

## AN OVERVIEW OF AFRICAN FILM AND LITERATURE WITH REFERENCE TO NADINE GORDIMER WORKS

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### **Abstract**

*Film and literature are the artistic expressions of human mind. Man thinks of different ways of communicating human experiences to broaden the enlightenment scenario. At the very outset, nobody takes an interest and favor towards the connection of filming and writing (literature). The relation (connection) of both, film and literature is as old as humanity. The 19th Century is the slow beginning to take an ideal shape of the process of creative exchange between film and literature. Film is such a field which was more related to photography and painting in the beginning. On the contrary, literature was almost restricting to print, which has more or less a permanent shape. Literature consists of different genres - short story, novel, drama and poetry. These all are the written documents, and it is clear that letters are used in literature.*

*African cinema is film production in Africa. It dates back to the early 20th century, when film reels were the primary cinematic technology in use. During the colonial era, African life was shown only by the work of white, colonial, Western filmmakers, who depicted blacks in a negative fashion, as exotic "others". There is no one single African cinema; there are differences between North African and Sub-Saharan cinema, and between the cinemas of different countries.*

*African filmmakers currently produce more films than their North American or European counterparts, yet the common misconception endures that the diversity of African cinema can be reduced to a simple, monolithic category of "African film." Sometimes "African film" is considered only in terms of anthropological films, imagined to represent some mythical "authenticity." At other times "African film" is considered as a set of artistic practices specific to the continent (sometimes derived from the model of Ousmane Sembène's early work).*

**Keywords :**

### **INTRODUCTION**

African theatre, effectively, the theatre of Africa south of the Sahara that emerged in the postcolonial era. It is not possible to talk of much African theatre as if it fell into discrete historical or national patterns. Colonial boundaries ignored cultural and linguistic unities, and ancient movements throughout the continent—sometimes motivated by trade (including the transatlantic slave trade), religion, or exploration—brought different ethnic groups into contact with each other and often influenced performance in a manner that is still evident in the 21st century. It is also important not to divide the theatre into “traditional” and “modern,” as the

contemporary literary theatre—predominantly written and performed in English, French, and Portuguese—exists alongside festivals, rituals, cultural performances, and popular indigenous theatre. The richness of theatre in Africa lies very much in the interaction of all these aspects of performance. The broad subheadings under which theatre in Africa is considered should, therefore, be seen as an aid to access rather than as representing definite boundaries.

Analyzing a range of South African and West African films inspired by African and non-African literature, Lindiwe Dovey identifies a specific trend in contemporary African filmmaking—one in which filmmakers are using the embodied audiovisual medium of film to offer a critique of physical and psychological violence. Against a detailed history of the medium's savage introduction and exploitation by colonial powers in two very different African contexts, Dovey examines the complex ways in which African filmmakers are preserving, mediating, and critiquing their own cultures while seeking a united vision of the future. More than merely representing socio-cultural realities in Africa, these films engage with issues of colonialism and post colonialism, "updating" both the history and the literature they adapt to address contemporary audiences in Africa and elsewhere. Through this deliberate and radical re-historicization of texts and realities, Dovey argues that African filmmakers have developed a method of filmmaking that is altogether distinct from European and American forms of adaptation.

The extraordinary (and often courageous) vitality of South African theatre during the oppressive days of apartheid to some extent dissipated with the coming of majority rule, but work from the second half of the 20th century—particularly that of Zakes Mda—confirmed its continuing relevance. Three early plays of Mda's—*Dark Voices Ring* (1976), *We Shall Sing for the Fatherland* (1976), and *The Hill* (1977)—established not only his inventive theatrical craftsmanship but also his sophisticated and independent critical voice.

### **FILM ADAPTATION OF NADINE GORDIMER'S FICTION**

Nadine Gordimer, South Africa's foremost novelist by any serious literary reckoning, was not bowled over when a producer of educational television films from Munich appeared on her doorstep in a sedate white neighborhood with a proposition for putting some of her short stories on film. Earnest visitors from the west, with a sudden urge to get involved in the intense morality play that is everyday reality here, show up occasionally in Miss Gordimer's fiction and more frequently in her life; typically the impulse that brings them expires with their visas.

A conditioned response of not expecting very much, rather than any lack of interest in seeing what could be done with her work in film, led the novelist to attach little importance to the German's visit. In fact, her interest in film was more than passing; her son is an aspiring filmmaker in New York and she herself had collaborated on a brief documentary with another filmmaker in the family, her husband's son-in-law, later encouraging him to make a short, virtually no budget feature out of one of her early stories, "Six Feet in the Country." But there had also been some fruitless talks with American producers who turned out to have neither the backing nor grasp of her work to make anything of their grandly sketched projects. "The thing I dislike about films is the big talk, the hot air," she said in a conversation over tea in her living room.

*"I'm not used to that. As a writer, you just sit down with your bit of paper and when it's finished, you take it to the publisher. At least, that's how I work."*

Unexpectedly, however, the producer from Munich returned with enough backing to start shooting some of the films they had discussed. Even more important, he was still prepared to give legal force to stringent conditions she had set: that the directors and authors of the screenplays would be South Africans of her choosing; and that the series, once finished, would have to be sold in its entirety and shown without cuts by any broadcasting company that purchased it for television, a condition that effectively ruled out the state television monopoly in South Africa.

## CONCLUSION

Not surprisingly, all the stories touch on race issues - an obsession not of the writer but the country and therefore an ineluctable theme - but the focus shifts from white to black, urban to rural and, more subtly, from innocence to entanglement in the underlying conflict. The German producers, at first, wanted to pick stories that were as overtly political and contemporary as possible. Miss Gordimer held out for more of a mix, suggesting several stories from early collections. "They wanted to pick stories all of the same kind," she said, "and my idea was, first of all, to show the complexity of this society, which is reflected in stories that I've written over 30 years, at different stages in my life, at different stages of understanding where I live."

Film and literature are two different things with a similar goal to create sublimity in human imagination and understanding. Both film and literature work hand in hand to boost the progress of human civilization. And they are the complimentary in nature and one is no

substitute to the other, like letters and sounds in human communication. Film and literature inspire and enrich each others. They also ennoble human mind through action, images, words and replicating life of human beings. Adaptation of literary genres for filming is not a new / recent phenomenon but an old one. Adaptations of films have various sources for e.g. theatre, novel, music and painting. All these sources get techniques of stage, lighting, movements and gestures, structures, characterization, theme, point of view, rhythm, repetition colour & counter point respectively.

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