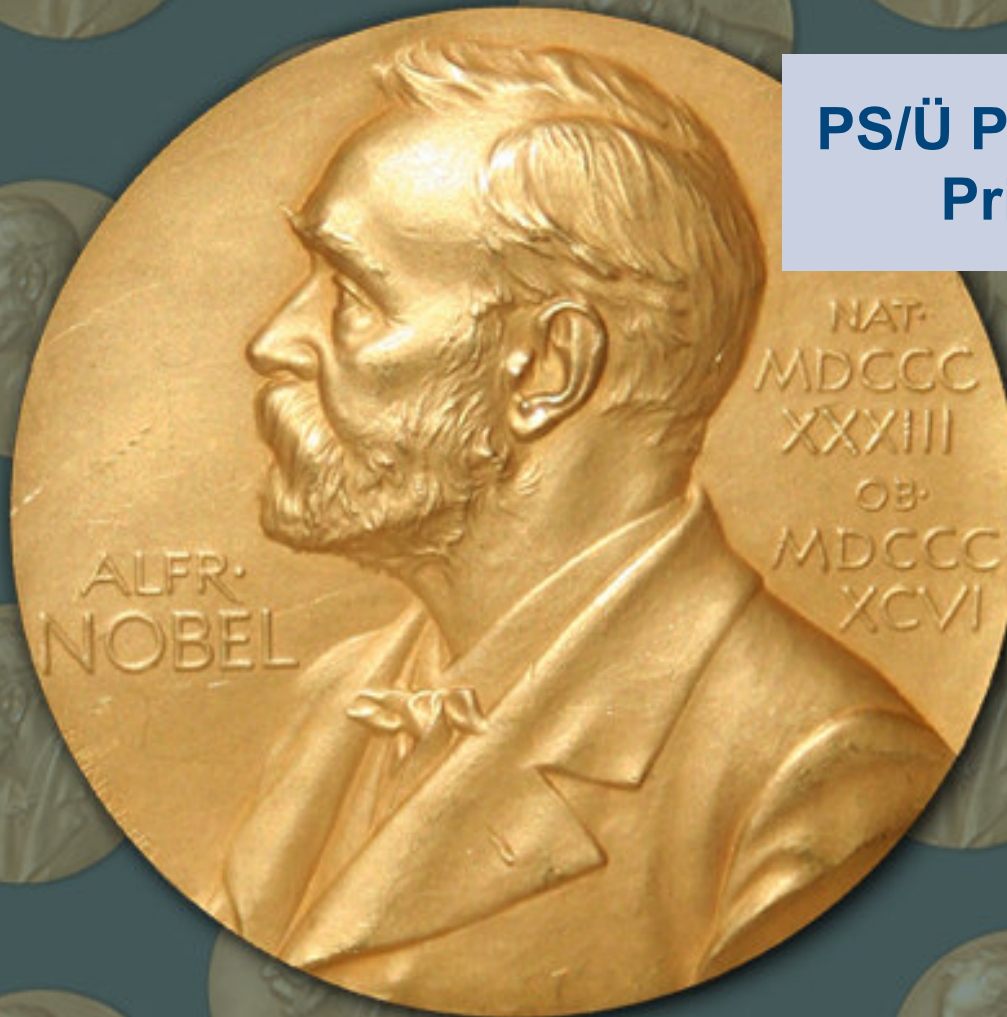


**PS/Ü Postcolonial Nobel
Prize Laureates**



PS/Ü Postcolonial Nobel Prize Laureates

Session 5: The Colonies and the Cultural Cringe

Prof. Dr. Nora A. Pleßke

Vertretungsprofessorin

Lehrstuhl für Englische Literaturwissenschaft

Time: Wed 12:00 – 14:00

Room: MG1/02.06

Email: nora.plesske@uni-bamberg.de

Website: <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/englit/personen/prof-dr-nora-plesske/>

Office Hours: Wed 16:00 – 17:00, U9, 202 (register via VC)

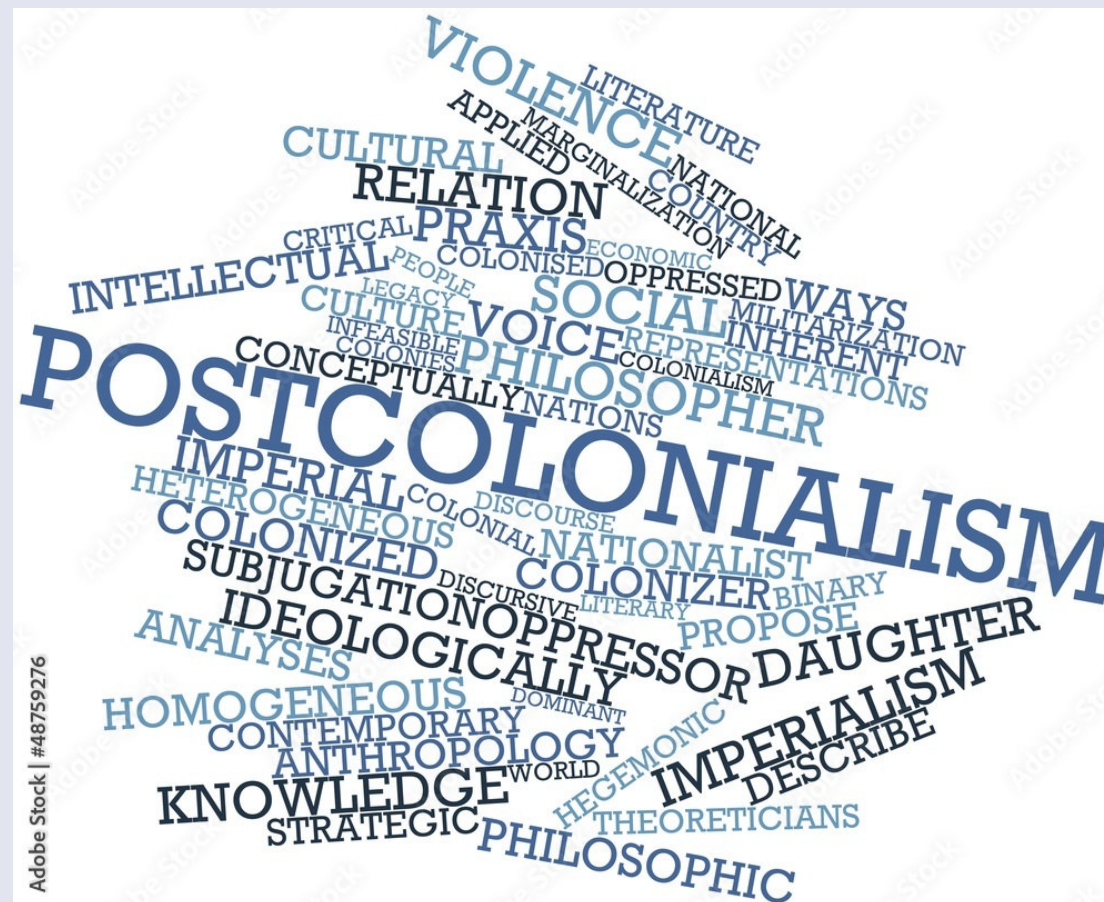


Nobel Prize in Literature

Questions on the Prize

1. What is the Nobel Prize in Literature?
2. What does it include? What does it entail?
3. Who awards the prize? Who has received the award?
4. How is the prize awarded? What are central categories of assessment?
5. What are the single steps from nomination to the award ceremony?
6. Why is the prize awarded - in general and specifically?
7. What is the history of the Nobel Prize in Literature?
8. What are the politics of the Nobel Prize in Literature?
9. What are postcolonial issues connected with the award?
10. Any other points of interest or questions you might have....

Postcolonial Issues???



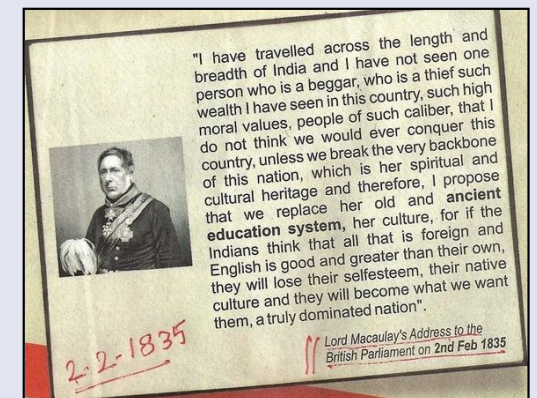
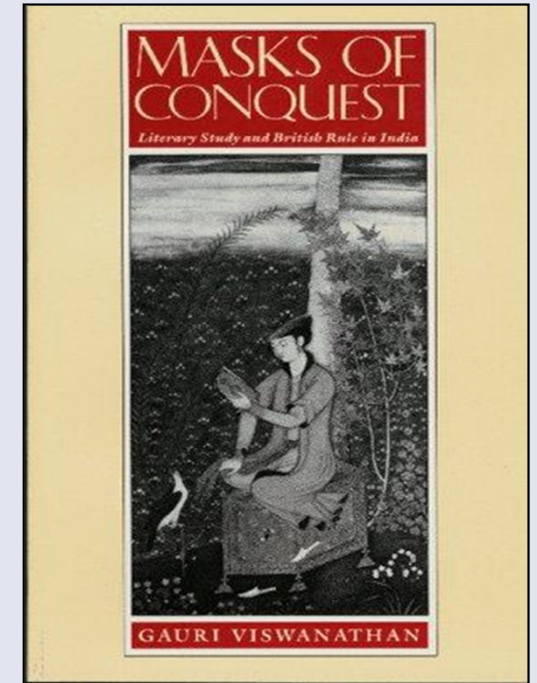
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Colonial Literature

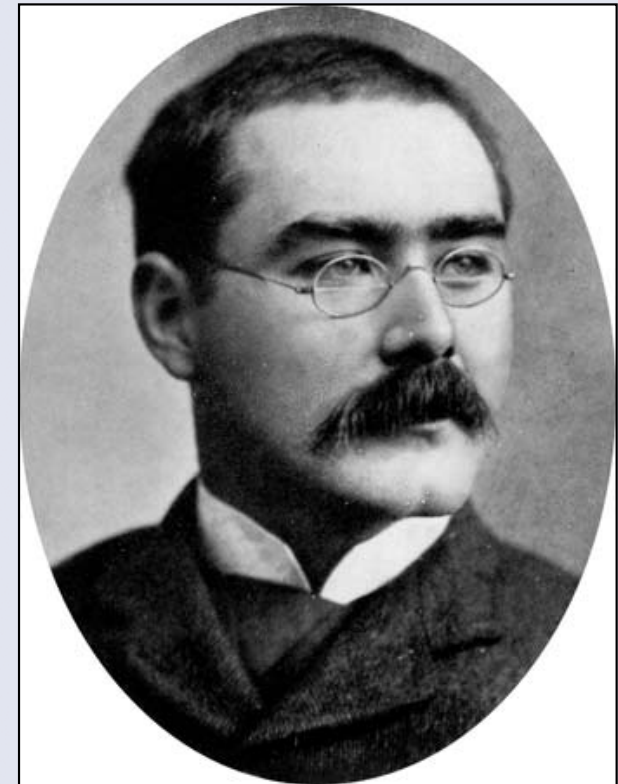
Indian Literature

- **Indian Literature:** venerable literary tradition covering a great variety of ethnicities, religions, cultures, traditions. Languages (multilingual country)
- **Official Languages:** Sanskrit, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugo, Urdu, Sindhi, Maithili, Dogri, Rajashtani, Mainpur, Knkani, Nepali, English (5%)
- **English:** Problematic role of English as language of colonial administration and formal education; English Literature as a school subject was first established in the colony before it was introduced in England; Indian education dominated by the Christian missions; English Studies is intricately bound up with British Indian educational history
- **Anglo-Indian Literature vs. Indian English Literature**



Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

- **Anglo-Indian:** Born in Bombay, educated in England
- **Journalist:** 1882 returns to India to work as assistant-editor at *Civil and Military Gazette*
- **Traveller:** from 1889 onwards extended travels to the USA, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand
- **Novelist and Poet:** *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888), “Gunga Din” (1890), *The Jungle Book* (1894), *Kim* (1901), wins the Nobel Prize for Literature (1907), “If” (1910),
- **“Bard of the Empire”:** “The White Man’s Burden” (1899)
- ***Kim* (1901):** spy novel, picaresque fiction, novel of development, children’s literature, boy’s own adventure story, imperial romance, hybridity



Indian(-English) Poetry

- **Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1914):** *Gitanjali* (1912), Nobel Prize (1913), *The Fugitive* (1921), *The Child* (1931)
- **Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004):** *A Time to Change* (1952), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *Collected Poems* (1989)
- **Kamala Das (1934-2009):** *The Sirens* (1964), *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), nominated and shortlisted for Nobel Prize for Literature (1984)
- **Vikram Seth (1952):** *The Golden Gate* (1986)



Postcolonial Literature

Winner of the 2014 Man Booker Prize: Richard Flanagan

“In Australia the Man Booker Prize is seen as something of a chicken raffle. I just didn't expect to end up being the chicken. I do not come out of a literary tradition. I come from a tiny mining town in the rainforest in an island at the end of the world. My grandparents were illiterate. And I never expected to stand here before you in this grand hall in London as a writer being so honoured. I do not share the pessimism of the age about the novel. They are one of our greatest spiritual, aesthetic and intellectual inventions. As a species it is story that distinguishes us, and one of the supreme expressions of story is the novel. Novels are not content. Nor are they a mirror to life or an explanation of life or a guide to life. Novels *are* life, or they are nothing. I thank the judges for choosing my book from such an illustrious list. It is the greatest honour. I thank my English publisher Clara Farmer and all her team at Chatto.” (Flanagan)

The Cultural Cringe

“Above our writers – and other artists – looms the intimidating mass of Anglo-Saxon culture. Such a situation almost inevitably produces the characteristic Australian Cultural Cringe [...] The Cringe mainly appears in an inability to escape needless comparison. [...] But the dangers of the comparative approach go deeper than this. The Australian writer normally frames his communication for the Australian reader. [...] A second effect of the Cringe has been the estrangement of the Australian Intellectual. [...] The Australian writer is affected by the Cringe because it mists the responsiveness of his audience, and because its influence on the intellectual deprives the writer of a sympathetically critical atmosphere. [...] [T]he Cringe is a worse enemy to our cultural development than our isolation.” (Phillips 437-440)

Critical Voices from the 20th Century

- “Its [our individuality] quintessence must lie in the realization of whatever things are distinctive in our environment and their sublimation in lore and idea, in culture. Australian culture is at present in a nebulous stage, because our writers have not come clearly to any such realization.” (Ingamells 200)
- “I do not wish to flog the obvious fact that a nation, or the idea of a nation, is inseparable from its literature, is incomplete. Australia without a literature remains a colony, no nation.” (Stephensen 186)
- “Social, literary and political commentators in Australia and Canada have, perhaps, shown an even greater obsession with the problem of national identity than those of most other emergent colonial or postcolonial nations.” (Lawson 167)

Critical Voices from the 20th Century

“Brought up to believe in the maxim: Only the British can be right, I did accept this during the earlier part of my life. [...] All through the War in the Middle East there persisted a longing to return to the scenes of childhood, which is, after all, the purest well from which creative artists draws. [...] I wanted to discover the extraordinary behind the ordinary [...]. [...] Above all I was determined to prove that the Australian novel is not necessarily the dreary, dun-coloured offspring of journalistic realism. [...] I began to see things for the first time.” (White 557-59)

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