CHAPTER II

Acquiescence and Resistance in Nadine Gordimer's Fiction

2.1 Theoretical Approaches

This chapter attempts to discuss the theme of acquiescence and resistance in the fiction of Nadine Gordimer in the light of postcolonial theory as forwarded by Bhabha and Foucault. Postcolonial studies may be described as a complex field that covers a number of issues and ideas. While it mainly focuses on the impacts of colonialism and the relation between the coloniser and the colonised, it covers a wide range of themes and ideas. As Bill Ashcroft et. al. put it, "Postcolonial theory involves discussion about experiences of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place . . ." (2). The works of Edward Said may be said to have inaugurated the field of postcolonial studies. It can, however, be traced back to Frantz Fanon. Fanon examined the psychological effects of colonialism on the colonised subject in his important book, *Black Skin White Masks* (1952, English translation 1986). Fanon perceives the colonial world as 'manichean', that is, the world is divided into good and evil represented by the coloniser and the colonised respectively. From this division follows the other binary oppositions such as Self and Other, and subject and object. This division is one of the basic tenets of postcolonialism. The coloniser represents the native as evil and primitive. In course of time, the native begins to accept this racialised view as true. Consequently, in order to deal with this psychological inadequacy, the native tries to be as 'white' as possible. He puts on, to use Fanon's words, 'white masks'. But soon the colonised realises that he cannot become 'white'. His life is caught in "the lasso of existence" (Fanon 178). Out of frustration he often directs his violence against his own people – the 'wretched' turn upon each other. Fanon claims that tribal wars are instance of this violence.

In his path breaking book *Orientalism* (1978), Said very persuasively argues that the western scholars should reconsider the relationship between the West and the Orient. He saw colonisation as rooted in an epistemological enquiry and project of constructing the image of the east as savage, primitive and underdeveloped by the Europe. Through

discursive practices the Europe and the Orient were represented in literature and history as binary opposites. Europe was what the Orient was not. If the Europe was developed and civilized, the Orient was underdeveloped and uncivilised. "Europe saw the Orient as different and treated this difference as *negative"* (original italics, Nayar 161). The western views of the eastern cultures is coloured with prejudices. In short, orientalism may be said to be a practice of discrimination applied to non-European societies and cultures to establish imperial rule. To justify their rule, the colonisers claim to have more knowledge about the orient.

Critics like Michel Foucault and Bhaba contend that if, as Said claims, the west produced knowledge to show the inferiority of the Orient, it might be possible to read the literary texts to find moments of resistance offered by the colonised subject. Said's argument about the power of orientalist discourse to 'construct' the orient is based on the Foucauldian premise of power and knowledge. The west had power to know the orient and that power constituted the oriental other as a particular subject of discourse. In the 'General Introduction' to the book, *The Post –Colonial Studies Reader*, Bill Ashcroft, et. al. make an important observation. Quoting Said, they point out that when Arthur James Balfour stood up in the House of Commons on 13 June, 1910 to answer challenges to British presence in Egypt, he spoke with a position derived from the two indivisible foundations of imperial authority – power and knowledge. They further say:

> The most formidable ally of economic and political control had long been the business of 'knowing' other peoples because this 'knowing' underpinned imperial dominance and became the mode by which they were increasingly persuaded to know themselves: that is, as subordinate to Europe (1).

As Balfour claims in the passage, the imperial derives authority from and governs through power and knowledge. Foucault has given a powerful account of the significant connections between power, knowledge, and the subject in his writings. He challenges the traditional concept of power. He claims that power is exercised rather than possessed (*Discipline and Punish* 26). The history of different social institutions is the history of power relations. Knowledge gives rise to power. It is the relationship between power and knowledge, which controls and governs the society. He further argues that power is

productive and that subjects are produced through cultural and institutional practices. He mainly focuses on practices of disciplinary power which lead to binary divisions such as sane/mad or civilized/uncivilized. These divisions can be used as a means of social control. They also involve the physical segregation of the population in a society. Such divisions of population are clearly found in the ideological practices of apartheid in South Africa. Discourse is the connecting thread between power, knowledge and truth. For Foucault, discourse is not just language in context; it also means disciplines and social institutions. Discourses are everywhere. His books, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction* (1976) show how discourses such as discourse of sickness and discourse of religion condition people's life and thought. He demonstrates that science, human relations and other social institutions are involved in a struggle for power. This struggle is carried on through discourse and discursive practices. However, in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues that discourse is a means not only of oppression but also of resistance. On the other hand, Foucault suggests, where there is power, there is resistance. He admits the existence of state power but at the same time he points out the possibility of resistance to the centralised power at the micro level –power relations in the lives of individuals. Many characters of Gordimer's fiction demonstrate or show a tendency to resistance at the micro level.

Foucault's concept of power and knowledge interrogates resistance to the dominant power structure. Spivak is concerned with the possibility of representation of the subaltern. In the colonial discourse, the subaltern is cut off from representation. South Asian scholars, particularly the Indian historian Ranajit Guha undertook the subaltern project to give voice to the subalterns who were left out in the conventional historical accounts. They went against the traditional, 'elite' history that focused on the history of kings and generals only, leaving out from their account the subaltern social group. So there can be, they argue, different versions of history as alternative. However, Gayatri Spivak has been critical of this project of the subaltern studies group. She questions the possibility of giving a voice to the voiceless. She contends that one cannot construct a category of the subaltern that has an effective voice. She concludes that for the true subaltern group whose identity is its difference, there is no subaltern subject that can "know and speak for itself" (Ashcroft, et al, 10).

Unlike Frantz Fanon, Bhaba does not see the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised simply in terms of the self and the other. He argues that the relationship is ambivalent and unstable. The coloniser wishes that the natives imitate or 'mimic' his habits and values. At the same time he wants to keep the difference between himself and the natives. On the other hand, when the native mimics the colonial master, he does so with subtle variations and nuances. Thus the colonial discourse "produces ambivalent subjects whose **mimicry** is never very far from mockery" (Bill Ashcroft, et. al., *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* 10). So the mimicry of the native displays obedience as well as disobedience. Bhabha calls this dualism resistance. He asserts that all cultures are impure and hybrid. In his book, *The Location of Culture*, he examines issues like 'border lines', cultural difference and colonial oppression which can be used to analyse Gordimer's fiction and resistance against apartheid. Bhabha argues that living at the border or margin demands a new 'art of the present' (McLeod 217). Borders are thresholds which separate as well as connect different places. They are transitory locations from where one thinks of moving beyond a barrier. Bhabha describes the border as beyond or liminal. As he puts it, "The 'beyond is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past . . . we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (1-2). Bhabha claims that the borders between cultures are porous. Cultures moves across the supposed barriers through the porous border. Hence cultures are hybrid and fluid. The border disturbs the conventional patterns. On the other hand, it is also the place of possible new ideas.

It is obvious that two of the dominant ideas that emerge in postcolonial studies are representation and resistance. The concept of resistance is nicely illustrated by Barbara Harlow in her book *Resistance Literature* (1987). For her, resistance is an act or series of acts carried out to get rid a people of their oppressors. Literary resistance can be interpreted as "a form of contractual understanding between text and reader, one which is embedded in an experiential dimension and buttressed by a political and cultural aesthetic at work in the culture" (Slemon 104). She thinks that resistance literature is a category of literary writing which emerges as an integral part of an organized struggle of resistance for national liberation. According to Said, resistance is a two-fold activity. Of these the first one is a literally fighting against outside intrusion. The second activity is

the ideological resistance which can be carried through literature. Quoting Basil Davidson, Said further observes that it comprises efforts made "to reconstitute a 'shattered community to save or restore the sense and fact of community against all pressures of the colonial system'" (252-53). Thus, resistance literature can be seen as literature which resists the imposition of the ideology of colonial discourse. Colonial discourse represents and produces the reality of the colonised in a way that they accept the constructed reality. Resistance literature often decodes this reality. Literary text is a site of cultural control and an effective instrument for the determination of the native by fixing him or her under the sign of the other. In his influential essay "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: the Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature", Abdul R. JanMohamed contends how literary texts contain features that can be appropriated to the oppositional and anti-colonial purposes of contemporary postcolonial writing. JanMohamed divides colonialist texts into two categories: 'imaginary' and 'symbolic'. He says that the writers of imaginary texts show a fixed opposition between the self and the native. On the other hand, symbolic texts attempt to use the native as a mediator of the European desires. The authors of this kind of fiction are willing to examine the specific individual and cultural differences between Europeans and natives and to reflect on the efficacy of the European values, assumptions, and habits in contrast to those of the indigenous cultures. JanMohamed subdivided the symbolic texts into two types: fiction like E M Forster's *A Passage to India* and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* explores to find syncretic solutions to the manichean opposition of the coloniser and the colonised. The symbolic fiction of the second type is represented by the novels of Joseph Conrad and Nadine Gordimer. This kind of fiction argues that syncretism is impossible within the power relations of colonial society. But it examines rigorously "the imaginary mechanism of colonial mentality" and thus "manages to free itself from the Manichean allegory …" ("The Economy", JanMohamed 20).

The colonial experience has been explored imaginatively by writers of fiction. But the distinction between the historical and the fictional representation is not clear cut. Critics in the postmodern period, particularly the new historicists have often questioned the objectivity of history and its representation of facts. The historian has to interpret his materials or data to construct a picture of the period he deals with. But there will always be more facts to record than he can possibly accommodate in his work. So he has to be

selective and can only present a segment of it. In doing so, he applies his own mind and interprets his materials on inferential and speculative grounds. Thus imagination or subjective element finds its way into the narration of the facts. In his 'Translator's Introduction' to *The Writing of History*, Tom Conley has observed that students of fiction and history show us that understanding is based on effects of representation. The criteria of selection become "the object of study no less than an archive or a literary text"(x). This principle of selection and interpretation of facts is common to a historian and a writer of fiction as well. The postmodernist concept of history as narrative further problematises the treatment of history. Hayden White suggests that all historical facts come to us only in the form of narrative. The fact that history is always narrated implies that the past is available only as it is represented. History is thus understood to be the recreation of past events, through a combination of imagination, intuition and narrative discourse. This, in turn, indicates a parallel between history and fiction. In his significant book, *The Novel of Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside*, Stephen Clingman has observed that literature represents history as it has been lived and experienced by people In other words, history is represented in literature through living, breathing men and women. It is an effective medium for exploring the questions such as how people see the world they live in. For him, "it is in fiction that individual and social narratives are given visible and public voice" (xxxv). This is very important for South African literature, for South Africa has a unique and peculiar history. Apartheid can be seen as an extension of colonisation. It has produced a vision of history which is singular to that country. This singular history has often been delineated and interpreted by South African literature, particularly fiction. In this respect Nadine Gordimer's fiction is significant, besides its artistic merits.

2.2 Gordimer's Fiction

The socially committed writers like Nadine Gordimer in the apartheid South Africa passed through a precarious situation in the country. Very often their words were considered equivalent to the actions of the people who were "politically active and important because they might help to give a voice to those who found themselves beaten into silence but not into submission" (Yousaf viii). The writers produced work which exposed the oppression suffered by the black in the hands of the white. As a result the rulers considered the act of writing as a form of resistance. This led the apartheid

government to ban and exile many writers of the time. It is in this light that the resistance novels of Nadine Gordimer will be analysed in the following pages. Her literary impulses and social commitment lead her into the heart of anti- apartheid to create a body of fiction that brought her the Nobel Prize in 1991. Sensitive as she was, she had a deep consciousness of the history of her time. She has derived inspiration from a host of international authors to pursue artistic freedom by exercising social responsibility. Some of them are Bertolt Brecht, Albert Camus, Ivan Turgenev, Antonio Gramsci and Georg Lukacs. These authors are associated with the Marxist philosophy in one or the other way. Gordimer's works also display the influence of Marxism.

However, there is a parallel between the beginnings of her career and the rise of the Afrikaner-dominated National Party that ruled South Africa for about half a century. In a 1982 "Conversation" she described herself as a natural writer and claimed that she did not write about apartheid. "I write about people who happen to live under that system" (Robert Boyers, et al. 27). It is true that she was a natural writer for she started writing quite early in her life when she did not know much about apartheid. But she admitted that she was living in a society of intense racial prejudice. It was obvious that racial politics gradually entered her work and she was perhaps aware of it. This is clearly seen in her views on the role and function of the writer in the society. In her essay "Literature and Politics in South Africa", she calls the writer as "the creative consciousness of his society" (219). It is natural that the writer influences and is influenced by his society. Apartheid permeated all spheres of South African life in the second half of twentieth century. So a writer who aimed to depict truthfully his society could not avoid the political issues influencing his mind. Gordimer rightly observes in an article, "A Writer in South Africa", that society means political situation in South Africa. "Politics is character in SA", she says (23). On the other hand, as Gordimer argues in her essay, "A Writer's Freedom," the main responsibility of the writer is "to write the truth as he sees it" (105) and his immediate goal is the "enlargement of the reader's apprehension of reality" (107). Through the fulfilment of this social responsibility, the writer offers his "unique contribution to social change" (107). His ultimate aim is the transformation of society. In the context of South Africa under apartheid, it was the goal of the writer to awaken the conscience of his readers to the evils of his society with a view to removing the evils and laying the foundations of justice and freedom in society.

She has observed in her essay, "The Essential Gesture", "South African writers [were] answerable in their essential gesture . . . [to] the historical and existential situation of blacks" (293). The writers –both black and white writers –should speak against the oppression of blacks in their works. Gordimer asserts that the white writer as a cultural worker should raise the consciousness of the white people. She understands that he may lack the experience of "the life of the black ghettoes". But, she continues,

> black writers do share with white the same kind of influence on those whites who read them; and so the categories that the state would keep apart get mixed through literature –an unforeseen 'essential gesture' of writers in their social responsibility in a divided country." ("The Essential Gesture", 293-294)

Gordimer contends that the writers should speak against the oppression of the blacks in their works. That is the demand made upon the writers of the time. Every society imposes social responsibility on the writer in terms of its concept of the writer's essential gesture. At the same time the writer has also responsibility to his art. Sometimes the writer's social responsibility may conflict with his creative vision and sometimes there may be a reconciliation between social responsibility and "the writer's commitment to his artistic vision" ("The Essential Gesture" 289). In the case of a conflict between the two, the writer can resolve it exercising his fundamental freedom as a writer. As Gordimer states in "A Writer's Freedom", this freedom is the writer's "right to maintain and publish to the world a deep, intense, private view of the situation in which he finds his society" (104). The fiction of Gordimer responds to the historical situation and at the same time, she maintains her fidelity that fiction should be the servant of truth only. All her novels and short stories which are set in South Africa reflect the socio-political condition of South Africa under apartheid. She has been aware of the socio-political issues. In fact, she has been an social activist herself. But she attempts to deal with them with utmost honesty at her command as an artist. She herself says that in the work of the honest writer social truth appears naturally. So she asserts that the anti-apartheid nature of his novels is not due to her personal abhorrence of apartheid. It is, she argues, because the society she lives in "is the very stuff of my work *reveals itself* … If you write honestly about life in South Africa, apartheid damns itself" (original italics, quoted in Clingman 12). So, her fiction, focusing primarily on human lives and situations,

represents a fictionalized history of apartheid. By exposing the evils of racism, she has contributed to the resistance of apartheid and thus she has discharged her social responsibility.

2.2.1 The Early Fiction

Gordimer's first novel *The Lying Days* (*LD*) was published in 1953, five years after the Afrikaner National Party government came to power. It deals with the development of racial consciousness of the protagonist, Helen Shaw. Many critics also opine that the novel is autobiographical. Helen's development reflects Gordimer's own development. Dominic Head sees the novel as Helen's search for her "social and political identity, just as this first novel has Gordimer beginning her search for her own artistic identity, and an appropriate literary form" (35). The novel captures a picture of South Africa in the late 1940s when the National Party came to power in 1948 and began enforcing the apartheid policy. The narrator, Helen Shaw lives in the white community of Atherton gold mine where her father is a secretary. Her parents and the other white people associated with the mine socialize only with one another. It is in this world of white community that Helen spends the first seventeen years of her life. One Saturday, Helen, in the absence of her parents, ventures to the concession stores that serve the black mine workers. In her first attempt to venture into the black world, she saw the "red dust path turning off the stores" somewhere she had never been. She also saw in the mine little children in pushcarts whose mothers allowed the maids to take them anywhere they liked. They went down the "filthy kaffir stores to gossip with the boys" (*LD* 8). This act of the maids exposes the little babies to dirt and disease. Her mother often condemned their negligence.

This is the beginning of Helen's awareness of the world around her. The above passage reveals her mother's racist attitude. She condemns 'the filthy kaffir' stores with their atmosphere of 'dirt and disease'. Immediately after this, Helen makes her way along the path and observes dozens of natives in their dark skin and with their dark brown faces. Helen experiences the world of the blacks. The incident shows Helen's tendency to break the ideological confinements of the whites. This is more clearly evident when she befriends a black girl in the university, Mary Seswayo. Helen wishes Mary comes to their home and stays till the latter writes the examination –not in the

house exactly but in the 'cooler', a storeroom built for keeping food. This is Helen's compromise solution –the creation of a makeshift space which is neither inside the house of the whites nor outside where the blacks stay. But Helen's mother is very angry at this idea. Helen is frustrated by the white parents' racist ideology towards the blacks. She attempts to go beyond her ideological confinement by befriending Mary Seswayo, a black co-student at university. She does not succeed. In the apartheid South Africa, Mary is not only a person but a black person. She is the other. This incident also points to the issue of spatial provisions for the blacks in South Africa. Helen is surprised that there are no public toilet facilities for native men and women in the whole shopping centre of Johannesburg. In fact, her concern with space for the blacks in the township illustrates the idea of spatial provision as a political issue. Gordimer's description of the township where Mary Seswayo lives may be called a rudimentary version of Foucault's notion of space expressed in the term 'heterotopia'— a site of difference and resistance. Charles and Helen's visit to the native location Mariastad is a kind of "culture shock", which is similar to Helen's reactions at the concessions stores (Head 42). This native location was much like the other locations:

> All around the veld had been burned and spread like a black stain. And all above the crust of vague, close, low houses, smoke hung, quite still as if it had been there forever; and shouts rose, and it seemed that the shout had been there forever, too, many voices lifted at different times and for different reasons that became simply a shout, that never began and never ended (*LD* 171).

As they move along the township, Helen and Charles are so shocked that they stopped talking as people do when they feel they have lost their way. The spatial compression of the location gives the reader an illusion of permanence despite its transitory nature. The narrator expresses this paradox through some significant images. The polluting smoke has been described as something permanent, and the 'many voices' of the township forming a single shout suggests the disorder and incoherence of compression and squalor of the location. Paradoxically, the single voice also suggests "the unity of common experience of repression, and there is a clear sense here of the unity required for political action . . . an (as yet) unarticulated, but nevertheless unified, 'shout'" (Head 43). The single shout reduces Helen and Charles to silence. Their silence suggests their guilt, their

awareness of the white complicity in the material manifestation of repression. There is a possibility that the shout represents an emerging black political voice which may silence the whites. The politics of space gives the scene an extra dimension. This is an early version of the heterotopia. Heterotopias are sites of differences and resistance. They are different from and yet have links with other social spaces. A better example of heterotopia is the township description in *Burger's Daughter*. Foucault uses the term to refer to the way through which spaces surrounding the subject in social existence can reduce his autonomy and even his sense of identity. According to Foucault, heterotopias are almost invisible and perceived as natural by members of a society though they are measures of disciplining and controlling. Space is a device that helps the colonizer to control and regulate the movement of people in a colonised country. This is quite evident in the apartheid South Africa. Different acts such as Population Registration Act (1950), Group Areas Act (1950), etc. were enacted to classify the natives and regulate their movements. But while the regulation of space within apartheid South Africa is enforced to keep the whites and non-whites apart, characters in Gordimer's novels frequently cross the spatial divide. Thereby they resist the division.

Gordimer has also touched upon the issue of space through the character of Joel Aaron. He receives training to be an architect. Earlier the reader is informed that Joel's future plans include the possibility of building houses –cottages –for blacks (*LD* 155). It is appropriate that he is studying the provision and organization of social space. It has a bearing on the political vision of the novel. In the final chapter of the novel, Joel sails for Israel in the hope of realizing, says Helen, "a concrete expression of his creative urge, in doing his work in a society which in itself was in the live process of emergence, instead of decay" (*LD* 375). Helen makes this remark when she identifies herself as the writer. Joel's "creative urge" may suggest his intended participation in the construction of a new society. Gordimer, perhaps, implies that the novelist should have such an objective, particularly in South Africa. Gordimer's concern with spatial politics points to her intention to build a just society.

When Helen lives in the city of Johannesburg, she shares a flat with a married couple. Here she meets Paul Clark, an Afrikaner and a Welfare Officer in the Native Affairs Department. In course of time she starts living with him. In the beginning her parents favour Paul because he belongs to Natal which is known for its close ties with

England. However, through the Paul-Helen episode, Gordimer explores an important issue. Before the Afrikaner Nationalist government came to power, 'trusteeship' had been the official ideology of the government (Clingman 35). This ideology allowed the whites to act as guardians of the blacks and to act for the welfare of the blacks. Under the nationalists this was replaced by *baasskaap* (literally meaning 'boss-ship'). This was done to assert the white supremacy. In the novel, Paul's job is to deal with the housing problems of poor blacks. Paul feels that it (his job) gives him access to the world of the blacks. On the other hand, it allows him to undermine the oppressive system by using its resources or, at least, to reduce the sufferings of the blacks. This demands that Paul lives a double life –working for a government that enforces apartheid and collaborating with his friends in African National Congress. Soon he realises that his position inherits some contradictions. Under the Nationalist government in 1948, the state policy of apartheid becomes more prominent. On the other hand, his friends in African National Congress adopt a militant attitude. This situation tears him apart. As Helen puts it, "He cannot lose, and he cannot win. He scarcely knows anymore what to hope for" (*LD* 300). In depicting the replacement of the ideology of trusteeship the novel has addressed a central aspect of the history of its times and, more importantly, it has "dramatized the implications of this change for individual life" (Clingman 38). Paul's relationship with Helen also begins to fail when his political anxiety increases. She thinks of a private life with her lover Paul and she has it at least for a short time. She seems to be happy to meet the demands of an inner life with her lover. But it does not take her a long time to understand that their life is in a "state of suspension" (*LD* 295). The tensions of their life reflect "the tensions of the external divisions in public life" under the nationalist regime (Green 82). After witnessing the May Day Strike in which Paul's friend Sipho becomes a victim, she decides to go to Britain. She seems to understand that she has no place in the country of her birth, South Africa. It dawns upon her that she belongs neither to the black nor to the white. This is a kind of withering "into the truth" as the epigraph of the novel from the poem of Yeats suggests.

Though political events have not been given any prominence in the novel, Gordimer nevertheless refers to certain crucial measures of apartheid such as the Mixed Marriages Act and the Suppression of Communism Bill. Sexual relations between whites and non-whites were prohibited through the Immorality Act (1950). This is conveyed by

the novelist through a very short incident when the headlights of the police van shine into the bedroom of Helen and Paul Clark. This is to remind the reader that they are enforcing the Mixed Marriages prohibition. The apartheid government's intrusion into the private life of individuals points to Foucault's concept of surveillance. This surveillance leads to self-surveillance as seen in Helen's reaction that night. As Paul recalls the incident of the police van shining on the mixed couple in the bed, Helen recoils instinctively from him. These are some of the instruments of oppression of the apartheid regime. The whites are still living a life of comfort and leisure, Helen realises. So there develops a feeling of guilt in her mind. She attempts to overcome them by mixing with some blacks and visiting the locations. The May Day riot that Helen and her friend Laurie confront in the black township is an eye opener for Helen. She is horrified to see how the police shoot and kill a black rioter. The traumatic death of the rioter affects her deeply. She realizes the realities of South Africa of 1948. She thinks that in South Africa she can be only an observer and never be a participant in the struggle of the blacks. Hence, perhaps, she decides to leave South Africa. Though Helen decides to leave the country, she is hopeful that she will return. This is conveyed through the image of "the phoenix illusion that makes life always possible" (*LD* 376). The illusion of the phoenix suggests a realistic understanding of the limits to the contribution of a creative writer in building an alternative political future.

Published in 1958, Gordimer's second novel *A World of Strangers* (*WS*) was set against the background of the movements opposed to apartheid in the 1950s. The philosophy of these movements spearheaded by the Congress Alliance was multi-racialism. In fact, multi-racialism was a social way of life of the time, at least some part of the country. The magazine, *Drum* provided a platform to the writers, reporters, critics and photographers who attempted to change the way black people were represented in the society. Sophiatown, a suburb of Johannesburg, became a hub of multiracial culture. In this context Clingman observes that Sophiatown itself became a vital symbol of the 1950s. It was an ethnically mixed and vibrant black township on the borders of Johannesburg. In fact, it was virtually part of Johannesburg. In a number of ways this social world reflects the broader political movement of South Africa. Gordimer herself was involved with different aspects of Johannesburg life of this time. She developed friendship with the members of the *Drum* such as Henry Nxumalo ('Mr Drum'), Can

Themba, Bloke Modisane and others. More importantly, it is at this time she began her lasting friendship with a banned Afrikaner trade unionist, Bettie du Toit.

In *A World of Strangers* Gordimer explores the life in South Africa from the point of view of an outsider, Toby Hood. *The Lying Days* almost ignores the black world and focuses mainly upon the development of consciousness of the white protagonist, Helen. In *A World of Strangers*, however, the narrator often visits the townships, particularly Sophia town. Toby Hood, an Oxford graduate, comes from England to South Africa to look into the affairs of the publishing agency of the family. But he does not have any inclination to the family's interest in anti-colonial causes. He tries to remain neutral to South African politics and leads a life oscillating between the white high society and the black townships. He tries to understand the nature of these unbridgeable 'world of strangers' through his personal relationships. His black bachelor friend Steven Sitole, who is apolitical likes him, takes him to the townships. On the other hand, his prejudiced lover Cecil Rowe epitomises the traits he finds in privileged white society (Head 48). He gains his first significant experience of South African white society when he visits the High House. It is a huge mansion of the wealthy mining magnate Hamish Alexander who has been a friend of his mother. It is at this place he meets the three important people of his life. He meets Cecil Rowe, a divorcee, who becomes his mistress. Another important person is Anna Louw, the Afrikaner lawyer and activist, who married a South African Indian and then divorced. Anna introduces him to different people who were engaged in the struggle of the black for liberation. Most significantly, Anna takes him to a party of mixed races, where people get together and makes friends across racial divide. In such meetings, Toby meets Steven Sitole who has returned from England, and Sam, a struggling musician. Steven makes a profound effect upon Toby's life. From his visit to the parties and other places, Toby realizes that colour and social barriers keep the white and the black far away from knowing each other. He discovers that there exists a void between the worlds of the blacks and the whites: "I passed from one world to another –but neither was real to me. For in each, what sign was there that the other existed" (*WS* 197)? Gordimer effectively depicts the contrasting worlds of the whites and the blacks. Against the hard, poverty stricken world of the blacks, she represents the lavish world of the whites. In the parties at the High House, Toby meets the rich white businessmen and industrialists. On the other hand, there is a careless

attitude to life in the black township. Food, survival and reproduction are the primary concern of life in this township. In fact, Gordimer has pitted the blacks against the whites throughout the novel to make the differences prominent. Toby finds that there is a deep divide between the rich white life and the poor blacks. In such a situation he just carried along his daily life though it exerted an enormous stress and strain, "where one set of loyalties and interests made claims in direct conflict with another set, equally strong" (*WS* 258). He had to keep his friends physically apart. He could not even speak to one group about the others either.

Though he plans to remain neutral to South African politics, he moves between the white society and the poor world of the blacks. He is upset that the white society makes no room for relationships with blacks like Sam and Steven. He wonders what he will write in his letters to his family and friends back in England:

> Could I tell them how pleasant it was to be lulled and indulged at the High House? Could I explain the freedom I felt where I had no legal right to be in that place of segregation, a location? I suppose that to have a 'life out there', a real life in Johannesburg, you'd have to belong in one or the other, for keeps (*WS*, 203).

Toby finds that the divide between the whites and the blacks is deep and that it is irreconcilable. Toby finds himself in an 'in-between' reality, a borderline existence (Bhaba, 19). The binary divisions develop in him a sense of despondency and alienation. "I had not been to Alexander's for weeks. I couldn't go there any more, that was all" (*WS*, 257). His failure, though temporary, to continue his contact with the privileged whites and his friendship with Steven and Anna makes him understand the success of separateness of apartheid in South Africa: "You couldn't really reconcile one with the other, the way people were, the way laws were and make a whole" (*WS* 203). Thus he expresses his anxieties and experiences of both the worlds of South Africa.

But Gordimer does not represent the character of Toby as one who is disappointed at the prevailing racial prejudices in South Africa. His complicity with the apartheid does not escape the critical lens of Gordimer. Like Steven, he is indifferent to the politics of South African life. But his lack of commitment to the fight against apartheid does not give him the freedom of a private life. His mistress Cecil Rowe has a

different attitude to life and to the blacks. She wishes she had enough money and lived in Europe. So she ultimately marries Guy Patterson in her greed and fear of life. She is out and out acquiescent to the apartheid ideology. She has a strong racial prejudice. So much so that she shudders at the thought of touching a black skin: "Her hand came out in the imaginary experiment and hesitated, wavered back" (*WS* 263). She cannot take it easily that Toby socializes with the blacks or treat a black person as an equal. Though Toby befriends Steven, he makes it sure that the latter never meets Cecil. He conceals his friendship with Steven from Cecil because he fears that if he does so he will lose her. Thus, though he intends to remain indifferent to the politics of the land, he himself contributes to the segregation of the races.

Steven's death in a car accident provides him a check, a pause to think about the kind of life he has been living. He quickly realizes that even when black and white people live together in South Africa, they are strangers in each other's world. He says, "What I had known of Steven, a stranger, living and dying a life I could at best only observe; my brother" (*WS* 252). His acquaintances with white and black worlds and his failure in personal relationships across colour bar make him feel the necessity of a commitment to the resistance against apartheid. According to Clingman, Toby suddenly realises that the kind of "self-centred indifference" attitude he has adopted contributed to the "social divide of the 'world of strangers'" in South Africa (55). In this sense he cannot deny his complicity in the death of his black friend Steven. So, he must commit himself to a different kind of social commitment for his moral rehabilitation. His experiences of the black and the white worlds move him to "a new social commitment" against the apartheid structure (Clingman 55). And this time he makes his commitment through a friendship with another black, Sam Mofokenzazi.

This friendship between Toby and the black Sam is very significant. It marks a change in Toby, at least in his attitude and intention. Just before leaving the Johannesburg railway station for Cape Town in business trip, Toby promises Sam to be the godfather of Sam's baby when it is born. However, Sam is not sure of Toby's decision: "May be you won't come back at all" (*WS* 266). Gordimer seems to suggest that their friendship transcends all ideologies and signals the beginning of a cultural synthesis against the apartheid. Through the epigraph of the novel, which is taken from

Federico Garcia Lorca, she seems to anticipate the emergence of a revolutionary spirit against the apartheid:

> I want the strong air of the most profound night
>
> to remove flowers and letters from the arch where you sleep,
>
> and a black boy to announce to the gold minded whites
>
> the arrival of the reign of the ear of corn.

The action of the novel revolves around Toby's oscillation – both physical and mental – between Johannesburg and the black townships. The mixed gatherings are borderland spaces that have the possibility of bridging the racial divide. These parities of mixed people may be described as what Bhaba called borderlands. They are the meeting points, thresholds of two worlds. Clingman describes the novel a ''frontier'' text, suggesting a transition from one world to another (71). Toby moves to the borderlands or frontier places to find a world of friendships across racial divide. In addition to the cross racial friendship, there is Steven who has "the network of contacts" within which he operates. Toby notices that Steven "seems to know 'a fellow somewhere'" (Head 59). This 'network' helps him avoid the restrictions imposed by adverse legislation: "The more restrictions grew up around him and his kind –and there seemed to be fresh ones every month –the quicker he found a way round him" (*WS*, 204). By avoiding the legislations and thereby opposing them, Steven offers a site of individual resistance that links with a broader movement which can generate practical resistance.

If *A World of Strangers* explores the possibility of a multi-racial society, *Occasion for Loving* (1963) shows its failure as the dominant ideology to oppose segregation. Multi-racialism had been challenged since long. The African nationalists seceded from the African National Congress and founded the Pan Africanist Congress (1959) and questioned the idea of multi-racialism. On the other hand, the apartheid regime was implementing its policies more strictly. It banned organisations like African National Congress and also resorted to violent action against the anti-apartheid activists. Gordimer was aware of this socio-political condition of the time. *Occasion for Loving* (*OL*) acknowledges this challenge and historical realities of the time. The novel explores

this issue through the theme of love and sex across colour bar, which runs through South African fiction from Plomer to Paton and beyond.

The action of the novel moves around a love affair between the black artist, Gideon Shibalo and a white woman, Ann Davis, who visits South Africa with her husband, Boaz. They stay with Tom and Jessie Stilwell in Johannesburg. Tom Stilwell is a university teacher who participated in the campaign against the Extension of University Education Bill. The Bill was introduced to bar the blacks from the universities. As Thompson says, this apartheid legislation was passed in 1959 to prevent the black students from enrolling in the established universities unless a cabinet minister granted them special permission (197). In a protest meeting, an acquaintance of Tom tells him: "Fight them over this business if you want to, man, but don't think that anything you do really matters. Some of you make laws, and some of you try to change them. And you don't ask us" (*OL* 69). This shows, on the one hand, the exclusion of the blacks from the mainstream politics and, on the other, the growing suspicion of the liberal whites of their complicity in the oppressive system.

Foucault argues that power is exercised in public as well as in private spheres (Ransom, 28). The family is an important private sphere for the operation of power in society. In the first part of the novel, Jessie evaluates her past, her relation with her unhappily married mother. She painfully realized that she lost her youth because of her mother's confining love. Jessie's mother withdrew her from school on the pretext of a non-existent heart complaint. It left a deep scar on her mind. While watering the garden, a feeling comes to her mind that she has never left her mother's house. This is a sign of the inner struggle of Jessie to find the meaning of her past in the present situation. Both Tom and Jessie strongly believe in the sanctity of personal relationship but they ironically involve themselves in the inter-racial relationship between Ann and Gideon. However, Jessie may be said to represent Foucault's contention that public or state institutions continue the process of producing 'docile' subjects through family or individuals. Danaher et. al. explain in the context of Britain that mothers were entrusted with the responsibility to perpetuate the values and attitudes of the state (Danaher 76). In South Africa, the racial differences or apartheid governed the institutions of the white family. Jessie believes that "the race business" had been settled long ago (*OL* 290). But when she comes in close touch with Ann and Gideon, she realizes how the race factor

lies at the core of their life and identity. When they suddenly turn up at her family beach cottage, she discovers the effects of apartheid on her psyche. As she converses with Gideon, she gradually feels her childhood fear growing in her. She was often told that she must not be left alone with a black man in the house. Nobody explained to her the reason. But it had an adverse impact on her mind: "I used to feel, at night, when I turned my back to the dark passage and bent to wash my face in the bathroom, that someone was coming up behind me" (*OL* 290). Jessie now recognizes the racist taboos that have been inculcated in her mind by her mother. Thus the institution of family plays an important role in the racial politics of apartheid.

The affair between Ann and Gideon breaks down because of racial and psychological barriers. There cannot be any occasion of loving between the black and the white in the context of South Africa under apartheid. Gideon is disappointed at the racial politics in his country. He cannot go to Italy on a scholarship because the government denied him passport because of his involvement in African National Congress. So his friend Sol reacts: "Most of the whites don't want to talk to you … *They* are the ones who decide what's going to happen to us" (original italic, *OL* 144-145). In the beginning of their relationship, Ann does not show any inhibition about race or colour. She enjoys visiting the townships and making acquaintance with the blacks. Her frank nature attracts many people to her as well. But as the narrative moves forward, she shows that she is not committed to the blacks. She does not remain faithful in her love for Gideon either. Despite her fascination for Gideon, she understands the inadequacy of their love when she runs away with him. A sense of alienation and a strange feeling comes over her during their journey to his native place. In a scene when Ann is sleeping by road, she is warned by a white African farmer of "drunk boys around on Sunday" (*OL* 268). When the man leaves, she feels a growing sense of fear in her. Ann's fear suggests that in a black majority country there is no space beyond the control of white race. And the control over space is a disciplinary practice to maintain power. The colour-blind Ann gradually becomes conscious of Gideon's colour. She tells Jessie:

> "You know when the man in the garage looked at Gid, and I stood next to him seeing Gid at the same time, it wasn't the same person we saw…" (*OL* 308).

She realizes that blackness count even in their intimate relationship. When they stay in the African village, Ann experiences the laws that prevent the whites and the blacks from mixing in social and public meetings in South Africa. The teacher, who provides them lodging in the African village, finally tells them to leave because of fear of persecution by the apartheid regime. Realizing the realities of racial politics in South Africa, Ann decides to leave South Africa with her husband, Boaz. This is an effect of what Foucault calls disciplinary practices which produce 'docile' subjects who are afraid to transgress the social binary oppositions. In the present instance it is inter-racial sexual relationship. The end of the affair is painful for not only Gideon but Jessie as well. She feels that there is no occasion for loving between a black and a white in the racially divided society of South Africa. Apartheid pervades through every aspects of South African life, even through the most intimate relationship of man and woman. In other words, apartheid has been internalized. The love affair between Ann and Gideon fails due to external as well as internal pressure. The Immorality Act, 1950 partially accounts for the failure of their relationship. It is the effect of disciplinary practices that silently internalized the apartheid. As Clingman says, the repressions of apartheid have become "psychologically inscribed" (82). This failure makes Jessie see the futility of any attempt love to across the racial divide. She ultimately realises that blackness counts even in the matter of love between a white and a black. This shows how the personal relation inevitably turns out be social, or the private affairs becomes political. So, Jessie says, as long as the law like the Immorality Act remained unchanged, "nothing could bring integrity to personal relationships" (*OL* 321). Jessie painfully realizes that Ann has not been committed to her relationship with Gideon. "She did not love him *across the colour-bar*…" (original italics, *OL* 309). Ann who once claimed to be passionately in love with Gideon leaves South Africa without even bidding good bye to him. It is this attitude of arrogance of the white people to the South African blacks that Gordimer seems to criticize. Ann finally surrenders to the barriers of apartheid. The white liberal, Ann acquiescently accepts apartheid. On the other hand, her irresponsible behaviour exasperates Jessie. She cannot come to terms with the situation. She wonders how a person (Ann) falls in love with a man (Gideon) and at the same time destroys him. She reveals her feelings of annoyance and anger in a long conversation with Tom. He tries to calm her down and tells her that what else Ann could do if she didn't want him. She

asks him not to make her suggest it. They do not distinguish between black and white; they behave decently to both the colours. She asks her husband

> But how can that ever be, so long as there's the possibility that you can escape back into your filthy damn whiteness? How do you know you'll always be fair?" . . .
>
> First he couldn't get out on his scholarship because he's black, now he can't he stay because she's white. What's the good of us to him? What's the good our friendship or her love?" (*OL* 312 -13)

The above conversation reveals Jessie's painful realization of discriminatory race relations between the white and the non-white. People Gideon refuse to live according to a particular set of circumstances governing their life and another set governing the life of the whites. Gideon expresses his true feelings when he tells Jessie "White bitch –get away" (*OL* 331). This is a moment of confrontation and realization for Jessie. She cannot forget the words of Gideon. They open her eyes to another reality –the pain and torture of voiceless millions like Gideon Shibalo. This understanding on the part of Jessie keeps her meeting him "in a friendly fashion sometimes in the Lucky Star, occasionally at the houses of friends" though she could not his words (*OL* 332). These (places like Lucky Star) were the places where coloured and white people mixed opposing the apartheid ideology that segregated people into different spaces. And these borderlands are the locations of culture where new dimensions of existence emerge.

The interracial relationship between Ann and Gideon is also an example of the idea of resistance to the racial hegemony in the apartheid South Africa. Gordimer has often shown the inter-racial relationship between white women and black men. She has been criticized for the depiction of this relationship because, as Ian Glen points out, liaisons between white men and black women were prevalent in South Africa (cited in Waxman 139). Gordimer has reversed the relationship to use it as subversive force against the traditional imbalance of power. She suggests an alternative discourse to the generally prevalent social discourse exploring the connection between sex and power. Foucault argues that the existence of state power cannot be denied but the power relations in the lives of individuals can act as resistance to power. He believes, "Power comes from the below" (*The History* 103). And he considers sexuality as a "transfer

point of power". Gordimer explores the complexity of power relations among the racial groups of South Africa through her characters' personal and sexual relations. She searches for new alliances and forms and provides an alternative discourse which may act as a resistance to the apartheid regime.

The first three novels of Gordimer show how her characters get the opportunity to come close to each other and build a society of mixed races. But they lose the opportunity largely because they are marginalized in the society they live in. They accept or submit to the barriers of apartheid. Helen in *The Lying Days* leaves Joel, Mary and Paul, and Toby in *A World of Strangers* moves away from Anna and Steven. In *Occasion for Loving* Jessie loses her friend, Gideon though they continue to meet in friendly fashion occasionally. Gordimer's protagonists in the early fiction attempt to live a non-racial life and thereby resist the segregation as the liberal whites did in the fabulous fifties. But they fail because of the harsh reality that prevailed in South Africa.

Gordimer tries to show the liberal whites and their actions that offer some inspiration as an alternative despite their limitations. This is reflected in her early novels and short stories as well. Thus, the story "The Smell of Death and Flowers" from *Six Feet of the Country* (1956) presents a young white woman Joyce McCoy who involves herself in a multi-racial demonstration and finally ends in jail. She goes to a party attended by members from different races. This kind of party of mixed races is unusual in apartheid South Africa. Such parties are also found Gordimer's *The World of Strangers*. However, McCoy dances with a black man, Eddie in the party and catches the attention Jessica, a white anti-apartheid activist. Out of her impulse, McCoy asks for permission from Jessica to join an anti-apartheid march to be organised by a group of people of different races. The story depicts the psychological changes in the young woman Joyce McCoy as she decides and involves closely with struggle for equal rights of the black South Africans. Gordimer describes the period in Joyce's life from the time of her decision to join an anti-apartheid movement up to her act of resistance itself and her arrest by the police. The author has recorded the changes in Joyce in a very short time and this makes her a little unconvincing. Nevertheless, the significant fact is that by the end of the story there is "a marked change and developing sense of commitment in the young woman" (Trump 351). The story also reveals the nobility of the young woman –a twenty five-year old girl. In the Introduction to *Some Monday for Sure*, Gordimer

describes the girl as "experiencing her generation's equivalent of religious ecstasy in the comradeship of passive resistance action in the company of blacks" (n p). The moment of her arrest is the climax of the experience and perhaps at this moment she also feels the helplessness of the black. When the policeman comes to her, she looked at the helpless faces of the black African onlookers who stood near her. As the policeman came to her, she saw the faces of the blacks –two men, a small boy and a woman who were dressed in "ill-matched cast-offs of European clothing." They meet her gaze as she looked back at them.

> And she felt, suddenly, not nothing but what they were feeling, at the sight of her, a white girl, taken –incomprehensively, as they themselves were used to being taken –under the force of white men's wills, which dispensed and withdrew life, imprisoned and set free, fed or starved, like God himself ("The Smell of Death and Flowers", *Selected Stories* 134).

This passage from final paragraph of the story shows the young woman McCoy's involvement in the world around her and her sympathy for the black onlookers and the repressive condition of their life. Gordimer has outlined in the story McCoy's journey to political commitment and the inner struggle she has faced. Her politeness inherited from her family tradition and suggested by the smell of incense (death and flowers) moves her to join the anti-apartheid protest. The same smell or kindness returns to consciousness when she suffers inner struggle and decides to take part in the anti-apartheid demonstration. Gordimer seems to suggest the smell of death and flowers also suggests the possibility of a new life (flower).

In the pair of stories entitled "Town and Country Lovers" from the collection *A Soldier's Embrace* (*SE*), Gordimer examines the inter-racial relationship under the apartheid South Africa. The stories depict a white man having a sexual relationship with a black woman and show the failure of the relationship due to the intervention of the apartheid state. The first story introduces Dr. Franz-Josef von Leinsdorf, an Austrian geologist working for South African mining company. Like Toby Hood, he has no interest in politics of South Africa. One day he meets a coloured girl in the supermarket next to his apartment, who unexpectedly offers to help him by bringing razor-blades. As she goes to his apartment to deliver the blades, she, who lives in a township, experiences

a new feeling: "She didn't wait for the lift marked GOODS but took the one meant for whites" (*SE* 76). After this initial meeting, an intimate relationship develops between them. They start living together almost like husband and wife though they are not seen together in public. He even begins to educate her with a view to promoting the coloured girl to "the white-collar category", considering her not-so-black skin (*SE* 76). She dreams about a future with the white man –she would type notes for him, take him inside her body without saying anything and sit beside him in his car, like a wife. But their happy life comes to a halt abruptly as the police knock at the door one summer night. She immediately realises the danger and hides herself in the bedroom closet to save her. As Dr von Leinsdorf opens the door, the police inform him about the presence of the coloured girl, which is illegal under the apartheid laws (the Immorality Act, to be specific). The police ransack his room and eventually find out the girl. They took both of them to the police station and the girl is sent for medical examination to ascertain whether they have had sexual relation. A court-case has been filed by the authorities. The story ends in stylistic rupture as the court-case is narrated in the style of newspaper reporting. The couple is finally acquitted of the charges as the state failed to prove sexual relation had taken place.

Throughout the story the girl is not named. It suggests that she represents a vast majority of non-white people affected by the apartheid policies. In her attempt to move upward in life, she becomes a victim of the apartheid government. As Trinh T. Minh-Ha points out, the policy of separate development demands "you keep to your way of life and ethnic values *within the borders of your homelands* (italics original 247). The moment one steps out one's limits, they have to suffer.

2.2.2 The post-Sharpeville Fiction

The early fiction of Gordimer depicts the rise of liberal ideology or a liberal world. The characters make attempts to cross over the barriers of race. At the same time, the early fiction shows how the people are moving from a peaceful, non-violent struggle against apartheid to a radical solution to the oppression and injustice they face. The Sharpeville massacre is considered to be the turning point of this passive resistance. Kalu E. Ume has given a precise account of the historical incident and its consequences. The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), which broke away from the African National

Congress in 1959, launched a campaign of positive action against pass laws. On 21 March, 1960 all men left their passes at home and marched to the police station. They courted arrest and decided against bail and fines. Sharpeville, a township in the south of Johannesburg participated enthusiastically in this protest. About ten thousand people from this town marched to the police station. The police became nervous and

> opened fire on the weaponless Africans killing 67 and wounding 186 critically. This bloody and merciless repression was designated as the Sharpeville Massacre, a nadir of an unprecedented ruthlessness against peaceful demonstration. In Cape Town there was another shooting which left two Africans dead and 49 injured (quoted in Uledi- kamanga, 33-34).

The government declared a state of emergency on 30 March, 1961 and continued with mass arrests. This was followed by the banning of the ANC and the PAC. As a result of this measure, these two organizations went underground. On the other hand, the Africans were not cowed down by the police atrocities. On 16 December, they formed *Umkhonto We Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) and urged the activists to indulge in the destruction of state property. The Africans intensified their resistance, at least sporadically. The government, on the other hand used the police forces to carry out unlawful arrest against the native South Africans.

Clingman calls this transition from passive to violent resistance "the first stage of the double movement of the 1960s" (93). He further elaborates that the second stage of the movement consists of the way in which the movement was crushed by force and brutality of the South African government. The government used the police as a tool of brutal force and repression. By 1963, most of the underground *Umkhonto* rebels including its leader, Nelson Mandela were arrested and then sentenced to life imprisonment in the famous Rivonia Trial in 1964.

Gordimer's fiction written after 1960 shows the fall or inadequacy of the liberal world to meet the historical realities of South Africa. The liberal ideology could not match with the apartheid policies. Hence the blacks and many liberal whites felt the necessity of revolutionary tactics such as sabotage. This new radical stance towards apartheid finds expression in the novels, *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966), *Burger's Daughter* (1979), and *July's People* (1981). *In Occasion for Loving*, Jessie hints at the

possibility of helping someone blow up a power station. In *The Late Bourgeois World*, Max, a liberal white, blows up a post office. He is arrested and tried. Consequently he is sentenced to imprisonment for five years. But he turns a state witness after fifteen months and comes out of the prison. He commits suicide afterwards. The novel unfolds the events of a single day in the lives of the protagonist –Max's ex-wife Elisabeth. One morning Elisabeth is having her breakfast with her lawyer boy friend, Graham. Suddenly she receives a telegram informing her that Max drove his car into the sea and drowned himself along with his secret writings on "methodology of African Socialism" (*LBW* 67). Without wasting time Elisabeth visits her son Bobo in his school to break the news. She spends the day alone till the afternoon when she visits her grandmother. In the evening she is busy cooking for the black activist who visits her late night. In successive flashbacks, Elisabeth touches upon the key issues –her views about Max's politics, her affair with Graham and its implications for her son and the nature of her own emerging commitment. She remembers her being pregnant during the Defiance Campaign in 1952. The Sharpeville tragedy flashes through her mind. She remembers the declaration of the Communist Party as illegal, the formation of the Pan Africanist Congress and the confidence and prestige that African nationalism has gained in "the eyes of the world through the passive resistance campaigns" (Head 54). Her reflections capture her social marginalization and political alienation in the contemporary South Africa.

The novel is set against the backdrop of the sabotage campaign of a young group of white men connected with an organization called the National Committee for Liberation. Later it changed into the African Resistance Movement (ARM) and began an extended campaign of sabotage. Recalling her objective in writing the novel, Gordimer says: "My short novel *The Late Bourgeois World* was an attempt to look into the specific character of the social climate that produced the wave of young white saboteurs in 1963-64" (quoted in Clingman 96). Max may be said to be a representative of the African Resistance Movement and the movement itself represents the mood of the revolutionary moment – the failure of the liberal ideology and the desperation for a change. There was a growing distances between the blacks and the liberals for they (the blacks) thought that any African movement seeking mass support liberation struggle cannot afford to have white members. It is in this context that Elisabeth says that there was a move among politically active Africans to keep out of the white houses and "to

reject friendship and even intimacy with whites as a part of white privilege" (*LBW* 77). Gordimer herself experiences the historical reality of the period and therefore the African Resistance Movement provided a logical point of focus for her in relation to her own historical and ideological development. However, Max defies the colour bar and becomes a member of a "Communist cell" (*LBW* 30) because of his unconventional and different attitude to life and society. He spends time with African and Indian students who take him to the locations and ghettoes. By the time his association with the black activists is disrupted, he associated himself with the people who wanted to organize a new underground white revolutionary group. That is, Max establishes contact with whites after his loss of contact with the blacks. This may be seen as an anticipation of the Black Consciousness Movement that rejects the participation of the whites in the African struggle because of their complicity in the white supremacy. Gordimer seems to comment on the ineffectiveness of the liberalism against the apartheid policies of the government. The protests and petitions of the liberal-minded whites have achieved nothing but they remarked on the inefficiency of the terrorists and senselessness of their attempts. They (the whites) cannot "unseat the great alabaster backside with a tin-pot bomb" (*LBW* 79). The police arrest some of the revolutionaries. Some others flee the country. Max finally commits suicide. His death may be said to signal the failure of the white radicals in the struggle against the apartheid. Gordimer questions Max's bourgeois attitude to life. She does not completely idealize his deviation from his parents' way of life. He dies perhaps because he has been over ambitious. As Elisabeth says he has the desire to win approval in all what he does. As he fails to become the centre of attention in his family, he revolts. And he revolts against his parents and the system represented by them. He appears to take upon the role of a saviour. This indicates his bourgeois egoism. He seems to inherit from his ancestors a rage to succeed and the necessity of a revengeful need to be acknowledged.

However, Gordimer seems to suggest, through Elisabeth, beyond this aspect (selfishness) of the character of Max. His revolutionary ideas cannot be totally ignored. Elisabeth appreciates what Max has been doing. Perhaps she understands, "The madness of the brave is the wisdom of life" (*LBW* 79). Even after their divorce, she supports him in his fight to overthrow the white regime and when he was in jail. She feels that perhaps he didn't die for the anti-apartheid activists but perhaps he did more than that. On an

earlier occasion when Elisabeth meets her son Bobo, she tells him that he (Max) went after the right things, even if perhaps it was in the wrong way. He has at least attempted to set the wrong right. The only thing is that in his attempt to love, he lost even his self respect. "If he failed, well, that's better than making no attempt" (*LBW* 19). Elisabeth is well aware of his limitations. She understands that Max was in a mess and that he could not deal with what had happened to him. This is because, she thinks, " he wasn't equal to the demands he took upon himself" (*LBW* 19). She further observes that he was stubborn to play in the first team but he was good enough to play for the third team only. His speech on the moral sclerosis in the wedding of his sister nicely captures his thought. He rejects the life and values of a white bourgeois world and has to lead a life of alienation and loneliness in the white society. He could have become a lawyer but all such professions are part of the white club and he had already torn up its life membership ticket. Elisabeth further contemplates that he would have been good revolutionary if he had little more time to hone his political discipline. He takes one job after another. He leaves his first job because he would not be given three days' leave to attend a Trade Union Conference. It is a time when so many other things were happening all around South Africa. There were discussions, open-air meetings, demonstrations and study groups in the rooms of liberal whites like Elisabeth and in the black townships. Elisabeth further informs the reader that their group comprises Indian, African Coloured and white. Thus their rooms as well as the black townships are what Bhabha calls 'beyond' – transitory location from where one thinks of moving beyond a barrier. It is also the place of possible new ideas and new beginnings (McLeod 217). Elisabeth seems to suggests this when she says, "The future was already there; it was a matter of having the courage to announce it" (*LBW* 54). Defying the colour bar, Max goes to an African area prohibited to whites. He also visits Durban to camp with Africans and Indians on a public square in protest against segregation. Unfortunately, he experiences isolation not only from the whites but the blacks as well. Unlike other whites, says Elisabeth, he wanted to come close to the people and in South Africa the majority people are black. "Set aside with whites, even his own chosen kind, he was still left out, he experienced the isolation of his childhood become the isolation of his colour" (*LBW* 69). That is to say, he suffers alienation even in the midst of his own community.

As he shuns the path of the so-called white supremacy and joins the Defiance Campaign, Max is considered dead by his parents because their white identity is at stake

and for them it is a question of prestige. His father who has been a prominent Member of Parliament comes from an English family which immigrated to South Africa when works in the gold mines began. His mother is a descendent of a Dutch family who has intermarriages with English speaking white people. The marriage between the Afrikaner and the man of English origin reflects the historical reality of South Africa – the union between two white classes. Max's mother is always conscious of her being a 'Boer girl'. when Mrs Van Den Sandt spoke of 'we South Africans' she meant the Afrikaans and English-speaking white people, and when his father, Theo Van Den Sandt called for a united South Africa, going forward to an era of progress and prosperity for all, he meant the unity of the same two white groups. The whites maintain their white supremacy through power and control over economic production. They, like Max's parents, behave with the African blacks in an act of "essentialising blackness" (Bhabha 4). Elisabeth has rightly pointed out,

> For the rest – the ten or eleven million 'natives' – their labour was directed in various Acts of no interest outside Parliament, and their lives were incidental to their labour, since until the white man came they knew nothing better than a mud hut in the veld (*LBW* 31).

So the life of the natives is valuable only because of their labour. That is the way they are recognized in South Africa. Before the arrival of the whites in South Africa, the natives "knew nothing better than a mud hut". This is, in Fanon's terminology, the 'othering', the process through which the blacks are seen in relation to the whites. The blacks are the 'other' in relation to the whites and they are valuable as long as they can serve the interest of the colonisers. Gordimer wonders at the Europeans' obsession with their racial superiority. In her interview with Alan Ross, she says that her struggle against the apartheid was her war: "the colour bar is wrong and utterly indefensible" (34) and therefore it must be opposed.

Elisabeth observes how Max's mother spoke Xhosa with her black servants and Afrikaans with her Coloured cook. Max's parents show their racism in more ways than one. Elisabeth refers to the fact how her father and she herself were complicit in the apartheid history of South Africa. She narrates how she met Max in the summer when she was helping her father at his shop. She was at the counter of fancy goods such as

painted coasters for glasses, clocks and watches. She knew that the black men who bought the watches, paying from their small savings would return to the shop within a week because those watches did not work properly. She knows the sickening secret –the inferior quality of the stuff and

> that this quality of life was apparently what our fathers and grandfathers had fought two wars abroad and killed black men in 'native' wars of conquest here at home, to secure for us. (*LBW* 88-89).

The above passage shows Elisabeth's father's complicity with and even her own personal involvement in the economic exploitation of the blacks through 'shoddy materials' at her father's store. Dominic Head calls this "youthful political awakening" which is "associated with a sexual awakening" (84). Like the father-daughter duo, many South African whites explore every possible way for racial oppression.

Elisabeth has so far reflected upon Max as her ex-husband and as a revolutionary. This has been her past. Her present centres on her son, her grandmother and her boyfriend Graham Mill. She has an affair with Graham who is an advocate and older than herself. If Max takes the path of revolution and loses everything, Graham remains within system and works for possible change. He provides legal help in the court to people who are repressed by the state for anti-apartheid activities. He is one of those few lawyers who work in this line. However, Elisabeth's relationship with Graham is partial and incomplete. Elisabeth describes their affair as "not classified, labelled" (*LBW* 45). She does not want them to be regarded as a couple either. In fact, she even doubts if Graham is trying to form a lasting friendship by paying special attention to her son Bobo. She thinks that Graham tries to take the responsibility of the child as a means of creating some sort of surety for his relationship with her. So, she argues that it is not for nothing that he has a lawyer's mind. "If Bobo starts looking upon any man I'm friendly with as a father, it could be awkward if the friendship were to wane" (*LBW* 3). Elisabeth's personal relationship is ambivalent. She cannot clearly describe her relation with Graham: "A sexual connection. But there is more to it than that. A love affair? Less than that"(*LBW* 50). She has not been sure even about the nature of love between Max and herself. He wanted to please and make love with her. In fact, he demanded her approval and admiration for his every action. She also wanted to make love to Max. So,

she tried to give him the approval he demanded because she wanted to please him. "What I wanted was for him to do the right things so that I could love him. Was that love" (*LBW* 70)?

In fact, relationships in the novel, particularly Elisabeth's affair with Graham, show their failure to establish any contact – personal or social. This is even more clearly seen when Graham asks her how she would describe the things as they are with them. She is caught off guard and she does not know how to respond. There is what she "can only describe as a power failure" between them (*LBW* 99). Graham's question is not only about their personal relationship but also about the contemporary age. Elisabeth becomes aware of the vacuum that exists in their relationship and the lack of social contact as well.

In his discussion of this novel, Dominic Head refers to Ernst Fischer's *The Necessity of Art* from which Gordimer borrows the title *The Late Bourgeois World*. In his book, Fischer examines the relationship between art and social reality, especially the relationship between content and form. He points out that 'truthful' art, in a decaying society, must reflect the social decay, and yet must also indicate the means of social improvement. Like all other novels of Gordimer *The Late Bourgeois World* examines the possibilities of social change in South Africa. But this is her first novel "in which the social decay is overtly reflected in the form . . ." (Head 79). Head further says that socialist art should present a hopeful and broad historical vision of the future and this is not found in the artists whom Fischer associates with the late bourgeois world. Gordimer writes and designs *The Late Bourgeois World* to represents a particular situation in South Africa. This is a situation of political uncertainty and failure of personal and social contact. And this is conveyed through the content and form of the novel. The narrative reproduces a situation of political uncertainty which makes the path of progressive action very difficult. Seen apparently the novel appears to be negative in its vision of the future. But it has a deeper significance. To overcome the complex situation, Elisabeth has to face manifestations of the nuclear age, "the apocalyptic view which Fischer requires art to get beyond in offering an alternative vision of the future" (Head, 85). Elisabeth has been in a complex situation. She is trying to come to terms with it and at the same time find a way beyond it. The novelist conveys this through the Luke – Elisabeth episode. On insistence of Luke to provide him a bank account which he can

use to transfer funds from abroad, the bank account of her grandmother comes to her mind. She does not tell Luke about it at that moment. But she begins to think about it. Perhaps she discovers the possibility of using it and thereby participating in the underground black politics. The use of her dying grandmother's bank account to transfer money for the underground blacks is a crucial act of subversion of the bourgeois institutions – here the bank. This hints at Elisabeth's acceptance of the black leaders' radical movement. She recalls her grandmother asking her repeatedly "what happened" and she says "well that's what's happened" (*LBW*, 141). She, perhaps, realizes that there are possibilities for her but she does not know under what stone (*LBW* 79). No doubt, this is an act of minimum personal commitment on her part. But, as she admits, a white woman who is sympathetic to blacks does not have anything to offer except the connection she has to the good old white Reserve bank. She also knows that it was quite possible he would make love to her next time he visits her. She thought she should accept his proposal gratefully because in that case "we shan't owe each other anything, each will have given what he has, and neither is to blame if one has more to give than the other" (*LBW* 142). With this idea she keeps awake a long time at night as her heart beats 'afraid, alive, and afraid, alive'. The passage also points to the cross racial sexual relationships between Elisabeth and blacks. She confesses that she has had a black lover some years ago. Max also had sexual relationships with several women, such as Eve King and Roberta Weininger. As in *Occasion for Loving*, Gordimer has often used the cross-racial relationship to resist the racial segregation.

The uncertain or reluctant commitment of Elisabeth reflects the social conditions of South Africa in the early 1970s. The position of the liberals was made politically untenable. Gordimer's short fiction of this period also reveals that liberalism can no longer be effective against apartheid and that cross racial relationship is impossible. Her stories, "Open House" and "Africa Emergent" depict this social reality of South Africa. The story, "Open House" opens with Frances Taver, a liberal white woman who is an activist for black rights. She belongs with a group of people who wanted to discover the "truth about South Africa" (*SS* 375). Most of her political friends are in jail. She organizes a meeting between a visiting American journalist and three black men of the town. The journalist wants to prepare a report on the country's political situation from the perspective of the blacks. Hence wants to interact with the blacks. But the few blacks

he meets are deceptive and opportunistic. The blacks he should have met have been in jail or have gone underground. The few blacks available for interaction are corrupted by the system, the white woman tells the journalist. She warns him not to be "taken in" by them because corruption is real. She further explains "Being phoney is being corrupted by the situation . . . and that's real enough" (*SS* 386). Frances as a host of the lunch meeting is in a good position to reflect upon the social and political situation of South Africa in the 1970s. Thus, she observes the changes in the social climate and narrates that a few years before it had been "fun and easy" to arrange meeting for visitors which would turn into a party. The visitor would enjoy "learning to dance the kwela with black girls . . . he couldn't remember finding where there were *no* laws against the mixing of races" (*SS* 376). Then two paragraphs later in the story she points out that people did not want to talk any more. Even if they did something, it would not be talked about. The people whom the visitor or any journalist wanted to see were "shut away" (*SS* 378).

The story, "Africa Emergent" portrays the betrayal of trust as well as the uncertainty in the society. This story about the apartheid state is distinguished by the fact that the story is told by a liberal white man. The narrator talks about his friendship with two men who are black. One of his friends commits suicide in the USA and the other ends up in detention in South Africa. Early on the story the narrator talks about friendship between whites and blacks. They hardly knew what they could do and what could not. They were, perhaps, passing through a condition of interregnum. Later in the story, the liberal white man observes that 'trust' became a commodity on sale to the police. He regrets that they had reached a stage where if a literate black man had '"political" friends and white friends *and* a passport, he must be considered a police spy' (*SS* 434). People believed in the integrity of a black man only when he ended up in jail. The narrator ironically comments that the white friends could purge themselves of the shame of rumours. They were satisfied that the black man was in 'prison'. "He's proved himself, hasn't he" (*SS* 434)? Gordimer has directed bitter irony at the whites in these last sentences of the story. Martin Trump observes that Gordimer has depicted a picture of "a fractured society" through the stories "Open House" and "Africa Emergent". However, one more important thing that these stories imply is that blacks and whites continue to mix even at the time of uncertainty. Against the apartheid practice of keeping

the races separate, Gordimer's fiction often shows the mixed gathering and thus suggests the possibility of resistance.

Gordimer's sixth novel *The Conservationist* (1974) responds to the contemporary historical situation in South Africa through its rich texture. It proves to be prophetic in its prediction of the political change –the transfer of power from the white to the black South Africans. Clingman describes the novel as having a ''strong sense of history" (140). In this novel, Gordimer engages with the restlessness and alienation of the contemporary white South Africans through the central character, Mehring who belongs with the minority group that continues their dominance of the land and thereby maintain the white supremacy. Mehring is rich and has all the privileges that white South Africa can offer. He purchases a farm in the rural South Africa and enforces the apartheid laws. He represents the white European settlers for whom the whole world is theirs. Intelligent as he is, he uses the farm as a means to connect to the African land and gain tax benefit. Another motive behind his purchase of the farm is to secure a place to bring women. Through this Gordimer seems to suggest a "parallel between geographical and sexual acquisition and power" (Head 100). He spends Sundays on the farm to get a break from his busy city life. This also provides him a space to think upon his sensual attitude to the women in his life, his prejudices against the South African blacks and his moral distance from his son. But when he leaves the farm, he takes away "the empty space that was clear in him this afternoon" (*CN* 61). He only pretends to be conservationist.

In contrast to Mehring, the black Africans have a natural attachment to the land. Mehring understands that Jacobus honestly manages the farm and that he (Jacobus) does have a sense of attachment to the place. This is evident in Jacobus's effective management of the farm in the absence of Mehring. He acknowledges that blacks will continue to live on the farm long after he is dead. He knows well that they were here when he came. He wonders, "they were squatting God knows how long before he bought the place and they'll expect to have their grand children squatting long after he's gone" (*CN* 243). On the other hand, Gordimer portrays Mehring's son, Terry, as homosexual. This may be seen as suggesting a sense of discontinuity for Mehring, or for that matter, sterility of the white settlers in South Africa. He wishes to plant European trees on the farm to make sure his connection with and continuity in South Africa. But his wishes prove futile. He himself tells, though sarcastically, his mistress Antonia that he is

planting European chestnuts for the blacks to use as firewood when they take over the farm. Earlier Antonia reminds him that the four hundred acres is not going to be handed down to his children's children, not even to his children. She tells him,

> "That bit of paper you bought yourself from the deed office isn't going to be valid for as long as another generation. . . The blacks will tear up your bit of paper. No one'll remember where you're buried" (*CN* 210).

Antonia predicts the future of South Africa. Gordimer weaves the texture of the novel that reveals not only the 'inside' of Mehring but also the future of South Africa. In fact, Gordimer's novels from *The Conservationist* onward are concerned with the future of South Africa.

Gordimer's characterization of Antonia has often attracted attention of the critics. Antonia has taunted Mehring for his self interested engagement in capitalist life and style. But at the end she escapes from South Africa with the help of Mehring and takes shelter in the U.K. Gordimer seems to ask why Antonia, the liberal does not find any place for herself in South Africa. In her interview with Grey, Gordimer says that life in South Africa under apartheid is covered with "incredible layers of concealment" (Grey 265). She has frequently criticized the white liberals to unmask the pretences of white liberal attitudes. In her characterization of Antonia, she has unmasked the latter's liberal attitudes. Clingman remarks that liberalism as shown in *The Conservationist* is created within and by capitalist society (145). Antonia who is Mehring's mistress is symbolic in this regard. When Antonia is detained, she turns to Mehring to obtain the service of his company lawyer for defence, and this shows ultimately her own collusion with the oppressive regime.

As in many modernist novels, in this novel Gordimer employs the stream of consciousness to capture the internal drama of Mehring. Gordimer represents him as psychologically alienated from the white South African community. He has no relationship with other people and no one to talk to. Hence he often takes recourse to interior monologues. He is conditioned by a lack of contact with South African people – both white and black. Apartheid has even isolated the white from the land and the people as well. The fluidity of the narrative method captures his psychic confusion and

alienation. Thus, for example, Mehring's final interior monologue that captures issues, growing around his characters:

> He's going to run, run and leave them to rape her or rob her. She'll be all right. They survive everything. Coloured or poor white, whichever she is, their brothers or fathers take their virginity good and early. . . . no no no. No no, what nonsense, what is there to fear. . . No, no, no. RUN.
>
> --Come. Come and look, they're all saying. What is it? What's it? It's Mehring. It's Mehring, down there (*CN* 320).

The focus in this passage is on the psychic confusion and disintegration of Mehring. It portrays Mehring's habits of sexual and geographical exploitation, and his underlying fear of being discovered by the police and his subsequent arrest for violating the Immorality Act. This instantly produces in him a feeling to give the farm –'the whole four hundred acres' –as compensation.

Mehring's feeling of fear and guilt is intensified by the presence of the black man's corpse discovered in his farm. If Mehring represents the whites, the body stands for the blacks. It is symbol of everyman who is a victim of apartheid abuses. Its emergence may be said to indicate eventual transfer of South Africa's rule to the blacks. Hence Mehring's desire to conserve the land over which he has no right and his mental deterioration following the discovery of the black body collapse by the end of the novel. Dominic Head points out that the body assumes symbolic significance as Mehring's 'Other', and eventually it resurfaces after a storm displacing Mehring. In Gordimer's politics of the body, this is her most extravagant extrapolation. A single body or a corpse is "'disinterred' in a development which symbolizes the end of black African dispossession" (Head 100). In this sense, the body may be said to decolonize the farm.

However, the presence of the body disturbs and keeps Mehring haunting throughout the narrative. Finally, by the end of the novel, a storm blows in and the body resurfaces out of mud in the third pasture of the farm. This threatens Mehring's psychological condition and ultimately breaks him down. On the other hand, the blacks on the farm claim the body and give it a burial with proper rituals. This final ceremonial and respectful burial of the body symbolises Africans claim over the land. The Africans

claim the body as one of their own. The body which the farm received bears no name and he had no family. But the women of the farm wept a little for him. "They had put him away to rest, at last; he had come back. He took possession of this earth, theirs; one of them" (*CN* 323). Though the body had no child but the children of the black would come to live there after him.

In this context it will be relevant to refer to Gordimer's short story, "Six Feet of the Country". In this story, a black worker from Rhodesia dies and the authorities disposed off the body, assuming it to be unknown in the area. But the local farm workers wish to bury the body according to their custom. They could get back the body with the help of the farm owner. But the wrong body is returned. They discover the deception only when the father of dead worker, who travelled from the distant Rhodesia for the funeral, complains that the body is too heavy to be that of his son. The story mainly implies that even six feet of South Africa is not available to the blacks in their death. But in the 1974 novel, the body returns to receive a proper burial according to customs of the land and this time the body claims more than six feet of the country. Thus, Gordimer challenges the apartheid by envisioning a reversal of role of the white and the black in South Africa through the figure of the body. So Clingman observes that the novel is prophetic; its vision is one of historical transfer of land or power to the blacks. The action of the novel suggests a point where the white history comes to an end and black history marks a beginning.

> Referring to the return of the body, almost the very last words of novel, 'he had come back' . . . are a direct paraphrase of the great rallying cry of the African National Congress in the 1950s: 'Afrika Mayibuye!' ('Africa! May it come back!') (Clingman 141)

Thus, Gordimer imaginatively represents historical records through her fiction. Though imaginative or fictional representation has often been questioned, her fiction affirms the assumptions of the new historicism that history and literature or culture are interdependent and that literary texts call into question existing vision and power relations of society.

Land has been a vital tool of power and authority. It has been a means of constructing identity in colonial history. In the South African context, it is very

significant as separate areas were allotted for the South African blacks to continue with the political programme of racial segregation. The farm is an important site of origin because farms capture the essence of the settler aspect of a white colonial expansion. In a conversation with Robert Boyers, Gordimer herself admits that the landscape is an important character in *The Conservationist* (13). Land or for that matter nature is a powerful force. Nature, if hostile and rebellious, can resist colonisation. As Fanon points out in *The Wretched of the Earth*, colonisation becomes successful when the docile nature has finally been tamed (cited in Nasr, 7-8). The storm that blows over Mehring's farm and raises the body stands for the struggling force of nature. It is also an important symbol of the African culture.

Mehring's exploitative nature is seen in his sexual behaviour as well. In his imaginary conversation with his mistress, Antonia, he admits that there is "special pleasure in having woman you've paid" (*CN* 83). Antonia describes this as his 'sexual fascism'. Mehring's impulses of sexual exploitation are seen in his frequent erotic imaginings about young girls and women –such as his desire for the young daughter of a dinner hostess or his desire for seduction of his colleague's daughter whom he meets in a coffee bar. A most significant and relevant scene of this kind is the one which occurs in one of Mehring's business flights when he molests a young girl seating next to him in the plane. The scene may be interpreted as Mehring's sexual colonialism. Dominic Head argues that here in this scene landscape merges in Mehring's mind with the body of the young girl as object of sexual desire. It is significant that the girl does not speak throughout the journey while Mehring keeps 'fingering' or probing her body beneath her blanket. The body of the girl becomes the land as he explores it. Throughout the night "he encountered the soundless O of the little mouth that made no refusal" (*CN* 151). The girl's 'soundlessness' confirms that this is Mehring's narrative, that the power of speech belongs to him. But a sudden fear takes hold of him when he checks out at the immigration centre, fearing that the girl might denounce him finding her voice. This episode on the plane is a kind of vacuum because it is "happening nowhere" (*CN* 150) and that this is suggestive of "Mehring's own vacuous nature, socially and politically" (Head, 103). This is the result of his alienation from the white minority society in South Africa.

Along with this narrative – the story of Mehring, Gordimer employs a subtext that subverts the apparently main text. The narrative is interspersed with ten excerpts from Henry Callaway's book, *The Religious System of the Amazulu*. In her brilliant analysis of the quotations, Judie Newman shows that the quotations are the "organizing points for a subtext which slowly comes into the foreground. The story appears to be that of Mehring and of the white in South Africa, but reveals itself as that of the blacks" (56). Each quotation either initiates or complements an event in the novel. The quotations begin with prayers for corn and for children and continuation of life, which is expected in the fourth or fifth year of drought. Another series of excerpts is taken form a dream by one of Callaway's informants who dreams that he is awoken and asked to go down to the river along with his brother to fight with a spirit ancestor. This may be linked to the event in the novel in which Solomon is awakened in the night and attacked. Solomon is attacked because of his debt. This may be seen as suggestive of his failure to pay the debt to his African culture. Two later quotations introduce the image of the 'Amatongo', the ancestors who are beneath the earth. This can be linked to the dead man buried in the firm. The final quotation suggests the occupation of the land by the blacks.

According to Newman, the function of the quotations is to suggest that "there is a buried logic of fictional events, which may be expressed in the rhetoric of myth" (56). Newman further summarizes the main events in the novel: the drought, the discovery of body in the third pasture, the attack on Solomon, the spirit of Phineas's wife, the flood, and the reburial of the dead man. This subtext is buried like the black man and rises to the surface of the novel, displacing Mehring and his story. The farm worker discovers the dead man in a reed bed. His body is not "actually on the earth at all, but held slightly above it on a nest of reeds it has flattened. . ." (*CN* 9). Newman finds parallel between this situation and the myth of origins in *The Religious System of the Amazulu*. Callaway mentions that the cult of ancestors is connected with a bed of reeds. A father stands for 'Uthlanga' or ancestor of his children, and 'Uthlanga' is a reed. The nest of reeds, suggests the guinea, which Mehring tries to conserve. The novel opens with the image of guinea fowl eggs set out before a half circle of children. Thus, in the beginning itself the fundamental question of the novel –'Who shall inherit Africa?' –is set out in terms of Zulu myth. Continuing her discussion, Newman further says that the improper burial of the dead man conditions the later events: Solomon's attack, the fire and images of the

rain bird, which are organized into a coherent pattern of Zulu belief. In the dead black's funeral in the end of the novel, female members of the sect of Zion are seen in the background. They are a breakaway sect from the orthodox Christianity –a sect in which Christian tenets have been adapted to indigenous patterns of thought. In other words Gordimer provides a formal shape to the novel through Zulu myth. The novelist conveys a message different from the public rhetoric of South Africa. "One meaning of the title has thus been indicated: the blacks conserve their beliefs, and their beliefs conserve and regenerate the land and its people" (Newman, 59). By integrating the Zulu myth into text, Gordimer problematises the stream of consciousness of Mehring's story and repossesses South Africa. This new historical method may called a cross fertilization of European form and African culture.

It is ironical that in his concern for the extinction of African life, Mehring overlooks the fact that the blacks' existence inside and around the farm is an integral part of South African landscape. The blacks have been displaced from their land and subjected to live a life in unnatural conditions in the nearby Location. This has been possible because, as Fanon argues in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, centuries of subjection have caused irreparable psychological damage. This is seen in the character of Jacobus. On knowing the arrival of Mehring, Jacobus runs to him but stops at a distance "as if there were a line drawn there, ten feet away from the farmer goes through the formalities of greeting, which include a hand-movement as if he had a hat to remove" (*CN* 4). This shows the social as well as psychological barriers penetrating into the heart of the blacks and the whites.

Gordimer has assessed and often put to test the liberals against the resistance movements in South Africa. Some have failed to live up to the expectations such as Ann in *Occasion for Loving* while some others show commitment in their fight against apartheid. In *The late Bourgeois World*, Max fails as a white revolutionary but Elisabeth commits to the cause of anti-apartheid. In *Burger's Daughter*, Gordimer examines Rosa, the daughter of a resistance hero. In delineating the past and present of Rosa, Gordimer narrates the history of South Africa. Rosa is a product of and is situated in a complex historical situation in which the personal cannot be separated from the public – the realities of the South African police state and the black African struggle. *Burger's*

Daughter shows, through the life of Rosa, how the destiny of a nation plays a crucial role in private lives.

According to Judie Newman, Gordimer's novel *Burger's Daughter* is a historical and cultural document in its content and in its own history of censorship (10). The novel is written against the backdrop of the anti-apartheid struggle. There are references to actual events and people including Nelson Mandela and Soweto Revolt. Lionel was born in 1905, the year of the revolt against the Czar; he married Cathy Burger during the 1946 African mineworkers strike; and their daughter Rosa was born in May 1948, the very month the Afrikaner National Party assumed power. Rosa grows during the apartheid South Africa. The stages in her life are marked by the 1956 Treason trial and the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. Gordimer has employed postmodernist strategies and blurred the boundaries between fiction and reality. Many perspectives are presented, along with inserting texts from real documents. The mixing of the real with the imaginary creates parallels to actual events and lives. Alongside the dominant white world, Gordimer constructs a world in the novel that envisions a multicultural society of South Africa. Thus, says Bruce King, the novel acquires a 'baroque structure' in which, despite the focus on Rosa Burger's story, other stories, perspectives, voices and historical events intrude to disrupt and impinge on the narrative (7). King further says that in *Burger's Daughter* fragmentation replaces unity of narrative, as the social order is itself in disarray and moral imperatives require its destruction.

The novel is set in South Africa between 1948, the year the Afrikaner dominated Nationalist Party came to power, and 1976, the year of the Soweto Revolt. The history of South Africa covering this period is unfolded through the lives of Rosa Burger and her father Lionel Burger, a great communist leader. Rosa tells about her past, her childhood through her present in a quest for self-definition. In this process she first distances herself from the tradition or commitment of her family but finally comes back to it and ultimately goes to jail. The personal and the public get twinned. Thus, when the story opens, Rosa is seen outside the gate of a prison waiting to visit her mother who had been imprisoned before her father for their anti-apartheid activities. In this public scene Rosa also conveys a private message. She is experiencing menstrual cramps for the first time. 'Standing "in that public place on that public occasion," Rosa makes a small gesture to express her private self' (Cooke, 85). However, after her mother, her father was also

arrested and imprisoned and he died in the jail. Both her parents were members of the Communist Party of South Africa which had been resisting the apartheid regime. Throughout the novel Rosa has been assessed and measured in relation to her father who has a significant personal history. In a sense her father 'betrayed' his people because he was an Afrikaner. He went against his own people and became a member of the Communist Party of South Africa (later South African Communist Party) which was the only party to admit blacks into its membership as equals and resist the apartheid regime. Burger had been a member of its Central Committee throughout 1940s and 50s when the party dissolved itself in the face of the Suppression of Communism Act (1950). He was captured in the mid-1960s and sentenced to imprisonment for life and he died in the 1970s. Thus the fictional career of Lionel coincided with most of the major developments in the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa in the second half of the twentieth century. In fact, Lionel represents the "best heritage" in the white revolutionary tradition (Clingman 172). Gordimer reflects upon the resistance movements through the novel: censorship, ban, arrest and jail of the resistance leaders. The following lines concisely capture the historical situation:

> . . . the camps, concentration, labour, resettlement, the Siberias of snow or sun, the lives of Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Kathrada, Kgosana, gull-picked on the Island, Lionel propped wasting to his skull between warders, the deaths by questioning, bodies fallen from the height of John Vorster Square . . . (*BD* 211)

In fact, in *Burger's Daughter* the correspondences between fiction and history are close. The character of Lionel Burger is largely based on Bram Fischer, a leader of the South African Communist Party, about whom Gordimer had written two articles at the time of his arrest and trial. She unequivocally admired his heroism, which is quite evident in the essay, "Why did Bram Fischer Choose Jail?" Fischer was the defence lawyer of Nelson Mandela. However, as Clingman has pointed out, Gordimer has been more concerned with capturing "the *spirit* of a man like Fischer represented" (172). Lionel in the novel is a doctor. But the political careers of both Fischer and Lionel are quite similar. A traditional Marxist, he saw the solution to human problems in social terms, and he was personally warm and sociable, maintaining an open house around the swimming pool, just as Lionel does. Lionel's house which is open to both whites and

blacks is a symbol of resistance to the apartheid regime which keeps people separate through what Foucault calls classification and surveillance. Like Fischer, before being sentenced, Lionel made a moving speech describing how he, as a medical student, had been saddened and brought to defy the law by the evils of South African society. As a medical student is not tormented by the suffering he saw in hospitals. He is pained at the humiliation of human beings they face in their daily life. He points out the contradictions of his people, the Afrikaners and the whites who, on one hand, "worship the God of Justice" and, on the other hand, "practise discrimination on grounds of the colour of skin" (*BD* 19). He laments that this contradiction has split the very foundation of his life. He continues further

> Black men, women and children living in the miseries of insecurity, poverty and degradation on the farms where I grew up, and in the "dark Satanic mills" of the industry that brought their labour cheap and disqualified them by colour from organizing themselves or taking part in the successive governments that decreed their lot as eternal inferiors, if not slaves . . . (*BD* 20).

Lionel has been fighting a crucial battle against the apartheid. His speech vividly shows the racism, hypocrisy and double standard of the white government. His defence speech from the dock contains passages from Bram Fischer's defence speech. There are in the novel extracts from Marx, Lenin and Steve Biko. Most often these passages are quoted without any textual markers or acknowledgement. Thus, says Clingman, Marx's statement – world history would be very easy to make if the struggle were take up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances – is given in a footnote in Joe Slovo's essay, "South Africa –no middle road". But it is quoted without attributing it to Marx. This statement expresses the "central sentiment" of Lionel Burger's speech from the dock (187). Gordimer incorporates words or texts from other sources in this way. In her article, "What I say will not be understood: Intertextuality as a subversive force in Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter*", Susan Barrett argues that Gordimer uses intertexuality as a force of subversion (116). It helps her make political statement to disseminate ideas, to encourage people to think and thereby to lead them to question the status quo.

However, the novel is not about Lionel Burger only, it is also about Burger's daughter, Rosa. The novelist is more concerned with the predicament faced by the inheritor of a revolutionary tradition in the context of South Africa in the 1970s. "Precisely because Lionel Burger is a recognizable type of historical figure, this is what enables Gordimer to explore most imaginatively through Rosa" (Clingman 174). In his fight against the apartheid, Lionel has inculcated the revolutionary attitude in his daughter Rosa. In fact, the very house of Lionel is a symbol of resistance. People across colour line are allowed and accepted in the house. Rosa helps her father in this fight, at least until his death. As the novel opens, we see the fourteen year old Rosa waiting outside a prison to deliver goods to her mother. The novelist reminds the reader that she had already taken in her mother's role in the household. And the household Rosa takes over is better described as a political institution than a family.

In the process of her parents' opposition to apartheid, Rosa has to sacrifice her desires and her freedom. Her parents' preoccupation with the struggle of the communists makes them forget their daughter's choices and desires. Their concern for others is as important as for Rosa. As Jan Mohammed points out, this is brilliantly epitomized in the Rosa and Noel de Witt episode. Noel de Witt is a young communist who has been imprisoned. He has no family. So Rosa's parents encourage her to visit him as his fiancée to pass communication between Noel and the network of the Communist Party. But Rosa is actually in love with Noel though she does not admit this to her parents or to Noel because she does not want to harm the anti-apartheid cause. She continues to visit him for years concealing her real desire within herself. She recollects this episode with regret and irony. She even accuses of "having prostituted herself to political necessity." However, she soon realizes that in the Burger house prostitutes are not despised as they are products of economic necessity. So, her "father's ethos even deprives her of self contempt" (JanMohamed, "The Degeneration" 121). She lost her freedom and identity. So after her father's death she feels, "Now you are free" (*BD* 35). She embarks on a quest for identity after her father's death and attempts to renounce her heritage to assert her identity. Rosa's self analysis is encouraged by her lover, Conrad. She lives with him after her father's death in the garden cottage. The time she spent with Conrad in the cottage provides her the space and time to think about herself rather than about the revolution that her father and his comrades hope for. Conrad's bourgeois values and experiences

cause her look into herself and examine her heritage which privileges the public interests over her personal desires. He tells her that she has "grown up entirely through other people. What they told you was appropriate to feel and do. How did you begin to know yourself" (*BD* 41)? Conrad makes her understand personal relationship in a perspective. But this does not indicate her rejection of the Burger way – her heritage. With hindsight Rosa defends the Burgers' conception of the personal. She says that the 'creed' of her father's house that discounted the kind of individualism advocated by Conrad. They (Burger and his comrades) made a communism for 'local conditions'. The white people in that house had a connection with blacks that was completely personal. And thus, Rosa argues,

> their Communism was the antithesis of anti-individualism. The connection was something no other whites ever had in quite the same way. *A connection without reservations on the part of blacks or whites*. The political activities and attitudes of that house came from the inside outwards (emphasis added, *BD* 170-71).

Head comments that the above passage anticipates the conclusion that the novels seems to arrive at: "a genuine and politically motivated ethos of personal interaction is the securest foundation of an anti-racist opposition" (115). A motivated personal commitment for public responsibility can resist the apartheid in South Africa.

When Rosa along with Orde Greer has been going to Orlando, she comes across a black township which can be described, to use Foucault's term, as 'heterotopia'. Heterotopias are sites of differences and resistance. They are different from and yet have links with other social spaces. As Foucault points out, they have "the curious property of being in relation with all other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" ("Of Other Spaces", 24). These spaces are linked with other spaces and yet contradict all other sites. Thus heterotopias are the sites of social difference as well as social struggle. Dominic Head observes that the black urban experience in South Africa, especially the black township life, demonstrates dispossession as well as repression. "Yet it also contains a seed of something more positive, as . . . an implicit challenge to governmental control of urbanization" (29). In his 'Introduction' to the book (a collection of essays), *The*

Apartheid City and Beyond, David Smith quotes a passage describing a township and discuss the nature of heterotopias. The narrator says whenever she had crossed the line separating the whites form the blacks, she found "a black leaves a white and goes to his 'place'". And she saw the physical divide of clean streets become rutted roads and city centres become the veld dumped with twisted metal and a perpetual autumn of blowing paper. The description continues as follows

> These restless broken streets where definitions fail –the houses the out houses of white suburbs, two-windows-one-door, multiplied in institutional rows . . . first thrown out by the white man and then picked over by the black – is this conglomerate urban or rural? . . . The enormous backyard of the whole white city, where categories and functions lose their ordination and logic . . . (*BD* 147-48)

Smith appreciates Gordimer's description that presents the geopolitical issues and "captures something of both the life and the landscape of apartheid" (1). Gordimer raises the questions how this 'place' can be defined –a rural or an urban area. She seems to understand the possibility of going beyond the deprivation or limitation imposed on the inhabitants: "a 'place'; a position whose contradictions those who impose them don't see, and from which will come a resolution they haven't provided for" (*BD* 149). Urbanization in South Africa, despite its deprivation, is a challenge to the policies of the apartheid regime. The expansion of urban settlement leads to their failure of spatial control. On the other hand, presence of blacks in the area adjoining the city is required for necessary workforce. There is a self-defeating element in this contradiction.

After her father's death, Rosa wants to use her newfound freedom to become herself, that is, to fulfil her most private desires. But to do so she would have to discard her past, her parents, and her values. That is, she would have to reject herself as she is at the moment. Although Rosa is critical of her parents' legacy, she does not rush to the apparent freedom of bourgeois society which she believes to have its own ideological imprisonment. She finds little to choose between Communism and capitalism. So she hesitantly decides to leave South Africa. Her hesitation is overcome by an incident, "an epiphanic experience of cruelty, a merciless beating of a donkey" by a black peasant (JanMohamed, "The degeneration" 123). This scene recalls some earlier texts. Louise

Yelin in her book *From the Margins of Empire* provides a parallel reading with *Crime and Punishment* and Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African farm* (Yelin 121-25). Elaborating further the incident, JanMohamed says that Rosa is aware that she could easily stop this violence but she refuses to do so because she feels that this specific instance of pain is a product of whole chain of torture. The man's cruelty is the result of his own suffering and frustration produced by the apartheid system of South Africa. Rosa sees her own complicity with the system. So Rosa says: "If somebody's going to be brought to account, I am accountable for him, to him, as he is for the donkey. Yet the suffering – while I saw it it was the sum of suffering to me" (*BD* 212). The scene is symbolic of a broader political situation and thus the personal is linked with the public. South Africa becomes the embodiment of human grief, and Rosa cannot tolerate this. She decides to leaves: "After the donkey I couldn't stop myself. I don't know how to live in Lionel's country" (*BD* 213). So, she leaves South Africa, and by extension, the world of moral responsibility. She secures a passport with the help of Brandt Vermeulen and leaves for France.

Rosa's stay in Europe forms the second part of the novel. She stays with her father's first wife Katya in Nice, France. Released from the responsibility and the harsh reality of South Africa, she is changed. She is happier and carefree whose only imperatives are pleasure and loyalty to friends. Rosa thinks that the major merit of this life is tolerance: no one expects her to be more than what she is or seems to be, whereas her comrades in South Africa expected her to be 'equal to everything'. Her involvement in the Communist Party and her heritage are replaced by a life of all pleasures and her passionate love for a married man, Bernard Chabalier. Dominic Head argues that Rosa's attention to the self "facilitates a growth that is preliminary to a successful return to the social world" (118). She takes pleasure in becoming Bernard's mistress, not wife. This is perhaps because mistress, unlike the position of the wife, has no obligations. This is quite opposite to her father's other -oriented ethos.

History is a dialogue between the past and the present. So far Gordimer has dealt with the past. In the first part of the novel Rosa re-evaluates her past –her heritage and her need of self-expression. Her present comprises her life in France in an effort to 'defect' from her father and finally her active involvement in the resistance to apartheid in South Africa. Clingman observes that the present to which *Burger's Daughter*

responded is the movement of Black Consciousness and its culmination in the Soweto Revolt. On 16 June 1976, thousands of schoolchildren gathered at Orlando West Junior Secondary School in Soweto to protest against the enforced use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools. The protest began peacefully but by the time it ended two children were killed by the police. Many more deaths followed. Soon the uprising spread over other parts of the country. The underground activists resorted to violence and destruction. It turned out to be one of the most "climactic periods of modern South African history, as an unexpected phase of resistance burst with extraordinary intensity" (Clingman 180). Clingman further suggests that it was not only a sustained episode of cultural but also political resistance. The immediate cause of the revolt was the issue of the use of Afrikaans in schools and it gave impetus to the Black Consciousness movement, with its emphasis on cultural revival and assertion of black dignity and identity. The black started believing that they must be conscious of and celebrate their blackness and that they alone should fight against the apartheid regime. The white liberals could not genuinely fight against the white government, the blacks thought. However, the revolt made a far reaching impact in the South African society. Many, young and adult, died violently during the revolt. Among them was the Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko. Indeed, the Soweto Revolt occupied a central place in the history of resistance to the apartheid South Africa.

Towards the end of her stay in France, Rosa visits London to attend a party given in honour of the resistance activists. In the party she comes across Baasie, the black boy who had been like her brother and with whom she spent her childhood. She wants to talk to him but he refuses to recognize her. Later at night he phones her and expresses his anger and vengeance. He is angry at the way she is honoured. He resents that her father, Lionel is praised as a resistance hero while hundreds of black men like his father are neglected and forgotten. When Rosa tries to interrupt and addresses him as 'Baasie', he becomes furious at her use of his name 'Bassie' (meaning 'little boss'), given by the Burgers. He retorts that his real name is Zwelinzima Vulindlela (meaning 'suffering land') as if he is the embodiment of the suffering of his race and of his community. Rosa repeatedly tires to re-establish their personal relationship but in vain. Baasie insists upon her to see the racial difference. He tells satirically that everybody in the world should be told that her father was hero and that how much he suffered for the blacks. On the other

hand, there are dozens of black men suffered and died like dogs but nobody noticed them. So, he reminds Rosa:

> Listen, there are dozens of our fathers sick and dying like dogs, kicked out of the locations when they can't work any more. Getting old and dying in prison. Killed in prison. It's nothing. I know plenty blacks like Burger. It's nothing, it's us, we must be used to it … (*BD* 328)

The confrontation between Rosa and Baasie is short like the one between Gideon and Jessie in *Occasion for Loving* at the end of the novel. But this is a more significant scene in the fiction of Gordimer when considered in the context of resistance movements in South Africa in the 1970s. It epitomises the oppression of the blacks and their rejection of the whites' collaboration in the struggle for liberation. The accusation of Baasie reflects the accusations of the Black Consciousness. Gordimer allows Baasie or, for that matter, the blacks speak in their own voice. Thereby she shows the emerging resistance voice that will dominate or, at least, will be heard in the South Africa of near future. This voice is also echoed early in the novel. At Fats Mxange's party some young blacks reject the class analysis of South Africa offered by Orde Greer who is communist. Duma Dhladhla angrily refutes him.

> *This* and *this* should happen and can't happen because of *that* and *that*. These theories don't fit us … When he goes for fruit, the kaffir gets the half-rotten stuff the white won't buy. That is black (original italics, *BD* 161-62).

Gordimer has been critical of the practice of communism in South Africa. She seems to suggest that the blacks have began speaking and their voices will not go unheard for a long time.

Another subversive force in the novel is intertexuality, as mentioned in the beginning of the discussion on *Burger's Daughter*. The most obvious and significant example of it is the pamphlet distributed by the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC). This pamphlet describes what happened on 16 June 1976 and calls upon the blacks to continue their fight against injustices done to them. It has been reproduced in the text without any correction of the spelling and grammatical mistakes. Though the

Censorship Board claimed, when they unbanned the novel, that they were unsure of the authenticity of the incorporated text, Gordimer clarifies several times that it was genuine: "I reproduced the document because my stylistic integrity as a writer demanded it: it is a necessary part of the book as a whole" ("What the Book", 162). She further said that she reproduced it as documentary evidence in contrast to the fuller, fictive versions of events and that it expresses more eloquently and honestly the spirit of the young people who wrote it. This technique of intertexuality becomes politically very significant when it is seen the context of Black Consciousness. The young black activists often criticized the white writers for speaking on behalf of the blacks. As Susan Barrett points out, Gordimer solves this problem in a unique way. By incorporating the pamphlet completely she withdraws herself and allows the blacks speak in their own voice (116). And thus she imparts a kind of objectivity to her story.

Rosa's confrontation with Baasie makes her realize that she must return to South Africa. Perhaps she has come to believe like her father that if the whites do not support the blacks' political demand of majority rule, the blacks would become exclusively racist. As she recalls the devastating telephone conversation with Baasie she feels an overwhelming awareness of commitment to the cause of the blacks. However, Rosa does not succumb to any ideology or politics. Her sole concern is suffering. Her understanding and acceptance of the universality of suffering give her courage to bear the wretchedness of South Africa.:

> I don't know the ideology:
> It's about suffering.
> How to end suffering (*BD* 343-44).

More importantly, there is another reason for her return which she does not recognize consciously. Her confrontation with Baasie makes her see that in a single night they had negotiated the position "their history books back home [South Africa] have ready for us –him bitter; me guilty. What other meeting place could there have been for us" (*BD* 341)? The last sentence reminds the reader of Gordimer's short story titled "Is There No Where Else Where We Can Meet?" This early short story of Gordimer expresses her search for a 'meeting place' in apartheid South Africa where the whites and the blacks can meet. The story is about the fearful experience of a white woman as a consequence of her encounter with a black man. They meet on an empty

veld, which may be described as a borderland between a white suburb and a black location. The man struggles to rob the woman of her handbag and parcel. After her initial efforts, the white woman relinquishes them out of fear. When she reaches safely the white world, she regrets fighting the man and decides not to report the matter to the police. This is perhaps because she recognizes the black man's economic inequality due to his race. This understanding on the part of the woman signifies that there is hope for a meaningful relationship between the white and the black. Rosa does not show any fear like that of the unnamed heroine of the story. But both of them search for a location where blacks can live with dignity and control their destiny, and where the two races can meet as equals. Of course, ideologically and politically Rosa is more committed than the heroine of the story. The search for a place or location where blacks and whites can live together has been the purpose of Gordimer's fiction. Her style and technique changed or refined but her objective remains same throughout her career. It is in order to continue her search for such a location that Rosa returns to South Africa. Rosa and therefore Gordimer know that it is located in the future, on the other side of a revolution that will overthrow apartheid.

Rosa does not, however, re-engage herself politically like her father. She realizes that the role of the whites in the changing circumstances cannot be the same as it was in the past. But she is ready to do what she can. The past is evaluated only to get inspiration for the present. The change in Rosa coincides with the change in South African political situation. The Soweto Revolt is a protest by black children against the whites. The blacks who so far avoided to act politically have began to see themselves as their children see them. They have been radicalized by their children. So they are now being arrested and detained. As Rosa puts it,

> "The real Rosa [she means Rosa Luxemburg] believed the real revolutionary initiative was to come from the people . . . This time it's coming from the children of the people, teaching the fathers –the ANC, BPC, PAC, all of them . . ." (*BD* 361).

It is against this background Rosa takes up her work as a physiotherapist at Baragwanath Hospital instead of leading the struggle from the front like her father. She teaches the black children, who have been deeply wounded by the police, to walk again and helps them put one foot before the other. She renews her contact with Marisa Kgosana and other black activists at Soweto. But she is soon arrested. Now Rosa resides

with Clare Terblanche and Marisa in the same prison. The symbolic contact of black and white is established again (Heinemann 145). Gordimer depicts Rosa and other rebels as being lovelier and younger as if they have reconciled to their destiny. Rosa in her new haircut looks fourteen – the age at which she is seen at the beginning of the novel, waiting outside the prison to meet her mother.

Burger's Daughter is not only a radical work of fiction but it constitutes a political act. Instead of acquiescently accepting apartheid, Rosa fights against it and faces the consequences. So does Gordimer. By publishing this novel she "shows her willingness to accept, in addition to the certain banning of her novel, her own banning, house arrest, or even imprisonment" (JanMohmed, "The Degeneration" 129). The novel is Gordimer's response to the Black Consciousness as well as an examination of white South African psyche. In the given racial privilege, the way forward for the white lies in their radical self-examination and their relation to the blacks under the changing conditions.

Burger's Daughter captures the South African life before and immediately after the Soweto revolt. Gordimer's next novel, *July's People* (1981) focuses on the "full-scale revolution" in South Africa (Green 93). The 1980s was an era of massive political actions and counter-actions. The United Democratic Front was established in 1983. Strikes, boycotts and civil unrests destroying shopping malls and white suburbs became the order of the day. Rowland Smith argues that *July's People* depicts a South Africa where "the white power is tottering, if not already fallen" (141). Gordimer explores this by reversing the social relationship between the whites and the blacks. Gordimer reverses the order of master and servant pattern. She has shown July, the black servant having power and control over the white family. Previously the black servants were less significant or less visible. Nevertheless, this does not reduce the centrality of the inner struggle she ascribes to her white protagonists. The middle class white family of Bamford Smale, Maureen Smale and their three children has fled from their Johannesburg home and take shelter in the native village of their servant, July. The novel highlights their life they spend in the hut of July's mother. The servant plays host to his master. Every day they anxiously listen to their radio to know the result of the revolution, which remains uncertain even at the end of the novel, for the new world is not yet born, as the epigraph of the novel from Antonio Gramsci indicates. Gordimer envisions the revolutionary process that has begun in the 1980s and may bring about

changes in South Africa in the near future. *July's People* may be said to be a preparation for that future.

In the face of riots, arson and bombs, the Smales cannot but migrate from the white urban world to the poor village of their black servant, July. This implies their loss of geographical control. This is an important sign of any revolutionary transition. Foucault sees space in terms of power. He argues that space is created in terms of social relations and it is "a site of contesting social forces" (cited in Shabanirad, 117). Gordimer's fiction all along shows the importance of the politics of space. Bam not only loses the urban space but fails to adjust to the new African rural environment. Once he wrote a paper on "Needs and Means in Rural African Architecture" (*JP* 132). He can argue about the pragmatic use of African social space but he himself is unable to adapt to that environment. This exposes the "false credentials" of Bam, the representative of white bourgeois (Head 133). Gordimer's treatment of issue of space is best exemplified in the passage of the novel where Bam Smales move around in a small space behind Maureen. She could hear him hitting his fist against his palm as he used to do in the town when he would talk about some building project to be commissioned to him:

> Impossible to imagine what was happening in those suburban malls now, where white families ate ice-cream together . . . bought T-shirts . . . and looked, learning about foreign parts, at photographic exhibitions whose favoured subject was black township life. (*JP* 153)

The passage reveals several issues and themes. When Bam lingers on the 'small space' of the hut of July's mother, Maureen reflects upon the different and opposite spaces such as shopping malls. As an architect Bam has been involved in building these projects. These spaces epitomise the bourgeois identities and values. But they conceal the fact that the creation of these urban shopping spaces is dependent upon the spaces of social deprivation. This suppression is exposed alongside another reversal, that is, Bam's transposition – "from the designer of capitalist urban space to a lingerer in someone else's mud hut" (Head 134).

With their loss of control over space, comes the change in Bam and Maureen's relationship –personal, political and sexual. Maureen's words capture the central concern of *July's People* when she tells the Chief: "an explosion of roles, that's what the blowing up of the Union Buildings and the burning of master bedrooms is" (*JP* 142). The 'explosion' involves mainly the relations between the Smales couple and also between

July and the Smales, the white people. There is a reversal of familiar roles in the changed circumstances. Bam and Maureen are surprised to discover that July has taken the bakkie, their means to escape and a symbol of bourgeois status. An argument follows between Maureen and July. July tells her that she does not want him to keep the keys of bakkie though he has been her 'boy' for fifteen years. He uses the term of subservience ('boy') to point out that she should have trusted him. Maureen is shocked at his use of the word 'boy' and tells him that their old master-servant relationship is not possible in the changed situation. To this July asks whether she will pay for the month. The novelist suggests that the relationship is based more on the economic reasons than what Maureen believes to be personal understanding. To July, their relationship is only a means to support his family. Maureen even attempts to blackmail July into submission by reminding him of town mistress, Ellen. But she fails and realises that her behaviour as a former employer is unforgivable. However, When Bam and Maureen express their concern that July's use of the vehicle will provide clue to their whereabouts, July assures them he will tell people that bakkie belongs to him. "The bakkie it's mine" (*JP* 73). This makes them aware of their helplessness and that they are dependent upon him in the present situation. Their material dispossession even leads to the deterioration of their personal intimacy. As time passes, they behave as if they know a little about each other and finally appear in the manner of divorced people trying to give the appearance of normal family life.

The incident of Bam's killing two warthog piglets shows the connection between power and sexuality. Gordimer describes the warthogs as having "heavy bodies bounded like corseted women" (*JP* 90). She perhaps suggests that the act of shooting through the bodies of these animals is an act of sexual violation. As Bam shoots through the head of one of the piglets, blood is dropping from its face. The pig with its shattered face is taken to the huts "where his function as a provider of meat settled upon him as a status" (*JP* 94). Bam's gun is a symbol of his power and status, especially when it's used for survival. By extension it also suggests the masculinity of Bam, the provider of the family. Brendon Nicholls sees that gun as a "link between masculinity and phallic violence" which is reinforced when Bam and Maureen make love after eating the piglet (25). This is the first time Bam and Maureen make love since they have left home. In the following morning Bam sees blood of the pigs on his penis in a moment of hallucination. Soon he realises that "it was hers [Maureen's]" for she was menstruating (*JP* 97). Now

the killing of the pig is linked with Bam's sexuality and his status in the hegemony. This connection suggests a latent violence in the bourgeois male sexuality, which is one aspect of the male's socially encoded power.

The Smales are robed of their material possessions – first the bakkie and then the gun. They (the materials) are now used by the blacks. This signals the shift of power under the prevailing situation. More importantly, the second most argument between Maureen and July highlights the reversal of power relations. After coming from the Chief's place, they discover that the gun is stolen. Maureen insists that July must get back the gun from Daniel. July tells her angrily that she has always held him responsible for the stolen things of the family. She is therefore "too much trouble" for him, and now "in my [July's] home too" (*JP* 184-85). At this Maureen retaliates that she has seen him stealing small things of the family such as her "scissors like a bird" (*JP* 185). July responds to this accusation angrily and powerfully in his own language so much so that Maureen understood everything although she did not knew the word. July, on the other hand, understood her "idea of him":

> But for himself – to be intelligent, honest, dignified for *her* was nothing; his measure as a man was taken elsewhere and by others. She was not his mother, his wife, his sister, his friend, his people. (italic original *JP* 186)

This outburst shows that July can now assert himself. Through this Gordimer seems to puncture Maureen's liberal belief that she has some privileged understanding of July and that she has a respectful relation with him. Now she becomes conscious of the fact that his dignity is different from what she thought. Commenting on this, Brendon Nicholls observes that Gordimer "turns the most obnoxious consequences of Apartheid's policy of separate development into the deepest basis for respect" (31). Maureen tries to belittle him for his newfound independence. She tells him he may imagine to be a gangster driving around in their bakkie but soon he will run out of money to buy petrol for the vehicle and then it will lie there to rust. Maureen then tries to seduce July in response to her new consciousness of his dignity. When the tenderness of the evening envelopes them "mistaking them for lovers", Maureen "lurched over and posed herself" against the hood of the vehicle and her "sweat-coarsened forehead touched by the moonlight". She made of herself "death's harpy image" but it was meaningless to July who had never gone to "a motor show complete with provocative girls" (*JP* 187). Maureen resorts to sexuality, which can be considered as the "last strategy of political

containment – a final sign of her political bad faith" (Nicholls 32). She hopes that she will remain his madam by seducing him and thereby becoming his mistress. But she fails. Finally she understands that their dependency on July for survival "matched" with his former dependency on them (*JP* 189).

Gordimer has narrated the near fall of the so-called white nation that has excluded from its history the majority section of South Africa. At the same time she has not failed to hint at the new culture in the making. "In *July's People* Gordimer turns to the *details* of culture and shows a new world in the making" (original italic, Clingman 196). Gordimer has seen the new culture in the children. In *Burger's Daughter*, she has noted the contribution of the black children to the anti-apartheid movement through the Soweto Revolt. In *July's People*, the white children are negotiating with the African culture. Bam and Maureen are very old for any transformation although Bam engages himself in some communal activities like building the tank for harvesting rain water. The children, particularly Gina, display a potential for future change. Gina makes friendship with the black child Nyiko. She tries to learn her (Nyiko's) language and imitate her beviour. Together they enjoy a mutual world of childlike sisterhood and as true friends at a time of social turbulence they become part of the same cultural heritage. In fact, Gina's friendship with Nyiko is an advance on the childhood friendship between Maureen and Lydia. The photos of Maureen and Lydia appearing together in a magazine, *Life* recast their "friendship in terms of Apartheid ideologies of white baasmanskap" (Nicholls 24). Gina and Nyiko's friendship is not based on racial consciousness and their friendship has absorbed African language and African cultural values. Victor seems to cling to the bourgeois ideals of ownership of property, even of nature. To his complaint that the blacks carry water from the tank, his father says that it is theirs. To his mother's question "Who owns the rain?" he replies – "It's hours, it's hours" (*JP* 77). But later he is shown adapting to the new surroundings. When July gives him a length of fishing line, he repeats the typical black obeisance. He is seen bobbing at knees and "receiving the gift with cupped palms" (*JP* 191). Thus the children are undergoing a kind of socialization. These little changes in culture will occur in the everyday life as South Africa undergoes the transformation. Bhabha considers nation as hybrid and site of differences. He argues that both nation and culture are narrative constructions resulting from the cross-fertilization of national and cultural constituents: "It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and

collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest or cultural value are negotiated" (original italic, Bhabha 2).

Gordimer has exposed the values of the white liberals through Maureen and Bam. She has also offered a critique of the black world. At the time of revolution, the blacks have failed to put up a united fight against the apartheid regime. This is evident in the behaviour of July's chief. The chief asks Bam to teach him shooting so that he can protect himself against the 'Russias' and 'Cubas' or any other black revolutionaries of South Africa. That is to say, the chief sides with the white forces and is ready to fight against his own people because "he has succumbed to Apartheid propaganda that black majority rule dispossess him of meagre traditional lands" (Nicholls 29). Bam is surprised to learn that the imagined liberation struggle is less a race war than "an intertribal conflict" (Newman 89). The Chief's behaviour can also be seen as what Fanon calls tribal wars when the 'wretched' (native) turns against each other. July is hopeful, though. He suggests the chief was ever against white taxation and he will not oppose the black fighters either when they arrive.

However, when Maureen asks Bam what he will do if the chief come to him to learn shooting, he replies in the "old vocabulary" that cannot express their unexpected experience. He tried "hopelessly for words that were not phrases from back there, words that would make the truth that must be forming here, out of the blacks, of themselves" (*JP* 155). Gordimer seems to suggest that Bam's old language of political analysis fails because his language has been effective only within apartheid ideology. He cannot imagine anything outside that ideology. In his new place and situation, he fails to communicate. In fact, as Jennifer Gordon observes, the novel's vision of the future is limited by the "little hope of a common language" it offers (108). Even there is a near breakdown of communication between Bam and Maureen as they gradually estranged from each other in their new role and new place. So he addresses his wife as "Her. Not 'Maureen'. Not 'his wife'" (*JP* 128). As the action progresses it is seen that Maureen talks more than Bam with the blacks. She even understands July's outburst in his own language in their final argument, though not the words. Gordon argues that this is "symbolic bilingualism" a common language but it cannot sustain between blacks and whites in South Africa because of "years of conditioning" (105). Nevertheless Gordon argues that there is at least a cause of optimism as the children of the Smales are trying to learn the language spoken in the African village.

The ending of the novel has given rise to several interpretations as to future of South Africa as a nation that the novel seems to suggest. Thus, according to Clingman, the last scene of the novel – Maureen running to the helicopter – suggests that she is running from "old structures and relationships" towards a revolutionary future (203). On the other hand, Ali Erritouni argues that the last scene of the novel "prefigures a South Africa whose out lines are undefined" (76). He says that Gordimer refuses to predict the direction of the blacks' liberation struggle because the future of South Africa belongs to blacks. So, it is the blacks, not the whites, who should decide its content and nature. Nicholas Visser draws attention to the language used in describing the scene. The helicopter with its landing gear like spread legs is represented as a sexual force or imagined as a rapist. Gordimer describes Maureen's "rib-cage is thudded with deafening vibration, invaded by a force pumping, jigging in its monstrous orgasm" (*JP*, 192). Thus Maureen is imagined here as being raped by the monstrous helicopter which is a symbolic continuation of her attempt to seduce July. Visser further finds intertextual correspondences with Yeats' poem, "Leda and the Swan" that gives the symbolic rape a cultural significance. In the poem, Zeus descends upon Leda in the form of a swan and rapes in an act of annunciation that founds the Greek civilization. Similarly the helicopter may be imagined as a godlike force that descends from the sky to found the new nation after the apartheid.

Gordimer's fiction from *The Conservationist* onwards is concerned with the future and uncertain phase of South African history. Thus, both *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People* deal with the imminent revolutions in South Africa which culminated in the 1994 General Election. While focusing on the issues of future of South Africa, Gordimer engages with more radicalized political themes. *Burger's Daughter* examines, among other things, the history of South African Communist Party. The novelist seems to advocate its need to adapt Marxist theory to local realities, and its resistance to white exploitation of blacks. The novel shows the influence the Communist Party had within the ANC leadership until the rise of the Black Consciousness movement. Since the banning of the Communist Party and the uprisings of the 1970s, the anti-apartheid forces went underground. The political leaders changed their strategies of resistance and became more violent and subversive. The political climate of anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980s pervades Gordimer's novels *A Sport of Nature* and *My Son's Story*. Gordimer deals with a coloured family in *My Son's Story* and it shows her preoccupation with the

politics of race, gender and sexuality as played out in the private and public life as well. The novel demonstrates the possibilities of hybridity and fluidity of the socio-political conditions of the coloured people. Their 'in-betweenness' or 'ambivalence' colours them with a kind of transforming possibility which Bhabha points out in *The Location of Culture*. The 'in-between' spaces between identifications suggests the possibility of a cultural hybridity which may accommodate differences without imposing any hierarchy. Bhabha continues

> 'Beyond' signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the future; but our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary –the very act of going *beyond* –are unknowable, unrepresentable, without a return to the 'present' which, in the process of repetition, becomes disjunct and displaced. (4)

Sonny's coloured family marks such a progress and promise which Bhabha speaks about in the above passage. Sonny moves to a 'grey area' (*MSS* 14) in the white city of Johannesburg from 'coloured' location in their hometown. This is a symbolic move of crossing the border. This move of the coloured family into the grey area signifies the whole notion of 'coloured' identity as hybrid, in-between and transgressive. Symbolically speaking, their movement beyond the barriers of colour signals their crossing of the socio-cultural boundaries in their attempt to resist the racial segregation. On the other hand, Aila who earlier in the novel appears in the traditional gender identity as a caring mother and dependent wife emerges with a new identity in the later part of narrative when she secretly joins the underground revolutionary activities. This aspect of the novel is further discussed in the fourth chapter.

Gordimer has been an unwavering critic of apartheid. The fiction of Gordimer demonstrates a texture that allows one to analyse the theme of acquiescence and resistance. In her early fiction, she depicts mainly liberal white characters who reject or attempts to reject apartheid. As an activist and a committed artist, she has created characters and built plots that often defy the strict categorization of the population into white, black or coloured. This creates space for the characters to see beyond their particular identity and discover a perspective upon themselves and the South African life. They often fail in their efforts. But they demonstrate certain change in their attitude. The friendship between Toby and the black Sam in *A World of Strangers* marks a change in Toby, at least in his attitude and intention. Just before leaving the Johannesburg

railway station for Cape Town for a business trip, Toby promises Sam to be the godfather of Sam's baby when it is born. Gordimer seems to suggest that their friendship transcends all ideologies and signals the beginning of a cultural synthesis against the apartheid.

Gordimer's delineation of cross-racial sexual relationship is a challenge to the basic principle of apartheid. Like Foucault, Gordimer seems to consider sexuality as a site of power relations governed by the dominant socio-cultural conventions. She has attempted to produce an alternative discourse about sexuality. The prevailing cross-racial sexual relationship in the colonial South Africa had been between white men and black women (Thompson 45). But Gordimer has depicted the trans-racial relationship between black men and white women in her fiction such as *Occasion for Loving*. By reversing the traditional pattern, she has suggested the possibility of resisting the apartheid ideology. The Ann-Gideon affair is an act of resistance though it failed finally. But this may be said to prepare the ground for emergence of resistance in future. This is clearly visible in Gordimer's later fiction such as *A Sport of Nature* and *My Son's Story*.

In most of Gordimer's work discussed above, the characters often find themselves at the border or at the margin where past and present, inside and outside are not separated as binary opposites but they commingle and conflict. And from this emerge new and complex forms of representation that defy binary division. Through the imaginative border-crossings in her fiction, Gordimer suggests the possibility of psychological and physical crossing of borders. After returning to South Africa, Rosa renews her contact with Marisa Kgosana and other black activists at Soweto. She is imprisoned with other women revolutionaries. She lives in the prison with Marisa, Clare and the Indian woman, establishing a kind of sisterhood. Gordimer seems to convey the establishment of the symbolic contact of blacks and whites suggesting the creation of a community out of differences –the many into one (Bhabha 204). Through Rosa's subordinate position in the revolt, Gordimer suggests that the white must take such a position to overthrow apartheid.

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