

Things to Think About: Capek, Karl. *War With the Newts*. Catbird Press. 1990.

Why does the story begin in the East Indies?

What are the original motivations (on either side) for the relationship between Captain Van Toch and the newts?

How does their appropriation of technology transform the newts' lifestyle?

Why are the newts able to escape from the bay to which they had been immemorially confined?

What are the default assumptions through which Europeans try to assess and classify these alien yet useful and intelligent beings?

What are the consequences of the relative vulnerability of people, and the relative invulnerability of the newts, to the profit motive?

What can we deduce about English culture from Andy Scheuchzer's proficiency and style in learning the English language?

How helpful is scientific nomenclature in understanding the newts?

What is the relation between the reaction of scientists to the increasing populations of newts, and the reaction of the general public?

How does the Salamander Syndicate conceive of the newts?

What are the economic consequences of the European discovery of the newts? What are the environmental consequences? Are these two kinds of consequences related?

How do the heads of European nations balance the claims of military competition with those of environmental preservation?

What is the ladder of civilization and how do the newts ascend it?

What does Capek think about the value of western culture? Is it more accurately and dynamically represented by the behavior of people or of newts?

How would you unpack Capek's allegory?

Does this book have a happy ending?

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