TEXTUALITY AND THE LAND:
Reading ‘White Writing’ and the Fiction of J. M. Coetzee

T. Kai Norris Easton

A thesis submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

London, January 2000
For
ISAAC CLAUDE STEPHENS
(1917-1992)
Acknowledgements

Liz Gunner’s willingness to continue to work with me from afar (since her departure from SOAS for a professorship at the University of Natal), has been a tremendous support; Graham Furniss took on the role of a wonderfully steadfast ‘on site’ supervisor, and I am immensely grateful to them both for their advice, encouragement, and friendship along the way. Thanks also to the Africa Department at SOAS; and, in particular, to Nana Wilson-Tagoe and Louis Brenner.

A SOAS Research Student Fellowship and an Overseas Research Student Award made this study possible, and a SOAS fieldwork award and University of London Central Research Fund (Irwin Trust) grant provided the necessary resources for a trip to South Africa in May and June 1997.

My grateful acknowledgements to: J. M. Coetzee, for permission to quote the passages from his manuscripts at Harvard University’s Houghton Library; Paulette Coetzee, for her expert help during my visit to the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown; and Carli Coetzee at the University of Cape Town, for her helpful comments on a draft of this thesis.

Brenda Simon, Toshiko Sakamoto, and my colleagues on the SOAS Literary Review — Munizha Ahmad, Anshuman Mondal and Amina Yaqin — have offered good humour and intellectual companionship; Kathryn Mosley’s generous hospitality in Russell Square has helped bring this thesis to completion; and the Revd Prebendary Allan G. Scott and the parish of St Mary, Stoke Newington, have provided inspiration throughout.

Finally, my greatest thanks to my husband Robert Easton and to our family for such wonderful support, especially: Norman and Sandra Norris, Doug Norris, Agnes Jenkins Stephens, Emma Stovell-Milligan (and our dear Harry).
# Contents

**Acknowledgements** 5  
**Map ~ Cape of Good Hope, 1840** 6  

**Introduction** 7  

**I.** Travels in the Cape: The Many Journeys of 'The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee' 38  

**II.** Gender, Genre and Colonial Space: *In the Heart of the Country* 101  

**III.** 'Writing South Africa': Cape Provincial and the 'Classic' in *Life & Times of Michael K* 176  

**IV.** 'The Female Castaway': Her Story, History and Textual Captivity in *Foe* 239  

**Afterword** 299  

**Works Cited** 303