

# Shine Brighter 2<sup>de</sup>

## Snapfile 23 The Train from Rhodesia

Vidéo p. 194 – Extrait “Zimbabwe Explained”, *Opentiera*, 2024.

**Voice-over:** Modern humans have inhabited this region for over 100,000 years.

Beginning in the 11th century, several powerful African civilisations and kingdoms ruled the land until the British colonised it in the late 19th century. After a difficult period transitioning to majority rule, Zimbabwe today is working to achieve stability and development while balancing its colonial past with its African identity.

The early kingdoms that developed between the 11th and 15th centuries such as Great Zimbabwe and the Torwa, Mutapa, and Rozvi states were powerful empires built off mining and controlling trade roads. They constructed large stone palaces and fortifications including Great Zimbabwe which lends its name to Modern Zimbabwe.

This early period established much of the Shona culture and language that dominates Zimbabwe today. In the 1880s, British settlers established control over the region calling it Southern Rhodesia after the mining magnate Cecil Rhodes. This ushered in a colonial period that saw a large inflow of British settlers who gained political power and land at the expense of the native African majority who were forced into low-wage labour and restricted to Native reserves. After a violent Civil War, Zimbabwe finally achieved Independence as a majority rule state in 1980 changing its name to Zimbabwe.

Vidéo p. 197 – Extrait d'une interview "Nadine Gordimer on racism",  
*Nobel Prize*, 2007.

**Nadine Gordimer:** It was unthinkable for me to meet or know black people who would share my interests, with whom, in other words, there could be some sort of natural rapport and meeting. It was always on the servant-master basis. And even if you were the child of the master and the mistress you still had this particular position. But being troubled about it, and beginning, great reader as I always was, beginning to find out that there were, there's something called racism that existed in the world and I was living in it, I was part of it. And then when I was older, and went very briefly, took the train every day and went to the university, and there for the first time, I met, even then, there were one or two, there were a few young blacks, remember the University of course was whites only, but there were certain courses that were not available in the black universities and then as a concession at graduate level, postgraduate level, few blacks would come in. And so I met one or two black people with whom I had far more in common than I had with the young whites that I knew in the town. I was not interested in... I wasn't sporty, many of the things that they did were of no particular interest to me and here were young people black who were trying to write, who were beginning to write! So we had this enormous, not just ambition, we had this enormous way approach to life and the mystery of life and social questions in our own lives.

And then I began at that age to make black friends.

## Évaluation de la compréhension de l'oral – Guide pédagogique

Vidéo – Extrait du court-métrage d'Adrian Steirn, "Nadine Gordimer: short film", *21 Icons*, 2013.

**Nadine Gordimer:** To me, being a writer is a voyage of discovery. It's being alive. You are questioning, and you are moving on to discover what the real meaning of life is.

**Adrian Steirn:** Show Nadine to the books.

**Nadine Gordimer:** The Word. This wonderful thing that needs a capital letter. You become aware of the power, and the range of the Word, and then you want to do your own little experiment with the Word. I always tell young, beginning writers: read and write.

You can be taught to be a good journalist, but you cannot be taught to be a poet or a novelist. You read, read, read. Now of course, people don't read to their children. The bedtime story doesn't exist. You put the kid in front of the television, so they're not hearing the Word and then looking at the book. A great regret that's in my life: the nine languages that belong to this country, I do not speak one of them. And I could have learnt another language but I didn't, so that's my own fault. But I find it indeed unforgivable now that I didn't do this. A novel is a kind of journey, which is mapped out. I always know the beginning and the end, but how it's going to get there may change while I'm writing.

**Nadine Gordimer:** You're also a human being, you're responsible to all the people you know. You have to take care of them, standing up for them if they're in any trouble. There is this responsibility beyond your identity as a writer.