SUMMING UP

The dissertation, through a study of Short Stories illustrates, how Gordimer transports her political ideology of dismantling the colonial edifice, into the text and thus reinstates honor into the black consciousness. This she has achieved through the classic portrayal of the rich cultural back-drop of South Africa before the advent of the Europeans. Subsequently, she projects the latent neocolonial tendencies in the economic relations with the western power bloc. It is awe inspiring to watch the 'all comprehensive picture of South Africa' that evolves in Gordimer's works, when taken in their entirety. As if in a jigsaw puzzle, each individual story adds to the corpus of 'meaning.' The final picture is unbearably cruel and fascist in its' political climate that the Whites are forced to re-function their attitudes. As for the Blacks, Gordimer has exposed the innate servitude that has penetrated their racial unconscious, which lures them into internalizing the 'master's culture.' This awareness of the racial suppression at a personal and collective level, advocates a radical restructuring of the Black
identity. In the resulting winds of change, Gordimer visualizes a 'de-colonizing of the African mind.' Gordimer has thus set history of her nation, rolling in an organic and natural path of progressive culture. The 'subjectivity' of her characters and the situations they are placed in, educates the reader, towards the change, though no moral doctrine is preached.

Gordimer's search for identity and 'placing' in the land of her birth, can be traced in various political and ideological voices in her narratives. Once the social reality is deconstructed, there arises the question of the shape and structure of the 'new' South Africa. Gordimer envisages a future for her nation based on 'cultural syncreny.' In this 'multicultural theory' the inter-racial dialogues shall be on a plane of acceptance of difference on equal terms. Gordimer seems to endorse the instrumentality of culture in the national liberation struggle. The whole range of Gordimer's writings, are 'snapshots' of South African society. But the pictures -- the reality they represent -- are her version or her interpretation of them. Hence it could be argued that Gordimer's social realism is her political ideology.

Nadine Gordimer, observes the social codes that determine the Black/White dichotomy, in her writings. The racial patterns secluded beneath the political struggle
of her nation, allows her to re-inscribe, 'the great South African lie' within the scope of her fiction. Being a 'marginal' element in the society, her observations had the accuracy and clarity that was unattainable by those directly involved in the political struggle. This limpidity enabled her to visualize a 'cultural identity' for the post-independent South Africa, that was neither a pure resistance to colonialism nor a hegemonic idea of national purity. Gordimer proposes a syncretic identity made up of all cultures and races which have taken part in the history of her nation. Finally through the exploration of the polyphonic dialogues within the multicolored society of South African kaleidoscope, she attempts to reach an understanding of her own identity -- as a white woman and a revolutionary writer. Further, it has been argued that, Gordimer's political ideology shifts towards a comprehensive, multifaceted presentation of social reality. It was not a flattening process of assimilation but an arbitration for equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. The post-colonial tendencies in the text is evident in the fore-grounding of the colonized/colonizer tension and resistance towards the imperial power. The emphasis focalizes on the 'difference' from the European center, in the African culture. Gordimer's marginality liberates
her soul from the contagion of the black experience, but it allows her space to contemplate the entire issue with tolerance; even compassion.

The air of impersonality in the narrative is in itself a mask and Gordimer uses a richly complex technique to convey an ambivalent attitude towards the South African culture. We find a whole range of characters both black and white whose lives are closed to moral judgments, since Gordimer does her best to show that they could not have done any better in that situation. Texts that show 'gray areas' of life -- that could be interpreted in a multifarious way. We could say with Umberto Eco:

A creative text is to display the contradictory plurality of its conclusions, setting the readers free to choose -- or to decide that there is no possible choice. In this sense a creative text is always an open work (Interpretation and Over-interpretation, 140).

Gordimer makes her ideological statements subtle and unobtrusive, that the readers are given the full freedom to select the message and to enjoy the pure artistic pleasure. Gordimer’s social consciousness percolates through the "voices" in the narrative. By bestowing authority to some and incorporating signs of
unreliability to some Gordimer arbitrates the fictional truth of her stories. The concept of truth, ethics and ideology play a significant role, in discerning the meaning of the text. The political purpose of Gordimer's 'truth-telling' and her realism, attains a revolutionary character when she challenges the social evils towards a progressive alteration. Gordimer in her interview explains the extent and depth of her commitment to reality. She comments that unlike Lionel Burger, [the character in her novel *Burger's Daughter*] she would never compromise truth for the sake of a 'cause.' Gordimer was not willing to manipulate the truth to cover up for the weaknesses of the people on her side. She remains impassive to all the characters and concentrates only on an 'absolute reality.' As quoted earlier in Chapter 5, she says: "As a writer. I feel, that my first duty is integrity as an artist." ("A conversation with Nadine Gordimer," *Salmagundi* 62, 1984, 4-5). Later in her Nobel lecture, she defines her identity as an artist and a resistance writer:

> The writer must take to explore, warts and all, both the enemy and the beloved comrade in arms, since only a try for the truth makes sense of being ... (*Georgia Review*, XLIX 1, 283).
Nadine Gordimer, has combined in her life and literary career, the creativity of her genius and the social commitment of her conscience. Her strongest political and personal statement on the obligations and ambiguities of 'living in the interregnum,' synthesizes, codifies and transforms into her 'world of fiction.' Fundamentally it is a meditation on responsibility. Gordimer, herself resolves and concludes on the dual issue of art and commitment in her essay "The Essential Gestures":

The creative act is not pure. History evidences it. Ideology demands it. Society exacts it . . . The writer is held responsible, and the verbal phrase is ominously accurate, for the writer not only has laid upon responsibility for various interpretations of the consequences of his work, he is held before he begins by the claims of different concepts of morality -- artistic linguistic ideological, national, political, religious -- asserted upon him (PG, 286).

As Gordimer expresses herself most explicitly about her dual responsibility, it is concluded that her narratives are impregnated with her political ideology that arbitrates a restructuring of power which would ensure equal opportunity for the Blacks and the Whites,
in South Africa. Her uncompromising cult to reproduce the society 'as it is,' becomes the rationalization of her own political/ideological beliefs. Yet in the process she has polished her creative powers and explored deeper into the aesthetic world of perfecting creations. Her time and place have been Twentieth century South Africa. "Emerged in it, immersed in it the first form in which [she] wrote was the Short Story" (EG, 117). In fulfilling the vocation that she chose, Nadine Gordimer strikes an extraordinary balance between the apparently divergent worlds of fact and fiction.