

**WOMEN IN POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONFLICTS
FROM THE SELECT FICTION OF NADINE GORDIMER - A STUDY**

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CONCLUSION

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The previous chapter deals with the identity crisis, the significant role played by women characters in meeting the challenges to make a new nation in free South Africa and to have their own freedom. The present chapter summarizes conclusions to all the chapters along with scope and limitations of the study.

The primary theme in South African literature has been recurrent in all the works that it carries, as it is more or less connected to racial system whether it is in pre-apartheid or post-apartheid or in between periods. In the entire African Continent, South African region is abundant with the multicultural conditions for a long period and only in that place the racial and political policy of apartheid has been legalized against the wishes of many. Racial relations have almost confirmed their presence everywhere and have been maintained against dissension. The conflict between the Black and the White people which has its beginnings in European settlement at Cape Town in the sixteen-fifties has always influenced the ethnic groups of South Africa. South African women, irrespective of their colour opposed the despotic attitude and cruel laws of the white minority government. They imprinted their heroic participation in political movements in South African history. Most literary developments in South Africa are committed to balance the cultural and the political forces.

Gordimer presents the role of White minority in her novels, *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966), *The Conservationist* (1974). She focuses more on Blacks' frustrations throughout her fiction. Some of her well-worn themes are the limits of the liberal

understanding of the South African situation, the taboo on inter-racial sexual relationships, the extremes of power and powerlessness, the dissent from a White viewpoint and the deep-rooted problems caused due to mental liberation from such thinking. Unfair treatment of the African worker under the colonial system has also been taken as the subject-matter for several of her novels. In short, the national African literature varies from one region to another. While each African nation has gone through the phase of colonial rule, each has had a separate history.

Nadine Gordimer, the Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1991, is recognized as one of the exceptional English novelists in South Africa. Gordimer's progress as a novelist is remarkable. She is also an outstanding short story writer. Her elemental thematic concern is the study of the inter-dependence of the Whites and the Blacks overlooking their deeply inherent racial bigotry. Her themes are very lucid to understand as they reflect South African society. The quest for social, cultural and political identity is reflected in her works and the contrast between urban values that are primarily of British and European and South African realities. Gordimer has also furnished the subject for many South African novels, i.e. victimization of the African worker under the colonial past. Her writing has close connection with politics, yet seldom is explicitly political. She is a poignantly truthful recorder of the happenings in the tormented country.

In South Africa, the obvious concern is Black-White relations in sex and marriage right from the colonial days till recent times and these are prohibited by law in this territory. Gordimer's every novel discusses such reaction of the White domination, and she is regarded as the outstanding portrayer of English-speaking White middle-class life.

The freedom struggle of South Africa formed the background to her novels and she has skillfully blended fiction, politics and history, with a prognostic inventiveness. This is evident in many of her novels like *Burger's Daughter* (1979), *July's People* (1981), *A Sport of Nature* (1987), and *My Son's Story* (1990). She attempts to portray the reality that is human which has not been represented in history.

In her novels, Nadine Gordimer covers a number of universal themes, such as native life of Africans, Socio-political life of various communities, feminine wakefulness and human relations. There are some inevitable themes which have frequently appeared in Gordimer's individual novels only comparing the Public to the Private, Town life to Country life, and appreciation of Nature, particularly 'Europe' in Africa. Being a creative writer, her political motif is to synthesize innovativeness with social liability. Her commitment is in accordance with the requirements of her society and at the same time her sincerity is matchless in upholding artistic vision. Her attempts are always to find a solution to the conflict between the necessities of society and creativity, where she proposes a way-out between the two. It is always difficult to see the parting of political engagement and creativity, instead, they need to be non-segregated.

In her 1971 essay "Speak Out: The Necessity for Protest" Gordimer reiterated to White students of a university, the conditions in which she was forced to redefine the place so that a meaningful protest was possible. She made such a comment by discarding a Black-White racialist vocabulary and by taking into consideration a universal humanity.

Gordimer's novels are always primarily concerned with the political conditions of her native state, South Africa. Each of her new novel reveals a new thing about the

political and social history of her home country. She depicts the Socio-political and cultural life of an African through her assessment of various aspects such as apartheid, African Nationalism, clash of cultures, history, liberalism, negritude and politics. She is well aware of political and racial issues that affected the people of South Africa. Gordimer explains her role as a writer, has nothing to do with her alliance to South Africa ‘as a writer’, but she has made up her mind to accept the responsibility of the situation in which she is born as a person.

Racism is always considered as a distorted depiction of social reality in South Africa. Racial differences are strongly presented in Gordimer’s different novels like *The Lying Days* (1953), *A World of Strangers* (1958), *Occasion for Loving* (1963), *The Conservationist* (1974), *Burger’s Daughter* (1979), *July’s People* (1981), *A Sport of Nature* (1987) and *My Son’s Story* (1990). Her writings are concerned with the Black and the White, the leader and the subordinate clashes. In *The Lying Days*, she focuses on a number of significant measures of Apartheid regime, which include ‘the Mixed Marriages Act, Apartheid in public transport and buildings, the Suppression of Communism Bill..., the removal of coloured voters from the common electoral roll’. (*LD* 258)

In *A World of Strangers*, the societal classification forces the marginal groups to live isolated lives. It associates with the supremacy of multi-racialism as the political ideology of the movements, which are against the apartheid in the 1950s and also as a social way of life. All through the novel, Gordimer has repeatedly depicted the Black world’s competition against the White world and the seclusion of the Whites away from

the vibrating life of the Black townships. *In Occasion for Loving*, Gordimer presents how an affair between a White woman and a Black man ends up in failure due to the weight of the colour-bar. As the situation of institutional repression is a normal pattern, there can be no opportunity for love between Black and White men and women. Apartheid infiltrates into the most profound of human relationships in the novel.

In *Burger's Daughter*, racism has been discerned as a by-product of sexual tyranny. The novel *July's People* describes the power relationship interchanges between the Whites and the Blacks through the portrayal of Smales-July connection. The central theme of this novel again revolves around the racial conflict. The South African liberation movement against the White dominion and the regime of apartheid forms the basis of the novel *A Sport of Nature*. After the assassination incident, Whaila and the yet to be born 'rainbow' children are the afflictions Hillela undergoes for recognizing her own-self in the ever-reacting self of a Black man. It is the sacrifice expected by the political fight against Apartheid.

Gordimer describes the conflict of various cultures in her novels. In *The Lying Days* Gordimer presents the cultural estrangement in Helen's Jewish friend, Joel. He plays the role of a moral supporter to Helen in the novel. Helen is a Christian and Joel is a Jew and it is convincingly set to obstruct their relationship. In *A World of Strangers*, she highlights the impact of the metropolitan culture on the South African society. The cultural clashes are clearly shown between the wealthy 'Alexanders' and the not so moneyed Black people in Sophia town. Toby, being an Englishman, lives in the unrealistic world of the Johannesburg town; he has no apprehensions about his own

origins. In *The Conservationist*, she presents the character Mehring, as the cultural alienation of an industrialist who prefers to be away from land and its people. At the end of the novel, we find Mehring being denounced by his family and he sells his land. Gordimer elucidates the clash of cultures between the Smales (Maureen & Bam), the civilized people and July's people: July's wife, Martha and his mother, the so-called uncivilized people in novel *July's People*.

The temper of Black people is emphatically disclosed in Gordimer's novels. She presents Black characters as honest, generous and virtuous human beings. In the confrontation of the White and the Black, the author seems to be on the side of the Black, as she strongly believes that the Blacks are unjustly treated by the Whites. In most of her novels she has presented the Black consciousness, successfully asserting its role despite the confrontation with Western oppressive pressures. For example, in her novel *A World of Strangers* Toby, the English man finds a counterpart in the Black world because of his association with Steven who maintains his separate identity. The novelist also uncovers his high regard for the fearless Black girl Anna Louw, a Legal Aid Lawyer.

Among the Black characters, especially the significant role played by Black women is always on a high priority in her novels and other works. Aila, a Black protagonist in *My Son's Story* is very powerfully portrayed with her strong determination and involvement in political resistance along with her daughter. Gordimer's theme of the personal to the political can be clearly observed in the lives of her women characters. In *None to Accompany Me*, the political power shifts from husband, Didymus to wife, Sibongile shows how strongly Gordimer depicts her Black woman character. In some of

her works published, Gordimer portrays that Black women and Black men carry similar kind of problems and they are necessitated to find a solution to them before recapturing their female or male identity. In one of her conversations with Carol Sternhell, Gordimer declares that:

The Women's Movement doesn't seem irrelevant to me in other places in the world, but it does seem at the present time to be kind of a luxury in South Africa. Every black woman has more in common with a black man than she has with her white sisters. (Bazin 277)

She never sees the women's rights problems as a separate issue but as a part of the whole question of human rights. There are the disaffected groups in various societies. Gordimer confesses that the way feminist organizations progressed and fought in the battle for women's rights is noteworthy, especially for the reason that their rights have been considered as complete human rights and not as separate gender concerned rights. Women and men as a combined lot, irrespective of their colour or race form the basis to dismantle the traditional structures of power.

Finding the active role of women in gender specific struggles, Gordimer believes that they should hold a different position in the politics which can transform the South African state. She has made public statements many a time about the irrelevance of women's liberation movements, especially the ones in South Africa. She insists that top priority should be given to the political freedom for Black men and women and suggests that any improvement to the over-privileged position of White women or the under-privileged position of Black women should be treated as secondary. Her writing is never

supportive to a manifesto for feminism and at the same time it is not to be seen as a sign of resistance. However, she believes that women should take part in the movement of resistance and contribute to the struggle for freedom. The same is depicted through her women characters in her novels. Rosa Burger in *Burger's Daughter* takes the legacy of her parents by involving herself in resistance for the freedom of the Black minorities and gets imprisoned for that noble cause.

Gordimer writes about segregation based on colour and race, rather than suppression based on sex and gender, because she thinks that the former leads to widening the gap between the Black and the White than gender bias between men and women. She believes that the women's issues do not matter much when they are compared with the issue of voteless, powerless state of South African Blacks, irrespective of sex. She thinks that a campaign for women's rights, Black or White is irrelevant to the South African situation in apartheid regime. Moreover, she asserts that White women's condition is quite similar to that of White men and not to be seen as the same with Black women's position. In *My Son's Story*, Hannah, a White woman works as the representative of an International Rights Organizations to monitor political detentions and trials to assist the families of those who are detained. Being White she enjoys the privileges in the society and goes on her political activities, whereas Aila, a Black woman's clandestine involvement in political fight makes her opt for exile finally. Thus, the White woman is always privileged compared with the Black woman.

Gordimer asserts that women have the capacity to seek the rights that are equal to men, but at the same time they have the right to be different, also. She says that it is not

justifiable to treat women as men when their frills are on. She believes that feminism, whether in its negative or in its positive characteristics has become a boring subject. It is quite clear that Gordimer's opinion is an oversimplification of the South African condition, and she has modified her remarks in the late 1990s. She disclosed it in an interview that her thoughts on feminism have changed due to the change in the political scenario. She has also expressed the view that women have progressed that far but couldn't find a base for any common feminism where the White women can truly join their lot with Black women to witness a quick progress.

Gordimer creates more intricate and complicated women in her later novels. Her feminine characters are free to choose and strengthen their positions in the power structure. Her White South African women join the men to bear the responsibility for any exposition of racism. The White woman is presented as not innocent for her inability to take a stand against the policies of apartheid. However, she is restricted by the political and social circumstances of apartheid to take up any responsibility. *None to Accompany Me* describes the coordination of a White woman, Vera Stark and a Black one, Sibongile who are aiming at two different trajectories, and how they help each other in their careers, not paying much attention to their personal lives. Both are a reflection of the writer's main theme of personal to political. The political transition of the setting of the novel is reverberated in personal transition of the woman protagonists.

When asked about her viewpoint on gender biased politics, Gordimer responds that there are both White and Black women in the new parliament. She also cites the example of the Black woman who occupied the place of a White Afrikaner male in the

parliament. She outlines that the presence of a South African Indian is a true adaptation of non-racial policy, significantly, for the reason that she is not considered a Black in post-apartheid regime.

The political events that have taken place during post-apartheid years in South Africa have caused the change in Gordimer's earlier views about racism and feminism. She thinks that only after South Africans defeat the racism, they may become more focused on the issue related to feminism. The change of guard for this shift in her thoughts is because of the fact that the greatest change is caused by external facts at times. Her novels and short stories are concerned with various kinds of “-isms”, and they are all interrelated at one time or other. The author reckons that there should be a common resistance to all the disclosures of suppression based on class, gender, religion and skin-colour.

In Gordimer's novels, female characters have been presented as main protagonists whose growth caused some critics to think about her feminist concerns. Most of them believe that feminists should recommend the works of this South African writer for her presentation of strong women characters, which are on their way to achieve freedom from all sorts of oppression, especially for her assertion on the responsibilities of women and on the ineffective role of women. Helen Shaw in *The Lying Days*, Rosa Burger in *Burger's Daughter*, Hannah and Aila in *My Son's Story*, Vera Stark and Sibongile in *None to Accompany Me*, Julie Summers in *Pick Up* are very powerfully portrayed.

Nadine Gordimer has been criticized for her projection of Black women as silent and invisible individuals, and at the same time the White women have been portrayed as

individual who are revitalized and liberated because of their connections with African men. The manner in which she discusses the issues of liberation has also been dissented. This view of hers may be due to her exploration of things that fall between White women and Black men and her projection of Black women as “bearers of food”, servants, makeshift and simple caretakers. Mary Seswayo a Black student in *The Lying Days* is a weak and calm student who is suppressed by apartheid society. July's mother and wife are portrayed as meek people afraid of the White family to whom July give shelter during civil war in *July's People*. Still some of her novels highlight the Black characters as dominant, to illustrate Aila is a well-educated, understanding and politically active in *My Son's Story*. Some of her post-Apartheid novels come as a counter to all the criticism.

Some of her later works have repeated the same instances that are captured in her apartheid writings, and any such attempt to divide her works based on her views and projection of the Black women present in her novels is not an easy task. In *None to Accompany Me*, Nadine Gordimer illustrates a different point of view on Black women characters. The emphasis in this novel is on the Black and White women empowerment in the backdrop of the changed times within the boundaries of a new multi-racial South Africa. These changes in the political system have paved the way for providing women a more substantial role in the newly elected democratic government in the South African state.

In Gordimer's novels, Black women are given political roles and their endeavors for the progress of a developing nation has both positive and negative effects. Sibongile's relationship with her husband, Didymus, is significantly influenced by her new

responsibilities that allowed her work towards the possibilities of self-satisfaction. The Maqomas are compelled by their situation to create a new home for themselves as their old home was dismantled by the apartheid regime. Their deportation restricted them from settling quickly in their hometown. Sibongile and her daughter, Mpho, are comparatively more flexible than Didymus in their approach. The two women have the capacity to readily accept their identities, so that they can get away from their experiences of exile and fine-tune themselves to the politics at home. Sheila Roberts in her article “Nadine Gordimer’s ‘Family of Women’” rightly claims that:

Nadine Gordimer is distinctive among women writers in that her work has as its central concern an examination of the events and processes that have shaped and still shape a political reality. Had she not been a South African writer and one who possesses a highly informed political sense, she might well have written novels that allowed her to be classed among contemporary feminist writers. There is certainly a penetrating awareness of the condition of women - black and white - in her work, an awareness that sometimes informs single short stories to the exclusion of the politics of government. (45)

Gordimer presented in her novels the denial of economic, social and political rights to the Blacks especially to the women in the urban areas. The legislative policies led to the growing number of resistant movements against apartheid. These laws were aimed at removing all sorts of political opposition. The parties and leaders who were involved in liberation movement were restrained and alleged to be illegal. Many women

joined these important political campaigns like their male counterparts. Some examples for this are the Passive Resistance Campaign (1946), Defiance Campaign (1952), Congress of the People (1955), Treason Trial (1956-61) and Sharpeville Massacre (1960). Though, women were not in the lead role in these movements, they contributed in their own way by participating in them. Similarly, Gordimer reflected these political situations in her novels realistically along with the portrayal of Black and White women's active participation in political activism in the freedom struggle.

Gordimer has always shown the most fervent interest in the politics of her country. Most of her post-Apartheid novels such as *None to Accompany Me*, *The House Gun* and *The Pick Up* are primarily focused on the subject of new South African government policies, the formation of Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the immigration laws, which are in fact some of the core areas of post-Apartheid discourse in South Africa. The history of South Africa finds a determined European individual at its center of affairs while the criticism is on the immobility and silence of the natives, women, and the others. In this regard, it can be argued that *None to Accompany Me* foregrounds the problem or the limitation of re-writing history by the previously (during the apartheid times) excluded categories. Thus, Didymus and Sibongile Maqoma, who are returned activists, are central and expository. Vera Stark plays a pivotal role in creating new constitution to render the natives equal privileges in politics as well as in society.

Nadine Gordimer prefers to bring in the young woman as her main character, one who wants to get out of the White enclave and who likes to break her sick relationship, if

any, between the White mistress and a Black servant. The White woman in her novels recognizes her own effort to acknowledge her independent identity with the efforts of Blacks' cultural, political, finally, military quest for liberation. Majority of her heroines consider and relate 'Blackness' to imagination, sex and sensuality, to water and blood, and to the liberal politics. Robin Visel in his article "Othering the Self: Nadine Gordimer's Colonial Heroines" comments:

Gordimer's public comments on feminism reflect this problematic. She has said several times that the women's liberation movement is irrelevant in South Africa, where political freedom for black men and women must take precedence over subtle improvements in the already over-privileged position of white bourgeois women. Unarguable as Gordimer's view is, it is an oversimplification of the South African situation, which she treats with much more complexity in her fiction. (34)

The attitude of her heroines to embrace Blackness leads to a revolutionary thought process in growingly definitive terms. Many a time the heroine's first move is tentative and mostly she engages herself in the imaginative participation in the Black revolution. Later she becomes more active and realistic in her approach towards her life. At times she even gets confused between the two determining factors of life, sex and race. However, being a woman, she identifies with the Black liberation conflict, and as a White woman she carries herself 'a legacy of privilege' which her good self cannot discard or deny. Gordimer's women enhance their ability to think and act independently from their

inferior position in the society. It is also because of the irrelevant positions offered to them in the political system of the country.

Nadine Gordimer expressed her doubts in one of her interviews during 1986, regarding the role of fiction in changing the atmosphere prevailing at that time. According to her ‘Books make South Africans’, as they are the true reflection to Black and White. She thinks that they can only identify themselves but they cannot think from inside. She believes that they get a kind of mirror image with which they compare their own feelings and motives. However, ‘the mirror’ that Gordimer is talking about is not quite ‘the mirror in the roadway’ of nineteenth-century realism. Her mirror reflects not only the road and the already covered terrain, but the future that may lie just ahead.

The spirit of Black Nationalism is often found in Gordimer’s novels like *The Lying Days*, *A World of Strangers*, *The Late Bourgeois World*, *Burger’s Daughter*, *July’s People*, *A Sport of Nature*, and *My Son’s Story*. Gordimer elucidates the Africans’ disapproval of apartheid in order to assess their national identity. In *The Lying Days*, she brings in the incident of the Mining workers’ strike. It may not be really a strike in the modern sense of the term, but it is the exhibition of their national spirit. The protest of Black activists opposing the colour-bar is recounted by Gordimer, in *The Late Bourgeois World* and *Burger’s Daughter*.

Gordimer has admitted that her writing has been influenced most profoundly by the authors Camus and Forster. One can notice many similarities in the stylistic approach and realistic ideas between hers and her mentors. She describes herself as someone who has no religion, no political motives to get inspired to write. Her apparent concern is for

human relationships in all her works. Some of her works find much similarity to Forster's conformity of his own position in what he believes. The element of distrust is something she possesses in common with both Forster and Camus and along with them, she too refuses any delineative explanation of man's situation in the world. Alan Lomberg, in his article "Withering in the Truth: The Romantic Realism of Nadine Gordimer" presents:

There are even many details in the work of Nadine Gordimer which provide echoes of both Forster and Camus. Several of the attitudes of whites towards blacks in *A Guest of Honour* sound little different from the opinions of such people as Callendar and the Turtons in *A Passage to India*. Forster's early novels" are referred to in *A World of Strangers*, and.... A number of ideas in Camus' *The Fall* appear in Gordimer's works: the distinction between surface and reality in Jessie Stilwell's life in *Occasion for Loving*, Max's attack on the guilt-assuaging "charity" of certain whites in *The Late Bourgeois World?* (1)

Gordimer, as an author with genuine ability, never sought anything mechanically from other thinkers and writers and it cannot be ascertained that she hasn't been inspired by any. It has to be noted that there must be some sense of emotional kinship, intellectual, moral, which proves to be a kind of personal literary tradition for which Forster and Camus turned out to be her chief influences. Whatever be the commonalities among them, and however their insights are perceived by others, she has a distinct view of her own purpose and reason for writing.

The personal experience of the author with the South African conditions and her close observance of South African women formed the basis for all her novels. An attempt is made through the first chapter of the thesis to reveal the three phases of author's career, how the social, political and historical conditions have affected her writing. Gordimer's understanding of colonial rule and also the racial discrimination continued thereafter find momentum in her works and not the conditions alone, but the influences of them on her writing have some significance to seek a thorough analysis in the form of research.

The South African women and their conditions presented in the second chapter demonstrate that the laws forced them to undergo some unique and unbelievable situations. This may not be the case in other countries, where women experience more social discrimination than legal. But the women in South Africa face both types of discrimination. Nowhere in the world has that law interfered so much in the day-to-day lives of women like the case in South Africa. All these things strengthened the progressive thinking of women to fight for their rights. In many ways they were denied the rights that are considered basic in every other part of the world. Some of them are the right to live with husbands, the right to care for children and the right to lead a normal family life.

My study, however, proves that the role of South African women in defying the laws of apartheid is noteworthy and their contribution in all the major movements against the apartheid from time to time is exemplary. The second chapter further illustrates this point along with the feminist ideas in the works of Gordimer, whether the author's works permit or enable any to critically evaluate the feminist approaches of the

characters towards an ideal solution to their personal or public lives. Gordimer's works provide great scope to discuss various social, economic and political factors like education, illiteracy, health, migration, unemployment, wage disparities, marriage, infant mortality, and the issues of population. The chapter also provides the purpose behind the selection of such a study on South African women.

The cultural conflict in South Africa caused the Blacks and the Whites to clash with one another from 1910. The situation turned out worse after 1948 with the apartheid rule. The economic, social and political disturbances between Whites and non-Whites affected the multi-cultural scenario in South Africa. The most significant issue was the evolution and growing commitment of the woman protagonists of Gordimer in the racially segregated nation. *The Lying Days* and *Burger's Daughter* were taken to study these cultural factors and how the author highlighted these confrontations in her novels was also presented in the third chapter.

Gordimer works on the conscience of her White liberal characters in her novel *The Lying Days* to create a sense of guilt and repentance in them that they are inclusive of the oppressive forces of apartheid and that their forefathers ruined the native and ethnic cultures and people. In addition, she makes her liberal White protagonists realize that their family politics have a close connection with the apartheid oppressive politics; hence they must oppose such policies in order to connect themselves to South Africa through adherence and the struggle against the policies of apartheid. Thus, the cultural necessity for the benefit of both Whites and Blacks is given emphasis in her first novel *The Lying Days*.

In South Africa the Blacks were denied the right of being equal to their White counterparts. They were rather treated as units of labour to serve for the growth of White economy. How Gordimer conveyed this condition through her novel *Burger's Daughter* which was also discussed in this chapter. The novel explores the horrible conditions of the apartheid times and how the prison was not intended for rehabilitation but as a place used for de-activating the movements of anti-apartheid. The novel revolves around the Burger's family who protest against the apartheid regime and their involvement, their convictions which eventually caused the downfall of apartheid.

The lives of entire Black community were designed and controlled by apartheid regime through its labour policies and the principles of racial segregation. The political conflicts between the Whites and the Blacks were demonstrated in the emergence of apartheid legislation. While the apartheid laws were in force, the old laws were amended to suit the requirements of Whites' political and economic well-being. Here the novels *July's People* and *My Son's Story* were taken up for study and both the novels discuss the political atmosphere of the country during apartheid regime. *July's People* put forth the racial power-play in South African context where bloodshed, oppression, slavery, racism and violence were a common phenomenon. It discloses how all such inversion and reversal of power-play have affected the family of Smales, especially when they find refuge in the Black community of July, their servant. The author uncovers the political conflict and how it affected a White Afrikaner family when an imaginary Black revolution starts fighting against the system in force.

Another novel that was taken up to study in this chapter was *My Son's Story*. One can find that Gordimer's narrative strategy is tricky at times and intentionally misleading. She projects two distinctive characteristic features in this novel, one omniscient, and the other unreliable. Then she combines both in the final section. The changed realities in the country destroy the family traditions and personal morals of the individuals. Even the decent citizens get trapped into self-betrayal and deceitfulness due to the social conflict. Their lives were affected by police surveillance, pre-dawn raids, detention and harassment of civil rights activists. Gordimer's relentless scrutiny of these things through her protagonists and how the socio-political conflicts spoiled the harmony were examined in this chapter.

Two more novels of Gordimer are significant for any study or analysis of the author's presentation of both fictional and real world of South Africa at the final stages of apartheid. They are *None to Accompany Me* and *The Pickup*. These two novels are considered for a detailed study and understanding of post-apartheid times and the fifth chapter of this work explores the freedom that the Blacks achieved after a long struggle. A complete and close investigation was done with the help of this novel, to gain access to the turbulent South Africa in the final stages of apartheid, and how the bitter old life comes to an end in the transformative period. One can trace Vera's transformation along with her country's transition in this novel, which witnesses the radical social change as a possibility on the way to changing oneself.

Gordimer's thirteenth novel and the Commonwealth Prize winner, *The Pickup* was taken into consideration for further study of life in Post-apartheid times in South

Africa for its exceptional depiction of new ‘rainbow’ nation. The narration takes place in Johannesburg, where people from various cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds live together and they inter-relate happily. The changed scenario provided new phase of life to the people and it also provided the author a great opportunity to depict the stages of the same process in different times: first there was rejection and divergence from home values and then convergence into in the new social environment, which is portrayed in Julie’s life journey. The social environment brought in new challenges to both the Whites and the Blacks, where convergence and divergence in their lives became a reality

There is no end for a discussion on Gordimer’s novels, as her novels lead the readers come across a new revelation every time. It is evident from her novels that there is certain open-endedness. Her novels pose many questions from time to time and most of the times they are left unanswered. Why is it so? ‘Finally, all are happy’ and ‘all the issues are completely resolved’ are not being projected in her novels. Gordimer’s subject is the agony of South Africa, especially of South African women, in the initial, during and after apartheid periods. Her great achievement has been to present the world, through her narratives, the terrible cost of racism in her country. For decades Gordimer has made one essential point that not only the Blacks suffered due to the denial of human rights but also the Whites due to the dehumanizing policies of the regime. Though her characters are the Blacks and the Whites, she seems to be at ease in presenting the White liberal heroes who maintained relationships across the colour barriers and racial groups. From the study of her novels it may be concluded that multiple aspects of the South African society and the constructive as well as destructive nature of her characters makes the

readers feel that they are not only reading her novels but also the texts on south African social, cultural and political conflicts.

Literary research ignites various levels of thought, ideologies and feelings to get acquainted with the multiple thematic concerns like existential dilemmas, history, philosophy, politics, religion and so on. It reflects the socio-cultural and the political conflicts of society through the exposure of some vulnerable and caretaker groups of the society. Accordingly, the research has been carried with the analytical approach which is necessary for the study of socio-cultural and political dynamics revealed in Gordimer's fiction by selecting six representative novels.

It is a widely recognised fact that South African novels are varied in theme, range, mood and tone. The narrative and technical methods used by the authors are astonishingly diverse and experimental. Hence, there is always scope for further research on South African fiction. The novels of South African literature, especially the ones produced by Gordimer, the Noble laureate, characterize somewhat irresolute perspective of the racial discrimination particularly the politically-approved racial segregation and its results. Her treatment of the racial inequality and the inaccessibility between the Blacks and the Whites indicate an exceptionally humanistic and philanthropic approach towards all the stakeholders of the society irrespective of their race, colour. Similarly, many contemporary novelists, particularly the women authors, too find the most articulate expression in their novels which could be a significant source for an empirical research.

It is an undeniable fact that Nadine Gordimer stands out tall amongst the most forthright supporters for racial equality in the midst of the politically-approved racial

segregation years. She played her part very honestly as a White lady author in South Africa and inspired an elaborate amount of discussion. Her creative imagination and steadfast commitment allowed her to denote the myriad aspects of South African life and made her known to others. She was militantly critical on the outcomes of the chronicled conditions prevailing in South Africa and she was known for her scathing remarks on the disintegration in South African society. She voiced her aspirations through the voices of her woman characters to create apartheid free country and to project it on the global stage.