**Straddling Multiple Identities: Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Novels**

**Colonial History of South Africa**

History is the record of important events that in one or the other way mould and define the socio-cultural and politico-economic character of a country. If one aims to know the history of a country, there is a need to look at the lives of historical figures and their contribution in the process of nation building, as well as the events that took place in that particular era. History also reveals human nature and cause and effect which lead to great changes and upheavals in a particular age. If a country has a history of repression, there will be a rebellion sooner or later. As Foucault also says, power cannot exist without resistance. If we know a country’s history, one can understand its present in a better way and can also envisage the future of the country.

The colonial history of South Africa begins with Jan Van Riedbeeck and almost 90 people setting up a provisioning station for the Dutch East India Company in 1652, at Table Bay on the Cape of Good Hope. This was followed by Van Riedbeeck’s trading with KhoiKhoi which provided new land to Europeans for farming and brought in Africans and Malays as slaves. Almost 250 Europeans were living near the Cape by 1662 and gradually they moved inland, founded Stellenbosch in 1679. Almost 200 Huguenot refugees from Europe arrived in 1689; they established a wine industry and inter-married the earlier Dutch settlers. By 1707 there were about 1,780 freeholders of European descent in South Africa, and they owned about 1,100 slaves.

By the early 18th century, most San had to migrate into inaccessible parts of the country to avoid European domination; the more various Khoikhoi either remained near the Cape, where they became virtual slaves of the Europeans, or dispersed into the interior. A smallpox outbreak killed many Europeans and most of the Khoikhoi living near the Cape in 1713. During the 18th century intermarriage between Khoikhoi slaves and Europeans began to create what became later known as the Coloured population. At the same time white farmers (known as Boers or Afrikaners) began to trek increasingly farther from the Cape in search of pasture and cropland. By 1750, some farmers had migrated to the region between the Gamtoos and Great Fish Rivers, where they encountered the Xhosa. At first the whites and blacks engaged in friendly trade, but in 1779 the first of a long series of Xhosa Wars (1789, 1799, 1812, 1819, 1834, 1846, 1850 and 1877) broke out between them, primarily over land and cattle ownership. The whites sought to establish the Great Fish as the southern frontier of the Xhosa.

**Arrival of Britishers**

French Revolution and Napoleonic wars brought British people in Africa and they replaced the Dutch at the Cape from 1795 to 1803 and again from 1806 to 1814, when the territory was assigned to Great Britain by the Congress of Vienna. In 1820, 5,000 British settlers were given small farms near the Great Fish River. They intended to form a barrier to the southern movement of the Xhosa, but most soon gave up farming and moved to nearby towns such as Port Elizabeth and Graham’s town. They were the first large body of Europeans not to be assimilated into the Afrikaner culture that had developed in the 17th and the 18th century. Great Britain alienated the Boers by remodeling the administration along British lines, by calling for better treatment of the Coloured and blacks who worked for the Boers as servants or slaves, by granting(Ordinance 50, 1828) free nonwhites legal rights equal to those of the whites, and by restricting the acquisition of new land by the Boers. In 1833 slavery was abolished in the British Empire, an act that angered South African slave-owners, but the freed slaves remained oppressed and continued to be exploited by white landowners.

To escape the restrictions of British rule as well as to obtain new land, about 12,000 Boers left the Cape between 1835 and 1843 in what is known as the Great Trek. The Voortrekkers (as these Boers are known) migrated beyond the Orange River. Some remained in the Highveld of the interior, forming isolated communities and small states. A large group traveled eastward into what became Natal, where 70 Boers were killed (February, 1838) in the attack by Dingane’s Zulu forces. Andries Pretorius defeated (December, 1838) the Zulu at the battle of Blood River, and the Boers proceeded to establish farms in Natal. After Britain annexed Natal in 1843, however, most of the Boers there returned to the interior. In the 1850s the Boer republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal were established. In 1860 the first indentured laborers from India arrived in Natal to work on the sugar plantations, and by 1900 they outnumbered the whites there. South Africa became independent in 1910 but the concept of nationhood was not conceived. The unequal relations between blacks and whites became a corner stone to the history of South Africa.

**Apartheid and its Consequences**

Apartheid (meaning separateness in Afrikaans, cognate to English apart and hood) was system of racial segregation in South Africa that started from 1948. The first recorded use of the word “apartheid” was in 1917 during a speech by Jan Christiana Smuts, who later became Prime Minister of South Africa in 1919. Although the creation of apartheid is usually attributed to the Afrikaner-dominated government of 1948-94, it is partially a legacy of British Colonialism which introduced a system of pass laws in the Cape Colony and Natal during the 20th century. Apartheid was designed to form a legal framework for continued economic and political dominance by people of European descent.In apartheid the people were legally classified into racial groups the main ones being Black, White, Coloured and Asian (Consisting of Indians and Pakistanis)- and were separated from each other on the basis of legal classification. The “barrage” of apartheid legislations were laid after the National Party came into power in 1948. They tried to determine the segregation of the population. There were many laws made by the white government to subjugate and separate the black population. One of the very first laws was the Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act [1949]. In 1950, they passed the Group Areas Act in which they separated the land racially. The Population Registration Act brought total population of South Africa into four categories: “White”, “Coloured”, “Indian”, and “Bantu”. Another law to be passed was The Immorality Act which prohibited sexual relations among the different races. These laws were forced upon the population of South Africa and left no place for a private life. Anyone who went beyond this segregation was branded as a criminal in South Africa. What makes South Africa’s Apartheid era different to the segregation and racial hatred that have occurred in other countries is the systematic way in which the National Party, which came into power in 1948, formalized it through law. These laws flowed from the peace treaty signed between the Boer Republics and the British Empire at the end of the Second Boer War of 1899-1902.

**Resistance and the Change of Power**

The power of white government which spread through Apartheid Laws faced major resistance on June 13, 1976; the South African Students Movement (SASM) Action Committee which was later renamed the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) assumed leadership of many events after June 1976. People started attacking government offices and police stations. In 1985, the regime announced emergency for an indefinite period. In 1989, President Botha fell ill and was succeeded by F.W. de Klerk. De Klerk’s government was lenient towards apartheid restrictions and released Nelson Mandela in 1990 after 27 years of imprisonment. Mandela became head of the recently legalized ANC. After a lot of violence and protests, in 1993, an interim constitution was completed that ended nearly three centuries of white rule in South Africa. In April, 1994, the republic’s first multiracial election was held and the ANC achieved an overwhelming victory, and Nelson Mandela became the President. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996-2003), headed by Archbishop Tutu, sought to establish the truth about atrocities committed during the country’s apartheid era, while avoiding the expense and divisiveness of trials. AIDS had become a significant health problem in South Africa, and in late 2003 the government finally agreed to provide a comprehensive anti-AIDS prevention and treatment program through the public health system. Literature of South Africa is being written in eleven languages. Its culture and its literature are multi-layered and varied. The cultural history of South Africa is very difficult to assess. The very complexity of the culture of the land can be found in Zoe Wicomb’s essay “Culture Beyond Color? A South African Dilemma” where she starts her essay from an example from Bessie Head’s novel “A Question of Power” in which a Danish worker speaks:

“In our country culture has become so complex, this complexity is reflected in our literature, it takes a certain level of education to understand our novelists no one can understand. The ordinary man cannot understand them… There are a whole lot of novelists no one can understand.”

[African Literature, An anthology of Criticism and Theory, Edited by Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson, Blackwell Publishing, 2007.]

The whole study of the historical background will help us to understand the literature written during the Apartheid period and post-Apartheid period.

**Literary Background**

Literature reflects the socio-cultural and socio-political situations of a country. The first fictional works to emerge in South Africa were by colonial writers. These writers were ambiguous in presenting the indigenous people, if not completely hostile. One of the first writers to present South Africa and its natives in his novels was Rider Haggard in his *King Solomon’s Mines* in 1880. Haggard wrote many of the novels with South African background like *Allan Quartermain* and *She* both published in 1887.Olive Schreiner was the first white colonial writer who wrote about the conditions of the farms in South Africa, her novel *The Story of an African Farm (1883)* is generally considered to be the founding text of South African literature. This novel was criticized for its negation of natives in South Africa. There are other works also by Olive Schreiner like *Trooper Peter Halkett of Mashonaland* (1897)andthe polemical *Women and Labour* (1911). Douglas Blackburn with his novels like *Burgher Quixote* (1903) and *Love Muti* (1915) attack British colonial attitudes.

The first novel by a black South African was *Mhudi,* published in 1930 by Solomon Thekiso Platjee. His *Native Life in South Africa* (1916) was also a seminal text in the study of land dispossession in South Africa.In the 1950s there came a new generation of black writers who were called Drum writers because of their Drum magazine. It painted a new urban world of jazz, shebeens, and flamboyant gangsters. They satirized the repressive policies of the state and the effects of apartheid legislation on common people. The people who were part of this group were Henry Nxumalo, Todd Matshikiza, Nat Nakasa, Can Themba, and Mphahlele.In the early 1960s the state of emergency was declared by the apartheid state to curtail other political organizations which led to many black writers going into exile. Alex La Guma was one of the writers who were forced to leave the country. He was a Marxist and a National Congress eare driven and *And a Threefold Cord* (1967) contrasts the existence of a black worker in a white home with her employer’s affluent life. Andre Brink was one of the first white writers whose works were banned. His works were a great shock for apartheid state. His other works include *An Act of Terror* (1991) and *On the Contrary* (1993) which were based in South Africa. During the apartheid era Bessie Head emerged as one of the leading South African women writers. Her first novel was *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968), followed by *Maru (1971),* *The Collector of Treasure* (1977), and *A Question of Power* (1973).A mass democratic movement based on the ideals of the Freedom Charter arose within South Africa in the 1980s and the state responded with successive states of emergency that brought white troops into the townships. At this time, a very important writer was coming into literary existence, a writer whose work was mostly allegorical. J.M Coetzee won the Booker Prize twice for his novels, *A Life and Times of Michael K (1983)* and *Disgrace (1999).* He is the second South African writer who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003. His novels tell the realities of Apartheid and post-apartheid era in an allegorical way.

The writers that I have chosen for my thesis are Nadine Gordimer (1923-2014), Zoe Wicomb (1948- ), and Sindiwe Magona (1947- ). Nadine Gordimer a white South African published her first short stories in the early 1950s, and in 1991 she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. She published many novels between these time frames. Her first novel *The Lying Days* (1953) charts the growing political awareness of a white woman, Helen who lives in a small town towards South African racial divide. Her other works are *A World of Strangers* (1958), *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966), *Burgher’s Daughter* (1979). I have chosen to work on two of her novels, the first which was written about the time of Apartheid, *The Conservationist* which also won her the Booker Prize and the second,  *July’s People* which though written during the time of apartheid predicts the future of South Africa in a post-apartheid era.

Zoe Wicomb a colored South African published her first short story collection which is written in the form of a novel, *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* (1987), her second novel, *David’s Story* (2000) and *Playing in the Light* (2006). I have chosen to work on two of her books, the first of which is set in the time of apartheid, *You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* and the second is set in the post-apartheid era, *Playing in the Light*.

Sindiwe Magona is a black South African who wrote her autobiography *To My Children’s Children* in 1990. In 1998, she published her second work, *Mother to Mother*, a fictionalized account of Amy Biehl killing, which was also adapted into a play. In 2008, she wrote *Beauty’s Gift* which tries to discuss the growing problem of AIDS, in the post-apartheid South Africa. I have chosen two of her works which include, *Mother to Mother* which is set during the apartheid and *Beauty’s Gift* which is set in the post-apartheid era of South Africa.

**Objective**

People’s lives change when the political and economical conditions of the country alter. The races in South Africa were clearly segregated into four distinct communities, that of White, Bantu, Colored and Indian. This research will try to interrogate the role of these different races from Apartheid to Post-Apartheid time frame. The identities of the different races changed as time progressed and now each race has a different role to play in the new era. This research will also explore the perspective of different races towards the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid. The present thesis will cross-examine the different opinions of different races through the novels of Nadine Gordimer, Zoe Wicomb, and Sindiwe Magona.

**Social Relevance**

This research work will be useful for South African studies, racial studies and identity studies. This work will help the people to have better understanding of the times of Apartheid and Post-Apartheid and mainly the perspectives of multiracial writers towards these times. Research scholars will have an immense scope for political, social and cultural state of South Africa and could better understand pros and cons that Apartheid has bestowed to the people of South Africa. It will make a good place among the other research works that have been done in the field of Apartheid and Post-Apartheid. The changing perspectives of different races and their changing roles in Apartheid and Post-Apartheid times is something that will give an immense panorama to the future research scholars.

**Research** **Methodology**

**Xenophobia**

The term is mainly concerned with the fear of foreigners. Xenophobes are the people who loot the shops and make the life of foreigners vulnerable in South Africa. This term can appropriately be seen Sindiwe Magona’s book *Mother to Mother.* Foreigners who come to live in South Africa have to face xenophobic violence and identity crisis as well. The incidents of looting and raping have become common phenomena in South Africa. This violence is not only targeted at white foreigners but also on the people of black race.

**Postcolonial Crisis**

South Africa is one of the countries that have made the way difficult for Postcolonial theorists. Postcolonial theorists consider the period after independence as the postcolonial era of any country. But South Africa is an exception in this regard. South Africa became independent on 31st of May, 1961 but struggled with Apartheid till 1990. The problem raises in South Africa is its postcolonial era; the time when Union of South Africa became Republic of South Africa in 1961 or the time when Apartheid ended in 1990. Postcolonial theorists face a dilemma in deciding the true postcolonial era of South Africa.

**Biopolitics**

The term biopolitics is mainly attributed to Rudolf Kjellen in the 1920s who also coined the term geopolitics. But French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault discusses the term in his lecture series “Society Must Be Defended”. His concept of biopolitics is largely derived from his concepts biopower and state power. Foucault describes biopolitics as “a new technology of power …that exists at different scale, and has different bearing area, and makes use of very different instruments.”

**Power Analytics**

This theory has a very vast scope to look into. It is mainly used by Michael Foucault and Antonio Gramsci but when it is about South Africa and its Apartheid which shook the foundations of social and cultural unity of South Africa, Foucault’s usage of this theory would help to understand power analytics in the society and culture of South Africa. ‘Ruler can be ruled and ruled can be ruler’ this saying of Foucault seems correct when we see Apartheid and Post- Apartheid. Power circulates through discourse and how it circulated through Apartheid legislation is what this theory will help in getting to the point.

**Multiple Perspectives**

A research looks at different perspectives of different people so that it can cite a definite conclusion. But this research work will try to see three different writers of three different races and their perspectives towards Apartheid and Post-Apartheid and not only their perspectives but also the change that comes in their perspective when they come to a new era of Post-Apartheid. This method of looking at Apartheid and Post-Apartheid through the perspectives of three people of three different races will make it easy to understand the problems of Apartheid and Post-Apartheid of different races.

**Citizenship**

Citizenship has become a very important factor in this globalized world. South Africa where there are four different races, citizenship plays a very important role. The identity or the citizenship of Blacks was vanished in time of Apartheid. Their homes and their culture were snatched away and were given concrete houses and missionary schools to teach them so called better culture and better way of living. Coloured is also not an exception when it is about citizenship. They knew that they were not the natives but an amalgamation of the natives and non-natives. Whites might have lived a better life in South Africa but Post-Apartheid brought their own identity in danger. And even in Apartheid their power started facing resistance from the starting, and they were aware of their temporary rule over Blacks.

**Literary Review**

Stephen Clingman in his book *‘The Novels of Nadine Gordimer, History from the Inside’* describes Nadine Gordimer’s all books against the political background of the country. It is a brilliant presentation of Gordimer’s growth as a writer in Apartheid. He concentrates on the Gordimer’s extraordinary and unique style of presenting historical incidents and historical personas of her times.

Judie Newman in her book ‘Nadine Gordimer’ includes ‘*A Sport of Nature*’ to discuss Gordimer’s novels. Newman tries to explore Gordimer’s narrative forms that combine both European and indigenous culture. Judie tries to places particular emphasis on Gordimer’s searching investigation of the relation of gender to genre, and explores other major concerns such as the crisis of liberal values, the nature of historical consciousness, racism, sexual politics, and the psychopathology of power. Her study also combines how an artist can contribute to contemporary debate.

Constance S Richards in her dissertation titled ‘Toward a transnational feminist writing and reading practice: Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker, and Zoe Wicomb. Chapter first of this book focuses on the centrality of Shakespeare’s The Tempest as a master narrative of colonial discourse. Chapter second examines Virginia Woolf’s *Voyage Out* and *Between the* *Acts.*Chapter third claims that Alice Walker’s *Color Purple, Temple of my Familiar,* and *Possessing The Secret of Joy* construct race and gender as transnational identities and criticize the violence perpetrated upon these aspects of identity and played out on bodies of women by the colonial process with the collusion of indigenous patriarchy. Chapter four examines her approach to South African colored author Zoe Wicomb’s You Can’t Get Lost In Cape Town using a transnational feminist reading practice suggested by the strong sense of “otherness” evoked in her first read of the novel.

Lucy Valerie Graham in her book ‘State of Peril: Race and Rape in South African Literature’ talks about rape narratives in the literature of the country that has seen the sexual violence at its extreme. Graham’s study draws on Michel Foucault’s ideas on sexuality and biopolitics, as well as Judith Butler’s speculations on race and cultural melancholia. This historical analysis contains the readings of literature by Olive Schreiner, Sol Plaatje, Sarah Gertrude Millin, Njabulo, J.M Coetzee, Zoe Wicomb and others.

Lesibana Rafapa in the article ‘Post-apartheid transnationalism in black South African literature: a reality or a fallacy’ discusses the question of whether globalizing post-nationalism impacts on post-apartheid black South African English literature in a manner that it blurs the different African identities. Rafapa first analyses two post-apartheid novels written by black writers Niq Mhlongo (Dog Eat Dog, 2004) and Sindiwe Magona (Beauty’s Gift, 2008. Secondly, she discusses three post-apartheid novels by black writers Phaswane Mpe (Welcome to our Hillbrow, 2001), Kgebeti Moele (Room 207, 2009) and Kopano Matlwa (Coconut, 2007).

The book ‘Apartheid and Beyond: South African Writers and the Politics of Place’ written by Rita Barnard, offers an intelligent, historically sensitive readings of writings by Coetzee, Gordimer, Fugard, Tlali, Dike, Magona, and Mda, and focuses on the intimate relationship between place, subjectivity and literary form. It also explores how apartheid functioned in its day-to-day operations as a geographical system of control, exerting its power through such spatial mechanisms as residential segregation, Bantustans, passes, and prisons.

**Tentative Chapterization**

**Chapter-1 Introduction**

This chapter will cover geographical, political, social, and cultural background of South Africa, the first time when the colonialists landed into South Africa and the time when the colonization took a disastrous face and made Blacks helpless. This chapter will mainly concern the historical time of Apartheid and Post-apartheid. It will cover all the laws made by Afrikaner government and the havoc those laws brought on the black and other races. After completing historical and social effects of Apartheid, this chapter will explore the time of Post-apartheid. It will explore the political and cultural change that Post-apartheid brought with itself. Next, this chapter will analyze the literature of both Apartheid and Post-apartheid. The difference in writing style of different races and their respective concerns will be described thoroughly.

**Chapter 2: Race and Class in Apartheid and Post-Apartheid**

This chapter will investigate the problems related to class and race. South Africa is not only defined by race-led laws but also by class aspirations and economic disadvantages that carry forward a history of vulnerability. South Africa has a long history of physical and spiritual violence. Politics is perpetuated on the free people of the country. This chapter also looks into the biopolitics of apartheid which is led by those who are superior in class and race. The apartheid laws which were made to harass the natives of South Africa. This chapter will include all the six novels which have been taken for the research work. Every novel either of apartheid or post-apartheid has the problems related to race and class. Three female writers of different races have been taken up for this research. Through them one can interrogate the role played by different races in the turbulent political times of the country.

**Chapter 3: Politics of Place and Citizenship**

This chapter will explore the politics of land and citizenship in South Africa from apartheid to post-apartheid. The history of South Africa has witnessed displacement, immigration and exiles of common people. The claim of the citizenship by every race in apartheid and post-apartheid era has always been a matter of concern. The white who is away from his homeland, tries to capture the land which is culturally away from him. The black who belongs to the place, has been displaced from his land. The colored also faced the same problem of displacement from their own land. This chapter will try to analyze the power analytics of Michel Foucault, and how the power moves from one race to another. This chapter will also try to delve into the Postcolonial crisis of South Africa which has become a major concern of poscolonial studies.

**Chapter 4: Narrative Techniques**

Narrative techniques have always been an integral part of literary tradition. Narration is the soul of plot. Narrative techniques give us the view of the culture and the traditions of a country. Nadine Gordimer, Zoe Wicomb and Sindiwe Magona represent not only their respective races but also their ethnicities. They have their own traditions of writing to follow. Nadine Gordimer seems more near to European tradition of writing and Sindiwe Magona makes the reader remember the tradition of Chinua Achebe and Bessie Head, while one can see a different style of writing in Zoe Wicomb’s works. They are more near to oral tradition than stylistic effects that have been introduced in literary circle. These three writers have one common theme and that is showing the true social and political picture of South Africa in their novels.

**Chapter 5: Emerging New Problems and New Writers of South Africa**

This chapter will be the conclusion of this research work. It will mainly tell what the present condition of South Africa is. It will also explore the new panoramas that have been opened up by these three female writers. It will also discuss the changes that have taken place in South Africa politically, socially, culturally. It will also try to focus the themes of the present South Africa. The new writers have come up in the literary scenario of South Africa. This research will also help to paving the way for the future research in related concern of South Africa.

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