

Works by J M Coetzee

We will read two short novels or novellas by the well-known South African writer J M Coetzee. Coetzee is a Nobel winning (2003) novelist from South Africa (although since retiring from the University of Cape Town in 2002, he has moved to Adelaide, Australia). He has also won the Man-Booker prize twice (only one other author has done this) and he was a close contender for the Booker prize last year for the third in his series of semi-autobiographical novels - *Summertime*. He has achieved many other awards and honors as well. Coetzee spent a number of years in the U.S. obtaining a PhD. in linguistics at the University of Texas and teaching English and Literature for several years at SUNY Buffalo. But, as he had protested the Vietnam War while in the U.S., Coetzee could not gain permanent residency here and he returned to teach at the University of Cape Town. Coetzee has cited by a number of critics and reviewers as the greatest living writer today in the English language. Although Coetzee is best known for his works of fiction, he has also done translations as well as non-fiction and other works. For more information on Coetzee's diverse and unique background see the thumbnail sketch at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J. M. Coetzee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._M._Coetzee)

Coetzee is a very shy and reclusive individual who rarely give interviews, signs books, or appears in public. But here are a few links to videos showing Coetzee:

1. Some very short video-clips of Coetzee reading from his 2009 book *Summerland*:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYk5uxGXui8>

2. An extremely rare and insightful, but long (1+ hour) interview with Coetzee in Cape Town in 2000. The interviewer speaks in Dutch and English (there are bits of Afrikaans as well), while Coetzee answers primarily in English. It is definitely worth viewing:
<http://www.hollanddoc.nl/themasites/mediaplayer/index.jsp?bw=sb&player=wmp&media=14414924&portalnr=30852812&refernr=34437343&hostname=hollanddoc&portalid=hollanddoc&them>

We will read:

1) The second novella in his 1974 book *Dusklands: The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee*. This is story of an eighteenth-century Boer frontiersman who explores region of South Africa well north of Cape Town and his encounters and interactions with various indigenous peoples. This is covers his travels to Namaqualand, north to the Orange River, and into present day Namibia. We will be visiting some of this area during our trip to South Africa this summer. We will not read the first novella in this book: *The Vietnam Project*.

2) The short 1997 novel: *Boyhood: Scenes from a Provincial Life*. This is the first of Coetzee's semi-autobiographical novels. It focuses on childhood, growing up in a small Karoo (desert) town, which we will also likely visit.