



J. M. Coetzee and Ethics: Philosophical Perspectives on Literature

From Columbia University Press

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In 2003, South African writer J. M. Coetzee was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his riveting portrayals of racial repression, sexual politics, the guises of reason, and the hypocrisy of human beings toward animals and nature. Coetzee was credited with being "a scrupulous doubter, ruthless in his criticism of the cruel rationalism and cosmetic morality of western civilization." The film of his novel *Disgrace*, starring John Malkovich, brought his challenging ideas to a new audience.

Anton Leist and Peter Singer have assembled an outstanding group of contributors who probe deeply into Coetzee's extensive and extraordinary corpus. They explore his approach to ethical theory and philosophy and pay particular attention to his representation of the human-animal relationship. They also confront Coetzee's depiction of the elementary conditions of life, the origins of morality, the recognition of value in others, the sexual dynamics between men and women, the normality of suppression, and the possibility of equality in postcolonial society. With its wide-ranging consideration of philosophical issues, especially in relation to fiction, this volume stands alone in its extraordinary exchange of ethical and literary inquiry.

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Editorial Review

Review

Scholarly readers with an interest in Coetzee's novels or philosophy's relationship to literature will find this work highly rewarding.

(Library Journal)

Review

This collection takes stock of J. M. Coetzee's impact from a number of interesting angles, including animals, sexuality, race, and reason. The time is truly ripe for such a volume. Philosophers who are interested in Coetzee's work will find these essays useful for their own research, and readers of Coetzee who share an interest in philosophy will be able to further explore those interests.

(Matthew Calarco, California State University at Fullerton, and author of *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*)

About the Author

Anton Leist is professor of philosophy at the Ethics-Center of the University of Zurich. His books include *A Question of Life, Good Action, Ethics of Social Relationships, and Action in Context*.

Peter Singer is Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics in the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University and Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne. His books include *Animal Liberation, Practical Ethics, Rethinking Life and Death, One World, and The Life You Can Save*.

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