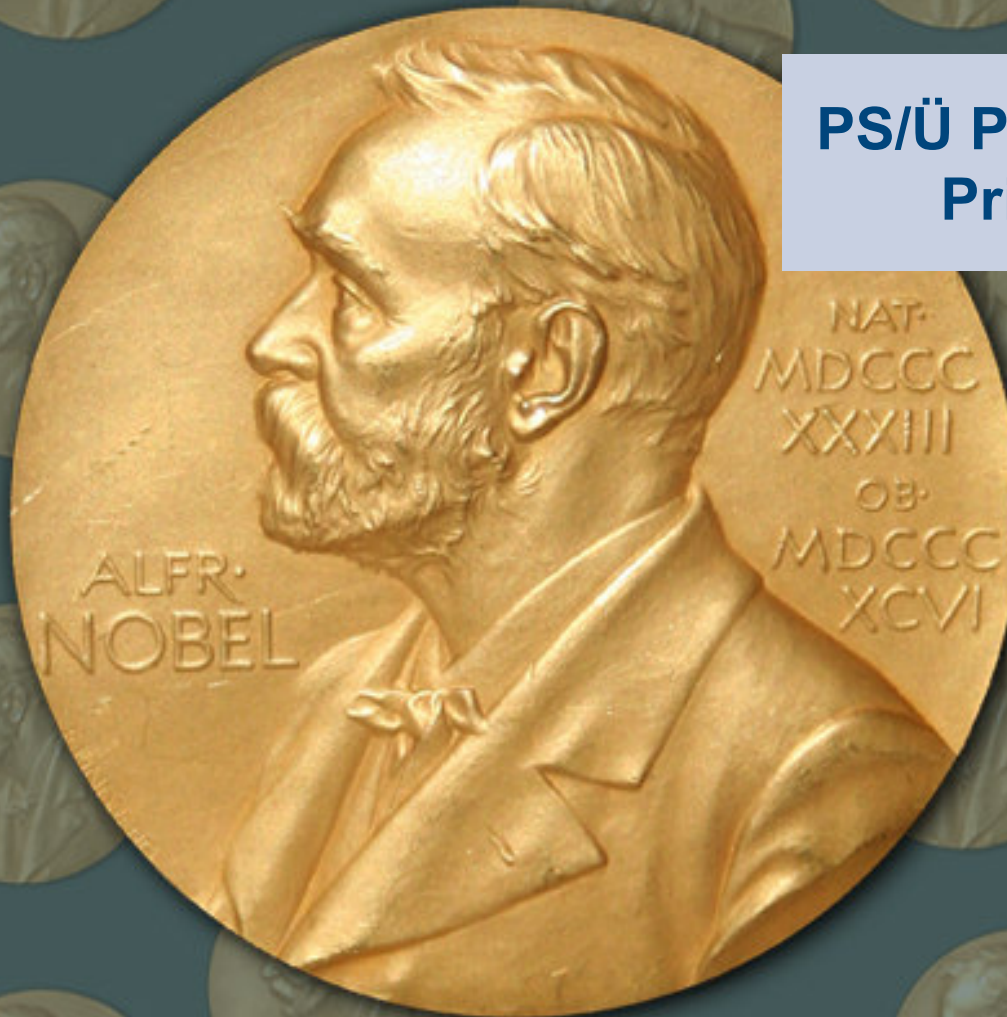


**PS/Ü Postcolonial Nobel
Prize Laureates**



PS/Ü Postcolonial Nobel Prize Laureates

Session 11: Apartheid

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

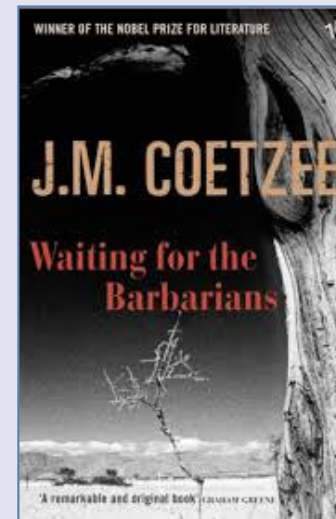
Website: <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/englit/personen/prof-dr-nora-plesske/>

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

J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980)

J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980)

- Intertexts
- Genre
- Time
- Space
- Characters
- Themes:
 - Barbarity and Civilization
 - Body: Self/Other, Othering
 - Truth, Knowledge, Power



Southern African Literature

Southern Africa



- No consensus on geographical region and territorial boundaries with regard to literature.
- “The end of apartheid has heralded a new era in Southern Africa with South Africa once again becoming part and parcel of the political, economic and cultural life of the subcontinent.” (Ngara qtd. in Davis 87)

South African History

- 1500 First contact with Europeans
- 1795 **Occupation of the Cape by British**
- 1820 Settlement by the British on eastern frontier of Cape Colony
- 1836 The Great Trek
- 1867 Discovery of diamonds near Kimberley results in migrant labour
- 1872 Cape colony granted 'responsible' settler government
- 1879 Anglo-Zulu war
- 1886 Gold discovered in Boer republic Transvaal
- 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War
- 1923 Segregation extended to urban areas
- 1925 Afrikaans official language
- 1948 **All white election, National Party election victory, and implementation of apartheid policy**
- 1953 Bantu Education Act
- 1959 Anti-apartheid movement founded in London
- 1960 **Sharpeville massacre, SA withdraws from Commonwealth**

- 1962 Life imprisonment of Nelson Mandela
- 1968 Resettlement of African under SA apartheid social engineering
- 1976 **Soweto Revolt against Afrikaans as medium of instruction**
- 1977 Black Consciousness movements banned
- 1985 State of Emergency, civil unrest, economic crisis,
- 1986 Repeal of several apartheid laws
- 1990 President F.W. de Klerk announces unbanning of ANC and release of Nelson Mandela
- 1993 Mandela calls for international community to lift economic restrictions, Mandela and de Klerk share Nobel Peace Prize
- 1994 **Democratic elections with ANC as majority party British**
- 1995 Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* as international bestseller
- 1996-1998 Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Language and South African Literature

- Zulu (23.8 %), Xhosa (17.6 %), Afrikaans (13.3 %), Pedi (9.4 %), English (8.2 %)
- Afrikaans as associated with officialdom and repression
- “hegemony of the English language” (Alexander qtd. in Davis 90)
- English “a deeply embedded foreign language” (Coetzee qtd. in Attwell 509)
- Access to wider world vast majority chose English
- Crucial role of language in post-apartheid transformation

Apartheid

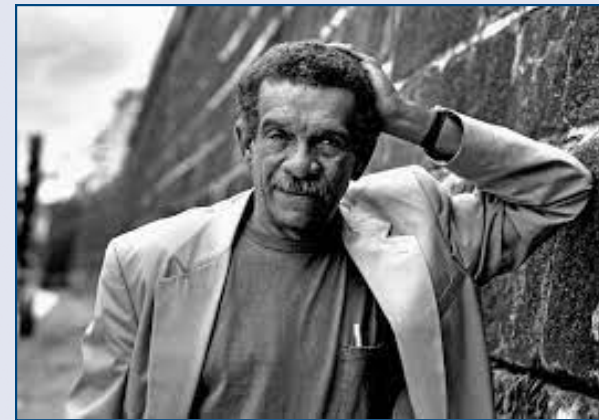
- Afrikaans word for “segregation”
 - 1950-1990 in South Africa
 - Division of entire population of the country according to race, tribal affiliation, and language
 - Justified by law, e.g. Population Registration Act (1950) and division of population into four groups: White, Coloured, Asian, Black
 - Intensive form of racism in all aspects of social life
 - Removal of people, homelands (Black reservations), resident permit-holders
 - African National Congress (ANC) – initially non-violent resistance against institutionalised racial discrimination
 - Increasing repression under political and economic pressure
-
- Most of English Language South African Literature arisen in opposition to political system
 - Censorship, forced exile, banned books

Postcolonial and Apartheid Literature

- As South Africa is a society that is, properly speaking, neither colonial nor post-colonial, yet participates in features of both, so too its literature has been caught up in an extended historical interregnum involving treated explorations of a delayed transition between these two conditions.” (Clingman qtd. in Columbia Guide 5)
- “The challenge is to free the entire social imagination of the oppressed from the laws of perception that have characterised apartheid society. For writers this means freeing the creative process itself from those very laws. It means extending the writer’s perception of that can be written about, and the means and methods of writing.” (Ndebele qtd. in Davis 96)

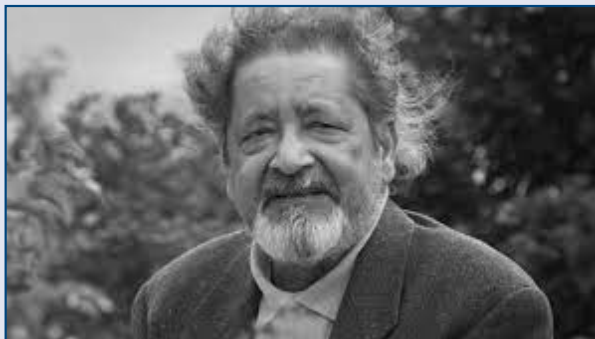
The Nobel Lectures: Literary / Political

Wole Soyinka, “This Past Must Address Its Present” (1986)



Derek Walcott, “The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory” (1992)

V.S. Naipaul, “Two Worlds” (2001)



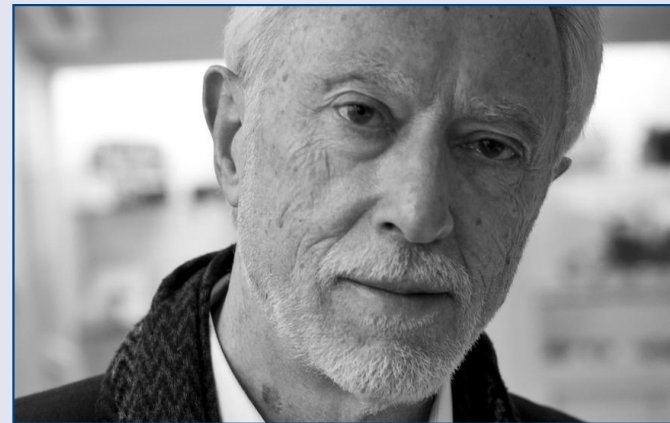
Abdulrazak Gurnah, “Writing” (2021)

The Nobel Lectures: Literary / Apartheid

Wole Soyinka, “This Past Must Address Its Present” (1986)



J.M. Coetzee, “He and His Man” (2003)



Nadine Gordimer, “Writing and Being” (1991)



Doris Lessing, “On Not Winning the Nobel Prize” (2007)



Nadine Gordimer's *The Conservationist* (1974)

Nadine Gordimer (1923-2014)

- **Background:** Born to Lithuanian father and English mother in South African mining town, supporter of Mandela, wrote more than 13 Novels and 200 short stories
- **Collections of Short Stories:** *Face to Face* (1949), *The Soft Voice of the Serpent and Other Stories* (1959), *Six Feet of the Country* (1956), *Friday's Footprint and Other Stories* (1960), *Not for Publication* (1965), *Selected Stories* (1975), *Something Out There* (1984), *Jump and Other Stories* (1991), *Loot and Other Stories* (2003)
- **Novels:** *The Lying Days* (1953), *Occasions for Loving* (1966), *A Guest of Honour* (1970), *The Conservationist* (1974), *July's People* (1981), *None to Accompany Me* (1994), *The House Gun* (1998), *The Pickup* (2001), *Get a Life* (2005)
- **Novels banned:** *A World of Strangers* (1958), *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966), *Burgher's Daughter* (1979)

Nadine Gordimer (1923-2014)

- **Prizes:** James Tait Black Memorial Prize (1971), Booker McConnell Prize (1974), Grand Aigle d'Or Prize (1975), South African News Agency (CAN) Literary Award (1975, 1991), Nobel Prize (1991)
- **Topics:** Draw attention to atrocities of apartheid, master-servant relations, mindsets and attitudes, neocolonial situation, move from liberal to radical phase, move from explicitly political to private lives

Nadine Gordimer, “Nobel Lecture: Writing and Being” (1991)

- “Some of us have seen our books lie for years unread in our own countries, banned, and we have gone on writing. Many writers have been imprisoned. Looking at Africa alone – Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Jack Mapanje, in their countries, and in my own country, South Africa, Jeremy Cronin, Mongane Wally Serote, Breyten Breytenback, Dennis Brutus, Jaki Seroke: all went to prison for the courage shown in their lives, and have continued to take the right, as poets, to speak of trees.”

Nadine Gordimer (1923-2014)

Nadine Gordimer, “April 27: The First Time” (1994)

- “Is there any South African for whom this day will be remembered by any event, even the most personal, above its glowing significance as the day on which we voted? Even for whites, all of whom have had the vote since they were eighteen, this was the *first time*. This was my own overwhelming sense of the day: the other elections, with their farcical show of a democratic procedure restricted to whites (and, later, to everyone *but* the black majority), had no meaning for any of us as *South Africans*; only as a hegemony of skin.”

Hermoine Lee, “Interview with Nadine Gordimer” (2004)

- “We had the same reaction [party when the Berlin Wall fell] when the apartheid walls came down. Then comes the morning after. Then comes the hangover. [...] [...] I don’t think we had given much thought to [...] the idea what would happen the morning after. That of course is what we are dealing with now.”

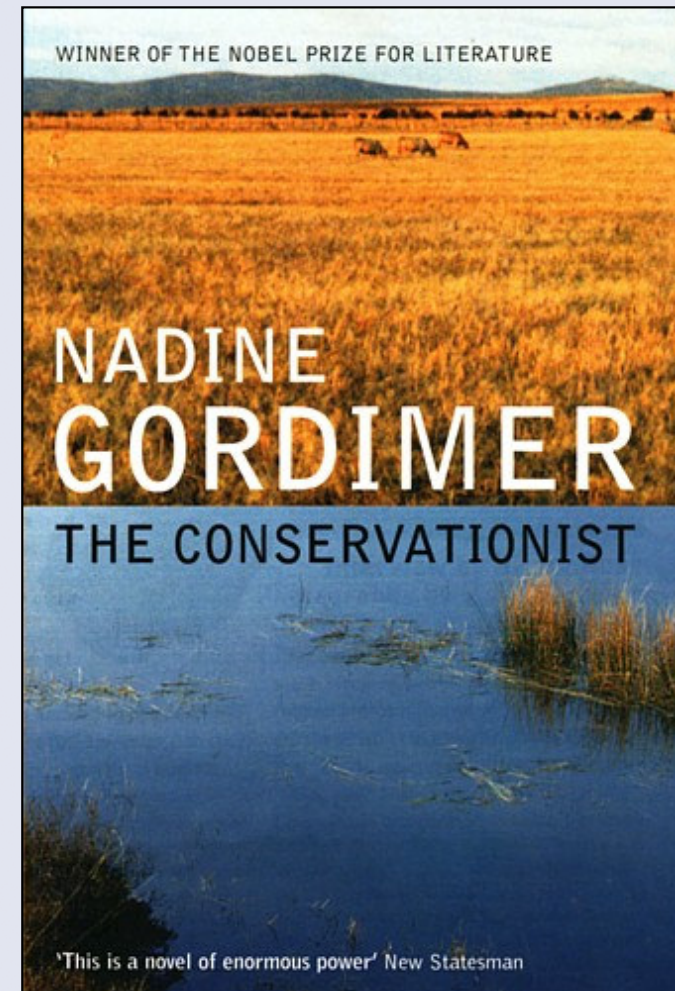
Nadine Gordimer, *The Conservationist* (1974)

Content:

- Psychological Disintegration
- Zulu Mythology and Biblical Apocalypse
- Anti-Apartheid Writing
- Women's Writing

Discourse:

- Unreliable Narrator
- Present Tense
- Stream of Consciousness



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