Chapter Three

Bridging the Unbridgeable

Writers are committed to the society in which they live and an astonishing feature of a committed writer is that, he/she passes on the issues, which affect the society, and the reality of it through the works. Williams in “Culture and Society” discerns: “A committed writer deals with ‘real’ social relations, for he is engaged in writing in a specific society and period … and the ‘style’ and ‘form’ or ‘content’ of his work, now are considered … but as expressions of these relations” (203-04). The committed writers bring to light social and ethical issues through their works. The primary obligation of these writers is to engage with social and ethical issues they care deeply about. The literary authors dedicated towards the social order, attempt to find out the errors in it and seek to provide solution. In Drama and Commitment, Rabkin points out that commitment is, “a pledge, a bond, an obligation … includes any belief which incurs an obligation” (qtd. in Nair 77). Thus the main obligation of the writers is to illustrate the genuine image of society through their writings.

The novelist, in particular, plays a vital role in society, explaining and interpreting the nuances of it. Writers have suggested that the expression, “…of the social and political values in a society’s literature is often the most accurate index as to what the society is really like” (Mutiso 4). Leo Lowenthal
has pointed out that the artist reacts to the society. Novelists such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and J.M. Coetzee present the living portrait of the society from which they hail. Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* mirrors the society showing its misconceptions about the purpose of education, coupled with government policies that produce intellectually and morally bankrupt leaders. Wole soyinka’s *The Trail of Brother Jero* exposes religious ‘charlatanism’, a prevailing problem in South African society. The novel also reflects the social, political, economic and religious situation of the society in which it is set. J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* depicts the brightening picture of South African society with a different note where the Whites are oppressed and the marginalized section of the society, where the ‘hunter’ became hunted.

Sol Plaatje, Sarah Gertrude Millin, Mongane Walley Serote, Miriam Tlali, Alan Paton, Nadine Gordimer and André Brink found fruitful inspiration in the emerging injustices of the white minority rule. As a result, fiction quickly achieved dominance and came to define South African Literature abroad, which was the blunt, black and white portrayal of South African race policies. Nadine Gordimer, while explaining her function as a writer states that she has no alliance to South Africa as a ‘writer’ but as a ‘Person’. The novelist pledges “I have no religion, no political dogma-only plenty of doubts about everything except my conviction that the colour bar is wrong and utterly indefensible. Thus I have founded the basis of a moral code that is valid for me. Reason and emotion meet in it and perhaps this is as near
to faith as I shall ever get” (qtd. in Vijaysree 104). Gordimer is a visionary who could very well understand her mission towards South Africa and her role in the transformation of it. In *Writing and Being*, Gordimer makes a frank statement:

> only through a writer’s explorations could I have began to discover the human dynamism of the place I was born to and the time it was to be enacted. Only in the prescient dimension of the imagination could I bring together what had been deliberately broken and fragmented: fit together the shapes of living experience, my own and that of others, without which a whole consciousness is available. I had to be part of the transformation of my place in order for it to know me. (130)

The novels reflect the uncertainty and intermediacy that characterize the South African experience during the long drawn era of racial and political violence.

South Africa is multi-dimensional – exotic, beautiful, mysterious, colourful and mystical. Unfortunately there are infinite social evils such as servitude, injustice, caste, class system and poverty that destroy the beautiful nation. Racial prejudice is abhorrent, especially when governmentally sanctioned, and it is the writer’s responsibility to speak the truth. The writer’s task is to transform experience, to enter into the existence of others, whether they are black or white, men or women, and to use the tension in both participating and standing at the side. Roland Barthes declares that the writer’s
enterprise is his essential gesture as a social being and asserts, writing as something that fundamentally ties the writer to the world he or she lives in; it is impossible to “write without establishing oneself as a ‘social being’, making a commitment to one’s times. …has the sense of social duty or obligation in creating fiction” (475).

Racism endows the colonial system with consistency. The most characteristic feature of the colonial situation is racism, which underpins ideologically the division of society into ‘human beings’ and ‘natives’ caused by the colonial process of production. Jean-Paul Sartre says,

for the one, privilege and humanity are one and the same thing; he makes himself into a man by freely exercising his rights. As for the other, the absence of any rights sanctions his misery, his chronic hunger, his ignorance, in short, his sub-human status.

(qtd. in Zahar 19)

By reducing the native to a natural object, it enables the European to hew the ideals of Western democracy, while at the same time exploiting the natives in the most brutal way. Sartre has rightly pointed out that,

… everyone has felt the contempt implicit in the term “native”, used to designate the inhabitants of a colonized country. The banker, the manufacturer, even the professor in the home country, are not natives of any country: they are not natives at all. The oppressed person, on the other hand feels himself to be
a native; each single event in his life repeats to him that he has
not the right to exist. (215)

The reactions of the indigenous themselves to racial discrimination have a
stabilizing effect on the system. In the same measure as the oppressed learn to
perceive the cause of oppression in their own inferiority, their power of
resistance weaken under the pressure of the prejudices mobilized against them
and as a result they act against their own interests. According to the United
Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial
Discrimination, the term ‘racial discrimination’ means, any distinction,
exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national
or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of spoiling the recognition,
gratification on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedom in
the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

The term ‘racism’ coined in the 1930s, primarily as a response to the
Nazi project of making Germany is closely related to the concept of race. It is
simply a part of continuum that includes, at one end, perfectly understandable
and gentle collective identifications that are essential for the survival of all
groups. Thus the term ‘racism’ throws up, “… a number of questions and
various associated terms –ethnicity and ethnocentrism; nation, nationalism
and xenophobia; hostility to ‘outsiders’ and ‘strangers’, or heterophobia …”
(Rattansi 6). ‘Race’ entered in the English language in the 16th century. It was
also the time when the term was acquiring currency in other European
languages, for example ‘rassa’ and ‘race’ in French, ‘razza’ in Italian, ‘raca’ in Portuguese, and ‘raza’ in Spanish. By the middle of the sixteenth century, a common meaning gained ground, to refer to family, lineage and breed. There was some continuity with the later Middle Ages, for the term signified continuity over generations in aristocratic and royal families. It was in the eighteenth century, a period of great intellectual fervour and social change, referred to as enlightenment, or the Age of Reason that “the idea of race began to be incorporated into more systematic meditations on the nature of the world” (Zahar 23).

The form of rationality that predominated in the Enlightenment was primarily classificatory and the manner in which the idea of race was increasingly pressed into service to make sense of natural variety reflected the classificatory zeal. The most influential of the classificatory systems of the 18th century was provided by the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus. In the volumes of his Systema Naturae, published from 1735 onwards, the writer extended his classification of plants and animals to include humans into the animal variety. Linnaeus proposed a four-fold classification of humans: americanus (red, choleric and erect), europaeus (white and muscular), asiaticus (yellow, melancholic and inflexible), and afer (black, phlegmatic, indulgent). Linnaeus’s attempt to find connections between appearance and temperament is determined from:
H. *Europaei*. Of fair complexion, sanguine temperament, and brawny form … Of gentle manners, acute in judgement, of quick invention, and governed by fixed laws … *H. Afri*. Of black complexion, phlegmatic temperament, and relaxed fibre … Or crafty, indolent, and careless disposition, and are governed in their actions by caprice. (Rattansi 26)

The classification has clear evaluative judgments built into it. The concept of race does not have a privileged status in Linnaeus’ work and is not used with any consistency, as it was true of the period, when ideas of ‘race’, ‘variety’, and ‘nation’ were often used interchangeably.

Among the humankind which was divided into a limited number of distinct and permanent races, the race was the key concept for an understanding of human variation. There were distinct physical markers that characterized the different races, especially skin colour, facial features and texture of hair. With the growing influence of phrenology, size and shape of skull, each race was innately associated with distinct social, cultural and moral traits. Finally, the races were graded in a coherent hierarchy of talent and beauty, with the Whites at the top and the Blacks at the bottom. Eminent British biologist Steven Rose defines racism as:

By racism is meant any claim of the natural superiority of one identifiable human population, group or race over another. By ‘scientific racism’ is meant the attempt to use the language and
some of the techniques of science in support of theories or contentions that particular groups or populations are innately inferior to others in terms of intelligence, ‘civilization’ or other socially-defined attitudes. (qtd. in Rattansi 94)

Racialized frames of interpretation were continually challenged and a variety of measures had been put in place to dismantle racially discriminatory practices.

Since the mid-1980s, race has become a central category in social, political and cultural theory. Critical race theory includes the study of race in literature and culture, ethnicity studies, studies of minority literatures and specific traditions in literature and philosophy. It is also a component of legal theory and overtly addresses questions of racism and racial discrimination. Race has become a central concern within literary and cultural theory for various reasons. Race and ethnicity are forms of collective communitarian identity – one that is shared and not necessarily unique to an individual. Thus, the question of racial or ethnic identity has a larger social and political significance. It involves questions of, “…belonging, location, rights, citizenship, empowerment, welfare, affiliation and could be the locus of discrimination, exclusion and oppression” (Nayar 217-18). The term ‘racism’, used in common-sense, political, and academic discourse, is of very recent origin. Race, which is one of the most contradictory and violent terms in our world today, is not just one banal, harmless designator among others. Ashley
Montagu in his *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, views race as,

the prime determiner of all the important traits of the body and soul, of character and personality, of human beings and nations. And it is further alleged that this something called ‘race’ is a fixed and unchangeable part of the germ plasm, which, transmitted from generation to generation, unfolds in each people as typical expression of personality and culture. (14)

In a context, where race had become “the dominant organizing principle of South Africa’s social order” (Dennie 187), Gordimer’s novels, short stories and essays combine the political and the personal “with the moral crisis of a South African society structured according to the system of apartheid, the society she grew up in and struggled to reform” (O’Neill 457). The novelist, a white South African and an authentic fighter of apartheid, is very militant in the portrayal of the South African society, which consistently condemned apartheid regime in South Africa. Unlike her contemporaries Doris Lessing and Andre Brink, Gordimer chose to remain in South Africa, vitally involving with the activities of the African National Congress and the struggle for freedom. As the historian Leonard Thompson points out in *The Political Mythology of Apartheid*, the assumption that “races are the fundamental divisions of humanity” is the crux in “the political mythology
that legitimizes the South African social order” (69). Drawing on the lives of South Africans of all the different races, the novelist weaves tales that have shaped the world’s perception of her homeland. Being quick to recognize the scandal of racial segregation in her homeland, she also questioned it.

Apartheid, an African word which implies apartheid or apartness, means “separateness”. In the government’s official policy of racial segregation, apartheid was a system of laws that effectively stripped all the South African Blacks of their citizenship rights controlled by the Whites. It began as a method of discrimination with the founding of Cape Town in 1752 by the Dutch East India Company. British occupation in 1817, led to the beginning of hostility among the different races and the wars between the Boers and the natives-Hottentots and Bushmen- also contributed to the growth of enmity between the Whites and the Blacks. The same year witnessed the formation of the Union of South Africa under the British and right from its early days, institutionalized discrimination became part of its policy. Gordimer in, Living in Hope and History, views apartheid as:

If you ask a member of the South African government, he will tell you that it is separate and parallel development of white and black. If you ask an ordinary white man who supports the policy, he will tell you that it means of keeping South Africa white. If you ask a black man... for him it is neither an
ideological concept nor a policy, but a context in which his whole life, learning, working, loving is rigidly enclosed. (105)

In *Burger’s Daughter*, Gordimer feels of apartheid as “the dirtiest social swindle the world has ever known - and you want to fight according to the rules of patriotism and honesty and decency evolved for societies where everyone has something worth protecting from betrayal” (349). Since the publication of her first book in 1949, Gordimer has fought the war against apartheid system through “her unblinking portrayals of its perpetrators and victims” (Williams 98).

Apartheid is a system of legal segregation enforced by the National Party government of South Africa between 1948 and 1994, under which the rights of the majority ‘non-white’ inhabitants of South Africa were curtailed and minority rule by the Whites was maintained. Racial segregation in South Africa began in colonial times. Apartheid as an official policy was introduced following the general election of 1948. Series of apartheid laws were enforced in 1948 by the new government such as, The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act and The Immorality Act, which aimed at preventing sexual contact between the Whites and the non-Whites and the Suppression of Communism Act to curb anything considered dissident activity among non-whites. The New Legislation classified inhabitants into racial groups such as the Black, the White, the Coloured and the Asian and residential areas were segregated by means of forced removals. From 1970, the Blacks were deprived of their
citizenship, legally becoming citizens of one of ten tribally based self-governing homelands called *Bantustans*, four of which became nominally independent states. The government segregated education, medical care, beaches, and other public services, and provided the Blacks with services inferior to those of the Whites.

The South African situation makes an instructive comparison. The apartheid system was formed and strengthened in the post-1948 period through specific acts of legislation, though custom and practice in the previous half century meant that it was pushing further a racial order which was already in existence in outline. The state was the agency by means of which the Afrikaner Nationalists imposed a system of racial separation upon the country, including a legal definition for four racial groups such as the White, the Coloured, the Indian and the African, forming the basis of the racial system. The event of dismantling of apartheid since the late 1980s was itself a matter of state action, initially to soften the sharper feature of the system, then to bring about its collapse and replacement by a new system of multi-racial politics led by the African National Congress, the principal opponent of the apartheid regime. The post-1994, South African government urged the state to implement a multi-racial order in which the different racial groups coexist and collaborate in a society marked by profound racial divisions, extremes of income and social provision. It provided “a laboratory for the study of the limits of state action in securing social change in the racial order” (Bulmer 275).
Gordimer pictures the effects of South Africa’s apartheid system on the ruling Whites and the oppressed Blacks. The political conditions in the country, essential to the motifs of the works, lead the novelist to focus primarily on the complex human tensions that are generated by apartheid. Roger Matuz in *Contemporary Literary Criticism – Year Book 1991* appreciates Gordimer for the genuine portrayals of black African culture: “…Gordimer is also praised for using precise detail to evoke both the physical landscape of South Africa and the human predicaments of a racially polarized society. Her fiction may be regarded as compelling and powerful” (161). The novelist offers a solution to those who suffer from apartheid conditions, whether they are racial, political or gender related. Having grown up in South Africa, she could well understand the pain, confusion, oppression, suppression, separation and segregation that exist in such situations of discriminatory separation. Gordimer is also trained in Marxism, which conviction names capitalism as “the root of all problems in a state structure and South African apartheid was made by white capitalists who were supported by the values of the white bourgeois family” (Hewett 61).

Eskia Mphahlele, Bessie Head, Dennis Brutus, J.M Coetzee, Miriam Tlali and Gordimer reflect on varying degrees the experience of living in a racially segregated society in their writings. The distinction of Gordimer as a novelist rests mainly on her new approach to social problems and the choice of fresh themes not commonly treated by the social novelists of the colonial period. The novelist puts the searchlight on a country that has painfully
evolved from an oppressive racist state into a model of democracy, who “most stubbornly has kept the true face of racism in front of us, in all its human complexities” (Baxter).

Gordimer, in the half century of her writing has held the mirror up to South Africa, unmasking the apartheid era at the level of the people, with all its uncomfortable ambiguities. The novelist is conscious of the politico-racial issues that affect people of South Africa. In the novels as well as in short fiction, she restructures characters in their own situation. The horrible problem of apartheid haunts her mind and she depicts the racial hatred and prejudice between the Whites and the Blacks. The novelist’s position in the context of apartheid is unique and unenviable in attacking apartheid, acknowledging that “…as a white South African within the system she is, however, unwillingly, a privileged beneficiary” (Gowda 16).

Gordimer, born and still living in South Africa has taken part in the struggle against apartheid. Far from being alienated from her world, “she is deeply involved in recovering its good health and in its survival; her moral outlook is a matter of daily life, not a literary abstraction, one could call it, simply, her conscience”(Hunter 161). The fictional writings chronicle the struggles and turmoil in South Africa surrounding apartheid and the aftermath of its dissolution. Dick Roraback comments on her ability to assume universal voice: “Gordimer is multilingual. She can speak male and female, young and old, black and white” (112). She saw those peculiar, deplorable legal
arrangements around her as she grew up and credited her animated, imaginative life in books, thus waking up from complacency. She was particularly inspired by *The Jungle*, a novel by the American muckraker Upton Sinclair on the labour exploitation found in slaughterhouses. The parents of Gordimer neither discussed, nor challenged, the separation of the races and in common with many others in their position, regarded the “blacks as a servant class that simply disappeared from white districts at the end of each working day” (O’Neill 459).

Gordimer’s early interest in racial and economic inequality in South Africa was influenced by her parents. The experience of her father as a Jewish refugee in czarist Russia helped to form the novelist’s political identity, but he was neither an activist nor particularly sympathetic toward the experience of the blacks under apartheid. Conversely, Gordimer saw activism by her mother, whose concern about poverty and discrimination faced by the Blacks in South Africa led her to find a crèche for black children. Gordimer also experienced government repression firsthand, when as a teenager the police raided her family home, confiscating letters and diaries from the black servant’s room. Studying in Witwatersrand University, she mixed for the first time with fellows across colour bar and was also involved in Sophia town renaissance as a political activist. As a white novelist in black South Africa, she confesses, “I do not fear Blacks, but many whites do. My message to the self-appointed guardians of our culture is: There can be no such things as South African Literature if it excludes Black Literature” (qtd in Reddy 93). A
white writer deeply committed to Black Literature and the black people in South Africa, with basic thematic concern for the interdependence of the Blacks and the Whites keeping aside deep-rooted racial prejudices is rare.

The novels of Gordimer capture both of South Africa’s worlds which continue to explore successive versions of white South Africa’s “state of suspension”. The dead miner in the ditch near Atherton station in The Lying Days anticipates the central character of The Conservationist, who, though dead, is the novel’s insistent controlling presence. The most significant matter is that of the corpse of the unknown black who was murdered on Mehring’s farm and crudely buried by the police. Like Rosa’s father in the Burger’s Daughter, the dead man is the controlling force in The Conservationist, as in the novel’s final paragraph, regains Mehring’s land: “The one whom the farm received had no name. He had no family but their women wept a little for him. There was no child of his present but their children were there to live after him. They had put him away to rest, at last; he had come back” (267).

For ten months, ever since the corpse’s discovery and inadequate burial, Mehring has endeavoured to forget it. The murdered man resurfaces imagining the blacks’ pressing claim to Mehring’s land. The white farmer is deeply disturbed, and in an episode of hallucinatory power-so strong as to be uncertain of the borderline between nightmare and reality. Mehring imagines how he himself could be similarly murdered, crudely, arbitrarily and desolately. He is not actually killed, but leaves South Africa abandoning his
farm. Unlike Helen Shaw of *Lying Days* and Rosa Burger of *Burger’s Daughter*, Mehring would not return. Clingman has argued,

> The vision is one of the historical transfers. Prophetically, *The Conservationist* is situated at the point where white history ends and black history resumes… (it) represents a moment when the imminent downfall of White supremacy seemed abruptly manifest, but the precise means of its achievement were still unclear. (190-91)

Despite Gordimer’s quest for universal brotherhood and harmony, the characters are governed by the South African feelings of the Whites of the Sophia town. Antonia, Mehring’s mistress does not identify any connection with her body and Mehring’s ego. After making love, “it was always necessary to her ego to establish the difference, the vast gap between herself and a man like him” (106). To her, it seems to be “bridged itself in pleasure” (106). The feeling of separation is a clarion call for the Whites to quit the continent. Mehring, the businessman, boss and seducer is the most insecure person among the Blacks, whose sense of security pressurises and forces him to sell the place.

The literature of South Africa is a “conflict between White conquerors and conquered black, between white masters and black servants, between the village and the city” (Nkosi 76). *The Conservationist* concerns the white industrialist Mehring who farms the land with the native in the weekend,
genuinely wants to make his presence a positive contribution. He wishes to preserve power and privileged way of life, despite being surrounded by poverty and suffering. He does not accept the indigenous population as the natural owners of the land and so the result is disastrous for him. Being contemptuous towards the Blacks, he wants Jacobus to protect the guinea fowl eggs from them: “They’re just picannins and they don’t know, but you must tell them, those eggs are not to play games with. If they find eggs in the veld they are not to touch them, you understand? Mustn’t touch or move them, ever” (12). Mehring is generous enough to offer them meat only when a beast dies of illness. Jacobus is always given “permission by the farmer to cut it up and distribute it to the farm workers” (170). There are cars from the city with grimacing white men in raincoats, dirting their handkerchiefs in an attempt to dry off some vital part of the engine, or “waiting anxiously for a passing black, bent drenched over a bicycle, to stop and help push the car out of the way of traffic” (233). The black waiters wait to pick up orders to serve their need and to serve the cars. The writer has successfully captured the mental frame work of the Whites who feel nothing or little for the misfortunes of others.

The ontological process of understanding and struggling to write for the Blacks began in Gordimer at a very early age. But it was not long before the inequalities of South African life came home to her. “I went to the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, but there was no mercy for blacks,” she said, “I went to dancing classes, but blacks were not allowed. The library, which
was so precious to me, again, blacks were not allowed. It impinged on my
consciousness. I began to ask why” (qtd. in Matuz 166). The novelist always
pushes the limits of relationship between the Blacks and the Whites in the
fractured society of South Africa. The short stories and the novels portray the
yearning in apartheid South Africa for a connection across the colour line.
The segregation laws strictly demarcated the races as “them” and “us” and
were one of the greatest factors in the making of mores in South Africa.
Women were underpaid and under Natal Code, virtually all African women
were treated as perpetual minors with no right to own or inherit property, act
as guardians over their children or represent themselves in the court. As
Ernest Harsch records:

   The White regime’s apartheid policies extended to marriage and
   sexual relations. Marriage between Whites and Blacks
   (Africans, Coloureds and Indians) became illegal under the
   prohibition of mixed marriages Act. Immortality act made
   sexual relations between Blacks and Whites, a crime punishable
   up to seven years in prison. (62)

The novelist’s vision of cross-racial relations crystallizes itself in the portrayal
of “black man and white woman who forge an individual connection in the
various forms available to them: as young “siblings” in the same household,
as mistress and servant and even as husband and wife” (Knox 63). In the early
works Occasion for Loving and The Late Bourgeois World, cross-racial
couples are fraught with conflict and cynicism from the start. In the later works, the couples’ search for and briefly finding places they could meet are subjected to the shifting forces of history. For instance, Toby in *A World of Strangers* rejects the idea of taking a black lover as he does not want to replicate the role of the oppressor. In the short story *City Lovers*, the White man and the “coloured” woman as lovers, could only be perceived as master and servant. *A Sport of Nature* and *My Son’s Story* highlight the tenuousness of all relationships and the illusory quality of middle-class marriage.

The cross-racial relationship occupies the centre stage of the novels. The first happy relationship between a black man, Whaila and a white woman, Hillela occurs in the *A Sport of Nature*. The stalemate between the Blacks and the Whites depicted in *Burger’s Daughter* and *July’s People* “is lifted by freewheeling” (Knox 70). In *Burger’s Daughter*, Rosa and Zwelinzima turn childhood memories without colour consciousness into weapons in a racial battle. The troubled coupling of Rosa with Bassie/ Zwelinzima in *Burger’s Daughter* and Maureen and July in *July’s People* manifests the yearning for a meaningful cross-racial connection. In *Burger’s Daughter*, a complex narration of which the epigraph taken from Levi-Straus: “I am the place in which something has occurred”, (1) clearly indicates Rosa as the centre of the action, yet much of the action is composed not of external political events but of meditations on those same events by Rosa herself and by the other characters such as Bassie, Marisa and Katya. Rosa, seen from many angles as sympathetic, neutral and actively hostile, seems difficult to choose one of the
perspectives and associate it with the novelist’s own private judgment. Rosa Burger, the protagonist emerges as a complex character and her situation too is full of contradictions. She is placed at the epicentre where many conflicting forces converge: the communist dissent of her father, an Afrikaner doctor meets there with the desire of enlightened nationalist. Vermeulen, to reclaim Burger as a tribal hero who had merely been deflected by his leftist beliefs, “White involvement in the struggle for political justice, exemplified by her father and his colleagues clashes at one point in Rosa’s life with the desire of Black Conscious Movement to exclude all Whites from the struggle” (Green 558). In the mean time, “the blacks were used to being ignored and bypassed by whites and were wary of any assumption of common cause” (370).

Burger’s Daughter, the masterpiece of Gordimer with its complex rendering of the theme has preoccupied the novelist from the beginning, as revealed by her, the “human conflict” torn between the desire to live a personal, private life and the rival claim of special responsibility to one’s fellow men. Rosa is related to Helen Shaw, Toby Hood, Jessie Stilwell, Elizabeth Van Den Sandt and James Bray in relationship with the blacks. As the child of a family committed to the eradication of apartheid, Rosa’s search for identity is integrally bound up with the issues of race. Rosa’s direct confrontations of racism with Zwelinzima “…is locked in Rosa’s consciousness throughout the novel as her childhood playmate “Bassie” or little boss, the black boy who lived with her family while his father worked
underground in the struggle against apartheid” (Knox 67). Zwelinzima could
not forget Rosa or her family for sending him back to poverty of black
townships when he suffered from age bar to attend the school in their white
suburbs. As a child, Rosa had no part in the decision, it becomes clear that
what the black Zwelinzima could not forgive is Rosa’s whiteness. Her middle-
class privilege, the celebrated martyrdom of her father to the same cause that
killed his own unknown father and countless other blacks, the abandonment
that separated the two as children – for Zwelinzima, those are secondary to the
simple fact of racial difference. That night he calls her and, despite her sleepy
protests, makes her hear him out echoing the earlier sentiments of Duma
Dhladhla. He confirms that he does not like the way she has spoken that night
about her father:

Everyone in the world must be told what a great hero [Lionel]
was and how much he suffered for the blacks. Everyone must
cry over him and show his life on television and write in the
papers. Listen, there are dozens of our fathers sick and dying
like dogs, kicked out of the locations when they can’t work
It’s nothing, it’s is, we must be used to it, it’s not going to show
on English television. (320)

When Rosa addresses him as ‘Bassie’, he angrily insists that he is not her
black brother. Rosa discovers first-hand what it means to be a victim of the
kind of philosophy of hate in Europe at the hands of her long-Lost ‘black’ brother. The experience with the grown Bassie comes as a rude shock to her which brings her face to face with herself and her future, reshaping the will and sharpening the determination. Political exile in Europe is a cowardly alternative to front-line action. She realizes that normal happiness lies in South Africa when she finds it for herself as Rosa and not as Burger’s daughter. Burger’s daughter thus becomes Rosa in her own right. Rejecting the doctrine of the father out of the need to lead her own life and afterwards being herself rejected and vilified by the young black Bassie, ‘adopted’ by her father, Rosa returns to Post-Soweto Johannesburg, to be detained there without the glory that has been attached to the father’s confinement.

After nearly twenty years, Zwelinzima destroys the ‘little boy’ of Rosa’s memory; “whatever you whites touch, it’s a take-over”. “I don’t have to live in your head” (321-23). All the pain of the exclusion of the Whites from the Black Conscious Movement is crystallized in Rosa’s stinging retorts, the desire to hurt Zwelinzima as she has been hurt. Later she asks herself “How could I have come out with the things I did? Where were they hiding?”(329). When she realizes that her radical family heritage does not exempt her from lashing out with the subtly racist insults, Rosa abandons the comfortable European exile. Gordimer, in the final pages of the novel, places Rosa locked in a South African prison, re-committed to the struggle against internal and external racism. Rosa and Bassie’s childhood intimacy is described in flagrant physical detail: “the two children share a common bed”
where Rosa feels a, “special spreading warmth when Bassie had wet the bed in our sleep, a warmth that took us back into the enveloping fluids of a host body” (139-40).

The artistic representation of the bond between the white and black characters announces the novelist’s inner longing to be together even in the frustrating situations. The telephone call, the scene of pivot in Gordimer’s fiction, marks a turning point in the life of Rosa. The outburst of anger is mirrored as Bassie speaks:

Blacks must suffer now. We can’t be caught although we are caught, we can’t be killed although we die in jail, we are used to it, it’s nothing to do with you. Whites are locking up blacks every day. You want to make the big confession?- why do you think you should be different from all other whites who’ve been shitting on us ever since they came? … [Blacks] die because it’s the whites killing them, black blood is the stuff to get rid of white shit. (330)

Rosa, sickened by Zwelinzima’s contempt for her, immediately after his phone call and apparently without telling Chabalier, returns to South Africa. “I cannot explain to anyone” she narrates “why the telephone call in the middle of the night made everything that was possible, impossible” (328). Rosa finally realizes after a bitter discriminatory encounter with her long lost adopted black brother Bassie in London – where both take up their assigned
white-black roles – that South Africa is where her normal happiness lies. It is crucial that she finds it for herself as Rosa and not as Burger’s daughter.

Gordimer has sensitively portrayed the strains of racial divisiveness and oppression by monitoring their effect on individual black and white characters. The people living in South Africa, whose lives and personalities are affected by the stultifying conditions of the land becomes the prime concern of the novelist. The use of precise detail to evoke the human predicaments of a racially polarized society in the stories and novels, has made Gordimer “introduce a new continent of black and white into world literature” (Gowda 22). Lionel’s concept of communism was, as Rosa points out, a communism for local conditions which in South Africa meant, “a connection with blacks that was completely personal. …A connection without reservations on part of blacks or whites. …they had the connection because they believed it possible” (172). Lionel speaks of the contradiction that his “people – the Afrikaner people- and the white people in general in our country, worship the God of Justice and practise discrimination on the grounds of the colour of the skin; profess the compassion of the Son of Man, and deny the humanity of the black people they live among” (19). The contradiction arises not from Conrad, whose relationship with the Blacks is scarcely mentioned, but from the racial separatism of the Black Consciousness Movement. Rosa encounters it at a mixed-race party where a young black man says: “Whites, whatever you are, it doesn’t matter. It’s no difference. You can tell them – Afrikaners, liberals, communists. We don’t accept anything from
anybody. We take. D’you understand? We take for ourselves” (157) and “White liberals run around telling blacks it’s immoral to unite as blacks, we’re all human beings, it’s just too bad there’s white racism, we just need to get together, ‘things are changing’, we must work together the solution … Whites don’t credit us with the intelligence to know what we want! We don’t need their solution.” (163). Similar statements are thrown in Rosa’s face by the black childhood friend, Bassie during the traumatic telephone call that prompted her return to South Africa. Rosa loses Zwelinzima within the confines of Burger’s daughter, but Gordimer continues the exploration of cross-racial relationships in the novels that follow.

The most dramatic example of Rosa’s racial displacement occurs as she returns from driving an old black woman home to “one of those undefined areas between black men’s hostels and the mine-dumps on the outskirts of the city”(206). Rosa sees a raged black man beating a donkey and finds herself conflicted by the animal’s pain and the unknown pain that compels the man to beat the animal. Tempted by her freedom as a white woman in South Africa, Rosa speculates on her ability to abstract the scene:

I could formulate everything they were, as the act I witnessed; they would have their lives summed up for them officially at last by me, the white woman—the final meaning of a day they had lived I had no knowledge of, a day of other appalling things, violence, disasters, urgencies, deprivations which
suddenly would become, was nothing but what it had led up to: the man among them beating their donkey. I could have put a stop to it, the misery; at that point I witnessed. (209)

But she does not put a stop to it; she does not intercede on the animal’s behalf. “I let him beat the donkey. The man was black. So a kind of vanity counted for more than feeling; I couldn’t bear to see myself- her- Rosa Burger- as one of those whites who can care more for animals than people. Since I’ve been free, I’m free to become one” (210). The dramatic episode convinces Rosa that she must leave South Africa, with the recognition that: “I don’t know how to live in Lionel’s country” (210), because “Yet the suffering-while I saw it was the sum of suffering to me” (212).

The incident of beating the donkey in *Burger’s Daughter* parallels with the incident in *The Story of an African Farm* in which the black Waldo protests the brutal beating of an animal. Gordimer’s rewriting of Schreiner accentuates “the differences between South Africa in the 1880s and the 1970s and points to the very different situations of whites opposed to racism in the two periods” (Rowe 49). Schreiner’s Waldo suggests the failure of self-reliance of the Whites and the exploitation of the working class who sympathizes with and stands in for the suffering of the South African blacks in the second half of the nineteenth century. Waldo attacks his master on a wagon train, when the man whips, then stabs and kills one of his oxen. He
could not remain with his master after he attacks him, so he walks away, virtually penniless as he has not yet been paid for his work. The situation of Rosa is quite different from Waldo’s, since she is, unlike him, safe from the whip and since the man beating the animal in Burger’s Daughter is a poor black and not a white boss. The clear-cut sense of moral outrage that Waldo expresses is not available to Rosa; it is complicated by her opposition to apartheid. Rosa chooses not to intervene because she refuses to assume the “white authority” that would enable her to deliver the man to the police and as she puts it, she does not want to be seen or to see herself as caring more for animals than for people.

Regarded as the doyen of South African Literature, Gordimer, an ardent opponent of apartheid is against racial segregation and censorship in the country. Under apartheid, Gordimer’s A World of Strangers, The Late Bourgeois World, July’s People and Burger’s Daughter were banned. The publication committee banned the books as they found it “offensive on moral, religious and political grounds” (n.pg) and felt that the novels portrayed the reality of South African society too accurately. To Pietton, Gordimer’s work was deeply marked by the situation in South Africa and demonstrated the superiority of human feelings over legalized segregation. The novels bear the air of the compassionate observer than the protestant, and it is filled with the motifs of understanding, forgiveness, and adjustment. Gordimer is the most skillful among the South African writers recording the abortive attempt of the middle-class whites and the poor blacks to respect each other’s values. In the
July’s People, the novelist, a visionary paints the picture of what might happen after revolution. The relationship between Maureen and July is a direct continuation of Rosa and Zwelinzima’s. Maureen and July’s unequal status is more entrenched by the mistress-servant relationship. Displaced into a post-revolution future, Maureen complains that July does not treat the former like a ‘friend’, but she herself could not help falling into the scolding remonstrances of her former role as mistress. When Maureen and her family arrive in July’s native village, they become entirely dependent on the latter in an inverted power relationship. Language fails to fit in with those new relations. Yet, July speaks to Maureen in “the English learned in kitchens, factories and mines … based on orders and responses, not the exchange of ideas and feelings” (91). Maureen has always prided herself on her treatment of July, but she discovers its inherent contradictions:

> How was she to have known, until she came here, that the special consideration she had shown for his dignity as a man, while he was by definition a servant, would become his humiliation itself, the one thing there was to say between them that had any meaning. Fifteen years, your boy, you satisfy. (98)

July hurls those words in her face; though she has never scrupulously called him ‘boy’, the relationship is acknowledged.

Gordimer is of the opinion that apartheid has “marked all levels of personal relationship with deformity and her fiction explores these deformities
with an unrelenting rigour” (Read 168). In *July's People*, her most unsparing novel due to the revolution in South Africa, Bam and Maureen Smales accept their servant, July’s offer of refuge in his tribal village which is six hundred kilometers away from Johannesburg. The traditional black African society is threatened by the Black Nationalist Movement. The politico-racial tension created bad blood among the Blacks and the Whites. Gordimer has observed the entire scene with the keenness of an artist’s curiosity and the intellect of a perceptive critic in the fiction, thus presenting the characters as lively and authentic. The traditional black African society to which July returns during the revolution is where the white rule is threatened by the urban modern Black Nationalist Liberation Movement. As traditional Africa is not a paradise, July leaves in search of employment in the city. The dilemma of the black women is pathetic that “Most of the women of child bearing age had husbands who spent their lives in those cities the women had never seen” (83). July too is no exception. The novelist depicts the return of July to his hut as, “he came home every two years and each time after he had gone, she gave birth to another child. Next year would have been the time again, but now he had brought his white people, he had come to her after less than two years” (134). The relationships of master-servant, white-black are gradually shown to be those of power, based on the possession of property. As the white woman is not accepted by the tribe and so is unlikely to accept the subservient role of a black woman in the African community. At the end of the novel when
Maureen flees, it is unclear whether it is for the comforts of the white society or for her own freedom as a woman.

Gordimer has succeeded in presenting the understanding and misunderstanding between the Blacks and the Whites under conflicting situations. Her writings revolve round the conflicts of the Blacks and the Whites which are often twined “…with impotence, a condition brought about by the political acts of segregation and exploitation” (Rao 97). *July’s People*, set in a revolutionary situation when South Africa is on the verge of becoming a new non-racial country, tells the story of a white family Bamford Smales, Maureen Smales and their three children. They escape the revolution of “Riots, arson, occupation of headquarters of international corporations bombs in public buildings … the chronic state of uprising all over the country” (7) from the cosmopolitan Johannesburg and take refuge in a remote village of their servant, July. As a humanist, Gordimer always envisions South Africa with the Blacks and the Whites living together in peace and harmony. The novelist assumes that the Blacks would emerge victorious from their struggle for political and economic justice, whereas the Whites would find themselves in a subordinate position ruled by the Blacks.

A living victim of apartheid, Gordimer focuses the pain and agony of apartheid and the interdependency in novels such as *The Conservationist*, *Burger’s Daughter*, *The Late Bourgeois World*, *July’s People*, *The House Gun* and *The Pickup*. Radha Rao in “Relocating the South African White:
Gordimer’s commitment” points out the sensitive portrayal of “… the strains of racial divisiveness and oppression by monitoring their effect on individual black and white characters in her fiction” (Rao 96). The Whites and the Blacks have to depend on each other for their peaceful survival. The comfortable and civilized life in the city becomes a dream for them; the primitive life of the village becomes their future, which Maureen and Bam fail to grab and they long for everything to come to an end. They “yearned for there to be no time left at all, while there still was. They felt sickened at the appalling thought that they had lived out their whole lives as they were, born white pariah dogs in a black continent”(8). The Whites find it impossible to experience what the Blacks live with and through. Hence, they remain confused throughout the novel, “like people waiting in a hospital room” (48). Only the children Victor, Gina and Royce give in and accept their new future. Bam shares the natives’ pleasure by dancing to their gumba-gumba music and drinking beer. July does not allow Bam to drink beer from the earthenware like his relatives. To July, Bam is not to do so because the latter is his master. July’s mother is still in words of praise for the white people. She says, “…White people. They are very powerful, my son. They are very clever” (21). July, who never feels irritated to serve them, tells, “I’m work for you. Me, I’m your boy” (69). He carried and lifted Gina, the child of his master back to bed.

*July’s People* portrays Maureen and July as representatives of the Whites and the Blacks. Gordimer pictures it to the entire Blacks and Whites through the Smaleses’ children. They are prepared to make use of the best of
the conditions in which they find themselves. To the novelist, for a peaceful and harmonious future in South Africa, both the Whites and the Blacks have to adapt and accept themselves fully to the emerging situation. The children represented ordinary people, not bound to any ideologies and who would survive to see the future. People such as Maureen and Mehring would have to face a lot of problems and are forced to run frantically towards their past which is uncertain to be found.

The Smaleses felt insecure and threatened, when July has gradually taken control of their lives. At the time, both in the city of Johannesburg and throughout the entire nation, the Blacks revolted in response to the harsh treatment meted out to them by the Whites, who controlled all aspects of their lives. During their stay in July’s hut, in Johannesburg and in South Africa, a shift in power has taken place; the shift in power control is gradually moved from the Whites to the Blacks. Meanwhile, in the village, the shift in the power has eventually taken the master status away from the White the Smales and gave it to the black July. The two shifts in power happen extremely in similar ways, one on a national level and the other, a much smaller scale, thus clearly paralleling the budge between the Smaleses and July. The Whites like to have a black as their servant for “if it was allowed to have blacks living in, because you can control a black, he’s got to listen to you” (16). July has worked for them fifteen years with utmost sincerity. In the city, the Smaleses too treated July well and he was given due respect as a human being without showing colour difference. July also acted according to the role given to him,
as he “…always did what the whites told him” (128) and confesses, “I’m work for your kitchen, your house, because my wife, my children, I must work for them” (72). In the village, their former roles no longer apply and the colour discrimination takes authority.

July’s act of giving shelter to the white family is part of his own selfishness though it happens outwardly generous in risking his life. The truth is July does not want to lose all the material security that only the Smalesees could provide him. He does not want to put an end to the flow of money since that is the only way that would make his family members respect and obey him. The Blacks always wish to receive grace and favour from the Whites. As they consider themselves inferior, they could touch the white people unless the Whites arrive as refugees to the inhabitation of the Blacks: “The white woman’s hand, when she stood there and offered it- the first time, touching white skin” (22). To them Whites mean ultimate power, supremacy, sophisticated life and the lacks are subordinate to it. July’s mother tells “White people…. are very powerful, my son…. You will never come to the end of the things they can do” (21).

*The House Gun* unveils the mystery of the society and the societal structure of the present day South Africa. It unfolds the story of Harald Lindgard and Claudia Lindgard, two middle-aged white liberal South Africans and their struggle to come to grip with the murder, committed by their twenty seven year old son. They see their son, Duncan Lindgard in the court who
“was committed for trail on a charge of murder” (8), Gordimer uses the courtroom drama that ensues as a way of bringing light to the disquieting truths and contradictions of race and gender relations in the country. As a novel of ideas, *The House Gun* investigates troubling issues of race, gender and the moral ambiguities of the life in the South Africans. For instance, the novelist explores questions of individual and social responsibility in the context of widespread violence. Making use of the central incident, the murder of Carl Jesperson by Duncan that has no obvious political etiology. The author refers to the enigmatic crime and its repercussions to probe obliquely the complex relationship between the individual, Duncan and the wider social context in post-apartheid South Africa.

Gordimer’s exploration of racial difference is subtle. The position of the parents, Harald and Claudia are pictured as helpless bystanders in the legal process. The triangular structures in *The House Gun* offer their own version of opening rather than closure, unexpectedly for Duncan, and for those around him. Of all the characters in the novel, Duncan is represented as one of singularity: “Duncan is Duncan” (99). As for Duncan himself, an absent presence until the end of the novel, is known only through memories and testimonies of others—the parents’, Khulu’s, Natalie’s and Motsamai’s and eventually he speaks up. As a novel of physical violence and spiritual turmoil, it ends with Duncan’s composure. Stephen Clingman in, “The novels of Gordimer: History from the Inside” comments: “Subterranean motives of revenge, humiliation, and escape were embedded in the actions of both of his
form former lovers” (154), which has resulted in the fatal end of Duncan in prison. When morality vanishes, people lose values, and emotions dominate. Those emotions lead Duncan to unintentional horrible and terrible actions. The victim, in a critical dilemma, a mystery to the parents and to himself, refuses neither to say much about the murder nor to give an account of it, since it is mysterious coping with silence in the prison cell, Duncan remembers Carl, and then the child in Natalie’s womb. He is ignorant of whose child it is and so is forced to believe in the final, the haunting words in the novel, “a way to bring death and life together” (294).

The ability to plunge into the intersection between public and private life defines Gordimer’s talent where the writer presents the life of Duncan in the hands of Motsamai, the black lawyer. “Court B17 has briefed a top senior counsel – Hamilton Motsamai” (30) and when they suddenly heard it, they are shocked to the very name; “the choice of a black man. She’s [Claudia] one of those doctors who touch black skin indiscriminately along with white, in their work, but retain liberal prejudices against the intellectual capacities of blacks” (33). The Lingards find themselves “dependent … as neither has ever before been dependent on anyone”(40), upon a black person, the advocate Hamilton Motsamai. The “Senior counsel [Motsamai] is black” (37) but he is known as eminently capable and experienced. In the four years of his presence in the country, he’s appeared successfully in a number of challenging cases. ... He has the kind of aggressive spirit, controlled mind … strong intelligence that
puts him on a high level of competence in cross examination. Very clever-some would say exceptional. (37)

The relationship of the Lingards with Motsamai forms the most striking instance in the novel of shifting power relations from the Whites to the Blacks in the new South Africa: “he has, perforce, to become everything to them – diagnostician-priest-confessor” (114), even though he is “the stranger from the other side of the divided past”(86). Due to racial prejudice in the old regimes, experience is what counts and hence the black lawyers have far less experience than the Whites. In the old conditioning,

phantom coming up from somewhere again, there is awareness that the position that was entrenched from the earliest days of their being is reversed; one of those kept-apart strangers from the Other Side has come across and they are dependent on him. The black man will act, speak for them. They have become those who cannot speak, act, for themselves. (88-89)

There is transformation everywhere and at present “the new laws were addressing many of the factors that had made poverty black people’s condition as the colour of their skin had been their condition” (88). Thus the novelist warns about the pressures of the political frame work, the legal system and the social mores by which the individuals caught within them are hurt and misinterpreted.
In *July’s People* too, an unexpected reversal has made white people dependent upon a black man, a situation which they resent but are powerless to oppose. Motsamai in *The House Gun* is educated and articulate, while July is illiterate and speaks broken English, yet both of them remain inscrutable characters. The Lingards could discover what lay behind the polished facade of Motsamai, while Bam and Maureen Smales “could not read July” (21) in *July’s People*. The radical change in circumstances leads to a recognition that identity has no essential core, that it is predicted entirely upon context and contingency. Though living in July’s village for a period, Bam fails to recognize his wife. The title of the novel gracefully embodies the altered relationship as the revolution transforms July’s owners into his impotent guests and the villagers “creatures, like their cattle and pigs” (96). Thus, the transition between the two worlds, of the urban White affluence and the rural black deprivation, with their servant had managed to span for the previous fifteen years, appear violent for Maureen and Bamford. Gina and Royce quickly acclimatize themselves, learning the vernacular and playing happily with July’s children. The novel competes with the blanks of the unknown and the unimaginable at the edge of the white novelist’s comprehension, articulating what it would be like for “a descent white couple (Bam and Maureen) to experience the transformation into “blacks”, harried from their home and bereft of accustomed physical and psychological supports” (Green 560).
Gordimer dissected the social tensions of apartheid through the microcosm of the family relationships in apartheid free South Africa. As a novel of the inner lives of the family of Paul Bannerman, *Get a Life* depicts the protagonist, an ecologist, fighting to live his life as well as the lives of the South Africans. The predicaments Paul undergoes state the sufferings of each individual in the society. As *The Daily Telegraph* observes: “*Get a Life* is about all our fears of destruction, but also of contamination, alienation and enforced solitude. A brave story about the fragility and the dangers of intimacy” (Coverflap *Get a Life*). Written after the abolition of apartheid, the novel also pictures the dilemma of the Blacks in South Africa. The white people “didn’t try any of the sentimental coming close many did with the blacks these days when they wanted something from you…”(18) and naturally the white do not want “rural blacks to have a share in the growth of economic power. It’s not for them” and “they are out of the mix in our mixed economy” (145). Thapelo, the black colleague of Paul in an agonized state of mind speaks: “we have to live with it, Bra (brother). Race sensitivity is out, my man…”(145). Dealing with the involvement of the Blacks in the development of economy, Gordimer makes a sensitive reply: “No one can disagree with the necessity for the blacks to enter the development economy at a major level…”(183). Thus, *The Pickup* and *Get a life* of Gordimer portray the unbridgeable gap between the Blacks and the Whites. The system of apartheid has established long or wide gap between the Blacks and the Whites that they could not overcome it after the abolishment of apartheid.
The twentieth century in South Africa was violent and brutal for the Blacks. A legacy from the British and Dutch colonial past, the system of apartheid began in 1910, when the majority of South African lands were assigned to the Whites. The limitations on property ownership became only one of hundreds of restrictions on the rights of the black South Africans. They were deprived of normal education and basic social opportunities and were not permitted to live or attend schools they liked, work in professions they chose, marry who they wished, be represented in the government, or travel permission in cities. Gordimer, a gifted artist has portrayed the reflection of South Africa in the novels thus revealing a truthful testimony to all the horrible sufferings of the blacks in their own land.

Education was segregated by means of the 1953 Bantu Education Act, crafting a separated system of education for African students which was designed to prepare the Blacks for lives as a labouring class. In 1959, separate universities were created for the Black, the Coloured and the Indian people. Existing universities were not permitted to enroll new black students. In Living in Hope and History, the novelist records her experience in South Africa where the Blacks are excluded from using the library. In

... the municipal library ... I could use the library because I was white – and so for me that also was part of the middle-class experience. No black could use that library; in the concomitance of class and colour a young black person of my
age was thus doubly excluded from ‘reading’ Proust’s Meseglise and the Guermantes Ways: by lack of any community of cultural background, and by racist material conditions. (43-44)

The Whites, the main beneficiaries of the inequality were made up of only twenty percent of the population.

The stories of Gordimer like “Tagore’s, …give the whole of Africa, with all its confused beauty and pain and terror, but do it without a single statistic, by letting … know its people and look into their souls” (Mathai 17). The grasps and shares, the essence and inner quality of life lived in South Africa in a highly perceptive and an intensely sensitive way. In Burger’s Daughter, the novelist brings out the dilemma of the Blacks in their political, social, cultural and economic conditions. The school where Rosa studied has showed discrimination between the Whites and the Blacks. “The school was a private one for white English-speaking girls and they innocently expressed their sympathy the only way they knew how: “Bloody Boers, dumb Dutchmen, thick Afrikaners…” (5-6). The precise danger of such schematization ignoring the complexities and active processes of social and ideological transformation taking place in an evolving South African society. Throughout their lives, the Blacks always endure harsh realities. “The blacks haven’t ever allowed into your schools, your clubs, your army, for God’s
sake” (349). Thus, the natives are segregated and separated from all walks of life.

Apartheid created a heinous system of exploitation in which a racist minority monopolizes economic wealth, while the vast majority of the oppressed, the Blacks are condemned to poverty. South Africa, a wealthy country is the labour of the black workers who have built the cities, the roads and the factories. *The Conservationist* pictures “hundreds of thousands of blacks in the steel industry” where “more than 80 per cent of the labour force is black…” (179) in the pig-iron industry alone. The hands of the Black, permanently curled to the grip of spade or hoe, the nails opaque, thick, split as worn horn, did not presume to touch, but wavered from one to the other. He was nobody in his own land and was harried by day and haunted by night by the mere fact that he was a Black. When the black characters appear in the stories of South African literary works, “they were usually portrayed as savages, servants or comic buffoons. While animals were frequently humanized, black people were essentially brutalized” (Naidoo 19). Thus an atmosphere of economic insecurity, social inferiority, fear and resentment warped his personality. *Burger’s Daughter* clearly pictures the situation of the Blacks as revealed by Rosa:

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 bought
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. (20)

The guls that divide South African Society officially are the primary concerns of the South African writers. The colour of the skin makes people who are in physical proximity, within the boundaries of the same geographical space, virtually strangers to one another. In the novels of Gordimer, the Blacks always exist as ‘them’, though her radical white characters such as Lionel, Rosa and Julie are also engaged in the struggle for equal rights. The reason is not due to the rupture between what Gordimer writes and what she professes to believe in, rather it serves as a sobering reminder of the state of affairs in the society in which the novels are set. It is impossible for the Whites such as Mehring and Maureen to experience firsthand what the Blacks live with and through. The Blacks have done hard and dirty and dangerous work in the mines, on the docks and in the blistering foundries. They live in constant economic insecurity in the midst of abundant material prosperity. The Whites enjoy life in South Africa due to the labour and hard work of the Blacks. The prisons are segregated, to the little detail of different diets, different ‘last suppers’ for those condemned to death. The voice of Lionel Burger in *Burger’s Daughter* is heard in the public for the first time for seven years and for the last time, bearing testimony once and for all. He spoke for an hour about his own experiences as a medical student tormented not by the
suffering he saw around him in hospitals, but by the suppression and humiliation of human beings in their daily lives, “a subjection and humiliation of live people in which, by my silence and political activity I myself took part, with as little say volition on the victims’ side as there was in the black cadavers, always in good supply, on which I was learning the intricate wonder of the human body…” (19). Hence, for the white writer, to portray a realistic, truthful black character in literature is to present the version of the black person which is available to the white eye. Rosa graphically pictures the condition of the Blacks in an appealing way.

The revolution we lived for in that house would change the lives of blacks who left their hovels and compounds at four in the morning to swing picks, hold down jack-hammers and chant under the weight of girders, building shopping malls and office towers in which whites like my employer Barry Eckhard and me moved in an ‘environment’ without sweat or dust. It would change the labourers who slept off their exhaustion on the grass like dead men, while the man died. (76)

Duma Dhladhla, a teacher at a black university speaks of the discrimination showed by the shopkeepers towards the black: “when I go into the café to buy bread they give the kaffir yesterday’s stale. When he goes for fruit, the kaffir gets the half-rotten stuff the white won’t buy. This is black”(162). Thus the
blacks suffer in their own land and live a life “always under the threat of being spilled” (246).

The dark corridors in the lives of the Blacks as well as the Whites appear as a never ending process and Gordimer is vigilant in presenting the fact in the novels to picture the reality of South Africa. The white society in which the Black lives constantly reminds the black man of being different, either by overt politeness or by outright discrimination. Fanon in the book *Black Skin, White Masks* pitiably narrates the notion of other Whites on the Black: “The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; … the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger” (114). As his inferiority is intimated to him, he suffers from not being white and feels subjugated in all walks of life. The blacks were crushed in and shot in the back by the Whites. When the police were loading the dead into vans, a white police asks the black policemen to take the brains of men left in the road. Sipho, the father of the Black Conscious Movement says, “they sent a black policeman to pick up the brains with a shovel” (39). Lionel is very sympathetic towards the Black man who “stand trial in this court as I do must ask themselves: why is it so black man has ever had the right of answering, before a black prosecutor, a black judge, to laws in whole drafting and promulgation his own people, the Blacks, have had say?” (21). The Whites make use of the Blacks to get their things done in the name of servants. All “collaboration with the whites has always ended in exploitation of blacks” (157).
The Blacks live their lives enduring all the injustices done to them in their own land. In *July's People*, Gordimer pictures the home of July as “not a village but a habitation of mud houses occupied only by members of his extended family” (12) and

a stamped mud and dung floor, above her, cobwebs stringy with dirt dangling from the rough wattle steeple that supported frayed grey thatch. Stalks of light poked through. A rim of shady light where the mud walls did not meet the eaves; nests glued there, of a brighter-coloured mud-wasps, or bats. A thick lip of light rounded the doorway; a bald fowl entered with chicks cheeping, the faintest sound in the world. (2)

Flies wandered in the air and fell into the eyes and mouths of the children of Maureen. Their lack of material possessions first impresses Maureen, the daughter of a white miner and the wife of a rich architect. July is worried when his master’s “children began to cough in their sleep for the last hour or so – the same cough that one always hears from the black children” (50) and is not prepared to give the same medicine which he gives for the children, for they are his white master’s. He went to the extent of saying: “That medicine is no good for Royce. … It’s not for white people” (60), but Maureen smiles and replies “Ju-ly…your baby is given it. Don’t tell me it can do any harm” (60). He always did what the Whites told him. July, an obedient and trustworthy
servant “will he not do what blacks tell him, even if he has to kill his cows to feed the freedom fighters” (128). The emotional outburst of July pictures the designed thought of his own people as subordinate to the Whites. The Blacks have no guns and feared the tusks; the chief recalls the days when they were left out without guns. “Before, the white people are not letting us buy gun. Even me, I’m the chief, even my father and his father’s father – you know? – we not having guns. When those Soweto and Russians, what – you – call – it come, you shoot with us” (119). They live in the horrible conditions where “the pigs concentrated on feeding and showed no more than usual deep, general distrust of beasts for humans” (74). They had “nothing…in their houses … that was slowly incorporating” (29). In Burger’s Daughter, the novelist pictures the condition of the Blacks living in the yards built up with “shelters made of materials gathered from the bull-dozed mine compounds and the brick shells of concessions stores… People were living in what had been abandoned by the white city” (209). The desecrated tail of an animal and the fleshless skull of the rat, dimly perceived through the gloom and dirt has a parallel link to the opening chapter of Gordimer’s debut novel twenty eight years back, where Helen peers through the window of the location store at the dusty lion’s tails.

Vermin, fowls, weak and savage cats who tailed her openly or secretly for their survival, scenting food on her hands, hearing the proximity of food in her footsteps, domestic pigs who followed her in the hope of picking up her excrement, were
reinforced in numbers by the birth of a litter to one of the cats. (85)

Maureen is forced to live in the environment, for she has nowhere else to go. Smaleses, at present, July’s dependents are relying on him for supplies of sugar, and condensed milk and for his friendly intervention with the neighbouring chief. July arranges “stones brought from some other attempt to build something that had fallen into ruin. That was how people lived, here, rearranging their meager resources around the bases of nature, letting the walls of mud sink back to mud and then using that mud for new walls, in another clearing among other convenient rocks” (26). July’s old mother crawls home with wood, and grass for her brooms on head, bents lower and lower towards the earth until finally “she sank to it- the only death she could afford” (65). Women walk a long distance “with tins of water on their head” (115) to satisfy their needs.

In *The Pickup*, Julie is shocked to see the living condition of the Blacks in Abdu’s place. In the village, Julie witnessed,

a ruin but was normal state of lassitude in the extremes of poverty, there was no demarcation between what was thoroughfare and the shacks where goats were tethered and women squatted in their black garb like crows brought down wounded – suddenly he had to swerve to avoid a dead sheep
lying bloated in a shroud of flies. Now she was appalled. Ah poor thing. (132)

Abdu is ashamed and angrily resentful that Julie sees the village which, “will be an image of his country, his people, what he comes from, what he really is – like the name he has come back to be rightfully known by” (133). Without proper money to live and tired of the living condition and indignant of his present predicament “as stray dog” (227), he is “demanding a country for her as well as for himself” (175). The feeling of alienation in life makes Rosa, Maureen and Abdu run in search of a sanctuary, a new abode of peace. The novelist, thus realistically depicts the inner pressures and pains of both the Whites and the Blacks in South Africa.

The apartheid laws carried colour bar to the final and logical conclusion. Translated into concrete terms, the opprobrious term meant a number of restrictions. This discriminatory dispensation ensured no political standing of any kind for the Africans. Like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King who believed in the equality of men, Nadine Gordimer championed the cause of the downtrodden. Nelson Mandela, the South African Statesman recorded hatred towards racism in 1994 when he was democratically elected as the state President of South Africa. On racial discrimination, Mandela discerns: “I hate racial discrimination most intensely and all its manifestations. I have fought all my life; I fight now, and will do so until the end of my days” (n.pg). Martin Luther King struggled hard to
eradicate slavery through his rebellious acts while Gordimer resisted black oppression through the writings. The Blacks were excluded from citizen’s buses, hotels, restaurants, schools, toilets, beaches, booking office and from roadside seats. In the city of Durban, a notice board bearing “Under section 37 of the Durban beach by-laws, this bathing area is reserved for the sole use of members of the white race group” (n.pg) evidently declares the segregated condition of the Blacks in their own land. A poll tax was levied for reservation dwelling compelling them to leave the kraal and seek employment in towns, mines or farms. In Transvaal and Orange Free State, they were required to carry a pass law called “dom pass”, meaning stupid pass.

The novels of Gordimer picture the black labourers living a life of oscillation, where their life and labour itself is a question. The Blacks work in their own land for meager wages without any papers. The dilemma of the voiceless people is well depicted by the novelist in The Conservationist, Burger’s Daughter, July’s People and The Pickup. In The Conservationist, Mehring sees the black man Jacobus, “making for him” (11) everything. The truth was that sometimes the abattoir took people without papers to work in town. Jacobus is reminded of a farm labourer who “has no papers for town” (63). He does not care if “anyone’s got papers or not, as long as you work. That’s all he knows. And if the police catch you, he can just look in your face and say he doesn’t know who you are, that’s all, you’re someone hiding with his boys on the farm” (92). In July’s People, when a white farmer “… sold up, or died, the next owner would simply say to the black labourers living and
working on the land, born there go” (104). July worked in a hotel “washing up in the kitchen. I had no papers, that time. All of us in the kitchen had no papers…” (84) and worked for the Smaleses more than fifteen years. _The Pickup_ pictures the pitiable condition of the black Arab, Abdu who was “no qualified mechanic” (17). As a small boy, he tinkered cars and repaired trucks in his uncle’s backyard workshop which helped him for survival in Julie’s land. Disguised as a “grease-monkey” (49) without a name, the unqualified mechanic, Abdu could not earn much for his living. The garage employed him illegally, ‘-‘black’, yes that’s the word they use. It is cheap for the owner; he doesn’t pay accident insurance, pension, medical aid. … What an awful…exploiter”(17). Gordimer, thus reveals the weakness of all human convictions in extraordinary circumstances and is sympathetic towards the helpless Blacks battling for their survival and space in their own land.

In addition to the reputation she has garnered for the novels, Gordimer is also an accomplished short fiction writer. Like the novels, the stories also portray individuals who struggle to avoid, confront or change the conditions under which they live. _Not for Publication and Other Stories_ and _Livingstone’s Companions_ depict the Blacks defying apartheid in their daily lives. The stories in _A Soldier’s Embrace_ offer an ironic historical overview of the South African society. In _Something Out There_ Gordimer examines the temperament of individuals who unwittingly support the mechanisms of racial separation. In the collection _Jump and Other Stories_, the writer continues with exploring apartheid, insulating the daily lives of the Blacks and the Whites. In
the review of *A Soldier’s Embrace*, Edith Milton summarizes the literary achievements of Gordimer as: “Gordimer is no reformer; she looks beyond political and social outrage to the sad contradiction of the human spirit, which delivers to those in power an even worse sentence of pain than they themselves can pass upon their victims” (161).

Gordimer treats of the racial hatred and prejudice between the Whites and the Blacks in the short stories, the motifs of which are “cultural conflicts, and vast range of subjects such as ‘the war in Mozambique to the beaches of the South of France, from the affluent suburbs of Johannesburg to the back streets of London, over political territories from the underground to revolution” (Das 78). The title of *Jump and Other Stories* presents in a subtle way the problem of colour prejudice.

At this point in the telling came the confession that for the first time in his life he thought about blacks and hated them. They had smashed his camera and locked him up like a black and he hated them and their government and everything they might do, whether it was good or bad. No- he had not then believed they could ever do anything good for the country where he was born. (8-9)

Thus in the novels and in the short stories, Gordimer tells of the strange and immensely moving peril of the races.
The era of legalized racial discrimination ended in 1994 and a new era began in which South Africa is reborn as a “free nation after nearly three hundred years and returned to the fold of the comity of civilized nations” (Dangwal 100). Ngugi’s Karega in *Petals of Blood* feels, “The voice of the people is truly the voice of God” (126) and for Ngugi, the struggles of the people are of primary significance. As a writer, he uses his art in the service of the masses engaged in a fierce struggle against human degradation and oppression. Ngugi and Gordimer are both concerned with the transformation of society. The writings of Gordimer had more influence abroad in creating an awareness of apartheid among people. The novelist insists that she has no special audience in mind when she writes and is happy, for she hopes, “people read her books for other reasons than that she is a South African” (*Living in Hope* 83). The writer envisions better living conditions for the Blacks. *The Conservationist, Burger’s Daughter* and *July’s People*, authored by her during those horrible years of apartheid, in different ways pre-figured the end of apartheid. Stephen Clingman, South African comments that the oppressed black world and the absent future of South Africa pose a deep historical question to which each novel of Gordimer is an attempted solution.

The novels portray painful forays into the self for a better understanding of the outside world. The central characters, Toby Hood, Mehring and Maureen who are unable to get a foothold in South African soil, remain only superficially or peripherally involved in the racial struggle for survival. The White protagonists in the novels *The Lying Days, A World of*
Strangers, Occasion for Loving leave South Africa, in fear with hopes and promises to return. By contrast The Late Bourgeois World and Burger’s Daughter are significant as they show the white protagonists finally and fully responding to the needs of the Blacks. The novels deal with the white characters, who after undergoing stress and strain opt into the South African situation. The dilemma of “the whites and the manner in which they try to come to terms with the South African situation becomes a matter of urgent and lasting interest” (Green 557), for both Gordimer and the readers. The white characters Mehring, Maureen and Duncan realize that they could not opt out and that they are helped to a considerable extent by the black characters July, Jacobus and Motsamai. Thus the author wishes for a life of co-existence between the Whites and the Blacks in South Africa.

As a white writer in racist South Africa, Gordimer does not fit in the paradigm-literally the novels could scarcely be included as a part of official ‘White’ discourse. Yet at the same time, Ipshita Chanda in “Speaking for Another – Nadine Gordimer’s My Son’s Story” ascertains that “her focal characters are mainly white, both pro and anti-apartheid in sympathy” (58). Gordimer is rare among the white South Africans who have genuine and close friendships with the Blacks. Don Mattera, a black gang leader in 1950s Sophia town, a black township of Johannesburg had high regard for Gordimer. Wally Serote, a writer who chairs the arts and culture committee in Parliament, a black colleague since 1965, praises the ability of Gordimer to cross the colour bar in writing.
At home, Gordimer felt pity for the indifference to the plight of the Blacks. Her mother, the daughter of middle-class British Jew was troubled by the position of blacks, but in the spirit of her times, she did a lot of ‘charitable’ work and her concern was sincere. A living witness to all the atrocities, Gordimer, a humanist who is concerned with the interests, values and welfare of humans, visualizes the future South Africa with the Blacks and the Whites living a life of happiness and peace. Martin Luther King sprinkled hope in the minds of the Blacks through his speech: “Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away, and that in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty” (n.pg). Likewise, Gordimer through the novels has succeeded in kindling hope in the minds of the Blacks for equality, liberty and fraternity.

Lionel Burger in Burger’s Daughter, a humanist who lives for the liberation of the Blacks, is ready to work together for the great cause and voices:

We as communists black and white working in harmony with others who do not share our political philosophy have set our sights on is the national liberation of the African people, and thus the abolishment of discrimination and extension of political rights to all the peoples of this country…that alone has been our aim…beyond…there are matters the future will settle. (20-21)
Lionel Burger pledged in the court that the Communist Party stands for the unity of workers regardless of colour. Communists have served the workers’ cause by organizing unskilled and semi-skilled Africans, the Coloureds and the Indians, the largest and the most neglected sector of labour force, and the Communist Party has made a unique contribution to racial harmony in a country constantly threatened by racial unrest. The strike was “76,000 black miners’ genuine and justifiable protest against exploitation and contemptuous disregard of the needs, as workers and human beings, of the 400,000 black men in the industry” (87). Lionel, father of Rosa, her mother and the people in the house have association with the Blacks that is completely personal. The connection without reservations on the part of the Blacks or the Whites, no other Whites ever had in quite the same way. The political activities and attitudes of the Burger’s house came

…from the inside outwards, and blacks in that house where there was no God felt this embrace before the cross. At last there was nothing between this skin and that. At last nothing between the white man’s word and his deed; spluttering the same water together in the swimming-pool, going to prison after the same indictment. (171)

Gordimer pictures the humanistic attitude of Rosa who grows up completely colour blind. Both as a little girl and an adult, prior to her ideological and political maturation, she experiences no difficulty in relating
to the Blacks whether of her father’s household or outside it. She has problems in her relationship with neither Lily nor Bassie. “Lily”, the name of a domestic staffer in Burger’s household illustrates the absence of racial prejudice amongst them. As for the young Bassie, he is like Tony to Rosa, a (black) brother: ‘Bassie’ itself means ‘little master’- a name contradicted only by racism outside the Burger’s household. Rosa’s sense of decency and sincerity is matched by her sense of aesthetics. She is capable of appreciating beauty in a black person as readily as she would in any other colour of the human race:

Leaning on her elbow at the cosmetic counter opposite I saw the half-bare back of a black woman dressed in splashing colour of her skin … she could have been a splendid chorus girl but she looked like a queen of some prototype, extinct in Britain or Denmark where the office still exists. She was Marisa Kgosana. (134)

Though a white, Rosa has a fascination for Marisa, the black sales girl and Daniel, the black bar waiter is friendly to her. She perceives blackness not only aesthetically as a positive essence and characterizing quality, but also ideologically as the key to the future of South Africa. Lekan Oyegoke in “Crystallization of Identity in Nadine Gordimer’s Burger’s Daughter” opines: “Just as whiteness has been all that South Africa’s recent past has been about, blackness is all that South Africa’s future will be about” (58). In her house,
blackness was a “sensuous-redemptive means of perception. Through blackness is revealed the way to future” (134) of the South Africans where they live a life without threat and fear.

Lionel, a witness to the critical and pathetic condition of the Blacks wants to disprove the belief that, “Whites, not blacks, are ultimately responsible for everything blacks suffer and hate, even at the hands of their own people” (159). He evidently made it clear through his struggle for the Blacks. For nearly thirty years, the Communist Party allied itself as a legal organization with the African struggle for the rights of the Blacks and the extension of the franchise to the black majority. The municipal swimming pools are not for the poor black children. The black friends have never been in a pool before and “the municipal swimming baths weren’t open for them” (80). Lionel, fighting for the liberation of the Blacks, “gave their children swimming lessons; they clung to him, like Bassie and me” (80). The swimming pool remained to give pleasure to the, “black children who had never been into a pool before could be taught to swim there by my father” (125).

For a peaceful and harmonious future in South Africa, both the Whites and the Blacks have to adapt and accept themselves fully to the emerging situation. July’s People opens with the white South African Maureen and Bamford Smales in a hut provided to them by their former black servant July. It reflects the two previously unconnected worlds which are brought together,
when July brings the master’s family to his own native people. Neither the Smales nor the Blacks are prepared for the sudden and unexpected meeting and are alarmed by the shocking reality that replaces their dream fantasies. July serves Maureen and Bamford Smales very politely in the beginning of the novel, “…bringing two pink glass cups of tea and a small tin of condensed milk, jaggedly-opened, specially for them, with a spoon in” (1). The intermingling of the Whites and the Blacks find an excellent portrayal in July’s People, where Maureen is all with gratitude for July for the “risk of getting killed himself, for having us here” (128-29). She feels that she owes July everything, for he had saved their life and Maureen is quite happy that “she never made” him “do anything” he “didn’t think it was” (71) his job to do.

Gordimer’s portrayal of a new South Africa in peace and harmony through July’s People reaches its zenith when Bam, the white master mingles with the community of July and shares the happiness of the black people by dancing to their gumba-gumba music, drinking beer and building a water tank for the Blacks. The efforts of July in taking care of the master’s family and facilitating their needs form a significant event in the novel. Maureen and “her family were fed by them, succoured by them, hidden” (96) by July’s people. In the city, the Smaleses treated July well and they believed that July should be given due respect as a human being without showing any indifference towards colour, and July too acted according to the role given to him. In the village, out of their previous surroundings, where the ancient roles no longer
apply, colour discrimination fades away. For the Smaleses, after their narrow escape to the village, a dramatic change takes place in their role. They depend on July for food, shelter and medicine and ultimately for their escape. Both July and the Smaleses are presented as people who are about to enter a non-racial South Africa, in which differences in class and colour would be forgotten, yet the conflicts within them leave uncertainty about their position in South Africa. A peaceful future in South Africa remains a question mark because as Bam declares: “There is no music of spheres, science killed that along with all other myths; there are only the sounds of chaos, roaring, rending, crackling out of which the order that the world has been won. No peace beyond this world – not there, either”(124).

In an interview with Morris, Gordimer hopes, “If there has to be a true South African Culture, there should have been an honest intermingling of Black and White” (27). In July’s People, Gordimer has presented a sharp eye view of the society caught up completely in the racial struggle. The village chief is astonished to see July with a gun and hollers at him:

you’re not going to shoot your own people. You wouldn’t kill blacks. Mandela’s people, Sobukwe’s people… You’re not going to take guns and help the white government kill blacks, are you? Are you? For this – this village and this empty bush? And they’ll kill you. You mustn’t let the government make you kill each other. The whole black nation is your nation. (120)
The hope of living in their nation is pictured by the novelist with vivacity and vitality.

The novels of Gordimer exhibit the dawn of new South Africa where power would be in the hands of the Blacks and the Whites, playing a subordinate role. Mehring in *The Conservationist* leaves his farm to the Blacks whereas July in *July’s people* slowly grabs power from the White Smales. Nadine Gordimer creates a realistic portrayal that is human and has not been finalized in history. *July’s People* traces the end of White regime and the impact of the sudden reversal of power relationships on both the Whites and the Blacks. The necessity of interdependency of both the races of South Africa are lost in Maureen and July. By accepting each other for what they are, they would surely enter into peaceful relationship. As Gordimer herself is a living witness to the apartheid rule, she envisions a future for South Africa liberated from the iron shackles of apartheid. The transfer of power from the Whites to the Blacks is evident in *July’s People*. July, the Black who has worked as a servant for Maureen, the White at present, becomes the protector of the family of Maureen. Slowly July overpowers them to such an extent, that they feel dislocated in the village and Maureen runs in search of an uncertain place. Through the anecdotes, Gordimer has painted the post-apartheid South Africa and the inner dilemmas of the South Africans, faced during the last few decades due to apartheid. Her humanistic vision is that South Africans should live in harmony with equal opportunities for the Whites and the Blacks.
As racial relations have completely changed in post-apartheid South Africa, Gordimer in *The Pickup* deals with Julie, the white South African joining with the black Abdu to live a life of harmony and peace in the new land. The paradoxical nature of the novel is clearly evident where Julie initially distances herself from the rich white middle-class divorced parents. She lives in a formerly black part of the city, drives an old second-hand car and spends the leisure time with her multicultural and liberal circle of friends in the EL-AY Café. Gordimer describes the mixed race bunch thus: “Black and white, they fused about her” (6) indicating that in Julie’s circle, race and colour play no part, though the “pick up of her’s been a disaster from the beginning” (92), she copes with the move and makes necessary cultural adjustments for a synchronized life. Her journey to self discovery and that of Abdu’s to his identity, the differences in their attitude to family and friendship, values and responsibilities are realistically portrayed by Gordimer. Julie’s adaptation of Abdu’s culture, where “she has come to be accepted as one of the women who share household tasks, and she makes use of her education to teach English to school children and anyone else in the village…” (169-70), reveals the novelist’s vision of an apartheid free South Africa where the Blacks and the Whites celebrate the life of harmony and peace.

Gordimer has been in a paradoxical social situation: “a white living in privilege, yet writing for the cause of the deprived blacks” (Dangwal 104). The novelist writes of white privilege as “a silver spoon clamped between
your jaws and you might choke on it for all the chance there was of dislodging it” (Das 72) by projecting a bleak future in the ‘resurrection’ of the black corpse in *The Conservationist*. For blacks, the land is a symbol of hope and promise of rebirth, but it is a “graveyard” a “cold thick land” (141-42) for Mehring. He wishes to plant trees that probably would not take roots in African soil. “I’m planting European chestnuts for the blacks to use as firewood after they’ve taken over” (223), for it is an omen of the approaching end of the White man’s history in the continent. To Gordimer, in South Africa, death is a “final bankruptcy” (*Six Feet 9*) for the Whites and symbolic of the belief that the Europeans have no future in Africa. The power is in the hands of the Blacks and the interdependence of South Africa is a realization of the Whites that they must lose themselves in order to find themselves.

Reflecting on his early work on race in the 1970s, Hall has recalled, that racism works like Freud’s dream. Racism finds its complete expression through displacement and denial. To Hall, moral panic, as the ideological form of racism is:

> it deals with those fears and anxieties, not by addressing the real problems and conditions which underlie them, but by projecting and displacing them onto the identified social group. That is to say, the moral panic crystallizes popular fear and anxieties which have a real basis and by providing them with a simple, concrete, identifiable … social object, seeks to resolve them. (qtd. in Procter 85)
In *Get a Life, July’s People, The Pickup, Burger’s Daughter, The Conservationist* and *The House Gun*, Gordimer brings in the moral panic of the people who try to amalgamate the life of the Blacks and the Whites. The novelist wrote to Kenzaburo Oe, a Japanese writer about the central role of the black lawyer in *The House Gun*. The parallel theme of placing the lives of the Whites and the Blacks in the context of their country, the new South Africa, “was that they-white people who in the past regime of racial discrimination had always black people dependent upon them-would find themselves dependent upon a distinguished black lawyer to defend their son” (*Living in Hope* 89). Apart from Motsamai’s distinction as a counsel and the initial disgust of Lingards and their son to depend heavily on a black man, Motsamai is also a study in the Black’s access to power his children, representing the Blacks of the whole of South Africa,

have professions; economists, prospective doctors, and lawyers and architects, God knows, there are other children of his in the room. Their grandfathers and fathers having survived so much, does this mean they’re safe; these will not bring down upon themselves something terrible. (174)

Lindgards, the Whites were not racists, “if racist means having revulsion against skin of different colour, believing or wanting to believe that anyone who is not your own colour or religion or nationality is intellectually and morally inferior” (86). Claudia Lindgard has proof that flesh, blood and
suffering are the same, with regard to skin. Harald Lindgard believes that all humans are creatures of God. Duncan who had Jewish and other black friends was taught not to prejudice against the blacks, the Jews, the Indians, the Afrikaners, believers and non-believers, “all the easy sins that presented themselves in the country of his birth” (73). Claudia worked at clinics to staunch the wounds racism has gashed; she does not risk her own skin by contact, outside the intimate professional one, with the black men and women she has treated, neither by offering asylum “when she had deduced they were activists on the run from the police, not by acting as the kind of conduit between revolutionaries her to-and-fro in communities would have made possible” (86). Thus, The House Gun presents the relationship between identity and context with humanistic vision.

Get a Life crystallizes the life of the abandoned Blacks. Lyndsay, Paul’s mother by adopting Klara, the HIV infected black girl, announces the attitude of the Whites to an integral life with the Blacks. “To adopt a black child, an orphan from, Sarajevo…” (153) makes her feel that she is humane who could sow a seed of hope in a child. Paul and Benni, confronting the issue of selecting a school for their child finds its possibly easy in a “changed country both made a ‘normal’ education possible as it never was under segregation when Paul was a child … No segregation, black and white” (46). Thus, in Get a Life, the novelist treats an apartheid free society of South Africa.
Gordimer has only one solution for the suppressed and oppressed people of South Africa. She wishes them to demand their rights from the Whites hoping for a new dawn. Mrs Daphne Mkhonza, a black woman beating white businessmen with their own marked cards is featured in the women’s pages of white newspapers as an example of what black people could achieve despite their disadvantages. She is one of the rare black petty capitalists, “what Marisa’s cousin Fats would call a tycoon, who somehow manages to circumvent some of the laws that prevent blacks from trading on a scale that makes white tycoons” (201). July’s People confidently envisions a post-apartheid South Africa where the “black people who are making this war to get everybody’s land back from the whites who took it”(118). The Blacks in The Conservationist have found solution to their sufferings long ago. “The white working man knows he couldn’t live as well anywhere else in the world, and the blacks want their … Africa” (252) for themselves and they “took possession of this earth, theirs” (267). Gordimer has, thus revealed in the novels, the psychological consequence of a racially divided society.

A faint glance of the future that Gordimer has dreamt for South Africa, freed from fetters of colour and gender, is thus revealed. She is doubtful about the role of the Blacks on the Whites and the Whites on the Blacks. The novelist prophetically visualizes the future of South Africa with the Blacks and the Whites live in peace and harmony prior to the abolishment of apartheid. A white writer, deeply committed to black literature and its people, the honest unprejudiced attitude of Gordimer is seen in the novels where
neither the black characters are neither whitewashed nor the whites black listed.

Gordimer transfers the real life events of the South African society into fiction, mirroring out the nuances of the country by transforming the experiences of the Blacks and the Whites. As a sturdy fighter for apartheid, the novelist is very confrontational in portraying the polarized society under the official policy of racial discrimination that efficiently condemned the Blacks of their rights. The writer has explored the pain, pressure, confusion and the unfairness that exists in South Africa. The novelist, as a white writer, finds her position in the land of the Blacks as unfavourable. Despite the banning of the novels, Gordimer could unveil the uncomfortable ambiguities of the Blacks in their own land battling for space and life in a realistic way.

The novels further unfold the conflict between the white conquerors and the conquered black, white masters and black servants, the village and the city. The human variance torn between the desire to live personal and private life, the racial displacement and alienation are revealed in them. The characters, governed by the South African feelings and the mental frame work of the Whites who feel nothing or little for the misfortunes of others are reflected in *The Conservationist, Burger’s Daughter* and *July’s people* which deal with the motifs of understanding, forgiveness, and adjustment record the futile attempt of the middle-class whites and the poor blacks to respect each other’s values. The author’s vision of cross-racial relationship in the portrayal
of the Blacks and the Whites finds glorious expression in the understanding and misunderstanding between the Blacks and the Whites under conflicting situations. The spirit and inner quality of life lived in South Africa in a highly discerning and an intensely sensitive way is expressed in *July’s People*. The characters Mehring, Maureen, Rosa, Julie, Jacobus, July, Bassie and Abdu are presented as representatives of the two divisions of the society. The novelist unmasks the mystery of the society and the societal structure of the present South Africa in *The House Gun*. The talent of the author to plunge into the relation between communal and personal life is presented in the novels. Gordimer scrutinizes the social strains of the apartheid through the microcosm of the family relationships in apartheid free South Africa. In *The Pickup*, the novelist pragmatically depicts the inner pressure and pain, alienation, condemnation, love and life which mark the main characteristic traits.

The novels highlight the predicament of the Blacks in their terrible living conditions, denial of basic human rights, the atrocities imposed upon them and the inextricable pain. The novelist vigilantly presents the hardships that have hardened the lives of the Blacks in their own land which make them feel dislocated. The new era, in which South Africa, breathing fresh life free from stress and strain after nearly three hundred years has been visualized in the novels. The newly dawned era provides hope to the author that her envisioned land would attain higher and brighter summit to glorify humanity.