines that what distinguishes the African novel is that it is not written for Africans but for foreigners. That fact imposes both restrictions and obligations on the African writer, which Coetzee's story illustrates and explores. What it also exposes is the naivety involved in drawing precipitous conclusions and offering generalisations based on a person's language, profession and ethnic origins.

Dorota Kołodziejczyk

Traversing the globe: postcolonial studies and theory of globalization

The article aims to analyze the significance of spatial categories in postcolonialism. Dorota Kołodziejczyk puts forth a thesis that the characteristic spatial anxiety of postcolonial studies (visible e.g. in the inspirations from Foucault and Guattari and Deleuze) locates this discipline firmly in new theories of cultural globalization. She argues that postcolonial studies aims to replace the dominant logic of temporality founding the concept of modernity with the concept of subjectivity as heterotopia – a place where a range of different, often incompatible and alien spaces come together. Postcolonialism, since its inception sensitive to the problem of cultural and national borders, and the borders of belonging, rests on the premise common to its varied trends, namely that each form of identity is local, interactive and dynamic. Kołodziejczyk examines the postcolonial spatial categories arguing that this is in the explorations of the local and the global flows and the tension between them that postcolonialism has a chance to contribute to the theorization of globalization more complex and productive than that stemming from former development studies. It has also a chance to break away from the now exhausted paradigms of (post)colonial/metropolitan manichean dichotomies. The conclusion is that this new spatial imagination unique to postcolonial theory and literature develops a vision of a new cosmopolitanism, which Homi Bhabha expresses as 'our sense of mutuality in the conditions of mutability'.

Zbigniew Białyś

Capt. Lewis' Razor

On the basis of chosen travel narratives (mainly Alexander von Humboldt's *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent During the Years 1799 – 1804* and *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*) the author anatomises the somatics of travel writing, looks into textual and extra-textual evidence and argues, remembering the etymology of the word "e/motion," that – compulsive travelling is a "moving" manifestation of death-wish.

Helen Tiffin

"White Men Read Books, We Hunt For Heads Instead": Head-Hunters from Borneo

In the eighteenth, nineteenth and the twentieth century „head trading” i.e., literal and metaphorical hunting for heads existed in numerous colonial contexts. At the close of the nineteenth century Borneo especially started to symbolise wildness of nature. Writing of Dayaks Europeans used (and sometimes questioned) existing stereotypes concerning head hunters. Carl Bock differs from other writers of that period because he makes an equation between head-hunting and cannibalism. On the other hand, Harriette McDougall, Spenser St. John, Alfred Russell Wallace, William Hornaday and A. C. Haddon minimise or negate that equation, stressing the civilised features of the Dayaks. The above-mentioned writers reflect to a certain extent European sentiments towards "civilisation" and "wildness" prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century, of which the best example can be found in Joseph Conrad's works where convenient attitudes are radically revalued.

Dominika Ferens

Visiting French and German Colonies: Knowledge and Power in Karl May's African Novels

This paper considers the ambivalent role that the still popular German writer Karl May (1842–1912) played in the construction of the German colonial discourse. Although May opposed the colonial race and did not travel outside Europe until he was in his sixties, by writing adventure fiction set in exotic locales he colonized the world with his pen. An interesting connection between race, power, and knowledge becomes apparent when we analyze May's "African" novels. At a time when Germany was intent on annexing Namibia, Togo, and Cameroon, May's protagonist is interested only in British and French colonies. He ostensibly travels as an amateur ethnographer yet he already knows Africa better than do the locals. Quick to criticize colonial authorities, he nonetheless repeatedly finds himself in positions of power, authorized by people of color who value his European knowledge. To throw light on May's ambivalent texts, this essay reconstructs their historical context and compares May's flamboyant persona with those of his contemporaries: Sir Richard Burton, Isabelle Eberhardt, and Theodore Roosevelt.

Anna Cichoń

Henryk Sienkiewicz's *In the Desert and Wilderness* from the perspective of colonial studies

In his African novel addressed to young readers, Henryk Sienkiewicz uses codes, genre conventions and discourses characteristic of colonial literature. Architextual references to the exotic picaresque adventure novel, to the Robinsonade and romance, discourses applied for the presentation of characters and settings, as well as the Eurocentric (cognitive and aesthetic) perspective from which the narrator observes the world presented, have an impact upon the ideological message of the work. A pro-British interpretation of historical events, belief in the white man's burden, idealization of the European protagonist, stereotypical portraits of female characters, ethnographic gaze at the Blacks and the Arabs, presentation of the continent as an unknown and incomprehensible place, make Sienkiewicz's image of Africa bear semblance to the representations of the dominions in English literature at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

Katarzyna Nowak

In Search of a Voice: the Figure of a Little Girl in Chosen Texts by Writers of Indian Origin.

The author's analysis of the chosen literary texts focuses on the representation of childhood. An attempt to investigate childhood from the postcolonial perspective means reevaluation of the process of identity construction, both in the individual and in the communal aspect. The postulated turn from the polarized perception of adulthood and childhood towards the figure of a hybrid suggests also concentration upon the Third Space where we are the Others of ourselves. Homi Bhabha's concept of the Third Space helps to avoid the "politics of bipolarity" and is used here to conceptualize the period of "girlishness" which, according to Judith Butler, is connected with a forced citation of the norm of womanhood and the impossibility to reach to that norm. Exploring the relationship between the gaze and scrutiny with the "phallic sexual metaphors" the author points to Luce Irigaray's and Julia Kristeva's conceptions of womanhood. The forceful citation of the norm mentioned above is strictly connected with language: the author questions the position of language in the postcolonial literature where the choice of a language is politically charged. Here the "feminine" language remains the language of silence or the body; both failing to provide an access to the Third Space where one can speak of oneself and of others.

Leszek Drong

The Sow or the Stepmother: Flann O'Brien's Postcolonial Dilemmas

The essay focuses on the literary and non-literary works by Flann O'Brien (born Brian O'Nolan) explored against the background of Irish history, politics and culture in the aftermath of Ireland's emancipation from Britain in 1921. O'Brien's fiction, as well as his satirical columns contributed to *The Irish Times*, raise some key postcolonial issues, most notably the role of the Irish language and the prospects of its revival in the Irish Free State. The choice of the continued use of English as the basic means of communication, though apparently politically incorrect, appears to be a necessary evil in a society estranged from its native tongue through centuries of British dominion. O'Brien's writings urge a compromise between two radically polarised positions which emerged in the inter-war period in Ireland: on the one hand, O'Brien appreciates Irish tradition and the Gaelic language; on the other, the progress and well-being of the whole nation necessitate a more pragmatic approach to the postcolonial "burden" (language, tradition, customs, institutions) left behind by the British.