



[home](#) • [authors](#) • [trails](#) • [reviews](#) • [interviews](#)

literarytourism.co.za

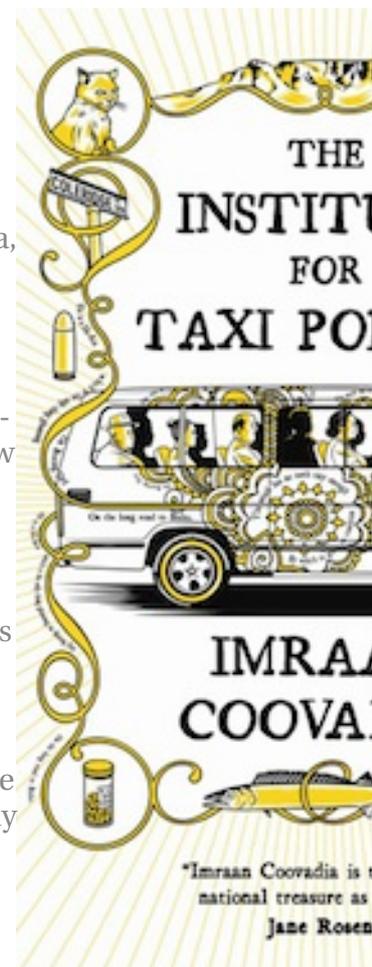
## Coovadiaâ™s imaginative recycling of revolution tradition

Monday, 30 April 2012 13:40

Launch of *The Institute for Taxi Poetry* by Imraan Coovadia, 08 May 2012, Ike's Books, Durban.

"It is a rare gift to be seriously funny and seriously serious," Mervyn Sloman remarks. The accomplishment is that of Imraan Coovadia, speaking about his new novel "The Institute for Taxi Poetry. He speaks to a well-thronged upper floor of recognisable reporters and scholars" most of whom have made the migration upstairs after double-dipping braised-potato spring rolls in the sweet chilli sauce (I saw you buddy" the tweed and suede doesn't fool me). His interlocutor is journalist-at-large, Oâ™ Toole, of the Sean variety. The event is casual and conversational, buoyed by Imraanâ™s disaffected charisma and Seanâ™s researched and imaginative questioning style.

"Last year Imraan interviewed me," begins Sean, "and his first question floored me." He had to stare blankly into the audience, eventually dredging up an answer that leads him to say, "I have hated him ever since." There are gentle murmurs of laughter, and a relaxed atmosphere that avoids the dire and machinic question-and-answer routine (with its hanging epochs of silence) which we launches.



Haunted by Dispa  
turns out to be a  
Of lostness and b  
Social Media Sub  
plan.

Charles R. Larson  
Christian-democr  
value of the coef

The Novel in the  
not available to v  
James Lee Burke  
Hepatocellular a  
interval illustrate  
A Novel In Vitro  
Peroxide on Axo  
A detailed pathol  
enzyme replacer  
levels, gives tang

Sean begins by remarking on a photograph of Imraan â œferretedâ from ( which features the latter in a composed shot taken during his residency in I before an old IBM laptop. â œI always figured you for a Dell kind of guy,â maybe a beat-up Apple.â â œWell,â replies Coovadia, the tilt of head and engaging the question with such mock-introspective seriousness has the au

[Read the full article on Slipnet ...](#)

---

## John Conyngham

Wednesday, 07 February 2007 04:22

**John Conyngham** (1954- ) was born in Durban and brought up on his familyâ™s sugar farm inland from Stanger (now KwaDukuza). After three years at a farm school in the Doringkop district, he attended Cowan House, Hilton College, Haileybury & Imperial Service College in England, the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, where in his B.A. he majored in English and Classical Civilization, and Trinity College, Dublin, where he studied Anglo-Irish literature. He later completed a post-graduate diploma in education through the University of South Africa.



After two yearsâ™ national service in the South African Army, and six months teaching English at Maritzburg College, he was, for thirty-one years, a journalist on *The Witness* (formerly *The Natal Witness*) in Pietermaritzburg, and from 1994 to 2010 the newspaperâ™s editor. He has held journalism f Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St Petersburg, Florida, United States a University.

During his years as a journalist he wrote three novels.

*The Arrowing of the Cane* (Ad Donker 1986) was joint winner of the 1985 AA

---

published by Bloomsbury in Britain and Simon & Schuster/Fireside in the U translated into French, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. In the *Irish Sunday* Colm TÃ³ibÃ n likened it to Doris Lessingâ™s *The Grass is Singing* and Na *The Conservationist*, saying it was â~as good and as skilful as either of those â~as good as anything which has come out of white South Africaâ™. Maur Johannesburg *Sunday Independent* called it â~a brilliant novelâ™ and Hea *Cape Times* said it â~must rank amongst the finest descriptive writing to co countryâ™. In the *New York Times Book Review*, Michael Ross said â~Mr ( deftly fashioned a metaphor for a country facing its own three oâ™clock in soulâ™ while in the *Los Angeles Times*, Charles Solomon called it â~a rare vanishing privileged world of white South Africaâ™. UKZN English literatu Bizley, writing in *Natal University Focus*, stated: â~*The Arrowing of the Car* classic status in Natal termsâ™.

*The Desecration of the Graves* (Ad Donker 1990) was shortlisted for the 1991 published in Britain by Bloomsbury, and translated into Spanish. In the Joh: *Times*, Barry Ronge described it as â~a bracing blend of history, political ar discovery which is externalised in a beautifully terse, non-committal plotâ™ to say in *The Natal Witness* that â~the reason he [Conyngham] is so succes: good English. There is a sense of refinement which one doesnâ™t often fir: *El Mundo* in Barcelona Nelson Marra called it â~an entirely original and ref

novelâ™, and in Londonâ™s *Daily Telegraph* Kirsty Milne found the land  
âˆ™vividly evokedâ™.

*The Lostness of Alice* (Ad Donker 1998) was published in South Africa. In *Di*  
Hambidge described it as âˆ™a breathtaking reading experienceâ™ and tha  
âˆ™such an accomplished novel about the violence in this land,â™ while Zo  
*Sowetan* found the black characters undeveloped and stereotypical but that  
nevertheless âˆ™a fascinating readâ™. In *Sawubona*, Rina Minervini called i

you on and onâ™. On *Capetalk*, John Maytham described it as âˆ™a really i  
poetic, oblique, rather fascinating take on Africa.â™

After an 18-year interval, much of it taken up as a newspaper editor, he has  
*Elegy for an African Farm* (Natal Society Foundation 2016; Shuter and Shoc  
non-fiction account of an Anglo-South African family and its sugar farm, w  
âˆ™outstandingâ™ by Stephen Robinson in *Business Day*, âˆ™inspirationalâ™  
McCracken in *Farmerâ™s Weekly*, and âˆ™a consummate elegyâ™ by Step  
review on this website.

## Selected Work

Â

fromÂ *The Arrowing of the Cane* (1986)

The road from Nonoti into the hills rises slowly out of the mugginess of the  
its way past deep old houses seething with wispish Indian children, mango t  
glossy leaves, car and bus carcasses, and fluttering flags on tall bamboo pol  
reluctantly, the sprawling suburb succumbs to the ubiquitous cane. Labour  
the Land Rover edges into the sighing greenness, rising and falling with its e

Clusters of palms indicate farmhouses hugged to their outbuildings by high  
verge announce the company's sections - Carrickfergus, Quantock, Umsun  
each with its own manager, overseers, sirdars, indunas and army of labour  
club, its team once provincial champions, holders of the Waterford Cup, bu  
relegation to the third division. Then the company hospital with its two whi  
shuttered wards, and the little St John's Church with its cemetery. Planter f  
rows while the Indians' crosses wander from the bottom fence into a grove

Gradually the air becomes more rarified. Coolness jets through the vents. F  
the Umvoti River coils through another finger of KwaZulu which was a hot  
Bambata Rebellion. Now overpopulated, overgrazed and rutted, the valley  
strangers crossing this neck miles above it. There is a lay-by from which tot  
photographs of the picturesque hutted kraals. As with anything gross, distal  
onlooker.

After another steep ascent I reach Manning's Post, the local trading store ar  
where each morning one of the gardeners collects the newspaper, and retu  
for the post. The familiar sign - Rangoon Estate - is on the right, swaying ge  
chains above the T-junction. Beyond it spreads a neighbour's plantation of  
ripening bunches swathed in hessian.

The wide district road with its harsh all-weather surface bisects the farm an  
mill in the valley. Around it capillaries a network of private roads and cane-  
past the mouth of the avenue, I weave along a series of overgrown tracks to  
consult with the induna. Several men are absent; otherwise all seems to be  
loaded trailer move slowly across the row corrugations and I dart ahead of  
to the avenue.

As I enter the vaulted shadow, a puff adder is crossing the pink gravel, writ  
across the open ground. Hideously distended like a length of diseased bowe

Land Rover approaches, entering the path of the right front wheel. To continue popping it, but I decide against it, bearing fractionally to the left as it disappears undergrowth bordering the Indians' houses. Why the sudden magnanimity? The answer isn't forthcoming.

### **Bibliography**

1986. *The Arrowing of the Cane*. Craighall Johannesburg: Ad Donker

1989. *The Arrowing of the Cane*. London: Bloomsbury (hardback)

1989. *The Arrowing of the Cane*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Fireside

1990. *The Arrowing of the Cane*. London: Bloomsbury

1990: *När Sockerrören Brinne/The Arrowing of the Cane*. Stockholm (hardback)

1991. *Le commencement de la fin/The Arrowing of the Cane*. Paris: Éditions

1994. *Cuando florece le caña/The Arrowing of the Cane*. Barcelona: Icaria

1994. *Lanças de fogo/The Arrowing of the Cane*. São Paulo, Brazil: Companhia

1994. *The Arrowing of the Cane*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker/Jonathan Ball

2002. *The Arrowing of the Cane*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker/Jonathan Ball

1990. *The Desecration of the Graves*. Parklands Johannesburg: Ad Donker

1992. *La profanación de las tumbas/The Desecration of the Graves*. Emecé Editores

1992. *The Desecration of the Graves*. London: Bloomsbury

2002. *The Desecration of the Graves*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker/Jonathan Ball

1998. *The Lostness of Alice*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker/Jonathan Ball

2016. *Hazara: Elegy for an African Farm*. Pietermaritzburg: Natal Society (hardback)

Â

2016. *Hazara: Elegy for an African Farm*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and

---

**Jack Cope**

Wednesday, 07 February 2007 04:22

**Jack Cope** (1913 - 1991), South African novelist, short-story writer, poet, and editor, was born in Natal, South Africa and attended boarding school in Durban, afterwards becoming a journalist on the *Natal Mercury* and then a political correspondent in London for South African newspapers. At the outbreak of the Second World War, in a state of some disillusionment, he returned to his father's farm and, while working at various jobs, took up creative writing. During the following four decades Cope published eight novels, more than a hundred short stories, and three collections of poetry, the last one in association with C.J. Driver. For twenty of those years, beginning in 1960, he edited *Contrast*, a bilingual literary magazine that published contributions in both English and Afrikaans. He co-edited *The Penguin Book of South African Verse* (1968) with Uys Krige and, as general editor throughout much of the 1970s, produced the Mantis editions of southern African poets. In 1980 he moved to England, where he published *The Adversary Within: Dissident* (1982) and his *Selected Stories* (1986).



Cope's first novel, *The Fair House* (1955), considers the Bambata Rebellion to account for the later racial and political conditions in his country. Later *Golden Oriole* (1958), *Albino* (1964), and *The Rain-Maker* (1971), chronicle the destruction of black culture and the ensuing struggle by the blacks to re-assert their identity. However, it is as a short-story writer that Cope demonstrated his greatest achievements. His stories evoke, according to Alan Paton, 'with a few words the scents and sounds of our country'. In 'A Crack in the Sky' (*The Tame Ox*, 1960) and 'Power' (*The Tame Ox and Other Stories*, 1967) his moral vision is clear; his third collection, *Alley* (1973), contains darker themes such as those of alienation and loneliness. One of his most important achievements was his influence on South African literature during the most important years in the struggle against apartheid. (From *The Contemporary South African Novel*, ed. by J. C. Coetzee, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, pp. 158-159. <http://people.africadatabase.org/en/profile/15849.html>)

Â

## Selected Work

from *The Tame Ox*

The veranda of the office looked across a square of low roofs, and beyond that of the Native College could be seen scattered among the wind-swept gum-storey blocks in plain stone masonry topped with corrugated iron. Beyond stretched rolling hills of sugar-cane plantations. The College Principal, the white man Dr Njilo, descended the steps to the broad red-earth square. Along the left side stood old mango trees. It was a tropical day of broiling sunshine and limp, hot air, and the flags round the platform were motionless. The mango trees had thrown a deep shadow. By the time the ceremony was due to begin the platform was shaded.

Dr Njilo went among the people, moving his big body with an ease that was at the same time youthful. The women fixed on him coy, bashful looks and smiles, but distant from them. That day he was to be honoured by the white men with a degree, a Doctorate of Philosophy - these were strange terms to them. Yet the white man of the Zulu nation had ever before arrived where he had. The word had been that people were coming from long distances to see the white men do honour to the white man Njilo.

Dr Njilo had a few words for all he greeted. He put into his own language a preciseness, a stiffness of the printed letter and book as though he had a pride in it. He turned to his secretary a few times with a remark in English brought beer in earthenware pots and large gourds covered with a few wild flowers. He would not refuse the customary offering. During the morning he had drunk a little and his midday meal had revived his thirst. At first he took the beerpots from the hands, drank a few gulps, standing, and then wiped his mouth with his hand a little to indicate his pleasure or approval. Perhaps his eyes lit up if he came to a new one. He silenced his belches in the European manner and merely nodded as a severe concession in accepting at all.

In the shade of the mango trees an old wrinkled woman, more pagan than the others, called in a cracked voice: 'Teacher, if you stand, the beer has far to travel -it will be cold.' The people turned their faces away to hide their smiles, but Dr Njilo burst in with a remark which all joined. 'A waterfall? Is that where the Amanzimtoti River started?' He called in a bell-like voice.

Sitting on his haunches, he took a good pull at the old woman's beer-pot with a compliment. He was speaking more easily; his quips flew, and now he was in a mood of amusement where the solid dark figure moved, clothed in academic robes with patches between the leaves on his crisp black hair, neatly parted. He was silent in the all-pervading heat and breathed like a strong-chested horse in the traces. He rolled amiably and a healthy pink tongue showed when he threw back his head.

At one place six elders were waiting for him, all greyheaded men. Some were in European clothes, others in the skins and sandals of tribal dress; one man, creased and aged, had on the polished head-ring of the old royal warriors. Dr Njilo did not know any of the grandfathers or great-uncles of students. There was a short awkward pause with the cool impassive bearing of men who are perfectly assured of their own power. The eldest nodded continually and spittle dribbled over his beard. The other two, with dark, half-closed eyes, faintly contemptuous, it seemed. He had been called an extremist among his own people called him a 'good boy', a 'tame ox'. As a member of the People's Voice, he was on the side of moderation, tolerance. He mixed with the Negrophiles like Miss Poynton, liberals, and even men who galled him with their glances at Charles Gumede and back at the old men. They were not the political. But they were studying him, weighing up the future that he stood for. He looked the clouds to divine what storms or what sunny days were in store.

Â

## Bibliography

1948. *Marie : A South African Satire*. Ontario: Stewart Publishing.
1955. *The Fair House*. London: Macgibbon and Kee.
1958. *The Golden Oriole*. London: Heinemann.
1959. *The Road To Ysterberg : A Novel*. London: Heinemann.
1960. *The Tame Ox*. London: Heinemann.
1964. *Albino*. London: Heinemann.
1967. *The Man Who Doubted*. London: Heinemann.
1968. *The Penguin Book Of South African Verse* (Co- editor). Johannesburg: Butterworths.
1969. *The Dawn Comes Twice*. London: Heinemann.
1971. *The Rain-Maker*. London: Heinemann.
1972. *The Student of Zend*. London: Heinemann.

1973. *Alley Cat*. London: Heinemann.
1973. *The Africa We Knew*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
1974. *Lacking A Label*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
1977. *My Son Max*. London: Heinemann.
1979. *Notes Recorded in Sun*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
1982. *The Adversary Within : Dissident Writers In Afrikaans*. Cape Town: Publishers.
1986. *Selected Stories*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
1990. *Tales of the Trickster Boy*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

---

**More Articles...**

[Ashwin Desai](#)

[New concept boosts KZN tourism](#)

[Herbert Dhlomo](#)

[DUT posthumous honorary Doctorate for Professor Lewis Nkosi](#)

[« Start](#) [Prev](#) [71](#)