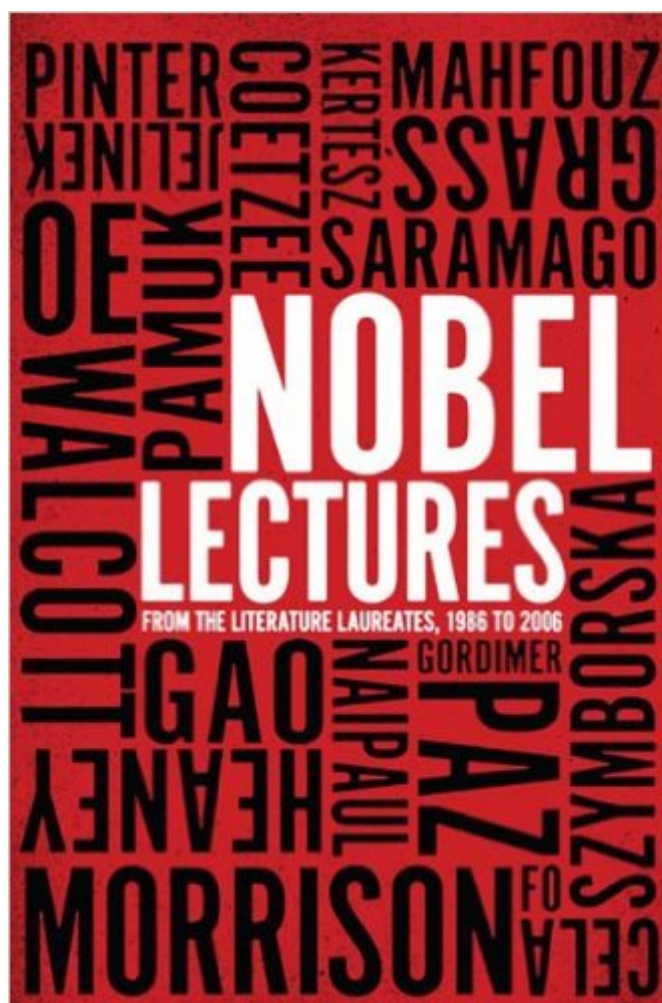


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# Nobel Lectures: From The Literature Laureates, 1986 To 2006



## Synopsis

Twenty-one of the world's greatest writers contemplate art and politics in a collection of both lyrical beauty and ethical depth. "A writer's life is a highly vulnerable, almost naked activity.... You find no shelter, no protection unless you lie; in which case of course you have constructed your own protection and, it could be argued, become a politician." Harold Pinter, from his Nobel lecture "Art, Truth And Politics" For over one hundred years writers from around the world have traveled to Stockholm, Sweden, on December 10, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death, to be awarded the prize bearing his name. From the political to the aesthetic, Nobel Lectures collects the words of a quarter century of these literature laureates, representing the inspirations, motivations, and passionately held beliefs of some of the greatest minds in the world of literature. From Harold Pinter's passionate and timely lecture on the nature of truth in art and politics to J.M. Coetzee's allegorical journey through the mysteries of the creative process; from Toni Morrison's essay on the link between language and oppression to Nadine Gordimer's meditation on the ways in which literature can shape the worlds of individual and collective being, this is a volume in which meditations on imagination and the process of writing mingle with keen discussions of global affairs, cultural change, and the ongoing influence of the past. Whatever genre the laureates write in, be it poetry, drama, or prose, and whatever their cultural or social background, Nobel Lectures is a testament to the power of literature to shape the world.

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## Customer Reviews

Nobel Lectures: From the Literature Laureates, 1986 to 2006 contains 21 talks given by writers upon accepting this acknowledgement of their work. I initially checked out this book to read more from Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka. I found myself captivated by many of the other authors. Following are eight quotes I gathered from reading this collection.

Orhan Pamuk In *My Father's Suitcase* (1986), Pamuk speaks about the fear of reading his father's writing: "For me, to be a writer is to acknowledge the secret wounds that we carry inside us, the wounds so secret that we ourselves are barely aware of them, and to patiently explore them, know them, illuminate them, to own these pins and wounds, and to make them a conscious part of our spirits and our writing."

Harold Pinter In *Art, Truth and Politics* (2005), Pinter writes about hidden crimes and the challenges revealing the truth: "I put to you that the United States is without doubt the greatest show on the road.... Listen to all American presidents on television say the words, 'the American people'.... Language is actually employed to keep thought at bay. The words 'the American people' provide a truly voluptuous cushion of reassurance. You don't need to think."

Imre Kertész In *Heureka!* (2002), Kertész reflects on the Hungarian dictatorship in the mid-20th century: "I understood that hope is an instrument of evil, and the Kantian categorical imperative--ethics in general--is but the pliable handmaiden of self-preservation."

Gao Xingjian In *The Case for Literature* (2000), Gao cautions not to celebrate peace in isolation: "This new century will not be immune to catastrophes simply because there were so many in the past century, because memories are not transmitted like genes."

Toni Morrison In *The Bird Is in Your Hands* (1993), Morrison's parable about the transfer of wisdom is especially powerful: "Language can never 'pin down' slavery, genocide, war. Nor should it yearn for the arrogance to be able to do so."

Derek Walcott In *The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory* (1992), Walcott remembers a village performance by Indian Trinidadian performers: "They were not amateurs but believers."

Joseph Brodsky In *Aesthetics and Language* (1987), Brodsky reflects on the Russian Revolution of 1917: "For in a real tragedy, it is not the hero who perishes; it is the chorus."

Wole Soyinka In *This Past Must Address Its Present* (1986), Soyinka rages against the oppressive writing of Frobenius, Hume, Hegel, Montesquieu and others: "Warning! This work is dangerous for your racial self-esteem." Reading these lectures from the literature laureates reminded me of the power of words, written in isolation, to grapple with the social condition.

Wonderful quality and fast service from seller. My brother in law loves the New Yorker. This was suggested reading if you read that magazine. He was thrilled with it.

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