JM Coetzee urges male graduates to teach and transform schools

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JOHANNESBURG: Renowned South African author and Nobel literature laureate Professor JM Coetzee yesterday urged young male graduates to consider a career in education.

“It’s good for children to have a man’s hand guiding them, and it is also good for you and common social life,” he said in Johannesburg at Wits University, which was conferring on him an honorary doctorate in literature.

“What a relief it is to see so many young men among graduates in the humanities.”

Although he had been taught by phenomenal women throughout his life, he was certain the presence of male figures would have enriched the experience, he said.

Coetzee urged male graduates to meet the country’s need for hardworking, dedicated and well-humoured teachers.

“Let us be a generation of young teachers who will transform school and make it a place of intellectual excitement where children can’t wait to go to school.”

He told the young women in the crowd they had been the backbone of the teaching profession so far. He spoke against the “suspicious eye” cast on men who expressed an interest in young children.

Coetzee now lives in Adelaide, South Australia.