CHAPTER – II

FARIDA KARODIA - COLONIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Farida Karodia, novelist and short story writer was born in 1942 in Aliwal North, South Africa and she graduated from Corona Townville Teacher Training College in 1961. She taught in Johannesburg and later in Zambia. When the government of South Africa withdrew her passport in 1968, she emigrated to Canada, where she supported herself with teaching and other jobs. At the same time she was studying and writing fiction and wrote radio drama for C.B.C. She returned to South Africa in 1994.

Her first novel, *Daughters of the Twilight* (1986), was shortlisted for the Fawlett Prize. Another novel *A Shattering of Silence* about the war in Mozambique was published in 1993. She is also author of two short story collections: *Coming Home and Other Stories* (1988) and *Against an African Sky and Other Stories* (1995). After studying for 20 years in Canada she has now returned to South Africa and resides in Johannesburg for six months and six months in Canada. The recent works included the novels *Other Secrets* (2000) and *Boundaries* (2003).


Though she has drawn on her own on varied background for themes in her novels and stories, Karodia is not limited in scope or genre. Her first novel, *Daughter of the Twilight* (1986) reflects her
South African childhood and the limits on education and domiciles for non-whites under the rule of the whites. Her collection of short stories *Coming Home and Other Stories* (1988) shows her skills and versatility in depicting protagonists of various ethnic groups. For instance a Boer girl, as black teacher, a ‘colored’ mixed race mother, a white employer. (She has also written about Canada and after a visit to India in 1991.)


*Other Secrets* relates the Saga of an Asian or rather mixed blood family in South Africa under apartheid regime but constant references are made to the forth coming elections with its hope and despair, to prominent political figures like Biko, Mandel, Sisuler in their respective struggle against the regime. The main characters in this novel are the members of this nuclear family, namely the parents, Abdul and his wife Delia referred to as Pa and Ma, the two daughters Jasmin and Meena, the narrator and the maternal grandmother Mama. The female characters, tough, determined and defiant in their actions have the leading role and contest with the peripheral role of the principled and working father whose only fault is his futile optimism a low profile Leibnizian (Lebanon) character.
Her novel *A Shattering of Silence* (1993) examines, against the background of the Mozambique civil war, the problems of remembering processes and the overcoming of trauma. The text is based on the fictional diaries of Faith, the protagonist, and daughter of Canadian missionaries who were killed during war. As a young woman, she sets out to find out the murderer of her family. At the same time Farida Karodia recovers her voice and language which she had lost after her shock experiences in writing. In the preface of the novel the author emphasizes that the story of the protagonist is exemplary. It is representative of the reality of hundreds of thousands of children all over the world who are brutalized by war, hunger and political corruption.

The stories in her short story collection *Against an African Sky* (1995), which the writer wrote after her return to South Africa, deal with the post-apartheid society from different perspectives. The author goes beyond the social boundaries of gender, race, class, by creating white, black, and Asian male and female, rich and poor protagonists whom she allows to speak as narrator. She creates a Polyphonic picture of the ‘Rainbow Society’ of South Africa Karodia shows conciliatory and hopeful perspectives and her figures go through identity forming process which force them to go beyond well warm behavioral pattern. Thematically, if resistance, the guilt feelings of the whites after the end of apartheid or the violence in the black town ships are critically looked at, the present novel can be studied from cultural point of view.

Colonialism has been one of the most significant phenomena in human history for the last three hundred years or so. Its importance can
hardly be overstated. Yet, as many have said before, it has not been adequately theorized. Colonialism generated a particular way of looking at the world in both the metropolis and the colonies. Colonial consciousness is to indicate this particular way of looking at the world. It is not merely the life in the civilizational superiority of one particular civilization. It is also a belief that functions on as a cognitive premise (whether as a suppressed premise or as an explicit one) and as a logical conclusion of the descriptions of the colonized and, as such, is a massive exercise. Colonialism involves creating and sustaining such a consciousness. In that case, colonialism is not merely a process of occupying lands and extracting revenues. It is not a question of encouraging the colonized to ape the western countries in trying to be like them. It is not even about colonizing the imagination of people by making them dream that they too will become ‘modern,’ developed and sophisticated, it goes deeper than any of these. Colonialism denies the colonized people and cultures their own experiences; it makes them alien to themselves; it actively prevents descriptions of their own experiences except in terms defined by the colonizers. This situation makes colonialism intrinsically immoral. The colonial consciousness is not only an expression of the phenomenon that colonialism is but also its integral part. Colonialism generates and sustains colonial consciousness. The framework about the civilizational superiority comes between the colonized and his experience of the world. A framework shared by the colonizer.

In her novel *A Shattering of Silence* Farida Karodia uses first person narrative throughout the novel. Faith, the protagonist, of the
novel is initially eight years old child and hence a child narrator but soon becomes the adult narrator. Through this technique of narration Karodia makes an attempt to explore the effects of the trauma of war where a child’s identity and voice are removed and regained.

Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia in the book Edward Said make it clear that “the sense of loss of the colonized people is deep and unremitting and it is only often this sense of loss from which empowerment emerges.”

Karodia’s need for purification is so strong that she becomes an intrusive narrator as her narrating ‘I’ often becomes the experiencing ‘I’. There is an autobiographical aspect as she identifies with her protagonist’s/narrator’s trauma and recuperation of her identity and voice. As Edward Said point out the sense of loss as it is both deep and unremitting. In the same way Faith loses her parents, home, identity, memory and everything which she possesess. She says:

The enormous sense of loss and confusion about the events of the past few days paralyzed me. I had lost everything: my parents, my home, my memory and my ability to speak, the shock left me numbed, unable to cry.

Therefore there is resemblance between the character Faith Smith and the writer. Coincidentally, Karodia also returned to the country of her childhood, South Africa, after an absence of 20 years. Karodia also fled to a society where she was a victim. Just as Faith’s diaries allow her to come to terms with her trauma that resulted in her loss of voice, Karodia’s writings allow her to come to terms with traumatic experiences of her youth in apartheid South Africa.

Faith finds her painful memories return, as she remembers the day on which she had started out so peacefully 40 years ago, in a
remote village in northern Mozambique, ‘and ended in tragedy robbing me of my voice, my history, and much of my life’.

With these words the novel flashes back 40 years when the eight years old Faith begins to narrate the story of her life in war-torn Mozambique. Her parents Rebecca and Alex Smith are Canadian Missionaries while her mother runs a clinic and dispensary and her father a school and Christian church, she enjoys:

*Those early years of growing up in the village provided me with wonderful experience. I was fortunate to have enjoyed the freedom and innocence of such a carefree childhood…which brought every one together as family.*

Faith discovers that her parents have opposing views on the question of imposing one culture on another. Rebecca gets angry when she has to deal with ‘problems created by rituals,’ where as Alex believed ‘that indigenous people ought not to be pushed to develop too rapidly.’ These words allow Karodia to initiate her criticism of colonialism and of the ethics and beliefs, which sought to thrust upon the cultures of the local. Faith comments: ‘Years later I realized how naive we had been.’

The Portuguese Colonial estate owners in Tete Province are enormously powerful and although labour conditions are loathsome, they are apposed to change any sort. Alex claims this attitude can ‘only reinforce the sense of inferiority instilled by the colonialist.’ Here one is reminded of what Abdul Jan Mohammad calls as Manichean allegory of binary oppositions of colonizer and colonized. The private armies supported by the estate owners and approved by the colonial government destroyed entire rural committees in an attempt to quash
their resistance against starvation wages. Tete is a rural province in Mozambique where these murders were particularly prevalent. The indigenous people were projected as feminine, inferior, ugly, uncivilized, black etc. by the colonizers. Whereas the colonizers were projected as superior, masculine, good civilized, whites.

Consequently, Alex is seen to sympathise with the workers and a certain Joseph Coelho, a labour organizer. Being a protestant missionary does not further Alex’s cause and having incurred the wrath of Paul Marias, the most powerful and owner of the region, the apocalyptic events which to follow are initiated. Horn comments:

“My parents went down with two shots. I might have run to them had Lodiya not dragged me back. I sank to the ground, hugging my knees, my back pressed against the wall of rock. I buried my face in my knees, sobbing bitterly.”

The colonizers not only colonized the local population, their culture, their identity, their existence but also brutally killed them. Farida Karodia criticizes colonialism and its consequences in Mozambique. Faith’s ‘carefree childhood’ is brought to an abrupt end with the arrival of a helicopter of paramilitary forces who massacre the entire village with ruthless cruelty that Karodia describes powerfully and vividly. Faith is hiding closely, having been tinged away by sixteen-year-old Lodiya, her nanny’s daughter. Her clear view of the massacre and the resultant trauma leaves Faith with no memory, no parents, no home, no voice. Lodiya takes her to father Fernando’s Catholic mission where she is further robbed of her history when he informs the authorities that there were no survivors. Father Fernando told authorities that there had been no survivors.
Faith undergoes a huge character change and she now faces the future with ‘growing dread and terror of the future.’ At this point Faith’s character develops as resistance character. Where she realizes her past, loss of her identity, and now she tries to resist the situation and condition in which history has placed her. She becomes an active resister. Having initiated her criticism of Colonialism, Karodia now examines the treatment of the child victims of war at the Catholic mission orphanage. She also questions the Christian perspective of rendering aid to the needy in exchange for conversion to Catholicism. Lodiya comments in one of her black moods, Lodiya hinted at the possibility that father Fernando and (Faith’s) my parents had competed for catholic and protestant converts. Jan Mohammed employs Jameson’s accounts of literature’s relationship to ideology and to social and cultural practice in order to emphasize the need in postcolonial texts to (rewrite) the literary text such a way that the latter may itself be seen as the rewriting or re-structuring of a prior historical or ideological subtext. Farida Karodia is rewriting the history, ethics, socio, geo-cultural, Eco, special aspects in the form of a literary text of Mozambique war. Faith finds this attitude as offensive. Lodiya scorns what she believes is the subjugation of the Mozambicans to an unfamiliar religion rather than developing the system of the indigenous culture. It is evident at the mission school that both spirit and tradition of the local culture are not tolerated. Only Portuguese is spoken, and all beliefs perceived to be heathen, are forsaken, ‘who wore ritual amulets or charms were punished severely. The only charm allowed on the premises was a crucifix.’
The catholic nuns at the orphanage are the next target of Karodia’s criticism of Catholicism. Faith comments on Sister Luisa’s ‘expression was the same as the ones carved into dawn mashs,’\textsuperscript{12} An unholy visage indeed. The missionary nuns are shown to be heartless, cruel and lack any understanding of the beliefs of the local Mozambican. Shriks: ‘What God? There is no God!’\textsuperscript{13} When it is discovered that Faith is not lazy, but has contracted malaria. It comes as no surprise; therefore, that Lodiya leaves the mission. It is the last time Faith ever sees her. It is only 20 years later that she reads of her death in a Mozambican relief prison camp. In a London newspaper Lodiya resists against the oppression of the missionary nuns. She is an active resister in a sense that she leaves the missionary forever and goes to the Mozambican prison camp where she dies. She can’t tolerate the physical torture given to Faith.

Karodia examines the plight of children who are brutalized by war, hunger and political corruption in the novel and her account of conditions at the orphanage is vivid and detailed. Her research in this area is thorough and admirable. She doesn’t assign culpability to any one organization or society in an attempt to appear non-judgmental. The conditions under which the children live are atrocious, and Karodia’s description is graphic. The children are half-starved, crippled, sparsely clothed and ‘considered an eyesore and a nuisance by a government bent on promoting tourism. The building is cold, drafty, and full of vermin.’\textsuperscript{14}

The colonial conditions of the Mozambicans were miserable worst under the Portuguese rule. The colonizers not only destructed and
destroyed their material life, cultural life, social, political geographical but also their historical life. ‘What might be called ‘cultural resistance to France’s African empire? Fanon (A Psychiatist from Martinique) argued that the first step for ‘colonized’ people is finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their own past. Said identifies a European cultural tradition of Orientalism, which is particular and long-standing way of identifying the east as ‘other’ and inferior to the west.’ 

Karodia suggests a duplicity, or pharisacism in the intentions of the nuns in her comparison of Sister Luisa to a life-size statue of Christ. Faith says, ‘The image of a crippled Christ seemed quite fitting,’ amongst the crippled but also psychologically, affected. Christ preached the law of ‘love your neighbour.’ ‘Approve for the people, what you would approve for your self’ obliviously, Sister Luisa, a representative of Christ’s legacy, is anything but a lover of mankind and the treatment of the children, crippled by war, are the antithesis of Christ’s teaching.

Prophet Mohammed said:

Negritude was the celebration of Blackness, of being black, of specifically African culture and African values that sought to reify a pre-colonial African past. This need to resurrect on African culture founded on the claimed glories of the past is one rejected by Fanon. As Soyinka points out, negritude stayed within... trapping the representation of African reality in those binary terms.

Faith is white, her stay at the orphanage is brief and she is sponsored by a wealthy Portuguese woman, Dona Maria Del Gado Cardoso, an interesting, undeveloped peripheral character. Ironically, she sends Faith to catholic convent, to be educated ‘properly’ for the first time and to learn to communicate in sign language. Karodia
Farida Karodia - Colonial Consciousness

considers that perhaps the Missionaries made positive contribution, but her earlier overt criticism suggests that cultural inclusion, not exclusion, may have not successful in their dealings with the locals. Karodia uses Faith’s four-year sojourn at the convent of Santa Terasa to show the reader how Faith’s character develops, to continue their criticism of colonialism and the Christian religion especially (Catholicism), to hint at the expansion of the relief movements and to highlight the plight of war orphans. When she leaves the convent at eighteen, Faith takes up a position at the clinic for the Deaf to teach sign language to the privileged children of wealthy Portuguese parents. In this way her isolation from her previous life amongst the indigenous Mozambicans is cemented for the time being. She pays frequent visits to Dona Maria and Senhor Cardosa the latter being very critical of the Lisbon Government for the oppressive conditions in Mozambique.

Rita is Karodia’s persona as she, once again, examines the effects of colonialism, Christianity and the plight of war orphans. When Rita hears that Faith will be teaching white Portuguese children sign language, she scornfully refers to their parents as oppressors whose mansions perched with life glittering jewel. Later Rita claims that she herself will have a hard time getting into because she is black. Rita’s allusions to the significance of skin colour makes Faith very uncomfortable, for it is something that has never been an issue in her life. Karodia makes it very clear that ‘faceless’ colonial government bled the occupied countries dry white, they ignored the fights of the locals. Karodia intimates that convent life constitutes a hive of elitism as the nuns live in their self-sufficient microcosmic society, cut off
from the reality of the impoverished local Mozambicans on the outside. Rita makes negative remark:

*It's like being in prison,*’ she remarked. *Was this what prison was like? I wondered Angie had once told me that not being able to speak was like being imprisoned in your own body. She had assured me that sign language would ultimately free me.*  

Faith believed that the only thing, which would help her, was the sign language. This would help her to get free with the freedom of expressions. It was only in this way her silence would get a voice. Rita raises questions about a Christian God when she sees children paying the price for political corruption. The children who turn up at the hospital are malnourished and orphaned. Karodia makes a point of mentioning that these children are ‘confined mainly to the black ghettos.’ While the European population remains blissfully unaware of their suffering and dispossession.

Karodia, as a victim of apartheid always identifies with the victims of society. This makes her writing very partial, and it is unfortunate that she does not at times put herself into the persona of Dona Maria, for instance, to give a more balanced view of her character’s experiences. Karodia’s writing is mainly cathartic, for she clearly had a great need to heal herself of her past. She is unable to separate herself from her narrative. Her relationship with her protagonist/narrator is excremental. Her authorial intention, which is to explore situations where identity is denied and voices are smothered, is hindered by her intrusive narrative and this detracts from the artistic integrity of her work. However, as a female voice in post-apartheid South Africa her novel is an admirable attempt to recruit the history of a
past, which was dominated by white historiography. She achieves her goal exposing the predicament of children of an unjust political society.

It is at this time that Faith meets David, the English engineer who is to influence her life significantly and she feels secure in the fact that ‘there was now some one who cared for (her).’ 20 As she matures, she is able to make her own decisions, even if some regard them as somewhat contrary. David asks her to marry him; she suggests that they live together instead. Dona, Maria, and David are taken aback, but a more mature Faith feels that there,

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\ldots \text{were aspects of my life and my personality that few understood. Much of who I had been forged in those early years under intolerable conditions, without complaint. With no voice to cry out, there was slow build up of rage and resentment.}^{21}
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As Faith struggles to come to terms with a lost identity, the reader admires her courage and confidence. Faith and David’s relationship starts to suffer as a result of Faith’s feelings of guilt about an empty past. He is unhappy about their ‘loose living arrangement,’22 and her trips to the township. In his attempt to halt this connection, he makes a statement that stays with Faith during all her years.

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The \text{people here are still too traditional- their way of life is quite incompatible with development. It’ll take years for them to catch up with the developed countries. Africa is dominated by dictatorships, all notorious for their excesses and their lack of integrity and humanity. You mark my word, one day, weakened by war, corruption and famine, we will see Africa re-colonized by new master.}^{23}
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These words highlight the great-calculated insight or they merely show a lack of confidence in the future of a trial and warlike Africa. Having struggled to maintain peace through the middle sections of her
narrative, Karodia bombards her reader with the facts. Faith, Karodia’s mouthpiece here, counters with the word,

“Colonialism is a White man’s concept for the blacks it means slavery, it means genocide, it means the raping and pillaging of their nation and their culture. As for the White man’s concept of morality and humanity.”

The Afrikaner is equated with apartheid. Karodia’s introduction of Wyanand van Der Berg, one of David’s business associates, allows her to express her distaste for this stereotype of oppression. It is understandable that Karodia indulges in this sort of characterization, as she was the victim of oppression under the Afrikaner Nationalist government. So she sees African in a negative light. Van Der Berg is labeled as coarse, uncouth and rude with limited vocabulary. He is overweight and bulging, his soft white flesh gleaming like the underbelly of a fish. While Karodia has the authorial right to depict African in this way—they did after all cause massive suffering with their Calvinistic, self-righteousness— not all African speaking people are uncultured like Van Der Berg, and this bias undermines the artistic integrity of Karodia’s novel. To have been more balanced would have enhanced the appeal of her novel. Faith’s characters gain depth with the introduction of Juan Guerra, a doctor from Portugal, working at the hospital. Initially a working relationship develops between Faith and Juan, but he is both passionate and hard working. So he is absolutely different for David that Faith is attracted to him. Another two new peripheral characters are also introduced: Helia de Souza and Rhoinca. These three characters play an integral role in the rest of the novel but they do not develop, they remain with us for a considerable time. With their introduction the
pace of the action also accelerates, although not dramatically. Another issue that emerges is the rumour about children disappearing or being kidnapped. This ‘rumour’ gains credulity with the disappearance of Faith’s neighbour’s daughter, Sofia. There is a suspicion that the children are being shipped out of the country to be sold into slavery. Rhonica helps to solve the problem of the disappearing children. She and Faith go down to the docks and onto a ship where they discover dozens of children in the hall waiting to be transported to the Middle East where they will, it suspected, be sold as slaves. Karodia has quite subtly brought out piracy by which children became victims of war. Later we learn that the boat met with sea robbery on the coast of Tanzania, and consequently the children landed up in refugee camps.

Rita is involved in the liberation movement. Having struggled to maintain pace through the middle section of her narrative, Karodia bombards her reader with facts and then allows the novel to slip into a light romantic style a litchi love story. David’s presumed to be in South Africa, turns up at a ball which Faith is attending with Juan. When David sees Juan, he hastily retreats. This ending is predictable, however, if one looks at the themes portrayed, Karodia simply could not allow her heroine to have successful relationship with a person considered to be a colonial puppet. On a positive note, the trauma of being attacked by her parents’ assassin allow Faith to overcome her silence and scream:

*I was whimpering one movement I was sweating, the next shivering with cold. I could hear the loud clattering from the sky, the sound of gunfire and people screaming. I tried to crawl away. There was another explosion. ‘Mama!’ I cried ‘mama’ I cried again in a child-like voice.*

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The novel ends with Faith’s memory returning rapidly and her request to address United Nations about child slavery. Through her autobiographical node of narration, Karodia makes Faith write this novel about her sojourn, which is finally able to shatter her silence and find a voice and identity in a patriarchal society.

For her novel Karodia has a format of five books. The first book consists of three chapters. The second book consists of chapters four and five. The third book consists of chapters six to fourteen and the last book, that is book five consists of chapters 18 to 20. As *A Shattering of Silence* was written in 1993 and is set in pre-independence Mozambique, there is need to comment on its relevance to post-apartheid literature writing. This novel was probably a therapeutic for Karodia as it was for Faith, who was finally able to shatter her silence and find a voice and identity in a society free from discrimination.

**AGAINST AN AFRICAN SKY AND OTHER STORIES:**

Karodia is post-apartheid English-speaking woman writer. She experiences life under the apartheid regime which consequently influences her writing. It is inevitable, therefore that her protagonist, reflects her experiences within the confines of apartheid. Areas such as interracial relations, African legend and mythology, the convert operation of apartheid perpetrators and the conservative thinking of the Afrikaner are some areas, which are explored in her writing. Karodia attempts to present a fresh view of a past distorted by the apartheid.

With the end of apartheid, a new constitution and a new hope for the future of the country ordinary South-Africans pick up the treads of
their ordinary day to day life. In these stories Karodia explores lives and relationship in the new South Africa from the perspectives of Indian, African and European characters. Many of the problems and situations of her people are timeless. An African woman subsisting in poverty awaits with anxiety the arrival of her daughter from a neighboring town; an elderly Indian couple try, to great disappointment, to marry off their recently arrived daughter from England; a South African of Dutch descent returns after years in exile to find a changed society.

In A.A.S. Johan an expatriate comes back to the country after years of absence. He is the privileged son of the owner of a vast farm, in the Karoo Sisise, a childhood friend whose family worked at the farm and Aaron Johan’s black half-brother, converge for one more visit to the land of their childhood memories. Each had escaped South Africa for better opportunity. Johan went to England, Sissie went to Scotland to pursue a medical degree, and Aaron travelled to England and America on ANC business.

Johan, the main protagonist is white South African who migrates to Britain after his family dies in a car accident and returns ten years later to reconcile himself with the past. The very first line of the text speaks about Johan’s desire to return to his own country South Africa, he says:

*Somewhere embedded deep down in my consciousness, had always been the feeling that some day I would return to South Africa. I had returned now after ten years of absence... I have come home, weighted down by my past.*

The silt he feels regarding family’s death mirrors the guilt that he feels for being a member of the privileged community of whites during
the apartheid event. But the law family blamed him for the accident. There were no bounds that existed between Johan and his family ‘It was all laid bare, in cruel and painful terms.’

They still, after all these years, blamed Johan for the loss of their only daughter and their two grand children. And even the family is not able to forget that Johan and Erica had argued the morning of accident. Johan’s desire to return to farm at his childhood and start over again represent the ways in which he renounces guilt through action. There are times when I feel that I belong here on the mountain slope, amidst the flowers perhaps eventually to become as reclusive as the legendary ran Hunks. But this feeling of comfort and contentment fluctuates. At times, I feel it was mistake to have returned. I no longer belong here. I feel as though I am in limbo between worlds...At this stage of my life, I require more than superficial relationships or superficial life style.  

The recent death of Johan’s aunt forces him to make a decision about his ancestral home, pondersed. If the farm lies idle, it will be subject to the government’s resettlement program. The vastness of the Karoo invites reflection. Against this backdrop, Johan’s assessment of the new South Africa reveals that there has been no change in the policy and still the whites are of dominant group. The rules have changed, but the game goes on as before. Karodia knows very well the consequences of colonial rule.

“If you’re a black woman, you start out with two strikes against you. You can never imagine the indignities I suffered, as a black woman, both here and aborad”

By taking on his coloured half brother’s son as an apprentice, Johan asserts that multi-racial partnership marks a new era of inter racial relations in the new South Africa. He also feels apartheid as a disease and it would require years to eradicate. Karodia very
brilliantly exposed the relationship of white and black during colonial period and South Africa and the same relationship of whites and blacks after independence.

_The whites make fun of the blacks who buy big houses, but you must understand, the blacks now are only making up for what they have been deprived of._ 29

The Blacks are reclaiming their past, their identity, and their right to property after the independence, which they have been deprived of.

Hall goes on to argue that the beginning of post war British racism reside in the systematic denial of this (internal) overseas history; by turning what is inside out, in installs, a series of binary oppositions between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ self and ‘together,’ ‘inside’ and ‘outside.’ Racism he argues works through a ‘profound historical forgetfulness’…a kind of historical amnesia, a decisive mental repression involving the displacement of its colonial history…Racism and reaction is that racism is culturally and historically specific rather than naturally occurring and universal, multiple rather than singular in its forms. 30

Sissie and Johan discuss about the violence which was still prevailing in their township, ‘what kind of legacy are we leaving them, Johan? ‘freedom,’ ‘yes,’ but is freedom alone, enough? What about freedom with responsibility?’ 31

The postcolonial condition of South Africa is magnificently shown by Farida Karodia. The problems which are faced by new South African’s, there is no doubt that they gain freedom but their
independence, their freedom will be only possible only if they bear the responsibility.

‘We buried Aaron on the farm. Amongst the mourners were several of his comrades from the A.N.C. These men were now in important government positions, but they had taken time to come all the way out there to pay their respect. We buried him close to where he died, at the foot of the ridge, with an eternal view of landscape.’

The events that happened in the past two weeks had effected the life of Johan and others around him. He feels as if the fog had lifted and that for the first time he saw everything clearly. They think that gods have now been appeased and everything went right. Still, in their reflections on their youth in the wide open, space of the form, there is a sense of elegance and equity. By the story’s end, the suggestion is made that through lilt family lies a solution to the resettlement question might well be achieved.

Karodia concentrates on the exclusions of people of colour within apartheid society she attempt to recuperate the past in her need to regain her identity in a society where to be coloured meant denial of identity. Her characters reflect rejections in this colour-dominated society and the trauma experienced. The emergence of women author of ‘colour’ cannot, therefore, be ignored for they too now have a voice in post-apartheid literature.

The story Billy, second in the collection of five short stories deals with the life of mentally disabled boy, who experiences poverty in the new South Africa, and remains on the outside of changes that are taking place in Post-apartheid South Africa.
Harry is deep sea diver and his wife Rose lived happy life before the accident took place. Harry was hospitalized for two months. The accident had not only affected his memory but slurred his speech and he was partially paralyzed from his left side.

*You must try to remember what happened, Harry, she insisted. I don't know, all I remember was that I had to go on this dive he told her. “Where?” He tried think, but it was hopeless.*  

Rose had to do everything for Harry. She had to take him to the bathroom, undo and clean him. And it was worse than trying to cope with Billy. Rose had to take care of two persons, her husband Harry a paralyzed man, and Billy a mentally disabled boy. The diamond dredging company denied culpability for the accident, but they agreed to provide the family with small pension and these were the difficult times and Rose often thought of moving back to Cape Town.

It is at this moment that Karodia introduces Mrs. Da Silva to the reader. She has a store. Rose has to cross the road to meet Mrs. Da Silva. The traditions of old Cape Town of Kockister are mentioned by Karodia. Before Rose had Kocksisters every Sunday after the accident, she adjusted the schedule and had them on every Saturday.

*Harry had once told her that most of the mining in this area was for rare-earth minerals, minerals which were used in nuclear research... all she knew was what she saw: well guarded mines, electrified fencing, and armed guards at the gates.*

It was difficult for Rose to read the words and pronounce them she was equally surprised when Harry started reading the materials on rare earth minerals and nuclear power. She couldn’t understand. Harry was educated up to school but could read these articles as if he was reading
a story. A friend of theirs who had moved to the United States occasionally sent them articles or papers written by university professors. When these letters arrived it was as if Harry was walking two feet off the ground.

It was very difficult for Rose to take care of Harry and Billy. But she never complained and was always ready to provide services to her husband and child. Rose never complained to Harry never burdened him. Rose always remembered Cape Town, the absence of real mountains, the landscape, and the diamond fields of Nambia, the cold Beguela current along the coast, which made winter cold and desolate. She had a wish to return to Cape Town. Once when Mrs. Da Silva put her gentle hand on Billy’s forehead, Rose got satisfied:

*The promotional boards advertising new lottery tickets changed against the glass panels as Billy pushed open the door to the store Mrs. Da Silva sat in her wheel chair behind the counter talking to bearded man Billy had not seen before.*

The store was second home for Billy but whenever there were strangers he hesitated. And his friend Piet Bezudenhont would follow him. When he saw that Piet was not at home and went for holiday, he burst into tears.

*“It’s okay, Billy, come inside,” Mrs. Da Silva said, “Piet has gone on holiday.” Billy stepped into the store. “Leave the door open. I’m here anyway. I might as well as do some business,’ she said.*

Billy loved cricket Piet promised him to bowl. It was his passion. He watched every game on television, he bowled with stones, tins bottles he could lay his hands on.

*The other whites chastised her for Making such a fuss about him*
But she liked the family Rose and Harry were principled
And she didn’t care what others had to say. 37

The whites have no sympathy for the Blacks. They even don’t care for the people who lived in shacks at the edge of town slummed by children and adults alike, Billy remains trapped within an enforced exile of difference, in a nation where all types of differences become target of hatred. ‘There is no one to help them. They were forgotten people, she told whoever would listen to her. They will become extinct, their culture lost just like that of so many other.’ 38

Billy’s mother suffers from blood cancer but due to extreme poverty she was unable to be hospitalized. The maternal anxieties are pulled into focus. Even though the practice of separation of the coloured and white population persists socially Billy found a surrogate mother Mrs. Da Silva, the riffled white store keeper who understands that they were both disabled and banished to the fringes of their respective societies.

Billy saw his mother doubled over, heard her crying oh God! Oh God! over and over again... The local ambulance arrived about 20 minutes later. Billy stood to one side terrified as he saw his mother on stretcher. He wanted to run after the attendance as they carried the stretcher into the ambulance; but Mrs. Da Silva reached for his hand and held him back. 39

Mrs. Da Silva assures Rose that they need not worry about Billy, as he is there to take care of Billy. And both of them search for the number, which are there on the lottery ticket. The colonized peoples will also be other than their pasts, which can be reclaimed but never reconstituted and so much in partial revisited and realized fragmented ways. You can’t go home again. Billy, the story of an eighteen year old
mentally disabled son of aged parents, explores the ordinary lives of people in the port North region of the country, where what little commerce there is generated by dredging gracious minerals from the sea bed.

The words like centre and periphery have become so common that every one is familiar with these terms. Centre represents power where as periphery represents marginalized or common. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin describe marginality thus:

“Marginality as a noun is related to the verb to marginalize, and in this assumption that power is a function of centrality. This means that such resistance can become a process of replacing the centre rather than deconstruction the binary structure of centre and margin which is a primary feature of post colonial discourse.”

The third story, Getting Through the Night is set in a black township. Farida Karodia deals with the problems and plight of so called marginalized groups of South Africa. The women are minorities and they form the marginalized group in South Africa. The women in Africa are three times oppressed and denied of their rights. First as Blacks secondly as Black slaves and thirdly because they are Black women. Under such oppression their survival is difficult.

In the present story, the fear and anxieties associated with township night are brought to the fore. A Black African woman, Florah, a mother awaits the return of her daughter in the wee hours of the night, anxious with the knowledge of the township violence. ‘She had hoped too, that eventually when she had a child, it would have a better future as coloured then as an African. Shortly after Tandi was born John was murdered, taken by violence that was township life.’
Karodia projects the microcosmic picture of South Africa. Even after independence, women were badly treated and they were being marginalized. The relationship between the mother and daughter is the product of a society which demanded change at all cost and which sacrificed the youth in the process of township violence. It was different kind of struggle which people were fighting.

*It was a struggle to eat, to pay the rent, to find a job, to educate the children and to buy the few necessities that would make life easier.*

The situation of the post apartheid Africa is reflected in the relationship of the mother and daughter. It is the situation of thousands and millions of South Africans who suffered due to colonialism and under new government of independent Africa. The relationship between the mother and daughter is the product of a society which demanded change at all cost so that they may fulfill their basic need related to food, clothes, shelter and education. There is a split between mother and daughter. In the extreme poverty violence was prominent. Tandi blamed her mother Florah for everything that has gone wrong with her. Florah was hurt by the rudeness and disregard Tandi showed towards her. Despite her rudeness and disregard Florah cared and loved her. ‘If this is freedom, she shouted defiantly at the retreating thugs, then I don’t want it.’

The very idea of freedom is questioned by Farida Karodia. Freedom which these colonized countries enjoy is merely independence in its theoretical form. The story gives a different picture of the way in which Black on Black violence takes over in these communities, in which children are ‘weaned on violence,’ where criminal violence
robbed citizens of their hard earned freedom, constantly afraid of one child being killed every day. Even after gaining political independence many countries especially colonized countries in their post colonial era are put forth to face the challenges of criminal violence either in form of riots or terrorism. The violence in the township is so completely delibilitating that the mother muses that,

“A painless death would be preferable to a constant paralysis caused by fear.”  

Karodia enables her characters to raise the question related to identity, race, gender, ethics, and freedom in its true sense. Karodia uses semi-autobiographical elements in her writing. Her concerns are with the postcolonial conditions and situations in which the native people are the sufferers. As her life is deeply rooted in South Africa her experiences which she shares by creating fictional world are marvelous. There is always Black on Black violence that operates through the centre and which exploits the marginal in every walk of life. Homi Bhabha in Location of Culture says, ‘The aim of cultural difference is to rearticulate the sum of knowledge from the perspective of the signifying position of the minority that resists totalization.’

It is in this respect that Karodia allows her characters to resist against the centrality of power. And these marginalised characters represent their problems, pain, agony and suffering. And these post colonial writers like Farida Karodia are trying to establish their voice in the post colonial era. ‘He died in my arms. We were friends, mama. Good friends, and now he’s dead… we were at the hospital.’ Thus the Africans during colonial rules were exploited and the colonizer used their cheap labour for capital development. The Africans after gaining
independence were free from slavery. But the independence which they gained was only in its theoretical sense and not in its practical sense. The centre/periphery which was White/Black after colonization turns back on Black violence. Karodia elaborately discusses these issues of Black on Black violence in Getting Through the Night. The African writers in English are primarily engaged with rewriting the history of their race from the imperial deniers of their past. In this respect these writers seem to have conceived their role as addressing in their fiction the social political, religious concerns of Africans. The African English writers examine the consequences of the Black neo-colonial denial of their country’s immediate past and present. Africans respect the changes with religious fervor and they prepare themselves for the good and for what is not good.

CROSS MATCH:

Cross Match, the fourth entry, in A.A.S. and other stories, centers on a wealthy Indian family whose primary aim is to marry their twenty eight year old daughter Sussie. The story begins with Sushila Makhanji which is all about her life. ‘Sushila Makhanji sat on the step of the veranda at her parents home in Lenasia, an Indian township just outside Johannesburg on her lap face down, lay the script for a stage play, Love Under the Bunyan Tree.’ The play Love Under the Bunyan Tree is introduced by Farida Karodia at the beginning of the story crossmatch. The play is about a young girl, who get married and is unhappy of her loveless marriage. ‘Love Under a Bunyan Tree is a play within the collection of stories by Farida Karodia in Against an African Sky and other stories. Sushila’s sister Indira is pregnant with second
child. She is good at hiding her emotions. She and her mother hide this news from Sussie. But she is clever enough to understand. Both these sisters are very different in their look and temperament. And hence their appearance is described by Farida Karodia as:

Indira the pretty child with the endearing shyness; Sushila the willful one, disconcertingly frank. Her large intelligent eyes fixed one with their bold gaze, with intensity, always challenging.  

Mr. and Mrs. Makhanji are very much concerned about their daughter Sushila, whom they fondly call ‘Sushi’. They had sent her to London to get her B.A. Degree but she had taken up acting assignments at the theatre. Each time she paid a visit to her parents; they would try to invite a suitable bachelor to see her but each time she would reject the proposal, Karodia’s main focus is on marriage. The only concern of the parents is to get their daughter married, “You smoked?” her mother had asked, aghast ‘we all smoked, but I was the one who took the rap.’(p.88)

Karodia highlights the cultural changes that are borrowed from the Britishers. Their daughter smokes makes difficult for Mr. and Mrs. Makhanji to see the behavioral change in their daughter and accept their daughter has forgotten her own identity as an Indian born in a rich Hindu family. Indira is shocked to see her sister Susie and Kevin in a photograph. Susie remarks:

Oh! come off it. We’re just kissing. Some idiot took the picture. ‘Some kiss. There’ll be hell too pay if Ma or papa sees this.’

Karodia is projecting the independent post South Africa through the characters of Sushila and Indira. But there is contrast in these two
characters. Indira loves traditional values and system but Susie rejects and resists it and accepts the western way of living. For her to smoke and to kiss a boyfriend like Kevin is normal. And at the same time it’s difficult for Indira to accept these changing values of her sister. Mr. Makhanji was very thoughtful and protective about his wife and daughter. Whenever he went on business trips to India and Taiwan he brought back exquisite gifts for his wife. He was very much devoted to his wife and cared for her feeling. Indira was married to Ravi she had a daughter Nita and she was expecting another baby. She was very sensible daughter and even though things were not as they ought to be between her and Ravi, she didn’t disclose this fact to her parents. He wanted Indira to give birth to a son or abort the female child by getting the tests done. They had their arguments on this matter. Mr. Makhanji had agreed to get his favored daughter Susie’s wish fulfilled by agreeing to send her to London to get her B.A. degree. She was modern and dressed according to fashion as she was the most sought out actress. Her mother always cared for her and was worried for her.

Her mother watched as she tied her hair back. She feared that Sushi had grown apart from them and that it was too late to bridge the gap… her mother had this idea that everyone living abroad, and particularly London, lived a debauched life-style.  

Sushie had the ‘who cares’ attitude. She had made herself comfortable in the atmosphere of London and adapted herself so was never at ease with her parents or in their home town Lenasia. ‘It’s the fashion in London, Ma, and Indira said, ‘Those people in London are all mangparas! It would be much better for her to be wearing decent
clothes, good dresses. So she can look decent like nice Hindu girl should.  

Karodia highlights the cultural difference that these countries have. People in London have free style of life where as Indian families who have settled in South Africa don’t want their children to adopt the modern ways of life forgetting their own values, culture, customs and their own tradition and way of living. ‘It was at a time when Lenasia was designated a residential area for Indians.’ Mr. Makhanji wanted to have better prospects for his wife and two daughters. He wanted to provide them with a decent home and a good family life. And the only thing they wished was to get married their daughter, Sushie:

Who cares if he’s from the bloody moon! Sushi cried, her gaze shifting from her mother to her sister. And how come you suddenly know so much about him, Indira?

Sushie rejected the proposals that her parents tried to find suitable for her, as she was going steady with a guy named Kevin who cared for her. No one at home knew this fact except Indira, she had hold of a photograph of her and Kevin as Sushie was very bad at hiding secrets. This time Mr. and Mrs. Makhanji were positive and were keeping fingers crossed that this time at least Sushi will accept the proposal of Mr. and Mrs. Vasant’s son Dilip, who was an engineer at Stanford in California USA. ‘I have told everyone about our son who is an engineer at Stanford, in California, USA.’

The story grows exciting and full of suspense when Nita brings Sushie’s photograph to show her grandmother in front of the guests but nothing much happens as she doesn’t have specs. The reader is left perplexed as to what was the purpose of the photograph but the real
reason is disclosed at the last part of the story where Sushie’s mother at last finds out what is in the photograph that Nita (daughter of Indira) was so desperately trying to show the other day in the presence of the guest.

‘That’s why you need a wife… to help you,’ said his mother. ‘I don’t need wife. Now will you, please drop the subject,’ Dilip snapped.\(^57\) Mr. and Mrs. Vasant wanted their son to get married in order to have support and help from the wife. But Dilip denies the idea of marriage. He did not want to marry a female as he had relationship with a man, he loved in California. He was Gay. The people of Luth (P.B.U.H) were completely destructed and destroyed because of their being homosexual, Lesbian and Gays. USA has passed a law of giving rights to man to marry a man.

\(58\) Freedom: not God, and yet as difficult to approach and as surely the banner under which we have witnessed centuries of both extraordinary social good and social terror. Even as I write, states are inching toward and resisting a potential global upheaval in its name. Such indeed is the nature of freedom that it can seem more godlike than God. Any evil perpetuated in freedom and name is exiled from its truth.

The very idea of freedom is questioned. Dilip Vasant is free to make his choice in the States because States permits for such Gay marriages. In the USA some states are constitutionally permitted to accept such marriages. Freedom has no concept of law and God.

When Mrs. Makhanji’s looks at the photograph brought by Nita, she is shocked and heartbroken and curses her daughter for hiding such a gruesome fact from her. ‘My life is, in California, pop not here.’\(^59\) Mr. and Mrs. Vasant insist Dilip to stay back in South Africa and get
married and lead a happy and peaceful life. They also insist him to provide his services as an engineer to South Africa. But Dilip denies and goes back to California for his love. ‘Dilip turned down the volume. ‘Sorry,’ he said, smiling sheepishly.‘” Sushie tells her sister Indira that Dilip is none other than a ‘Gay’ and at least she was better off with Kevin who was not that bad. The story ends here. Farida Karodia very artistically shows the postmodern conditions of young generation of South Africa who moved for various reasons from their native places and accepted and adopted the modern ways of life. They also adopted the culture, forgetting their own roots, culture, traditions and custom. Farida Karodia is a marvelous storyteller, depicting the realities of thousands of Africans who migrated to different parts of the world for one reason or the other. Though Farida Karodia picks up an Indian family as far as its first generation is concerned. The family follows all the cultural traditions and morals in South Africa. But when it comes to the second generation, they accept and adopt themselves to the modern way of life of London and United States of America. Farida takes the issue of marriage and she highlights the Cross Match of the cultures, nation and the individuals.

**IN THE NAME OF LOVE:**

The final story in the collection *In the Name of Love* explores Muslim Indian relations in post-apartheid South Africa. The story starts with a phone call from a mother to her son Ali informing him that his father is going for Hajj and pleading her son for forgiveness from his father as it had been quite, long time since the father and son had met, almost twelve years. They had met at the funeral of Ali’s brother Feroz:
It’s been almost twelve years since my grandmother died and my father and in last spoke to each other. Two years after my grandmother’s death, we met again, this time at my brother Feroz’s funeral. We didn’t speak, though, and I left the very next day. ⁶¹

Ali the son of a wealthy businessman marries a coloured girl and is estranged from his family. Nevertheless, the unresolved issues between Ali and his father are less a function of the marriage than of Ali’s rejection of his father’s excessively gluttonous way of being in the world. Ali hates his father and is reluctant to meet him. But his wife Zarina whom he loves and cares for, insists that he should go, so he decides to go. Ali took her as his wife in spite of these shortcomings. Zarina too left her home and got converted to Islam for Ali’s sake.

*My marriage to Zarina had been opposed right from the start. Most of the objections were based on the fact that she was a divorcee and, on top of it all, she was coloured.* ⁶²

Zarina was not only coloured but also Christian. But for Ali she embraced Islam. How could then Ali refuse Zarina? So he decides to meet his father. Karodia takes her readers into flash back where the complete character of Ali’s father is exposed. The hatred that both the sons Feroz and Ali have for their father.

“*Oh Allah! What have we done to deserve this? Why have you let us down like this, Ali? First your brother, now you,’ she cried.
‘My brother is dead.’
‘My mother lowered her eyes and an angry silence wedged itself between us.
‘This is my life, ma;
‘Your father is very disappointed;
When will you understand? I don’t care what my father thinks!*” ⁶³

The father instead of being an example to his son is a bad influence. He has been to jail many times for frauds in business and also has a white
woman as his ‘other,’ whom he leaves at a later stage. His wife is tolerant and takes the blame on herself. This encourages the husband, who is crazy after making money and being a rich man. He loves his daughter Jamila and pampers her a lot. She is married. When her husband in a fit of anger raises his hand on Jamila, Suleiman (father) has his thumb and index finger broken by Hooligans, thinking that would teach a lesson to his son in law and next time he would think twice before hitting her.

What stands between them in respect of the post colonial is, as I have tried to demonstrate, massive cultural trauma, such trauma as condemns to repetition and remains enthralled…

There are cultural differences between the two families i.e. of Zarina and Ali. Ali is an Indian Muslim and Zarina is coloured Christian. They get married. Suleiman the father in the story is shown as the main villain. He doesn’t care for the family and neglects his son especially Feroz who gets addicted to drugs, traffickers and is jailed. No one comes to bail him out and after many years one fine day, his dead body is found lying for three days in slum area. This is the biggest shock for his mother whose favourite child was Feroz. She becomes lifeless and heart broken. As if this was not enough, Ali her only hope marries coloured lady who is a Christian with a daughter named Ashley and has twins from her. But the whole family is disgraced and hurt by the whole episode. Meanwhile an incident is brought back to reader’s mind that how once out of selfish motives Suleiman had taken Ali to Dadima’s house in Aliwal where she was running an ancestral business with Ayesha and Shireen. His father’s announcement that he was
driving to Aliwal to visit his grandmother had come as a surprise to all of them.

She loved Ahmed but he had drowned in the Orange River. This is another tragedy in the story Suleiman has his eye on Dadima’s property and she knows. She signs the power of attorney of the property in Johannesburg and Suleiman shows his loyalty that he came to meet her and not for those documents only. Ali notice that he has kept the (original) main papers and torn Jamila (his daughters letter) he also goes and prays at the grave of his grandfather and brother just to impress his grandmother. Later when Dadima dies he wants to sell off all the property even the one that Dadima had left for her grandson. So Ali goes against his father and becomes his enemy and tries to save his grandma’s property. After ten years, he comes to know that his father is going for Hajj.

You did good, Ali you did good. I’m glad you came. Your father can go on hajj with a pure heart now. Come, she said leading me to where my father stood.65

He doesn’t believe his ears and knows that he is up to some trick now and where every reader thinks that after all Suleiman has changed when it is brought to our notice on the flight among the pilgrims too Ali’s father starts an new partnership a new scheme to earn money! So some people never change as far as their material life is concerned. Karodia provides minute cultural details of Muslims, the kind of dress they wear during Hajj and complete their pilgrimage:

Most of the pilgrim wore white flowing robes. Many men wore the seamless garments of Ihram draped to expose one shoulder. The women all had their head covered with the same white cloth, some of these adopted quite
Karodia brings forth the issues concerning as a social institution. All these stories are marvelous. They are illuminating and rich in detail. The characters are beautiful. The five short stories have different themes, different characters and different issues. Karodia wrote these stories after her return to South Africa. She deals with the post apartheid society from different perspectives. The author goes beyond the social boundaries of gender, race, class, and caste by creating fictional white, black, and Asian male and female, rich and poor protagonists. Karodia is hopeful of conciliation as the characters go through identity forming process which forces them to go beyond well worn behavioral pattern.
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