

ASPECTS OF CHANGE IN NADINE
GORDIMER'S NOVELS

BY
Elizabeth Achungo/Atemi

SAVY AFRICANA COLLECTION
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI LIBRARY

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the M.A. degree
of the University of Nairobi

DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented in another University.

Signature: 

Elizabeth Achungo Atemi

(Candidate).

Date: ...16.10.8.2002.....

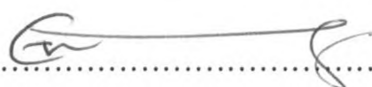
This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors.

Signature: 

Dr. D. H. Kijiru

(First Supervisor)

Date: ...30 August 2002.....

Signature: 

Evan Maina Mwangi.

(Second Supervisor)

Date: ...20.08.02.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my dear mother Nancy Jacintah Atemi, without her sacrificial giving I would never have scaled the heights of academia.

I also remember my father the late Patrick Otindo Amere Atemi, who was my role model.

Lastly, to my brothers and sisters who believe in me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this dissertation has been a tremendous learning experience. I want to thank all those who have assisted me in putting it together.

First, I appreciate my supervisors, Dr. D.H. Kiiru and Evan Maina Mwangi for the help I received from them. Their attentiveness and enlightening comments steered this study to its completion. They never tired of reading my chapters over and over. Their availability was reassuring. I always knew that if I ever ran into a problem in my writing, I could easily reach them for a solution.

Second, I must acknowledge all the lecturers of the department of literature through whose nurturing hands I passed.

Third, I shall forever remember the moral cushioning that I received from my colleagues: George Nyandoro, Weche W'opingo, Macharia Mwangi, George Omolo, Everleen Makhanu, Maureen Ndumba, Elizabeth Ayelabola, Jennifer Muchiri, Rosemary Mbaluka, Roseline Ayoo Odicho, David Ombegera, Hillary Muthuma, Collins Ocham, Aungo Bwonderi, John Muhia and Kawive. Our spirited chatting in the departmental library was most inspiring.

Lastly I thank Dr. Gabriel Tenesi Mukholi in more ways than I can mention, he walked that extra mile.

ABSTRACT

Proceeding from a sociological literary criticism framework, this dissertation focuses on Gordimer's later novels - July's People, None to Accompany Me and The House Gun. It explores how these novels deal with the aspects of change, which are relations of power, the quest for identity, and the messianic motif.

This study analyses the portrayal of characters who carry forth the theme of change. It reveals that Gordimer incisively presents a broad spectrum of characters in her novels. It demonstrates that these characters are realistic in that they combine the positive and negative traits, they grow or develop, and change their perceptions. It notes that although they represent a particular class, group or race in South Africa, these characters are also individuals. Besides seeing them as having been used to sum up significant social concerns, a reader learns more about them as individuals.

Our study concludes: that Gordimer's novels critically examine the South African Socio-political problems and offer possible solutions, that these novels constitute a stylistic and thematic continuum, and that the characters in these novels are used to illustrate aspects of change.

Elizabeth Achungo Atemi, 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Dedication.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
Chapter One	1
Background	1
Statement of the problem	7
Hypotheses	8
Objectives	8
Justification	8
Literature review	11
Theoretical framework	22
Methodology	25
Scope and limitation	25
Chapter Two	27
Power Relations	27
Chapter Three	52
The Quest for Identity	52
Chapter Four	75
The Messianic Motif	75
Conclusion	95
Works Cited	100

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

The February 1990 release of Nelson Mandela from prison after serving twenty seven years in detention marked a decisive turning point in the history of South Africa. This was the beginning of the end of apartheid – a political system that not only rationalised but also legitimised the oppression and exploitation of the black people by the white people. Gacheche Waruingi says that apartheid is “literary living apart, separate development” (3 Scattered Thoughts). He sees this racial political system as:

The most inhuman form of repression ever designed by man, an evil against the human race unequalled since the days of Adolf Hitler.... Apartheid is, to the Black race, what Nazism and fascism were to the Jews. It is a violent negation of what man is and stands for (4).

The white people’s invasion and occupation of 1652 led by Van Riebeeck is considered as the beginning of apartheid. H.F. Verwoerd defined the theory and implemented the practice of apartheid. J.B.M. Hertzog, a Boer general contested the 1929 general elections on the issue of race relations, advocating segregation of the African population economically, socially and politically. D. F. Malan a former Dutch Reform Church minister's successful ‘Black Peril’ campaign ushered in apartheid as the official creed of the Nationalist Government in 1948.

Under apartheid racial relations were segregative operating in a three-tiered manner. A train analogy explains it best-the whites enjoyed all the comfort and privilege of the first-class while the coloureds were put in the second-class. The blacks had to be contented with crowding in

the uncomfortable third-class. No one dared to cross the colour-line as doing so would surely earn one severe punishment. A separatist policy was put in place to ensure that there was a relationship gap between the races. Parliament complicated race relations the more by passing several acts: Mines and Works Act (1911), Colour Bar Act (1925), Land Act (1913), Native Urban Act (1922), Industrial conciliation Act (1937), Bantu Education Act (1953), Promotion of Suppression of Communism Act (1950), and Bantu Self-government Act (1959). These acts were on one side of the divide meant to handicap the Africans economically, socially and politically, while on the other side of the divide they ensured the privileged position of white people in the South African society.

Owing to the unfavourable conditions in their country of origin, many black South Africans opted for exile. The black people that remained relentlessly fought this oppressive system in conjunction with their counterparts who were in exile until 1994, when South Africa successfully held its first non-racial democratic elections. This proved to be a deathblow to the practice of apartheid.

Literature is a sensuous art that derives from the particulars of experience. A literary artist being part of race and society is given to capturing the same in artistic renditions. Therefore, it is in these heady days of power shift and general social transformation that Nadine Gordimer sets her novels: July's People, The House Gun, and None to Accompany Me.

July's People captures the future South Africa. It is set at the future moment of revolution itself. Its plot revolves around July Mawate and the Smales -- his white employers of fifteen

years. In the story, a revolution led by black people takes place in Johannesburg and gradually spreads to the rest of South Africa. July helps Maureen, her forty-year-old architect husband, Bam, and their children--Gina, Victor and Royce--to escape the massacre in the city. In the countryside, the Smales are received by July's elderly mother, and wife, Martha. They shelter in July's mother's hut. In the village, July takes over the Smales' car and engages Daniel--a former dairy truck driver turned revolutionary--as his driving instructor. As Bam acclimatises to the rural setting, he teaches Daniel how to use a gun, which Daniel later steals. July's chief is so intrigued that white people are visiting their house servant, thus, he requests to meet them. The story folds with Maureen running away in search of another refuge.

None to Accompany Me focuses on post-apartheid South Africa. It is set at a time when majority rule is in the offing. This is the story of Vera Stark--a white lawyer representing black people's struggle to reclaim the land--her family, and friends. Vera is married to Bennet and they have two children: Annick, the daughter, is a doctor and Ivan, the son, is a successful banker. Zeph Rapulana assists Vera in getting Odenville for black squatters. Tertius Odendaal, the owner of Odenville, is up in arms about the squatters' occupation. Vera's friends, Didymus, his wife Sally Sibongile Maqoma and daughter Mpho, return from exile to the changing South Africa. There are no two ways about it; everyone must embrace change. Sibongile rises to a top position in politics while circumstances force Didymus to retire from politics. As the story ends, Vera who has separated from her becomes Rapulana's tenant.

The House Gun is set in the post-apartheid South Africa where colour is not directly an issue any longer, but where undercurrents of years of prejudice surface from time to time. It explores the complex relationships between black and white people as they adjust to their new status.

This novel recounts how the Lindgards--Claudia and Harald--react when they learn that their only son, Duncan, has murdered his friend, Carl Jespersen, and is to be defended by Hamilton Motsamai, a black advocate. He is competent, having appeared successfully in a number of challenging cases of varied nature during his return of four years from exile. He has a beautiful niece, Motshiditsi, and a son, Sechaba. The murder is premised on a complex love triangle involving Duncan, Jespersen, and Natalie James. Duncan, a white architect, breaks racial barriers to make friends with Dladla Nkululeko. Two psychiatrists-Albrecht and Basil Reed--are caught in the court drama of Duncan's trial.

Gordimer, the 1991 Nobel Prize winner in literature, was born on 20 November 1923 to a Jewish jeweler in the Transvaal, South Africa. She grew up in a small gold-mining town of Springs near Johannesburg. To date she lives in her country of birth. She is married and has two children. Unlike many African writers of her time for whom creative writing was always a distant dream, for Gordimer, opportunities in creative writing opened at childhood. Much as she would have preferred dancing as a career, her rapid heartbeat could not let her. She settled for writing and set upon it while in school at nine with a poem, but she later developed a liking for prose and wrote sketches. Such was her passion for writing that she even wrote essays for her elder sister who was a Witwatersrand University student at the time. In June 1937, Gordimer's first published fiction appeared. It was a children's story, "The Quest for Seen

Gold". Her first adult story "Come Again Tomorrow" was published in Forum, a liberal weekly, when she was barely fifteen.

At twenty-two Gordimer joined the Witwatersrand University in order to learn how to write. Prior to this she had little formal education, getting a mere three hours of private tutorship. The one year she spent there marked the beginning of her political consciousness. This was the first time in her life that she was mixing with blacks. In line with her writing career, she kept on publishing in anthologies until she finally wrote her first novel, The Lying Days, in 1953. After this there was no turning back. Gordimer has thirteen novels to her name: A World of Strangers(1958), Occasion for Loving(1963), The Late Bourgeois World (1966), A Guest of Honour (1971), The Conservationist (1974), Burger's Daughter (1979), July's People(1981), A Sport of Nature(1987), My Son's Story(1990), None to Accompany Me (1994), The House Gun (1998), and The Pickup (2001).

Her nine volumes of short stories which add up to over two hundred are quite impressive: Face to Face (1949) The Soft Voice of the Serpent (1953), Six Feet of the Country (1956), Friday's Footprint (1960), Not for Publication (1965), No Place Like Home: Selected Stories (1974), and Some Monday for Sure (1976), A Soldier's Embrace: Stories (1980), ^{and} Something Out There (1984).

She is also an accomplished essayist with the collections: The Black Interpreters(1973), The Essential Gesture-Writing(1988), Writing and Being(1994), and Living in Hope and History: Notes from our Century(1999).

She did not choose to go into exile. As a writer she felt that “one must look at the world from Africa, to be an African writer, not look upon Africa from the world”(116 Unwinding Threads). As such, her literary output is the unkillable, succinct yet telling revelation of dilemmas and traumas of her defiant stay. One need only read between the lines to get this impression. Her books have borne the brunt of banning and censorship like any other South African writer irrespective of race, creed or colour. She shunned exile and stayed in apartheid South Africa in spite of her cognizance of the ensuing ramifications, especially for the liberal whites who did reject the theory and practice of apartheid.

To call her a prolific writer is to state the obvious. Indeed her writing has received international acclaim. What with the numerous prestigious literary awards she has and for her insurmountable contribution in literature: the Italian Malapert Prize, the German Nelly Sachs Prize, the Scottish Arts Council's Neil Gunn Fellowship, the French International Award, the Grand Argle d'or, the Benson Medal from the Royal society of literature, The Modern Literature Association Award, the Bennett Award, The Booker Prize and the CAN literary award.

Yale and Harvard, among other universities have given her fifteen honorary doctorates. She has served as a vice president of PEN International, an executive member and founder of the Congress of South African Writers and a goodwill ambassador to the United Nations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Maxim Gorky says literature is “the art of words and images”(92) but whose subject matter is man - his action and counteraction with one another and the various forces that characterise his existence. Change is one such force. The complexities, twists and turns inherent in person to person interaction, make the gist of literature.

Given the death of apartheid, the South African citizenry is learning how to live in a free and democratic society. It is the task of this study to show how the South African writer is responding to the change in his or her society. The assumption here is that with the new political atmosphere in South Africa, there has been change.

It is true that literature is shaped or influenced by what happens in society. Writers participate and observe society in their capacities as its third eye. They grapple with documenting and synthesising society's matters. Gordimer is one such writer who has published works that address the change taking place in South Africa. This study explores how effectively she does this in her novels--July's People, None to Accompany Me and The House Gun. These works cover the immediate post-apartheid period that is characterised by change.

While investigating the change in post-apartheid South African novels, this study considers the relationships amongst people, and how people affect each other's lives. We focus on the presentation and development of characters and how through their relationships the theme of change emerges. This study notes that the characters in these later novels are used to make social commentary.

HYPOTHESES

This study makes the following assumptions: that Gordimer's later novels show change in South Africa, that in these novels characters are used to investigate change, that the three later novels examined in this study have thematic and stylistic interrelatedness.

OBJECTIVES

This research accomplishes the following aims: to show that Gordimer's later novels reflect change in post-apartheid South Africa; to demonstrate that through the characters depicted in her later texts, Gordimer critically examines the South Africa socio-political problems and offers possible solutions; to delineate the stylistic and thematic interrelatedness in Gordimer's later novels.

JUSTIFICATION

In a bid to study aspects of change and their reflection in Gordimer's later novels, this research appreciates the characteristics of the emergent post-apartheid literature or "post-protest" literature according to Njabulo Ndebele(214). The theme of freedom from racial discrimination and oppression in general has had its share of attention in South African literature written during the apartheid era. Now that freedom has come this study finds out what more there is to write about in South Africa. This study is justified because its findings would go a long way in enriching African literary studies. The new trends in South African writing that this study realises might mean re-defining African literature.

Literature endeavours to help society understand itself by holding up a mirror to it. Writers will therefore go out of their way to come up with a genre: that appropriates techniques which will enable them to digest the complexity before them and render it understandable to the reader. This study has chosen the novel as the appropriate form for helping the world understand what is happening in South Africa. This is because the novel, being both an intensive and expansive art form, is endowed to explore any chosen human perspective fully and comprehensively, as it can cover a range of issues organising them in to a comprehensive whole. In the defence of the novel as a genre that accurately and vividly captures society's happenings, Ngugi wa Thiong'o in Writers in Politics says that:

Literature has often taken, given us more and sharper insights into the moving spirit of an era than all the historical and political documents treating the same moments in a society's development. The novel in particular... It pulls apart and it puts together; it is both analytical and synthetic. (72)

Gordimer holds a similar view to Ngugi's about the novel genre when she says in "The Novel and the Nation in South Africa" that it has

the dimension that makes it possible for us to know all, if the novelist chooses to tell us about the minds and souls of the people in the novel, that extra dimension that gives us, infact, the freedom of the city of the writer's imagination. (45)

Any work of art encompasses and promotes the ideals of humanism. It shows indignation at social evil, and posits a vision of perfect conditions for the positive development of human personality. Gordimer's novels deserve our attention since they encourage humanity to aspire

for excellence in relationships using techniques and strategies that appeal to the conscience. Through the incisive treatment of characters in her novels, the thematic concerns raised in them are made vivid. They continue to haunt the reader long after.

The focus on characterisation in this study is rationalised by the fact that characters embody values that have a bearing on understanding human behaviour in society. Thus this study concurs with The Norton Introduction to Literature's argument that:

Indeed, it may be worth paying particular attention to how stories create the images of people and what those images assume about human character precisely because this process and these assumptions are so similar to the way we get to know and understand real people. We may be able to enrich both our reading and our lives. (88)

Considering her tremendous literary output, we can safely mark her out as being an integral part of modern African literary expression. This study is necessary because her later novels raise major concerns that are pertinent issues in contemporary African literary studies. For example, she deals with the areas of the nature of the post-independent African state and the role of the African writer in the new nation. Combining class, racial, cultural and political struggles, puts South Africa in a position where it condenses many of the problems facing the world at large today. She is a writer whose literary being and career have been directly involved with these issues over an extended period, hence, the relevance of the focus on her later novels in this study.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

As a prolific and versatile writer, Gordimer has drawn a lot of critical attention--both positive and negative. Much of the critical work on Gordimer is written either by outsiders, or by South African critics offering an introduction to her work. These critiques are found in anthologies, collections of essays and interviews, journals, newspapers and on the Internet.

Dorothy Driver's "Nadine Gordimer at 70" is a bibliographical review of critiques on Gordimer's works. She assesses what has been said about Gordimer's responsibilities to politics and to writing. She observes that more than any other South African writer, Gordimer has been the subject of intense critical scrutiny, both in South Africa and abroad. The criticism comprises of seven critical books by Robert Haugh (1974), Michael Wade (1978), Christopher Heyword (1983), Judie Newman (1988), and Andrew Vogel Ettin (1993); nearly two hundred critical essays--some of which appear in Rowland Smith's Critical Essays on Nadine Gordimer (1990) and Bruce King's The Later Fiction of Nadine Gordimer (1993); and nearly fifty academic theses. Gordimer's interviews are reprinted in Conversations with Nadine Gordimer (1990) edited by Nancy Topin Bazin and Marilyn Dollman Seymour.

Driver notes that Newman argues from a post-structuralist perspective that Gordimer's writing produces a highly self-conscious reassessment of narrative realism. She then observes that Wade in White on Black in South Africa (1993) notes Gordimer's early recognition that the myths white South Africans construct of black people as sexually threatening function as a denial of their real threat to white ownership. He concludes that to Gordimer the prescriptive relationship between white and black people in South Africa is based on property and territory,

and on power, but not sex. His observation is useful in our study that identifies power relations between black and white people as an aspect of change.

Driver says that Gordimer's characters are typical figures of contemporary history in the sense that they express current historical desire. She concludes her paper by observing that the relations Gordimer sets up in her fiction are complex and always interesting. She further observes that Gordimer has rendered South Africa visible to itself--and perhaps, she will render black - and - white South Africa visible to itself. Our study holds that the characters in Gordimer's novels are a microcosm of South African society, and the characters mirror it.

Clingman (1986) examines the characters and the writer herself as typical in the realism mode advanced by Georg Lukacs. Clingman sees them as figures in whose lives some of the major currents of history intersect. He takes a sociological approach seeing Gordimer's writing as "history from the inside". His point of view refers to history as experienced by individuals who are products of a contradictory and fraught social and political history rather than just as actors in and observers of that history. Clingman argues that all of Gordimer's central characters should be conceived of as types, though there is variation because

[H]er characters are neither simple transplants of actual living persons, nor are they merely abstract fictional constructs. They are figures who, in the general drawn from Gordimer's observation of life at large, both condense broader social and historical patterns and, in their individuality, engage with them in intense and extreme form. They are characters who fully become 'subjects' of history, and in turn explore it as far as

their capacities and situation will allow. It is in dealing with the subjectivity of these characters that Gordimer has... also explored a much larger, and changing world. (9)

Since Gordimer writes not just of the events and movements in South African history, but also of what it has been and is like to live through them, our study shows the typical characters in her novels reacting to the political change in South Africa.

Anne Tyler's "South Africa after Revolution" is a review of July's People. She first gives a synopsis of the novel. Commenting on its characterization, she sees the Smales as extensions of Gordimer's earlier characters. She then observes that stylistically, on a superficial level, July's People is a wonderful adventure story as it has the ingenuity and suspense of Robinson Crusoe. She contrasts the Smales' present life in the village to their past life in the city to demonstrate the adventure in July's People. She says that on a deeper level this novel is much more than another survival story, which succeeds because of the Smales' liberalism. She notes that certain moments in the novel seem to leap right off the pages. She observes that though the details of the vivid incidents are so concrete, they never slow down the story. They are active and capture the reader's attention to the end of the novel. This review dwells on the style of July's People paying little attention to the themes. In passing, Tyler mentions that this novel demonstrates the tensions and the complex interdependence between white and black people in South Africa. Our study focuses on July's People in comparison with None to Accompany Me and The House Gun to show their stylistic and thematic interrelatedness.

Rob Kinsman's review of The House Gun cites this work's merits and demerits. Among the merits is style. He notes that in this novel the characters are well drawn the most interesting

being Duncan. Kinsman observes that a sense of mystery is built around Duncan, turning the novel into a good thriller. Kinsman notes that the setting is convincing—a post-apartheid South Africa where colour is not directly an issue any longer, but where the undercurrents of years of prejudice surface from time to time. The negative element in the novel is the voice of the narration. He says that it is a lot stronger than any of the characters it describes, and that as a kind of omniscient judge it crowds out the readers' thoughts and opinions on the implications of the story. This all-powerful narrator presents, in synopsis, the characters' past and motivations. He notes that it would have been more interesting to see the characters themselves interacting, allowing readers to piece them together. He concludes that due to the strength of this voice the book often reads more like an essay on murder than a novel. His comments notwithstanding, Kinsman's review is stylistic and focuses on one text. This research examines both the stylistic and thematic aspects of The House Gun in relation to July's People and None to Accompany Me.

The Penguin Readers Guide of The House Gun starts with a summary of the plot, then it mentions the themes—the quest for identity, violence, and change. Next, then it gives a personal and literary biography of Gordimer. It also contains an excerpt of Gordimer's interview by Dwight Garner for the Salon Magazine. In this interview Gordimer admits that she is writing about the new South Africa where there are reversals with the unthinkable happening to white people. She asserts that the main theme in The House Gun is the human relations in the family. She talks of the transition from apartheid and the challenges it poses to people of different races. The views raised in this guide will be useful to our study, as they will help us in understanding the aspects of change in The House Gun.

Par Wastberg's "Nadine Gordimer and the South African Experience" is an essay that intertwines Gordimer's personal and literary biography. He points out that generally her works reflect the psychic vibrations within South Africa, the road from passivity and blindness to resistance and struggle, even what life beyond apartheid might be like. He argues that in her characters the major currents of contemporary history intersect. He observes that she has created individuals who make their moral choices behind private doors and in the public sphere. He says that she paints a social background subtly, thus providing an insight into the mechanisms of change that no historian can match. He argues that Gordimer's writing career has covered a vast number of subjects: politics--Burger's Daughter whose subject is Bram Fischer, None to Accompany Me and The House Gun dwell on post – apartheid South Africa; race and gender as in The Lying Days.

Commenting further on Gordimer's characterization, he argues that she is able to put herself not in the mind, but also in the body of criminal and saint, male or female, black or white characters. He considers the protagonist, Mehring, in The Conservationist at length and concludes that, in this novel just as in July's People, Gordimer presents rounded characters. Concerning the characterization in The House Gun, he briefly mentions the major and minor characters. He also discusses the character Vera in None to Accompany Me in detail. He says that Gordimer is not afraid to present women of extra-ordinary intelligence and utmost delicacy of feeling. He concentrates on Vera whereas our study considers all the characters in three of Gordimer's later novels as they relate with each other. His study is informative. His approach is rewarding as it relates form to content, showing that they are in dialectical

interaction with one another. Our appraisal of the aspects of change in Gordimer's later novels presupposes the importance of form to content, in much the same way as Wastberg has demonstrated.

Fiona Mills' "Diasporic Displacement and the Search for Black Female Identity in Tony Morrison's Tar Baby and Nadine Gordimer's None to Accompany Me" explores the impact of the diaspora upon characters, as well as its relationship to the struggle to establish black female identity. She compares Morrison's Jadine to Gordimer's Mpho, and concludes that through these characters the writers present the attempts of young, black women to establish cultural roots upon which to ground their self identity in the diaspora. She observes that Mpho is not in touch with her African heritage: her accomplishments, though a source of pride to her parents, set her apart from her black community and impedes her from establishing an African identity. She discusses black female characters alongside Mpho. Sibongile is the supposed black female culture-bearer, who insists upon her daughter's abortion, which violates traditional South African respect for human life. Sibongile is aware of and in possession of her ancestry yet she fails to pass this cultural awareness to her daughter. Mpho's grandmother is a woman steeped in her South African heritage. Mills' insights on characterization vis-à-vis the theme of quest for identity is enlightening to our study.

Michiko Kakutani reviews Gordimer's None to Accompany Me in "Books of the Times: Learning to Lose the Self in a Cause". She starts by comparing Gordimer's heroes and heroines in Burger's Daughter, My Son's Story and None to Accompany Me and observes that for her characters who live in a society in which race has been a defining fact of daily life, there can be

no truly private life uncontaminated by politics. She discusses Vera's character highlighting her alienation due to her political commitment. She briefly discusses Vera's friends mentioning the reversal in their gender roles. It is not lost to Kakutani that this novel has a gallery of supporting characters who seem, the critic observes, to create a kind of group portrait of contemporary South Africa.

She contends that there is something fuzzy about the minor characters. Comparing None to Accompany Me to July's People, she notes that the latter novel creates a surreal portrait of post-revolutionary South Africa, but in the former novel, Gordimer's attempt to render a more realistic post-apartheid South Africa feels pat and contrived. Her insights on characterization are useful to our study that focuses on the characterization in three of Gordimer's novels.

Gordimer has had her fair share of negative criticism from Kakutani and Dennis Brutus among others. "The House Gun: A Fatal Triangle in the Long Shadow of Apartheid" is another of Kakutani's book reviews. She first commends Gordimer for producing post-apartheid fiction of enormous power and ambition. Then she argues that this author is yet to come to terms artistically with the dismantling of apartheid and her country's drastically altered social landscape. To support this standpoint, she notes that Gordimer's descriptions of the political scene in None to Accompany Me feel oddly generic and contrived, and her efforts to grapple with post-apartheid realities in The House Gun are equally forced. While analysing the characters in The House Gun Kakutani indicates that Gordimer, in an apparent effort to turn her courtroom drama into something larger and more ambitious, draws parallels between Duncan's story and the story of Rogozhin in Dostoyevsky's The Idiot. She concludes that The

House Gun, is a gripping thriller with pretensions, a novel that wants to be more than it is. Her analysis of The House Gun is derogatory. She appears to sneer at Gordimer's creativity in her later novels. It is the task of this study to show that Gordimer's later novels have significant artistic merit both thematically and stylistically.

Brutus in "Protest Against Apartheid" compares Gordimer to Alan Paton, and concludes that she is everything Paton is not. He comments that her characters are more complex--extremely sophisticated people. Stylistically he finds in Gordimer "a kind of impersonality that you find in a microscope. She does not herself react to feeling. In her books even the emotional relationships are forced are conjured up, are synthetic" (97). He further contends that she observes the South African society with a detachment, with the coldness of a machine. This study will show the incisiveness and involvement with which Gordimer treats the characters in her later novels.

In African Literature Today (13) Recent Trends in the Novel, Norman C. Jones in her essay "Acculturation and character portrayal in Southern African Novels", gives a biographical sketch of Gordimer, and then proceeds to discuss acculturation as evidenced in the characters portrayed in Gordimer's novels. His study focuses on two early texts; Burger's Daughter and The Conservationist. On Gordimer's style he quotes Claire Tomalin who says, "she, nails detail so that it speaks its own moral"(198). He does a character analysis, focusing on race relations but with a bias for the theme of acculturation. He concludes that all races need to cooperate. Our study is yet another character analysis but this time the focus will be on the theme of change in Gordimer's two later novels.

D. I Nwoga in an essay, "Modern African Poetry: The Domestication of a Tradition", which appeared in the tenth edition of African literature Today: Retrospect and Prospect, merely mentions Gordimer. He quotes her comment on the writings of the first generation of black South African writers but he does not analyse any of her works. Our research recognizes the need to subject Gordimer's later novels to intensive critical appraisal.

"Inkalamu's Place" is Gordimer's short story in the anthology, Unwinding Threads: Writing of Women in Africa. Charlotte H. Bruner apart from giving a sketchy outline of Gordimer's biography, makes sweeping statements about Gordimer's style of writing. For instance she notes that Gordimer has been "writing novels set in Africa and in an increasingly tense setting of growing apprehension and violence"⁽²²⁾. She concludes that Gordimer is "a genius at evoking a mood or a self-revelation within a character in a brief and often seemingly irrelevant episode"⁽²⁵⁾. Her sentiments are broad, but this study attempts to narrow down the scope to a specific period and to specific novels, giving a close reading to Gordimer's characterization.

In a chapter entitled "Characters and Modes of Characterization: Chinua Achebe, James Ngugi and Peter Abraham" Charles R. Larson examines characters and the techniques employed in presenting them in the three novelist's texts. He observes that characters and modes of characterization in African fiction may be shaped by the traditions within the geographical areas of the a given writer. He argues that characters who do not develop prevail in West-African literature, the reverse is true for East and South African literature where characters change as the story develops, being characters with whom one can readily make an

identification. He further comments that, with the exception of the likes of Sembene Ousmane's God's Bits of Wood, the tendency in West African fiction is for female characters to play minor roles. He observes that "that in East and South African fiction female characters play an integral part in the development of the story."

Modes of characterization Larson (148) identifies are "characterization by action" (where characterization is based on things a character does), the use of oral examples like proverbs, the use of authorial commentary, the use of stereotypes, the use of dialogue, the use of the dramatic, the use of the stream of consciousness, and the use of impressionism--an introspective approach to character that involves the internal rendering of a character's emotional reactions to external world.

In "Another Firm Nail in Apartheid Coffin", Muchugu Kiiru says that South African literature has been influenced by what Gordimer calls "the politics of the race". He further argues that Gordimer, in her works--short stories, novels and essays, has criticized and dramatized in her own way the theme of racialism in South Africa. He also sees July's People as a novel that depicts the changing attitude between a white family and its black servant. Responding to Gordimer's characterization he says that "shut out of his national experience writers tend to write from their side of the racial divide and in the process create caricatures of characters from the other race"(8). Wondering whether the above limitation is imposed by apartheid or designed as part of a writer's imaginative strategy, he thinks that this limitation is discernible in some of Gordimer's works. Our study's point of departure is that with the crumbling of apartheid, South African writers of either race are now able to cross the colour-line and flesh-

out their formerly caricatured characters. The focus in our research is on the aspects of change in post-apartheid literature with particular emphasis on characterisation.

In a Daily Nation article-"S.A. Writer Hopes Her Prize will Enhance Peace"-Chris Erasmus says that Gordimer's books address the suffering caused by racism and the way blacks and whites relate to each other under apartheid. He notes that the Academy had observed that since the 1970s, Gordimer had developed a complex novelistic technique that produced masterpieces like the Conservationist, Burger's Daughter and July's People. The comments in this newspaper column were briefly made, so this study inquires into this "complex novelistic technique"(10) by looking at Gordimer's characterization in her novels. Since Gordimer looked at human relationships in apartheid South African literature, this study demonstrates how she does the same in post-apartheid South African literature.

In "South African Writing-A Brief Survey", Waruingi argues that characters in Gordimer's novel, as in real life, live together but remain strangers, each following his or her own line of development. He adds that the interaction of characters one expects in closely woven novels is markedly lacking in many South African novels. Since his views are not specific to any text, they run the risk of being inaccurate. For this reason, the study will analyse characterisation in particular novels in order to arrive at more representative conclusions.

This review is useful in so far as it confirms the apparent lack of systematic research on Gordimer's later novels. The sole purpose of our study being to establish the fact that indeed

Gordimer's later novels do reflect change. We also demonstrate that she is a writer who responds to factors within her social milieu. As such, her fiction is worth serious attention.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In carrying out this study we will adopt the sociological literary approach to literary criticism.

In discussing this theoretical framework Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in Theory of Literature say:

Questions are asked about the relations of literature to a given social situation, to an economic, social and political system. Attempts are made to describe and define the influence of society on literature and to prescribe and judge the position of literature in society. (94)

The sociological literary theory is imperative since our concern is a stylo-thematic appreciation of Gordimer's later novels. Our study posits an intimate relationship between literature and society. We hold that since a writer is not only influenced by society, she or he influences it, therefore art does not merely reproduce life but it also shapes it. Ngugi (1972) says that literature as a force in society seeks to transform it for the better. Thus concerns Gordimer raises through the different characters in her works, will cause readers to re-examine themselves as they imaginatively identify with the characters presented.

This approach to literature advances that literature is a product of society: it creatively uses language, a social creation, as its medium; it represents life, and life is a social reality; it has a communal social function or use; a majority of questions it raises are social questions; and its writer is a member of society and therefore a social being.

Ime Ikiddeh observes that "Literature does not grow in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction, and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society" (xv). Our study demonstrates that the characters in Gordimer's later novels have been derived from the South African society. We argue that she writes ^{these} ~~this~~ novels with a South African sensibility.

A sociological literary approach will reflect the thoughts, feelings and customs of the age in which a work was written. It follows that knowledge about the period will help a reader to judge relations between characters. Notions in a text are geared towards reflecting those that were held at the time though what counts is what a writer makes of the thoughts, emotions and traditions of his or her age. Therefore, this study asserts that Gordimer's has a social approach to literature in her creativity. In her later novels she looks at social institutions such as the family and the government. She puts emphasis on the personality, and inner feelings of characters, as well as on the relationships they have with each other, as they function in the social institutions that she highlights.

The focus on characterisation in this study will be modelled along E.M Foster's understanding of people in Aspects of the Novel where he states that the novelist:

[M]akes up a number of word-masses roughly describing himself... gives them names and sex, assigns them plausible gestures, and causes them perhaps to behave consistently. These word-masses are his characters... their nature is

conditioned by what he guesses about other people, and about himself, and is further modified by other aspects of his work. (55)

This study observes that the characters in Gordimer's later novels are real given their mode of presentation. They bear traits that Foster lists in the passage above. He argues that characterisation is one of the devices that a novelist uses in writing, so that through characters, he or she can appeal to the reader's intelligence and imagination. Similarly, our study shows that Gordimer uses the characters in her later novels as instruments of social commentary.

Forster identifies two kinds of characters ^{who} are either flat or round. The former kind are constructed round a single idea or quality, and they can be expressed in one sentence. The latter kind, he notes, "is capable of surprising in a convincing way.... It has the incalculability of life about it - life within the pages of a book" (81). In our study, we see Gordimer presenting a variety of round and flat characters in order to communicate her message.

Georg Lukacs provides this study with some more insights on characterisation. He says:

'[T]ypes' are not to be confused with stereotypes, nor with average, nor the eccentric, but should rather be seen as highly individualized characters who engage in their fullest potential with the social and historical circumstances of their situation. In this way they come to represent the fullest exploration on that situation, while retaining their individuality as characters. (9)

Lukac's views are useful in analysing the complex characters in Gordimer's later novels. Our study realizes that these characters are both individuals and types insofar as they exhibit realistic traits about the South African society.

METHODOLOGY

In pursuit of our objectives and in a bid to confirm our hypothesis^es, this study carries out a library research. It involves the reading of the three primary texts under study and any other texts that have a bearing on our research. Because of the limited critical attention that Gordimer has received in texts within our reach locally, we shall consult the Internet for further critical examination.

In this research emphasis is laid on the aspects of change as they emerge in Gordimer's three later novels. The question guiding the methodology of this research is: how does she, in her later novels, portray change in South Africa? Characterisation, motif, and symbolism will be used as methods of reflecting attitudes, and values as held collectively or individually by the characters presented in her later novels.

Our study will be done in chapter form with each chapter focusing on a given sub-thematic concern as it bears upon the major theme of change. There is a consistent comparison and contrasting of the three texts the study focuses on.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

While appreciating that Gordimer is a versatile and prolific writer, with short stories, novels and essays to her credit, this study wishes to focus on only three of her later novels. Because her other later novels are unavailable in retail outlets and libraries, and due to the limited

period in which this research was conducted, we feel that these three novels are a representative sample of her later novels.

Micere Mugo (28) perceives African literature as being set in four major epochs: the purely traditional phase, the period of invasion by European colonial powers, the struggle for independence and, the era of "freedom and after". The novels of the study will take us through the last epoch.

Although Gordimer's essays and short stories are incisive and exhibit a lot of desirable literary merit, this study wishes to concentrate on the novel genre. The novel being a longer and more comprehensive form that we feel is better positioned in addressing the concerns of our study. In its expansiveness, the novel can allow us to conduct a more detailed research whose findings would reflect the objectives we set out to achieve. The theoretical standpoint adopted for this research lays emphasis on characterization, hence the need to focus on novels that are unlike the short stories, which may give character sketches owing to their limited scope.

CHAPTER TWO

POWER RELATIONS

This chapter looks at how characters interact vis-a-vis the concept of power in Gordimer's post-apartheid novels: July's People, None to Accompany Me and The House Gun. Power relations are looked at comparatively, in that power relations of the apartheid era and post-apartheid era are juxtaposed. Domestic and political levels of power relations are considered. Power relations are also seen in terms of race relations, gender roles and the generation conflict. Race relations denote how characters of the same and different races treat one another. Gender roles refer to functions that male or female members of a society typically have or are expected to have. The generation conflict entails the ideological or interactive differences between young people and old people.

July's People commences with an epigraph: the old is dying and the new cannot born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms. This epigraph is derived from Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks. It sets the scene in the text for a transition, that is, exiting from the old and entering into the new. Apartheid dies with its racist practices, leaving room for the birth pangs of a non-racial society.

A revolution takes place in the novel. Pass-burnings of 1952, Sharpeville of the 1960, the Soweto uprising of 1976, and Elsie's River of 1980 are given as backdrops to the present revolution. These are failed revolutions that resulted in bloodshed and deaths, majority of the sufferers being black people. This revolution is a continuation of preceding ones; the difference

is that black people triumph over the white people. The revolution is characterised by violence: "Riots, arson, occupation of the headquarters of international corporations, bombs in public buildings..." (7) and "gunned shopping malls and the blazing, unsold houses... heat-guided missiles that struck Boeings..." (9). Thousands of black and white people die as a consequence of the violence. The Smales are forced to flee this massacre in the urban setting to take refuge in the countryside.

Gordimer views this revolution as one that entails change in power relations. This is how Maureen the main female character in the text sums up the concern of the text "an explosion of roles, that's what the blowing up of the union buildings and the burning of the master bedrooms is" (117). Black people take over political power from the white people. Most directly, the explosion in the novel involves the relations between July and his white people--the Smales.

The first page of the novel introduces the reader through a flashback to the master-servant relationship that existed between the black people and the white people prior to the ongoing revolution. July, a house servant, is featured as a representative of his fellow black people who are servants to white people. The text says: "July bent at the doorway and begun that day for them as his kind has always done for their kind" (1). Immediately, the story shifts from the narrow single household setting to the broader setting of governors' residences, commercial hotel rooms, shift bosses' company bungalows and master bedrooms en suite. We infer that black people are serving white people, from the scenes above.

In the third paragraph of its opening pages, the novel takes us to the present moment where Smales are refugees in the countryside. A reversal of the master-servant relationship has taken place. July changes status from the Smales' servant to their host. When we see him serving tea to the Smales, he is only taking care of his visitors. These are the people he helps escape the war of race in Johannesburg, in which black people were killing white people.

When the South African world turns upside down, and the Smales are helpless with nowhere to go, July stands in their living room and suggests that they go to his home. July's offer marks the beginning of the reversal in power relations between white and black people. To this effect the narrator comments, "That he [July] should have been the one to decide what they [the Smales] should do, that their helplessness in their own house, should have made it clear to him that he must do this -- the sheer unlikeliness was the logic of their position" (11). Therefore, July in his newly acquired authoritative position directs Bam over a six hundred - kilometre drive. Having previously walked this same distance, the first time he comes to the city to look for work, July knows which route to follow. He also knows where to get petrol, food and water along the way. When the fugitives arrive in at July's village, he gives them accommodation and makes sure that they have provisions. In the village, July is the man who is in charge and, by extension, black people are in charge too.

Reversal in power relations between races intensifies in the rural set-up. July increases in stature when he takes over the Smales' car. This gesture of acquisition is a major twist in race relations. This is because under the racist regime, white people owned vehicles while black people only cleaned them or drove them when working for white people. For instance, Daniel

drives a dairy truck for his white employer. Now, July takes off with the Smales' car without their knowledge. When he returns, he is not apologetic. He stretches his authority when he keeps the car keys and engages Daniel to teach him to drive. Bam is so shocked at July's audacity that he says, " I would never have thought he would do something like that. He's always been so correct" (58).

That July now wields power becomes clear when he returns from his driving lessons and boasts about his progress. Bam who is taken aback by July 's enthusiasm wonders whether the police can find July without a licence. July laughs at this, thereby demonstrating his mounting self-confidence, and responds, "Who is going to catch me? The white policeman is run away when the black soldiers come that time. Sometime they take him, I don't know.... No one there can ask me, where is my licence. Even my pass, no one can ask any more. It's finished" (59). These are words of a man who is sure of himself. July knows the political changes that have taken place in his environment. He has been liberated from the racial oppression that was perpetuated by state agents like the police. Bam is concerned that as July moves about with the car, it might be traced to the Smales.

Maureen and July have other confrontations centering on the vehicle and its keys, and the Smales' gun. These are symbols of power such that whoever possesses them assumes authority. July becomes increasingly assertive with each confrontation. There is a time when Maureen keeps the car keys overnight after fetching a rubber mat from the vehicle. She then sends for him so that she can give him the keys. They engage in an ego battle. He refuses to come over to her summoning her to his hut instead. She ignores July's message and sends for him a

second time. Finally, he gives in and comes to her and she gives him the keys. After this encounter, July conducts himself like a person of authority. In the passage below, the narrative voice compares July's behaviour to that of people in authority. First, it likens him to a foreman inspecting his work. Then it juxtaposes him to a farmer noting work to be done on the land.

He put the keys in his pocket and walked away. His head moved from side to side like a foreman's inspecting his work-shop or a farmer noting work to be done on the lands. He yelled out instruction to a woman, here, questioned a man mending a bicycle tire, there, halloed across the valley to the young man who was his driving instructor.... (73)

This comparison underscores the fact that July is in control. The adverbs of place "there" and "here" and the preposition "across" show that July is in charge of his whole environment. Acting like a person in authority, he yells out instruction and questions people. July does not walk away silently from Maureen, he has a voice which he uses to loudly express himself.

Towards the end of the novel, July and Maureen confront each other over the stolen Smales' gun. During this scene, he refuses to be patronised by her. When she insists that Daniel had informed July where he was going, July says, "Don't tell me what Daniel he tell me. Me, I know if he's say or he's not say nothing. Is not my business, isn't it?" (150). He emphatically refuses to obey her when she orders him to get back the stolen gun from Daniel. He tells her off for all the trouble that she has caused him: "Me? I must know who is stealing your things? Same like always. You make too much trouble for me. Here in my home too.... I don't want it any more" (151). July's behaviour shows that he has found a voice with which to express his

views assertively. He is no longer docile; rather he has matured into defining his space. He states that he is not her servant to bow at her whims. He has now taken over power from her

Maureen feels deeply incensed with July's new-found freedom of expression. His expressiveness indicates that he is in control. She is "stampeded by a wild rush of need to destroy everything between them" (152) in order to set up new precepts of their relationship. She is further angered when July lashes out at her in his language. She retaliates by telling him what the narrative voice calls the truth:

You'll profit by the others' fighting. ... You want the bakkie, to drive around like a gangster, imagining yourself a big man, important, until and you don't have any money for petrol, there isn't any petrol to buy, and it'll be there, July, under the trees, in this place among the old huts, and it will fall to pieces while the children play in it. Useless. Another wreck like all the others. Another piece of rubbish. (153)

In this excerpt, Maureen despises July's ascension to power. Since he increases in stature by possessing the Smales' car, she likens him to a gangster. She is persuaded that his authority is short-lived and unreal--a product of his imagination. This authority will wane due to poverty, as represented by the car (a symbol of authority, power and control) which Maureen predicts, will fall to pieces for lack of money to buy petrol for it. She emphasises that his stolen power will disintegrate when she uses synonymous words – "useless", "wreck" and "rubbish"—to describe the car. Her words are intended to bring down July from the height he has attained in asserting his dignity. The words paint a grim picture of post-apartheid South Africa.

It emerges that black people having wrestled power from white people will not benefit from the same. This is because black people lack what it takes and are bound to fail in running South Africa.

In the urban set-up, white people are the wielders of power, but are dependent on black people's labour. In the rural set-up, the white people's dependency on black people is heightened. White people require basic needs like shelter, security and food from black people. The Smales, who represent white people, become refugees in the countryside. They are suddenly plunged into poverty from their wealthy position. A contrast is realized: from the door in a master bedroom en suite to an aperture in thick mud walls, and the sack that hangs over it. The dilapidated hut the Smales occupy is described to foreground their reversed fortune. The hut has a stamped mud and dung floor, frayed grey thatch supported by rough wattle steeple from which cobwebs stringy with dirt dangle, and nests of either wasps or bats are glued to its eaves. The dispossession of white characters demonstrates that they have lost power to black characters.

Reversed gender roles bring to light the change in power relations. A case in point is Maureen's relationship with Bam. As Maureen reflects on it, she observes that in the rural setting, He is reduced to "an architect lying on the bed in a mud hut, a man without a vehicle" (98). He is dispossessed since his livelihood is cut off. His vehicle, which represents authority and power, is taken over by his former servant, July. Maureen realizes that she left the man she married back in Johannesburg, and what she has now is an empty shell. The omniscient narrator says: "she had gone on a long trip and left him behind in the master bedroom: what was here, with

her, was some botched imagining of his presence in circumstances outside those the marriage was contracted for" (98). In Maureen's view, her marriage to Bam is rendered void by the revolution. While talking of how July has assumed control of their vehicle, Bam's reaction prompts her to notice that he has been stripped of his power, rights and authority.

The symbol of the gun is used to discuss power relations between Bam and Maureen. The gun is a dual symbol of authority and destruction. After shooting warthogs, he acquires the authority or power to subdue his wife in lovemaking. Prior to this, she has the upper hand--increasingly taking the initiative when it comes to basic issues to be dealt with.

July and Martha's marriage also reflects change in gender roles. Before the revolution Martha took care of her household, making all the decisions for fifteen years. This is because July came home on leave from his job in the city every two years. The only authority he had from a distance of six hundred kilometres was money. With the advent of revolution, he has come back to the village and there is awkwardness in taking over the making of decisions from his wife. He takes her pink glass cups and saucers and gives them to the Smales along with his mother's hut, without consulting her. Martha, having decided that it is high time the Smales left suggests this to her husband. He does not take it kindly when Martha suggests that the Smales can get a house at the chief's place. He feels slighted because she and his mother decided to cut thatching grass without seeking advice from him. This reversal of gender roles indicates a struggle for power. The wife and the husband all want to control the affairs of their family.

Maureen and July's confrontations in the text have a gender dimension.

She is a woman who "had never been afraid of a man" (98). When he takes over her family's car, she sees a threat in him. Therefore she engages him in verbal battles which she wins. These confrontations heave her into the readers' sight. She is not only a central character in the text, but also more vocal than her husband, Bam. Through Maureen, the author suggests a liberation for the female characters. Women who were previously silent and invisible are now given visibility by virtue of their becoming vocal. That the female characters are more visible suggest that they have become the wielders of power over the male characters.

The difference in relationships among characters of various generations brings out the change in power relations. Characters of the younger generation are more adaptable compared to the characters of the older generation. The novel simultaneously depicts three generations. July's chief sails in the same ideological boat with July's mother since they belong to the same generation--the oldest of the three generations. She is shocked at the change in power relations between black and white people. She cannot comprehend that white people are helpless with nowhere to go, yet they have money. That black people are killing white people, by shooting down planes, puzzles her too. Even after July has given her an eyewitness account of the revolution she says: "White people. They are very powerful, my son. They are very clever. You will never come to the end of the things they can do" (21). Her inability to cope with the transfer of power from white characters to black characters foregrounds that change in power relations.

Bam takes the change in power relations in his stride, since he belongs to a generation that is younger than that one of July's chief. He is so taken aback by the chief's request that he embarks on educating him concerning the reality on the ground. He says

You are not going to shoot your own people. You wouldn't kill blacks....You're not going to take guns and help the white government to kill blacks.... And they will kill you. You mustn't let the government make you kill each other. The whole black nation is your nation. (120)

These words go unheeded, since at the end of the visit July's chief insists that he will go to Bam for lessons on how to shoot. The likes of the chief cannot cope with a revolution where black people are subduing white people. Clingman notes about July's Chief: "A thorough going social revolution may be even more of a threat to him and the little power he has than are the structures of apartheid" (197).

Bam and Maureen, who belong to the second generation, try to come to terms with the change in power relations between black and white people. They exhibit a liberal demeanour. Prior to the revolution, they see apartheid ending if not in their generation, then in their children's generation. Owing to this conviction they think of leaving South Africa to start life afresh in another country, but their investments hinder them. They admire Castro--the bourgeois white who succeeds in turning revolutionary. They feel guilty of their privileged position of wielders of power as the narrative voice reports:

They sickened at the appalling thought that they might find they had lived out their whole lives as they were, born white pariah dogs in a black continent. They joined political parties and 'contact' groups in willingness to slough privilege it was supposed to be their white dog nature to guard with Mirages and tanks.... (8)

This passage demonstrates how much the Smales dislike the differences in relation between black and white people. The metaphor "born white pariah dogs" captures their discomfort. It

shows that they consider themselves as unacceptable creatures to black people. White people maintain their authority using force or violence as alluded to by the term "tanks". Disturbed by their status of privilege as white people, the Smales go out of their way to cast it off.

When the Smales get to the countryside, their liberalism is put to test. Bam lives up to his beliefs. He makes an effort to adapt to the rural environment. Maureen does not cope with the change in power relations as well as he does. She is unable to flow with everyday activities in July's village. She joins the village women in their chores but she seems lost. She remonstrates her children from mixing with black children to no avail. She is more affected when July takes over her family's car and Daniel steals Bam's gun. The gun and the vehicle are objects of power to her. Her alienation comes to a head at the close of the novel when she runs away to seek for another place to stay.

The third generation, which the children in the text belong to, features as the most adaptive to the change in power relations. The Smales' children--Gina, Victor and Royce--start off as resentful but end up being welcoming to black children. At the outset of the novel, Gina is so fussy that she cannot take goat milk. As the story advances, she strikes a friendship with Nyiko among other black children. She gets to the point where she prefers "pap" (an African dish) to pork sausages. She goes out of her way to learn the African language and songs. Victor who never wanted black people to fetch water from his father's tank changes too. As his name suggests he conquers racial prejudices. The black and white children in the novel are integrated in the change in power relations between black and white people.

The changing power relations we have observed in July's People are also discussed in None to Accompany Me. In the latter text, we perceive reversal in power relations and gender roles too. Similarly, the young generation features as the hope in resolving the differences of power between black and white people.

The opening pages of None to Accompany Me plunge the readers into a celebration. Nelson Mandela has been released from prison. This event marks the beginning of the end of apartheid. Governance is changing hands from white people to embrace people of other races. Black people, who have taken no active part in South African politics, are now the key contenders in the struggle for power. Women are also at the forefront in the changing political milieu. In the midst of this political change, parallel race relations are juxtaposed in the novel, one between Vera and her black friends, the other between Odendaal and his squatters.

Odendaal is an Afrikaner landowner with three farms to his name, none of which he wants to relinquish. He feels no qualms about owning so much land in a foreign land, whose thousands of black natives are squatters. Odendaal realises that there is going to be political change in his country. This makes him feel that his position as a landowner is threatened. Black squatters who have moved into one of his farms want to reach an amicable arrangement with him, where interests of both parties are taken care of. Odendaal, instead, shucks this olive branch, and schemes to turn the 'invasion' of his farm by black squatters into an entrepreneurship. The novel says:

Mr. Odendaal decided to move with the times; whatever they might be. What the Government had done, was doing, could not be undone by one Afrikaner alone.

Fighting its betrayal of the white farmer was something for which political action would be found. In the meantime, farmers would have to--in the businessmen's way of speaking--'diversify resources'...get up to the tricks that make those people rich. He applied to the Provincial Administration for permission to establish a black township on one of his holdings. He would convert the farm into cash as a landlord; he would divide it into plots for rent to blacks. He was going to turn their invasion to profit. (22)

Odendaal sees black people as scum or vermin. To him they are "black bastard [s]...crowd of criminals, drunkards and won't-works ... (23)" who now talk about rights they would never have had the nerve to think of. Black people are useful to him only as servants or slaves -- sources of cheap labour -- though they are not to be received as visitors. Since he owns the land he holds the power over the squatters. He tells them when to vacate his property and dictates to them the conditions under which they can stay.

He feels threatened not only by black squatters, but also by Vera--a woman who is a fellow white. His chauvinistic outlook is evident in the way he sees Vera as the omniscient narrator articulates:

This was the kind of woman who produced revulsion in him. To him, in fact she was not a woman at all, as he knew women, even if she had been young he could never have believed a man would want to touch a woman like that ... the mouth asking questions and addressing him without the respect and natural difference due to a male, yet offensively quietly, could bring the sensation of a woman's tongue in your mouth. (24).

He endeavours to belittle and frustrate her. He makes her wait and talks over her head, as if she is not there. His behaviour shows that he thinks women should be docile and come second to men. It suffices to note that he loses the battle for power in the long run. The squatters he seeks to throw out of his farm or exploit by charging high rent have the Supreme Court ruling in their favour.

Rapulana is at the forefront in the struggle for power between black and white people. The Odenville squatters choose him to lead them. He assists Vera, advising her on the best strategy to use in fighting Odendaal. He accompanies her to Odenville to initiate dialogue with Odendaal. He calmly bears Odendaal's tantrum and threats. He uses Afrikaans to subtly caution Odendaal over the looming violence in the Odenville squatter camp, "Meneer Odendaah, don't be afraid. We won't harm you. Not you or your wife and children" (25). This is a situation where the oppressors' language is turned against the oppressors. Rapulana is from the countryside where the school he attended taught in Afrikaans, therefore "the man's Afrikaans was Odendaal's not Mrs Stark's pidgin" (25). Language in this instance is used as a tool for fighting racial oppression and for challenging the power held by white people.

Rapulana's role, as a saviour, goes beyond the Odenville case. His success with the Odenville case gets him hired as an adviser in a housing project, thus he shifts his base from the farm to the city. He also becomes a director not only on the board of one company, but also on several finance companies, a development foundation and two banks. Consequently, he leaves his backyard cottage for a house in a modest suburb, vacated by a white couple that emigrates. He starts dining at Drommedaris, a restaurant that formerly served only white people of high

social standing. It is a fundamental development in power relations for Rapulana, formerly a schoolmaster, to ascend the ladder of success. This means that black people are beginning to take over what white people are giving up, be they houses or opportunities for jobs.

The changing political climate in South Africa pushes firms formerly owned and run by white people to adopt an Africanising policy. This is a practice in which black people are taken as employees of companies, even serving as members of boards. It is meant to encourage the sharing of power among people of different races. Firms take up black employees so as to appear to do the right thing, yet they do not expect the same employees to contribute significantly to the firms' endeavours. Rapulana breaks out of this mould. When analysing his achievements as a member of the boards in former white people's firms, Vera says:

My bet is they suddenly counted on you being decorative enough, with credentials from the housing commission, they thought that looks good, you don't need to say any thing round the boardroom table, you'll lend them enough credibility for progress just by being there, and then they will find they haven't got their dummy, they've got you.

(258-9)

Her observation reveals that white people let black people on board but not as equal partners in running South African affairs. Therefore, black people do not get an equal share of the power as the white people.

Reversed gender roles point to a change in domestic and political power relations. Comparing two couples--Starks and the Maqomas--who belong to white and black races respectfully can elucidate this. Vera Stark, as her second name suggests, is laid bare for the reader to see. As the main character, she appears in three capacities: a mother, a wife and a career woman. She is ambitious. She leaves her secretarial job, gets articled to a legal firm, and registers as a part-time law student at a university. She is accomplished in her career. She rises to the top most position in the legal Foundation, becomes a fixture, but declines to take the position of an executive director. The Foundation cannot run without her: "Her quiet acerbity at meetings ... her ability ...to recognise and separate the truth ... combine to make her the colleague to whom everyone from the director to the telephonist turns for the last word" (12). Her success in her career places in a position of authority.

In the political field, Vera is not a spectator. She is nominated to serve on the Technical Committee on constitutional issues. She is independent, but errs in putting her career above her marriage and family, as "For her the condition of existence was what happened in the power of politics" (299).

Bennet's career is humble compared to Vera's. He is a woodcurver and modeller of clay, while she is a lawyer. He fails at his career and concentrates on loving her. He tries his hand at business opening promotional luggage, but it closes down in bankruptcy. He resorts to whiling time away in Ivan's place in London as Vera hits the precipice in her career. He losses power in

his marriage because of dispossession. He is penniless and unemployed. The reverse is true for Vera.

The Maqomas also represent gender roles. As Sibongile gains in political stature, Didymus loses out. In apartheid South Africa Didymus is an articled clerk like Vera, though he does not pursue a law degree like her. Instead, he becomes a movement man who operates underground: "a veteran of prisons and integration...fox at infiltration, raiding under the eyes of the police and army" (47). This simile enhances his docility. He belongs to the inner circle in exile and during the years he is involved in international missions and other important activities. He topples from his pedestal in post-apartheid South Africa. He becomes meek "like a rabbit, quiet, nibbling at whatever's given to him" (47). When the Maqomas return from exile, he accepts the inappropriate accommodation provided for them. He is a man who has lost power.

Sibongile is the opposite of Didymus in developing her career. In apartheid South Africa, she runs a black co-operative and attends extramural classes at university. In the new South Africa she is appointed deputy director of the Movement's regional redeployment programme. She finds her way into politics when she starts attending the meetings Didymus attends. She is presented as a loud character with a presence that could not be ignored as the narrative voice alludes:

[Sibongile] glided in, late, graceful with well-dressed big hips, eyebrows arched when any one was long-winded... Even the way she used her body: coming into conference,

where she was by proxy rather than right, on high heels that chipped across the floor, no attempt to move discreetly ... perfume marked the progress of her breasts and hips her place. He [Didymus] felt that even her obvious undocile femininity would count against her; the physical disturbance she made no attempt to minimise prefigured the disturbance in the male appropriation of power she might seem presumptuous enough to ignore...the volume of her laugh was not moderated to the atmosphere of conference, either. (78)

Sibongile uses femininity to wedge her into a male domain: politics. Her behaviour in this passage demonstrates her struggle for the political power that is held by men.

As the novel ends, Didymus and Vera point out that Sibongile's success in politics is pegged to her beauty, charm and hard work. By then Didymus changes from his previous skepticism.

This novel shows the young generation as the synthesis of past and present power relations, in order to produce those of the future. They are a link between Africa and Europe, the white and black races. Mpho, a sixteen-year-old girl represents this transition:

Mpho was a resolution--in a time when this had not yet been achieved by governments, conferences, negotiations, mass action and international monitoring or intervention -- of the struggle for power in the country which was hers, and yet where because of that power struggle, she had not been born. (49)

Her style of beauty is one that "comes out at the clash of domination and resistance" (49). That she is neither African nor wholly European but a complex mixture of both suggests that she is an indicator of hope. Through her, readers see something beautiful or good coming out of the experience of apartheid, where black people withstand racial oppression meted out on them by

white people. Readers get the message that in the power struggle between white and black people there need not be a winner, rather all the contenders can each get access to a percentage of the power, thus engendering harmonious coexistence.

In The House Gun, power relations in terms of racial conflict are depicted in the relationship between the Lindgards and Motsamai, in which undercurrents of years of prejudice are discernible. The narrative voice reports the shock of Daniel's parents when they learn that he is going to be defended by Motsamai, a black advocate:

They heard it once, in the shock of the names; the choice of a black man. She's not one of those doctors who touch black skin indiscriminately along with white ... but retain liberal prejudices against the intellectual blacks. Yet she is questioning, and he is; in the muck in which they are stewing now, where murder is done, old prejudices still writhe to the surface. (33 emphasis mine)

The Lindgards question Motsamai's competence as a lawyer because of his race. That this is not just parental concern but a racial issue is clear when their doubts persist. Their attitude towards him at the beginning of this novel suggests remnants of racism in post-apartheid South Africa. They are uncomfortable with their son's choice of a lawyer because they feel that the white and Jewish races are superior to the black race. In their perception white and Jews people wield power over the black people. Therefore, they cannot understand how a black man who belongs to an inferior race can defend their white son who belongs to a superior race.

Augmented dependence characterises the relationship between black and white people in The House Gun. In the post-apartheid era, white people are more dependent on black people's

labour. When Duncan murders his friend, overnight the Lindgards become dependent on Motsamai as neither had ever before been dependent on any one. This dependence intensifies as the hearing of Duncan's case draws near. The narrative voice observes: "Where Claudia had gone reluctantly in summons to Counsels' chambers, she and Harald together now badgered Hamilton Motsamai for his time" (144). Harald, one of the directors of a large insurance firm and Claudia, who "is accustomed...to being the professional advisor instead of the victim" (44), turn to Motsamai for assistance. He is the only one with whom they can bear the weight of their predicament. The narrative voice says:

Because of 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. (88-9)

That the Lindgards are increasingly dependent on Motsamai signifies the change in power relations. Those who are accustomed to making decisions are forced to submit to another person's authority. Motsamai holds power over the Lindgards.

The Lindgards visit their lawyer severally as the story progresses. On one such occasion Motsamai addresses his clients using their first names. The narrative voice comments that he does so without the Lindgards' permission since he had authority: "Present within it, he has complete authority over everything in the enclosure of their situation. Motsamai, the stranger from the other side of the divided past. They are in his pink-palmed black hands" (86). Motsamai's wielding of power over the Lindgards points to reversal in power relations. They

are now under his charge. His using of their first names represents a turning of tables on the master - servant relationship:

It is very different with Motsamai... Servants used to be known to their employers only by first names, everyone knows now it was intrinsically derogatory. This use of a black man's first name is a sign not of equality ... It's a sign of his acceptance of you, white man, of his allowing you an intimidated access to his power. In this relationship the comfortable terms, quite accustomed now, of taken - for - granted equality once the appropriate vocabulary and the same references are understood, draws back from an apparition that has been waiting in the past. (88)

This passage indicates that by the Lindgards allowing Motsamai to address them by their first names, they also allow him to have authority over them. Motsamai's action amounts to invasion of private space. He further invades the Lindgards' territory, when he drops by their residence, to keep them abreast with the line of argument he intends to use in court: "Hamilton entered the mise en scene of life going on as he did the equally well-appointed room in his chambers; as if every place were made ready for his presence" (123). In this quotation Motsamai is depicted as a person in authority. He takes charge of life and the Lindgards' predicament; in the same way he handles his work. He also stamps his authority over them through his colour and body posture. When explaining to them how he was going to conduct his defence, he assumes domineering stance: "Motsamai was legs apart wide at the thighs, leaning out towards them in his body's emphasis, as he did from behind the desk in his chambers, the glimpse of the days' efforts shone on the obsidian of his face, his blackness was the stamp of authority in the room" (123).

By the end of the novel, the Lindgards have been schooled in shedding the vestiges of the apartheid regime. Their predicament humbles them to the point where they cannot turn down Hamilton's invitation to his house. The narrator reveals:

Harald and Claudia had never been to a black man's house before. This kind of gesture on both sides --the black man asking, the white man accepting-- was that of the Left - Wing circles to which they had not belonged during the old regime, and of the circles of hastily- formed new liberals of whose conversion they were sceptical. If they themselves in the past had not had the courage to act against the daily horrors of the time as the Left -Wing did beyond dinner parties, risking their professions and lives, at least neither he nor she sought to disguise this luck of guts...by dining and wining it away. (165-6)

The fact that the Lindgards accept Mosamai's invitation is a phenomenon culminating in changing power relations among people of different races. White and black people now engage in a mutual give and take interaction. While on this dinner visit, Claudia takes on Motsamai's son, Sechaba, as an apprentice. The issue here is that Motsamai takes care of the Lindgards' son while Claudia takes care of his son. Characters of different races have territories in which each of them is in authority. The white and black people share power, none is superior to the other.

Changing power relations in terms of reversing of the roles of gender is not an issue in The House Gun. Male and female characters are depicted as equal participants in building new South Africa, they share power equally. Claudia and Albrecht are doctors while Motshiditsi is

an agricultural economist. Motsamai, Harald, Basil Reed and Duncan are: an advocate, an insurer, psychiatrist and an architect, respectively.

The future power relations in South Africa are placed in the hands of the young generation--of Motshiditsi. Motsamai draws a comparison between three generations and argues that the youngest generation is the most capable in handling the transfer of power from white people to black people. Talking about Motshiditsi he says:

[S]he started off shrewdly by being born at the right time, growing up at the right time.... Her father and I belong to the generation that was educated at missionary school.... So we were equipped ahead of our time to take our place eventually in the new South Africa that needs us. Then came the generation subjected to that system euphemistically called education, 'Bantu education'. They were equipped to be messengers, cleaners and nannies. Her generation came next....they completed a real education equipped just in time to take up planning, administering our country She's going to outshine even her father. (173)

Motshiditsi personifies the rejection of the apartheid past: "the delicate jut of her jaw a rejection of everything that would have determined her life in the past." (168). As an agricultural economist, she confidently displays her intelligence when responding to Harald's question concerning transformation at the bank in new South Africa. Therefore she represents women and the young generation who are involved in shaping South Africa's economy for posterity. In the young generation, women and black people are at the helm of power in the new South Africa.

Gordimer's three novels that focus on the post-apartheid state make inroads into changing power relations, by illuminating the realities of her South Africa through the characters they present. Gordimer creates character types--characters who embody a substantial number of significant distinguishing characteristics of a group or class. These characters grow or develop, undergoing transformations, from the beginning of the stories to their ends.

In July's People, through a revolution, power shifts from the white characters to the black characters. July acquires power when he possesses the Smales' car and gun. The Smales' fall from power when they are dispossessed. Having left their luxurious lifestyle in Johannesburg, they live in poverty and at the mercy of their former servant in the countryside.

In None to Accompany Me, power changes hands not only from white people but also from black men to black women. Rapulana changes from a schoolmaster to a company executive. Sibongile and Vera rise from humble careers to major ones, while the opposite happens to their spouses. They end up succeeding in their political appointments, which involve the changing of governance from white people to black people.

In The House Gun, the white and black people engage in a mutual give and take relationship such that all of them have some power. The Lindgards allow Motsamai to have authority over them as he handles their son's case.

Integration and sharing of power are the way forward in all the three novels. The young generation is integrated into the power changes in South Africa. The children in July's People

adapt to the changes in power that the revolution brings. Mpho in None to Accompany Me is a harmonization of the disparate black and white forces of power. In The House Gun, Motshiditsi's accomplishments represent the black people's rise to power in shaping of the new South Africa.

From the three novels, the question of ownership is at the centre of the South African power conflict, such that whoever owns property is the wielder of power. This spurs sour relations among several characters. Gordimer advocates for a gradual power shift and integration as resolutions of the power struggle in South Africa. In July's People there is dramatic change where power shifts overnight through a revolution. In None to Accompany Me and The House Gun, novels published almost two decades after the former, power change is gradual and is realised soberly.

Having looked at power relations, the other aspect of change we shall consider will be the quest for identity. The next chapter will dwell on the latter aspect of change as its subject. In it we shall consider how characters in Gordimer's novels--handled in the foregoing chapter--struggle to forge their new identities. As these characters grapple with their changing status, they undergo moments of introspection and have awakenings. In so doing, they get new meaning in their lives and form their new identities.

CHAPTER THREE

THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

The search for identity is the subject of this chapter. This theme manifests itself variously as a hunger for self-fulfilment or an assertion of self, a pursuit of freedom, and a discovery of truth or meaning in one's life. In this chapter we shall look at how the characters in Gordimer's novels --July's People, None to Accompany Me and The House Gun--struggle to forge their new identities. As these characters come to grips with their changing status, they are compelled to re-examine their lives. Consequently, they undergo awakenings, which manifest as desire for a fresh identity. In moments of introspection, they form new identities for themselves and get new meaning in their lives. These characters shed their former identities, acquiring new ones.

July's People reveals to us the former identities of black and white people. We see July as a house servant of his white masters, the Smales. Suddenly, the focus reverts to the present where the characters have new identities. July is now a host to his fugitive former employers. The revolution that takes place in Johannesburg leads to a disintegration of identities of white and black people. In this new political environment, everybody endeavours to forge a new identity for himself or herself.

July begins by asserting himself and defining his territory. We see this when he takes charge of the Smales in their vulnerability during the revolution. He stands in their living room and offers his rural home as a place of refuge. In the countryside July gradually re-constructs his

identity. He sheds his uniform as a show of casting aside his former identity. He is no longer a servant but a host. His new identity is suggested in the change of clothes.

In order to affirm his awakened consciousness, July explains to his female relatives the occurrences in Johannesburg. He has witnessed black people blowing up buildings and Boeings, and white people dying as a consequence of the violence. He watches his former female employer with her three children cowering on the floor of their vehicle. He also guides his former male employer who is escaping death on a long drive. July, having witnessed the revolution in Johannesburg, "was suddenly aware of something he had not known" (21). While conversing with his female kin, he openly declares his enlightenment. "They can't do anything. Nothing to us any more" (21) he says. His words demonstrate that his consciousness about black people's predicament has been enhanced. His awakened consciousness indicates his desire to change his identity. He recognises the difference between his past and present identities.

July's quest for identity calls on him to denounce his previous existence as a servant. He has a confrontation with his former female employer in which they review their fifteen-year working relationship. He ridicules Maureen's definition of him when he persistently throws his "vulgar" identity as "boy" at her. This makes Maureen uncomfortable, since "boy"(69) is a derogatory term for a male servant, which she does not approve of. "Boy" represents a negative identity. While in Johannesburg she challenges those who say it in her presence. By so doing, July is acknowledging his individuality. He has come to the realisation that his former servile identity

of servility does not befit him. The new rural environment with new expectations in relationships warrants altered perception of the other.

Towards the close of the novel, he makes one more step towards acquiring a new identity. He stops carrying his passbook. This is a reference book that every black person is required to carry constantly and show on demand. It contains identifying details along with a record of all permissions and endorsement, involving freedom of movement, eligibility for employment, tax payments, or convictions for transgressions of the law. This passage reveals his attitude towards the passbook:

He thought of the passbook itself as finished. Rid of it, he drove the yellow bakkie with nothing in his pocket. But he had not actually destroyed it. He needed someone--he didn't yet know who--to tell him: burn it, let it swell in the river, their signatures washing away. (137)

In this passage, we note that July is yet to destroy the passbook. This indicates a gradual change of identity. Having a passbook or not having it indicate two different identities. He recognises the need for a different reference, but he goes about it one step at a time. He starts by not carrying it as he moves about. Since the passbook symbolizes his previous identity, his doing away with it, completely, gives him a new reference. He has not yet attained his new identity fully. He still needs encouragement from another identified person.

When he unapologetically takes over the Smales' car, his gesture demonstrates his new identity. Since the vehicle symbolizes power, authority and control, he acquires these characteristics when he possesses it. That he is self-confident becomes apparent when he brags

about the progress he makes in his driving lessons. He further shows this belief in himself by laughing, when Bam expresses concern over the risk of driving in the countryside. He proceeds to possess the car keys as well, refusing to relinquish them. This culminates in confrontations between Maureen and him. The decisive confrontation takes place at the end of the text, when he defies Maureen's order, lashing at her in his African language. The narrative voice records Maureen's reaction to July's barrage of words:

She understood although she knew no word. Understood everything: what he had had to be, how she had covered up to herself for him, in order for him to be her idea of him. But for himself--to be intelligent, honest, dignified for her was nothing; his measure as a man was taken elsewhere and by others. She was not his mother, his wife, his sister, his friend, and his people. (152)

His speech mows down Maureen's defences and acts as an eye-opener for her to understand him. She perceives the truth of their changed identities. He demonstrates to her his dignity and his way of measuring it, which is different from her degradation of him. That he uses his own language to affirm his dignity indicates the depth of his belief in his new identity. After examining his character, we can argue that he is engaged in a quest for identity.

July's wife also has a quest for identity. She does so by unravelling the white people's identities. With the arrival of the revolution, black people can now see white people for who they really are. Martha, who has never touched a white person's skin, undergoes an eye-opening experience when she shakes Maureen's hand. She says:

The face--I don't know--not a nice, pretty face. I always thought they had beautiful dresses. And the hair, it's so funny and ugly.... Like the tail of a dirty sheep. No. I didn't think she'd be like that, a rich white woman. (22)

Her words show that white people have been an enigma to the rural black people. Black people consider them to be measuring standards because of their possessions. July summarises white people's demystification when he tells his female relatives: "They [Smales] looked different there.... Here they haven't got anything--just like us" (22 emphasis mine). His juxtaposition of 'they' versus 'us' and 'there' versus 'here' dichotomies, foregrounds the changes in identities that have befallen both white and black people. The revolution has made black and white people equal, over temporal and spatial parameters.

The desire to re-define oneself is not only a preserve of black characters, white people are also caught up in the same. The Smales are suddenly forced to live in the countryside at the mercy of their former servant. They engage in soul searching, which results in a growth in consciousness. This is where they undergo self-discovery. The six hundred-kilometre drive turns out to be a journey of discovery for them. They go through a change of their identities in July's village.

Bam and Maureen become alienated from each other as a result of their changed circumstances. The more they seek to re-define themselves, the wider the gap in their interaction. Bam, who has been a husband practicing architecture, thereby being in control, has his status reversed. Therefore his identity changes from one who possesses to one who is dispossessed. He no longer knows how to think of or speak to Maureen. She changes from the

old 'Maureen' he knew. He therefore decides to refer to Maureen as 'her' as the narrative voice relates:

Her. Not 'Maureen'. Not 'his wife'. The presence in the mud hut, mute with an activity of being, of sense of self he could not follow because here there were no familiar areas in which it could be visualized moving, no familiar entities that could be shaping it. With 'her' there was no under surface of recognition.... For the children she chose to appear as 'their mother', 'his wife', this morning. But she was no one to whom he could say that the chief was going to tell them to go. He had no idea how she could deal with his certainty. There was no precedent to go on, with her. (105)

The use of personal pronouns in this excerpt enhances the alienation between the Smales. Therefore, in this passage, personal pronouns are symbolic of absent human feelings. Bam refers to Maureen as "her", "she", "one"(105), because he has lost the emotional connection with her. These are impersonal words with which to refer to one's wife. To Bam, she is also "the presence" or "it". These words seem to show that she has become a kind of object or entity, which he cannot relate to. These impersonal references indicate that she is detached from her husband, thus she gets a new identity. For Maureen, Bam becomes "he" and "a man". Indicating Maureen's thoughts towards Bam the narrator says: "And here; what was he here, an architect lying on a bed in a mud hut, a man without a vehicle" (98 emphasis mine). From the explanation it is clear that the words 'wife' and 'husband' no longer function as references for Bam and Maureen. This exposes their changing identities. They change their identities from an unalienated couple to one that is.

More insights into the quest for identity dawn on Maureen when she discovers that she does not really know July. She learns that he is not as honest as he seems, since he steals her household items. Her discovery suggests that black people have been masking their true nature from white people before the revolution. Another moment of awakening is when she learns that the language she used as a means of conciliation was for him nothing more than the medium of his oppression. The narrator thus renders Maureen's awakening consciousness: "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..." (98 emphasis mine). A change of environment transforms Maureen's manner of perceiving her former house servant.

By the end of the novel Maureen's quest for identity takes an upsurge. She is alienated, being unable to fully join the activities of the village. She also fights losing battles with July. The finale of the novel finds her on her own. She is sewing her son's pair of shorts when she hears the sound of an aircraft's engine. She runs towards the sound, leaving her husband and children behind. She fords a river moving into its water "like some member of a baptismal sect to be born again" (159). Her running away demonstrates that she has acquired the new identity of an alienated being. This incident symbolises a re-birth where she goes through a moment of re-discovery after which she attains a new identity. When she gets to the river-bank on the other side; she attains the newness of the self. The narrative voice thus represents Maureen's re-birth: "Suddenly [she] come[s] through onto the shallows of other side and has clambered the cage of roots let down into the mud by the huge fig--tree, landmark of the bank she has never crossed to before" (160).

Clingman argues that though the circumstances in which her running occurs are ambiguous, Maureen knows that she must do it. He says that she is running from old structures and relationships towards her revolutionary destiny. She does not know whether that destiny brings life or death but she sees it as her authentic future. For the first time since leaving Johannesburg--and perhaps for the first time in her life--she has found integration. We see her in motion; flight supposes that she has not attained her goal. She is still searching for her identity.

Having observed characters that are searching for their identities in July's People, we see characters with a similar quest in None to Accompany Me. The latter novel carries this theme to greater heights. Its characters are more aggressive, facing greater challenges in their endeavours.

Sibongile has just returned from exile to stake her claim in her country of origin. That she seeks recognition, shows her search for her identity as a black woman. Upon her arrival, she protests over the disgustingly pathetic accommodation provided for her and her husband by the Movement's new executive. She tells her husband: "I can't live like this.... At the beginning, years ago, yes. It was necessary.... But now! My God! I'm not running for my life. I'm not running for anybody any more, I'm not grateful for a bit of shelter, political asylum.... This is not for you and me" (45). To further demonstrate Sibongile's cognisance of her altered status and, thus a new identity, we see her lamenting to Vera. Sibongile complains of her husband

who seems to be living in a time warp, thinking that they are still refugees, and must suffer in noble silence “for what the cause doesn't need any more” (47).

While considering her advancement in her career, one discerns an overriding desire for self-actualisation. In the apartheid era she starts off running a black co-operative and attending extramural classes at the university. In the post-apartheid era she becomes the deputy director of the movement's regional redeployment programme. Later she is nominated for elections which she wins and joins the new executive. She attains a new identity as a politician with this nomination.

Her thirst for self-fulfilment, which emanates from her need for a new identity is highlighted in her self-confidence. She starts attending the same meetings as Didymus with an intention of making an impression. She arrives late at the meetings, having made sure that she is well dressed and perfumed. Her high-heeled shoes tap across the floor as she indiscreetly locates her seat. Docile femininity is not her forte since she laughs loudly at the meetings. At the end of the text, from her behaviour, we get the message that she wants to be seen and heard. She is no longer contented with being overshadowed. In her search of self, she becomes a force to reckon with in South Africa's political arena.

Mpho struggles to establish her identity as a black woman. She is born away from her African homeland, living in London with her exiled parents until she is sixteen. Upon her return to South Africa, her estrangement is magnified by her inability to speak an African language. Instead, “[o]ut of her mouth came a perky London English” (49). Therefore Sibongile urges

her to remember her roots--her true identity--which is represented by language. Sibongile says: "My girl, that is exactly what has been done to our people, you, your father, me. We've been alienated from what is ours.... You have a name to live up to! You were robbed of your birth--that should have been right here. Take back your language" (50). The young girl picks up her mother's challenge and starts frequenting her paternal grandmother's place in Alexandra. The description of the decay and state of disintegration of her grandmother's house and its environment attests to Mpho's displacement--her identity has disintegrated as an African woman.

Her upbringing outside South Africa impedes Mpho from establishing an African identity. Although she is bright, her intelligence having been simulated in exile by a European education, disadvantages her by setting her apart among black youngsters. Her attempt to bond with Oupa is disastrous, partly because of her privileged upbringing and education in the west. Their affair leads to an unexpected pregnancy. She has two irreconcilable identities. She is caught between worlds, combining "the style of vogue with the assertion of Africa" (49). Displaced in both South Africa and England, she moves to America, choosing to forge her identity in a Western nation.

Like his black female counterparts, Rapulana struggles to construct his identity as a black man. Defining his space is a major part of this goal. While battling it out with Odendaal over this farmer's land, Rapulana tells him not to be afraid, as no harm would befall him or his family. As Vera reflects on his words, she discovers that though subtly put they are a threat. Black

squatters are reminding the Boer of their presence and ability to challenge him. The novel reveals the underlying message in Rapulana's words:

Remember, Meneer Odendaal, we are thousands on Portion 19, our Odenville. We are there across the veld from you every night. You have dogs, you have a gun, but we are thousands, and we can come across the veld to this house ... where you and your wife and your children are asleep, and, as you said about us if we don't go from Portion 19, that'll be your funeral. (32)

In this extract we deduce a dichotomy between one white farmer and thousands of black squatters. This juxtaposition is evidenced in the recurrent use of the designators "we" and "you", which are plural and singular, respectively. The comparison here is one of numbers. No gun or dogs can stop the might of thousands of determined people. The fact that Rapulana goes to Odendaal's home and airs his views in Afrikaans indicates assertiveness. From his behaviour we infer that black people are weary of invisibility and voicelessness. They find a voice in new South Africa. They have a new identity of expressive people.

The fact that Rapulana goes to Odendaal's home and airs his views to Afrikaans, indicates assertiveness emanating from an awakened consciousness. His words represent the black peoples' realisation of their status as the oppressed. From his behaviour we infer that black people are weary of invisibility and voicelessness. They find expressiveness and, in effect a new identity in the changing South Africa.

Rapulana gets a new image when he successfully leads the Odenville squatters in acquiring Odendaal's land. This earns him recognition in that from being a schoolmaster he becomes a

director on the boards of several companies. As a board member in former white people's firms, Rapulana pushes for his ideas to be implemented. He does not conform to his employer's expectations of him being docile, a kind of decoration in boardrooms (258-9). Rapulana's new image is contained in his message to Vera after winning the Odensville case: "Vera, we've won, this time we've shut the door in his face" (213). He acquires the identity of a winner.

White characters are also engaged in shaping white characters their identities. Annick marries Lou, a fellow woman, and they adopt a black child. Her accomplishment not only re-defines her but also the family as a unit of society. She loses confidence in heterosexual relationships because she witnesses her mother's infidelity. She defends her choice of a fellow female for a mate to her mother, citing its advantages over the choice of a male mate. When Vera asks Annick what she does to turn her away from men, Annick replies, "What makes you always think that what I am is determined by you!"(159). These are words of a rebel, bent on affirming her new identity.

Self-satisfaction is the driving force behind Vera's career development. She has an intention of discovering the truth of her life, thereby achieving self-actualisation. In pursuit of these goals she changes male companions just as she does her career. She begins by divorcing her first wartime husband for a handsome lover, Ben. Next she marries Ben but later betrays him by sleeping with her former husband and a young lover, Abarbanel. In the end she separates from Ben becoming a tenant to Rapulana. The series of marriage, divorce, re-marriage, affairs and separation all point to a search for identity. They show the perpetual nature of the quest for

identity. In marriage, re-marriage, and affairs, Vera is seeking for an identity with the other person. By divorcing and separating she is seeking for identity in isolation from the other person.

Vera has two affairs because she is searching for a new identity as a free woman. Thus she rationalises her second affair with Abarbanel: "if Ben had taught her that the possibilities of eroticism were beyond expectance with one man, then this meant that the total experience of love-making did not end with him" (61). The day she commences her affair with Abarbanel, Vera feels proud and liberated rather than guilty of betrayal, as the novel recounts:

What happened ...was something that concerned her alone, her sexuality, a private constant in her being, a characteristic like the colour of eyes, the shape of a nose, the nature of a personal spirit that never could belong to anyone other than the self.... that unknown woman was demonstrating a truth Vera now euphorically believed she had only just discovered; sexuality.... She lay beside Ben that night with a sense of pride and freedom rather than betrayal. (63)

The picture above is of a forty-year-old woman who thinks she has discovered her individuality in an affair with a man fifteen years or more, her junior. This affair further alienates Vera since it draws her away from her adolescent daughter. By the end of the text she is alienated. She does not attain the identity of a free woman. Much as she has actualised herself in her career, her marriage and family disintegrate.

Vera's need is to accomplish herself by her own effort. Is evidenced in the manner in which she changes jobs. Each job offers her a different identity. In apartheid South Africa: Vera's moving

from a secretarial job, getting articled to a legal firm, and part-time study at University, is geared towards fulfilling her ambition. In post-apartheid South Africa, she rises to the post of deputy director of the Foundation and is appointed as a member of the Technical Committee on constitutional issues. At the end of the text she has the identity of an accomplished career woman.

She separates from her husband who moves to London, perhaps in search of his identity since he seems to lose it in loving her too much. Ben gives up his teaching career at the university to concentrate his energy on loving Vera—a gesture that symbolises a loss of personality. To him, loving his wife is meant to be a fulfilling engagement. When his business fails and she is indifferent to his predicament, he moves to London where he goes through an awakening. He realises that she “never ever really wanted a husband—only for a time, when it excited her to have her lover domesticated” (298).

His going to London is an attempt to come to terms with his loss of identity as a husband and to redefine himself. There, he undergoes introspection. He searches “himself for the bitter comfort of her inadequacies, the things in her that irritated him” (299). He realises that in new the environment he has all the time he has always needed for reading. He resorts to re-reading books that were essential in his youth. His behaviour demonstrates a quest for re-discovering one-self. In the books he begins to understand his relationship with Vera. He, consequently, hates his dependency on loving her. He therefore acquires the identity of a man who has accepted separation from his wife.

As the story ends, Vera has the identity of a lonely person. She is all alone in an empty house described as " a cage outside which prowlers cruised in their cars" (304). In the new regime Vera abandons her old personal life and seeks of what she calls the truth about her life. Kakutani talks of Vera's having lost herself in a cause. She argues that she is a highly complex character whose political commitments are a transcendent cause, whose practice might enable her to realize herself fully. Vera's quest for an identity as a free woman is rendered void.

The House Gun also demonstrates the theme of a search for identity. Like the characters in the first two books, its characters are also engaged in a quest for identity. In the novel this theme is mainly explored through the Lindgards. When a phenomenal occurrence takes place in their lives, everything concerning them changes. The fact that their son murders his friend forces them to seek a redefinition of meaning in their lives. They want to understand why a son who they have brought up with knowledge of the sanctity of life, chooses to pick up a gun and shoot his friend. They cannot believe that the violence that had always affected other people has found a way into their world. Duncan's preference prompts his parents to re-evaluate their attitude towards black people. Their world-view changes because of their encounter from the time they learn that their son is a murderer to the time he is convicted in court. They acquire the identity of parents of a murderer.

One of the things that the Lindgards deal with as they re-discover themselves, is their racial prejudice. In their desperation their thin veneer of liberalism wears off. From their sizing up of Motsamai, we see racism in them. They are living in a post-apartheid South Africa where colour is not directly an issue any longer, but we see undercurrents of years of prejudice

surfacing through them. The fact that their son is a murderer causes them to nullify their previous highly held ideals. The situation they are held up in is one in which, "many compromises with stereotype attitudes easily rejected in their old safe life were coming about now that the other values of that time had been broken with" (145). They take on an identity of racists.

Having gone through the initial stages of denial and disbelief, Harald concedes that his only son is a murderer. In the excerpt below we have a picture of a man who has been pushed over the edge by circumstances beyond his control, but is struggling to hold himself together. It reveals the extent to which Duncan's act of murder affects his father's life:

The intrusion in their life that monstrously displaced everything else, his fifty years, eclipsed the sun and shut off the air of all he had learnt, the understandings he believed he had reached in knowledge of human beings and the moves he had tested, the satisfaction in work and the pleasures of accepted emotions, the love between man and woman, between parents and son, the ease of friendship; irritation that swelled and struck out....Yes! Clamouring forces were struggling to take over his innards, forces that if let loose outside were the kind that could be violent. (54 -5)

Harald considers his son's act of killing an intrusion into the calm life, he hitherto lived with his wife. That this 'intrusion has had a tremendous impact on his life, thereby changing his identity, is attested to by the words--'monstrously', 'eclipsed' and 'shut of'. 'Monstrous' describes the quality of being extraordinary and particularly being of an overwhelming size. He is overwhelmed by his son's deviant behaviour, and so is Claudia. 'Eclipse' and 'shut off' denote the act of beclouding or obfuscating. Therefore, Harald's past worldview is rendered

indistinct by his son's act of murder. He is thus forced to seek a new worldview. He seeks for a new identity.

Harald turns to religion and reading in order to come to terms with his son's behaviour. When he goes to worship, he takes his rightful place with those most bowed to misfortune. He has acquired a new identity. Religion seems to be the preferred avenue of escape but it fails because: "Neither whiteness, nor observance of the teachings of Father and Son, nor the pious respectability of liberalism, nor money, that had kept them in safety... could change their status" (127).

Another channel of Harald's predicament is reading:

Harald's dependence on books became exactly that, in the pathological sense ... He turned to old books, re-read them; the mise en scene of their time would remove him from the present in which his son was awaiting trial for murder. (71)

We are told that he reads late into the night. The books' explanations of human misery give him the energy to rise up and face each day. He is searching for the meaning of his life in the books. His behaviour points to a quest for identity.

Apart from proving that the Lindgards have an underlying racist nature, Duncan's act of murder alienates them. They are estranged from each other and from other people too. From the time when they receive news of their son's crime, they do not make love. It is only when they meet in the advocate's office that they become a couple. Their relationship suffers greater strain when they quarrel, blaming each other for not being good examples to Duncan. Jointly

they resent Duncan for turning their lives upside down. Harald experiences moments of awkwardness at the work place. Claudia's alienation mounts when she drowns in her work and resents Motsamai for indicating that her son is guilty and for sending him to the sanatorium. She stops going for sessions in Motsamai's office, declining a visit to his home. The Lindgards take on the identity of an alienated couple.

They accept their predicament and find a new meaning for their lives by the end of the novel. Throughout the story they unlearn their old habits going through moments of introspection and discovery. Evidence that they have changed their worldview is when they accept Motsamai's invitation to his house. This shows that they have become open and receptive towards people of other races. They are no longer racist having changed their identities. They also place their confidence in Motsamai, who proves himself by getting a lenient sentence for their son.

A supporting character, Natalie, also brings out the quest for identity. She rebels against every form of personal dependence. Her rebelliousness points to an urge for self-definition. She wants to change her identity from a dependent person to an independent one. First she changes her career severally, a characteristic which mirrors a quest. She has been a hostess on a cruise ship to the Greek Islands, she has worked at an institute for market research and she has also been a secretary to a university professor. Presently, Natalie is a freelance. Her last career suggests a desire for freedom and independence. In her work, she does not want to be committed to any one employer. Natalie resents Duncan because he saves her life, he stops her from committing suicide making her dependent on him. Therefore, she decides to hit at him for

his cruelty by sleeping with his ex-lover. Her quest for independence is captured in her incessant ranting at Duncan:

You dragged me back you made me puke my death out of my lungs you revived me after the mad house of psychopath doctors you planned to save me in the missionary position not only on my back good taste married your babies because I gave mine away ...develop 'careers' you invent for me because that's what a woman you've saved should have you took away from me my death for that for what you decide I live for said I must stop punishing myself but here's news for you if I stay with you it's because I choose the worst punishment I can find for myself I revel in it do you know that.

(153)

The absence of punctuation in this passage shows an urgency for self-expression. This creates an effect of words tumbling over each other, like a tap of words left to flow. The repeated use of the pronoun 'you' as the initiator of actions foregrounds the hold that Duncan has over Natalie. She argues that Duncan only saved her from death in order to have her as a lover and to control her life, as shown in the underlined demonstrative 'that'. The end of the rant is frank and direct, since Natalie substitutes the pronoun 'I' for the pronoun 'you'. Having told Duncan what he intended her to become, she tells him what she has become. She stays with Duncan because this is worse than dying.

Natalie is unhappy in her relationship with Duncan because he manipulates her. During the interrogation in court, she says that since Duncan is an architect, he endeavours to fashion her life according to his specifications. Duncan's over protectiveness offends Natalie's dignity. Since she feels chained, she goes to Jespersen as an attempt to get off the chain. Natalie

succeeds in getting her new identity in her independence when she conceives a child whose father is unknown. She decides that this is her own child.

In this chapter we have examined the quest for identity as a concern that cuts across three post-apartheid novels. The characters in these texts have engaged in moments of introspection thereby forging new identities for themselves and getting new meaning in their lives. In July's People, July changes from servanthood to become a host who stands his ground when challenged by his former employers. Vulgarising his previous identity, he sheds his uniform, takes over the Smales' car, stops carrying his passbook and tells off Maureen when she orders him around. All these actions are geared towards his acquisition of a new reference. July's wife and mother are minor characters that demystify white people. Since they typicalise rural black people, these women's awakening translates into a change in identities for the rural black populace at large. Starting with a 600-kilometer journey, the Smales change their consciousness. Gina, Victor and Royce get new identities as they form sisterhoods and brotherhoods with black children in July's village. Estranged from his wife and having lost his masculinity when his architectural job his vehicle and his gun are taken away, Bam is boxed into re-defining himself. For Maureen, the drive to the countryside does not suffice in her quest for identity. This journey is but a section of her perpetual search for identity since the novel ends with her in motion.

None to Accompany Me has presented to us characters that are bent on forging their male or female identities. In pursuit of the truth (her own sense of self) Vera disengages from all else,

even family, finding a defiant independence in work, which earlier she has experienced in her erotic life. Per Wastberg in "Nadine Gordimer and the South African Experience" says that:

Becoming free, Vera locks herself out from most of what other people want their freedom for. In the end, she persuades herself that only without Bennet can she become a genuine human being.... It is the solitariness-- none to accompany me --in the midst of her community activism and her work for victims of persecution that is the paradox of Vera's life. (6)

Wastberg's views suggest that Vera does not achieve what she wants. Instead of getting the identity of an independent person, she gets the identity of alienation.

Annick succeeds in establishing her identity when she makes a home and family out of a lesbian relationship with Lou. This is in contrast with her mother who cannot sustain several heterosexual relationships and whose family disintegrates.

Sibongile manages to forge her identity in Africa but her daughter seeks to forge her identity in the diaspora. Returning from exile in the diaspora to Africa, is for Sibongile, a chance to actualise herself. This does not apply to Mpho who seems lost in Africa since she is born and grows up in exile. She goes to America in a bid to make meaning out of her life, having failed to bond with her black community. Mills in "Diasporic Displacement and the Search for Black Female Identity in Toni Morrison's Tar Baby and Nadine Gordimer's None to Accompany Me" notes that, through Mpho it appears that black women raised in the diaspora privilege individuality and mobility over community. Therefore, Mpho deserts her African community, to seek for her identity in a Western milieu.

In the House Gun we are treated to characters whose hunger is to define themselves so as to acquire new identities. The Lindgards' encounter with Motsamai, Duncan's black advocate, forces them to change their identities from racists to non-racists. These well read, intelligent and well-to-do couple depends on this highly educated black man for the survival and sanity of their souls. They put their faith in Motsamai, as this is the only way they can make new meaning out of their existence. The Penguin Readers' Guide observes that The House Gun is a portrait of powerful awakenings of a father and mother, a husband and wife, a parent and a child, a nation and its citizens. The above critical observation seems to suggest that since the Lindgards are a microcosm of the South African society, their awakening and consequent acquisition of new identities reflect the quest of their entire society. Natalie, though a minor character, emerges strongly in her desperate pursuit of freedom. She breaks free of Duncan's cage for her, albeit with fatal consequences. Jespersen's death symbolically marks the death of Natalie's old identity as a bound woman. Similarly, the birth of her son symbolically illustrates the birth of Natalie's new identity as a free being.

This chapter realises that Gordimer's later novels present characters in circumstances that are typical of the South African society. They are typical in the sense of realism in literature. Therefore, after analysing the characters' quests for identities in Gordimer's three novels, in this chapter it emerges that the change in South Africa's political climate causes its citizenry to engage in re-defining themselves. It appears as though a wave of a quest for identity is sweeping over this nation. In these texts, Gordimer seems to suggest that in a situation of

change, individuals desire to alter their identities. Such people will transform from negative identities to positive ones, as evidenced in the characters she presents.

The next chapter will mark the end of this study. In it we intend to see how the messianic motif, which runs through Gordimer's post-apartheid novels, emerges as her vision for the new state. We will delineate the messianic qualities that imbue the characters, enabling them to combat violence. Ultimately, we shall determine Gordimer's way forward in the face of violence--a vice which seems to be a vestige of changing South Africa's oppressive and turbulent past. This chapter will also include a concluding section in which we shall state the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MESSIANIC MOTIF

This chapter demonstrates that the messianic motif in July's People, None to Accompany Me, and The House Gun expresses change in the post-apartheid South Africa. The messianic motif is realised through characters who act as saviours. Since the society presented in Gordimer's novels degenerates because of violence, there arises a need for messiahs. These are people who will help to turn around the situation. Where violence has been a preferred means of communication, they advocate peace as a better alternative. The saviours are either black or white people who choose to work jointly or independently towards the goal of peace-- their moral ideal.

The understanding of the term "messiah", in this chapter, is guided by two literary critics-- F.W. Dillistone and Emmanuel Obiechina. To the former, a messiah is a Christ-like figure who carries out a mission, of redemption for fellow men and women. Such a mission, he contends, may be performed by an individual seeking consciously to follow into the steps of Christ and to fashion his or her life after the pattern displayed in the Gospels, but this need not be so. To the latter, a messiah may possess moral superiority or an ideal that those people he or she sets out to convert do not possess. Obiechina goes on to say that a messiah is single-mindedly devoted to his mission in spite of the personal risks. He also faces conflicts which arise from: the nature of the tasks he has to perform, the encounters he has with his opponents, and the steps he takes to overcome obstacles in the way of his mission.

“Motif” is a term that refers to a recurrent theme or idea in a literary text or group of texts. It also denotes a distinctive feature or a dominant idea in a work of art. Hugh Holman maintains that a motif provides the basic idea around which the rest of the narrative may be framed. In this chapter we determine how the idea of messiah cuts across Gordimer’s three post-apartheid novels.

The messiahs in this chapter are characters who pursue peace and whose missions or duties are tied around violence. They also have heroic or heroic identities. They are capable of accomplishing their tasks. They sacrifice for the sake of those they are saving. They take risks too. As saviours, their road to success is not smooth. They face obstacles or opposition that deters them from achieving their goals.

July’s People presents the violence in the South African society in its opening pages. It tells vividly of the wanton brutality and massive destruction in Johannesburg. This vice is a consequence of the on-going revolution, championed by black people. Previous and equally violent uprisings like Sharpeville of 1960 and the Soweto uprising of 1976 are the foundation of the present revolution. Sharpeville, a small township about thirty- five miles south of Johannesburg, was the scene of a massacre resulting from the Pan-Africanist Congress Party’s anti-pass campaign. On 21st March 1960, several thousand demonstrators surrounded a police station. Suddenly, the greatly outnumbered and panicky police force of seventy-five opened fire on the crowd. Sixty-nine black people died and four hundred people were wounded. On June 16 1976, 15,000 school children gathered in Soweto to protest at the government’s ruling that half of all classes in secondary schools must be taught in Afrikaans-- the oppressors’

language. A detachment of police confronted these students and without warning started shooting at them. Mass chaos ensued where the children fought with sticks and stones, with hundreds of students wounded and killed and two white men stoned to death. The events of this day reverberated across the country, triggering riots and violence.

Apart from the narrator, July is a source of information on the violent shake-up. He tells his female relatives what he witnesses in the city: "People are burning those houses.... The whites are being killed in their houses. I've seen it--the whole thing just blow up, walls, roof" (19). He proceeds to say that black people are chasing white people out and shooting down planes. This violent atmosphere creates the need for a messiah--someone who can counter this evil with peace. July emerges as the saviour. He is chosen by circumstances, as the narrator renders below:

When it all happened, there were the transformations of myth or religious parable. The bank accountant had been the legendary warning hornbill of African folk-tales, its flitting cries ignored at peril.... The decently-paid... male servant... turned out to be the chosen one in whose hands their lives were to be held; frog prince, savior, July. (19; Emphasis mine).

The passage above uses religious allusions to explain July's messianic identity. We see the bank accountant as a prophet who foretells the doom that befalls South Africa. He is referred to as "the legendary warning hornbill of African folk-tales." This reference gives the bank accountant a supernatural bearing. July is called a "frog prince." This is borrowed from folk tales in which, a seemingly useless ugly frog transforms into a handsome prince who saves a

maiden in distress and marries her. The biblical references--"chosen one" and "saviour"--compare July's messianic role to that of Jesus Christ.

As a saviour July has a heroic identity. In the text he features as capable of carrying out his messianic duty of saving the Smales family from the on going massacre in Johannesburg. Firstly, July walks 600 kilometers, braving lions, the first time he comes to the city. It is this distance over which he directs Bam in the flight to the countryside. Secondly, during the journey of escape, he knows which route to follow, and where to get the provisions needed for the same. This journey is likened to a wilderness in which he is a kind of Moses leading Bam in his footsteps.

True to his messianic stature, July undertakes the risky business of hiding white people in a black people's village during a black people's rebellion. Maureen brings to fore the depth of July's bravery and sacrifice when she asks: "What do the blacks think? What will the freedom fighters think? Did he join the people from Soweto? He took his whites and ran" (128). She further observes that July runs the risk of getting killed for keeping the Smales in his village. From her questions, we discern that July's act of salvation is questionable to his black counterparts. It is tantamount to betrayal or to desertion of a cause. Since July flees in the heat of activity, the freedom fighters consider him a sell-out. To them, July is a traitor because he prefers his former white employers to his own black people. Nevertheless, his gesture is portrayed as noble in that he chooses higher duty. Instead of being selfish, he emerges as humane when he rescues the people he has worked for and stayed with for fifteen years,

disregarding their race. July's sacrifice also extends to his family. He compels his wife and mother to give up their possessions for the Smales.

July is not exempted from the rule of messiahs encountering opposition or obstacles. His opponents are his wife, his mother, his chief and Maureen. When July arrives with his white visitors in his villages his wife and mother move "about under his bidding without argument" (18). They give up whatever is required of them. However, he is aware that their initial cooperation is not the end of the matter. These women put him to task, asking him to explain the sudden change of fortunes between black and white people. As July attempts to explain the blood shedding in Johannesburg, the narrator observes that the women listen, though no one can tell if they are convinced. Later in the text when we witness their rebelliousness, we understand that July did not persuade them with his explanation.

Martha resists her husband because he gives her utensils to the Smales without consulting her. She teams up with July's mother to fight July. Their opposition is in the form of cutting thatch for the house occupied by the Smales. These women do so without informing July who is angered when he learns of it.

Maureen proves to be July's major opponent. Tension mounts between them as the story gains ground. They have confrontations premised on the Smales' gun, car, and car keys. In their first confrontation, Maureen uses the car keys to trample upon July's ego. She summons July twice but when he goes he picks up the keys and swaggers away. This behavior shows July's carefree attitude towards Maureen. She fails to remove him from his pedestal of the newly

acquired status as her saviour. The gun is at the centre of the second confrontation. In this instance, July stands his ground by dismissing Maureen for ordering him to look for the missing gun. The confrontation over the car is climactic, for this is when Maureen expresses her pent-up feelings over July's acquisition of the Smales' vehicle. By telling July that he wants to drive the car like a gangster, pretending to be a big man of importance, Maureen reveals her feelings towards July's status as a saviour. Her words show that Maureen lowly regards July's achievement. It seems that just as the possessed vehicle will fall to pieces, so will July's new status.

July's chief is another obstacle in July's mission of saving the Smales from the city upheavals. In his over zealousness he tells the Smales (when they visit him) that he would like to know their discontentment with July. This observation retards the progress that July has made as a saviour. Since he is no longer a servant to the Smales but a host. July's gesture of saving his former employers is a favor to them. He is in no way compelled to act so kindly. The chief's suggestion, therefore, dents July's messianic image. While on the return journey from the chief's place, July dismisses his chief. He says that the chief is full of talk and no action--a man who is wont to obey the white people's orders. Having looked at the opposition July faces and the way he handles it, we see him emerge as a black saviour.

When the story begins, July is shown as peace-loving, thus together with his former employers he flees the killing in Johannesburg. As the plot gains momentum, July is pushed by the opponents of his mission to become violent. He engages in violent verbal confrontations with Maureen. The climax of the violence comes at the end of the novel when July charges at

Maureen in his language. This last incident of conflict, between Maureen and July, is a blow to the latter's messianic identity. Soon after this encounter, Maureen runs away from July's village in search of another refuge. She takes off because July (her saviour) is unable to take her to her promised land--the place of peace and satisfaction. As Maureen is still on a journey of fulfillment, the novel ends with a runner held in flight. In part it is a flight from but also a flight towards: towards what she cannot properly see, but which she knows is drawing her on. Maureen is trying to save herself.

On examining the messianic motif in this text, we can conclude that, as evidenced through July's character, Gordimer is against violence. The author offers the alternative of peace in times of conflict by presenting July acting contrary to the expected. He assists his former white employers to flee massacre. Although July turns to violence at the end of the text, it is not of the physical kind, rather the violence manifests verbally. His violence hurts people emotionally without loss of life. July turns to verbal violence after Maureen pressures him over a long period of time. In any case, he is not a deity but a mortal being. He succeeds in saving the Smales but loses Maureen as the story winds up. In view of this turn of events we suppose that, though this novel depicts black people saving white people, the messianic idea partially boomerangs at the end of the story. To this ending of the novel Clingman says: "There can be no reconciliation between masters and servants, no 'saviours', miracles, moments of mutual recognition and forgiveness, or easy way out" (203).

Unlike July's People, where we encounter a black messiah, in None to Accompany Me a black saviour is juxtaposed with a white one. Once again the text presents saviours whose missions are tied around violence. July's People seems to hint at violence while None to Accompany Me

brings forth manifestations of the violence. The former novel presents violence implicitly, letting characters narrate the revolution's events away from the scene of activity. The latter text depicts violence actively, such that through the narrators' vivid description, when characters visit the scene of violence, we see the destruction more clearly as this creates immediacy.

Vera's character develops alongside violent encounters. First, she visits Phambili Park--an upgraded middle class neighbourhood. Through her interaction with victims we note the effects of violence on them. A devastated young woman shows Vera the way to Phambili Park. She tearfully relates an ordeal where she witnesses a black man's murder: "when I opened the door... I saw the head, the black man, blood and the brains" (83). These words draw a picture of horror, thereby appealing to the readers' finer sensibilities towards consequences of violence.

The former Odenville squatters' camp is Vera's other stop. The passage below describes a scene of utter devastation. Everybody whether male or female, child or adult is affected by the violence. Women are reduced to crying while the men's sense of loss is captured in their wandering. The cumulative use of the words: "disaster", "turmoil", "splintered", "torn", "burned" and "destruction", enhances this image of annihilation. It delineates what Vera beholds after the clash between Odendaal, his supporters and the squatters:

A stunned aftermath of disaster slowed the pace of existence to its minimum; people were breathing, just breathing. Children with lolling-headed babies on their backs sat about... every element that they could identify shelter and possessions cost in turmoil. Dried tears were the salty tracks on the grey-black cheeks of women.... Men wandered, turning over splintered wood, torn board, plastic burned.... Now in the destruction of the wretched erections of rubbish-dump materials she saw that these were home, this place had been home. (118-9)

This incident deeply moves Vera to perform her messianic duty of writing a report about it. While in her office she realises that her work at the Foundation goes beyond routine or professionalism. She works out of compassion for the dispossessed black people.

Vera is a white messiah whose role is hinged on sacrifice in this text. Her messianic task commences when she gives up her job in a prosperous legal firm, because she wants to do more than just fighting white people's insurance claims or dig the dirt in their divorces.

Her mission is certain from the start of the story. In the apartheid era, she goes to work at the Foundation to fight the removals of the population, because she is touched by the plight of down-trodden black communities. That Vera is moved by incidents of violence meted out to black people emerges in the narrator's comment: "[her] self-absorption was pierced only by the fact of the baby dead on its mother's back at Sharpeville--an infant like her own, like Bennet's" (18). These words indicate that Vera identifies with black people's predicament. She is driven by that deep sense of humanity to save black communities from the violence that follows them. During the post-apartheid times, Vera champions black people's resettlement by

repossessing the land that was taken from them and allotted to white people. Her messianic mission transcends apartheid and its abolition.

Vera becomes committed to her messianic cause at the expense of her family. She immerses herself whole-heartedly into her career, neglecting her children and husband. Here, I concur with Kakutani when she says that the virtues of loyalty and commitment which Vera so values in her public life, are bizarrely absent from her personal relationships. She further argues that Vera allows Ben to compromise his own ambitions so that he can support her while she pursues her ideals. To demonstrate the sentiment above, we see Vera getting caught up in an affair with Abarbanel. We observe her frustrating her husband's desperate effort to recapture the closeness that is absent in their marriage. Ultimately we witness as the ties of the Stark family are severed in a separation between Vera and Ben.

The heroic identity of Vera authenticates her standing as a messiah. She projects as capable of accomplishing her mission. She excels in her career by rising to a top position. The text notes that "she was the abstract image of authority that--- you had to turn to in your powerlessness" (15). As a deputy director at the Foundation, Vera is in control. She helps the landless black people who approach her in their trouble. Her invincibility is captured in the repeated phrase "Nobody can con Mrs. Stark, no" (14). In the novel, Vera in her astuteness listens with patient alertness to the applicants' tales, assessing where, out of desperation and guile, the emissaries omit what they think might prejudice their cases. She also looks for exaggerations to effect sympathy in the stories, as well as where facts and their truthful interpretation are the strength of the cases.

In the process of helping black people to reclaim their land, Vera encounters obstacles or opposition. Odendaal is her first opponent. These are her words of appeal to him:

We've come to discuss the situation down at Odenville, which must be distressing for you, don't think the people there don't realize this.... We know from experience--the worst aspect of this sort of situation is when the farmer feels he's accepting it if he should agree to talk to the other parties concerned.... I can assure you that neither of us is here to deny your position.... We've come because it is in the best interest of everyone... believe me... solutions can sometimes be reached where there has seemed no possible way out while the only communication is the threat of police action.... We're going to hear each other out without prejudice to either side. (23-4)

This quotation demonstrates Vera's awareness of the farmer's sense of betrayal and the black squatters' desire for negotiation. It also shows her quest for peaceful co-existence between white and black people. She suggests dialogue as the alternative to the threatening reality of violent intervention by the police in the Odenville affair. She chooses her words carefully. Her speech is polite and reassuring, rather than combative. The phrases "I can assure you" and "believe me" are persuasive. She wants Odendaal to have confidence in her as a saviour. The ellipses - textual silences - that precede Vera's expressions give emphasis to her sentiments. To this friendly approach, Odendaal responds using abusive and confrontational language. Ignoring Vera's plea, Odendaal slams his door on her delegation.

Violent robbers are Vera's other opponents. Oupa accompanies her on an investigative tour of state owned land. Roadside robbers attack them. The thieves shoot and steal from them. The narrative voice graphically recounts this incident:

All the muscles in Oupa's body gathered in a storm of tension.... He burst out of the door knocking the man back with its force. The scuffle and animal grunting and yells of two men fighting. She saw another man run...with a gun and she jumped out of the passenger seat hearing a woman's voice screaming and ran... to where the two men fought.... The keys were thrown, the hand that held them struggling to get something out of his pocket as he fought. She and the third man were racing towards the ring of keys.... She was terrified... thumping tread like hooves making for her, there was a loud snap of giant fingers in the air--! And then another that gave her a mighty punch in the calf.... He came over... tore off her watch... pulled at the ring on her finger.

(195-6)

This paragraph has many verbs that dramatize the incident. The verbs, "burst", "knocking", "punch" "tore" and "pulling" are words that refer to violent activity. Descriptive phrases, "all the muscles", "storm of tension", "animal granting", "yells of two men", "thumping tread like hooves", "loud snap of giant fingers", and "mighty punch", make the robbery vivid, as they enable the reader to form mental pictures. These verbs underscore the violence, which Vera as a messiah needs to eliminate

The robbery is a climactic moment in the text. This is because the messiah falls victim to the violence from which she is supposed to save people. Unlike her driver who dies from the injury sustained in the attack, Vera recovers from the ordeal to carry on with her messianic

mission. In her convalescence, she goes back to her work, having documents sent over to her house.

Towards the end of the novel, Vera's messianic role spreads. She is nominated to serve on a committee that is charged with looking at the constitution. Since a constitution is the supreme governing law of any state, Vera's involvement in shaping this document enhances her messianic task. Her scope broadens from handling individual cases to that of the whole country. She moves from saving a group of squatters in Odenerville or in Phambili Park to rescuing the whole state from the claws of post-apartheid greed manifesting in land acquisition and violence.

Rapulana is a black messiah who complements Vera in performing her messianic tasks. We first meet him in the Vera led delegation, that goes to seek dialogue with Odendaal over the Odenerville squatters' land case. Deciding that peace is the only way to conquer violence, Rapulana tells the irritated farmer not to fear for no harm will befall him or his family. As a messiah, his mission is to get the black squatters settled on Odenerville, which he pursues assisted by Vera. Although these two are messiahs, the latter takes the lead on their mission. In spite of his not being a lawyer, Rapulana goes out of his way to get informed about what the Odenerville case entails legally. This is a show of his commitment to his messianic duty.

The obstacles in his path indicate that Rapulana is a messiah, as he struggles to fulfill his duty. While fighting violence and racial oppression, he becomes a victim of a violent attack. During one night when some people are killed and others injured in the Odenerville squatter camp, he is

one of those injured. After this skirmish, Vera visits Rapulana who says: "Now Administration will act. Now they'll have to buy his land. No more trouble for him. Lucky Odendaal. He'll get money... he'll be happy. And the land... Nine dead, so we'll get it" (117). These are not words of revenge rather they are practical. They reflect the speaker's positive outlook. He accepts that nine people have died in the attack, but he also sees the aim of squatters getting land being achieved. When Rapulana does not die in this attack, Vera likens him to Christ. She tells him: "Perhaps near escapes from death are always a resurrection. Perhaps that's how the whole legend of Christ rising from the tomb came about.... He understood she was talking about--himself" (117-8). This comparison lends evidence to the fact that he is a messiah. This conflict culminates in a court case, which he wins. His statement "Vera, we have won..." (213), after the victory shows his communal outlook. Using the pronoun "we", readers perceive that he considers the success as belonging to the whole community.

Winning the Odenerville case launches him into a greater messianic mission. His role as a savior expands from a single settlement to cover the entire nation. He defines his messianic task to Vera: "I'm just a schoolmaster who's trying to educate them [white people] to diversify their excess profits into enterprises that will benefit our people whose labour made those profits" (259). These words show that he perceives himself as a savior of black people, whom he calls "our people". It also emerges that he is bent on saving them from economic oppression. He is a messiah on the move as the narrator says: "He'll move on, as he did from the way he found to emerge from the Odenerville affair, doing what was to be done when it has to be done" (259). After setting up banks run by black people, the narrator indicates that, Rapulana will proceed to wherever he is needed next. This attribute of mobility is

characteristic of messiahs who enter, conquer and exit. Rapulana enters when the Odenville squatters choose him as their representative to the Foundation. He conquers Odendaal when he helps the squatters to acquire Odenville. After this success he exits by getting appointed to serve on several boards of companies.

When comparing black and white messiahs in this text, the former appears to be the overall saviour. Towards the close of the story, Vera becomes Rapulana's tenant following her family's disintegration. Gordimer's vision discernible in the messiah's presented in this text, is both optimistic and realistic. The author simultaneously shows us a white messiah with strengths and weaknesses in character and an ideal black messiah who does not falter. He succeeds in his missions, which indicates that peace triumphs over violence. By allowing Vera to work closely with Rapulana, even becoming friends, the author strengthens the otherwise weak image of Vera as a white messiah. The messiahs' co-operation, points to the harmonious and complementary co-existence between black and white people, which Gordimer posits.

The messianic motif we have examined in None to Accompany Me is also present in The House Gun. Like in the earlier text, the messiah in the latter text is ideal. Motsamai differs from Rapulana in that the former is a distinguished lawyer who has been out of South Africa, while the latter is a schoolmaster who has lived in his country of birth throughout.

The title, The House Gun, and the first sentence, "Something terrible happened" (3), connote an ominous presence. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that the society presented in the text is pervaded by violence. The novel starts with the Lindgards watching scenes of violence,

which could be from Bosnia, Somalia or Japan on television. In this way violence is universalized. Suddenly a messenger walks in bearing news of a murder. The evil that this couple has been viewing from a detached distance is now a reality in their house. They are further dismayed that a black advocate, Motsamai, is Duncan's choice of a defense counsel.

Motsamai's mission is to help the Lindgards in saving their son from life sentence. His task is to show that the accused is not solely responsible for his criminal act. His other messianic duty is to devest the Lindgards of their underlying racism. The messiah begins his work with opposition from the Lindgards who doubt his competence, on the basis of his race. Their shock when they learn that Duncan has chosen a black lawyer is a form of rejection to Motsamai. Harald presumptuously checks up the advocate's background. His findings present us with the messiah's heroic identity.

This messiah's road to success is neither smooth nor easy. He comes from low society and has illiterate parents. Irrespective of his humble beginning, he gets into Fort Hare for a law degree. Owing to his political involvement, he is detained. When he is released, he goes into exile in England. He furthers his studies in law there, gets accepted at the Old Gray's Inn and appears for the defense at the Old Bailey. His background of poverty is a Christ-like attribute. It underscores his role as a messiah.

That this man is successful is not left in doubt, as he appears successfully at a number of challenging cases of varied nature in his four-year return. A fellow member of the Bar describes him to Harald as "eminently capable", "experienced", "very clever", "exceptional",

“remarkable” and “has the kind of aggressive spirit—controlled...by strong intelligence...” (37). This cumulative adulation enhances Motsamai’s image as a hero and a messiah because it makes his abilities appear larger than life. Harald’s informant goes on to say: “Motsamai is providential... a star was needed and he appeared in the constellation.... He’s what the popular press would term much sought-after” (38). These words demonstrate that Motsamai has returned to his country when his services are most needed. It is the nature of messiahs to show up when the prevailing circumstances require their intervention.

To further explore Motsamai’s messianic identity, we observe him in his area of influence--his office. When the Lindgards meet their advocate for the first time, the narrator records their first impression of the man and his office. First the narrator describes the office. It has a grand desk with a deep and broad expanse, group photographs with distinguished Gray’s Inn colleagues, a library of law books with slips of paper standing up from their pages, marking frequent reference, and a presentation plaque on a tray of desk-top accoutrements. The adjectives of magnitude, grand, group and library enhance his illustriousness.

The way Motsamai handles his opponent marks him out as a messiah. While Harald accepts him as an advocate for their son, Claudia continues rejecting him. She stops attending sessions in his office and turns down an invitation to his home. He is not put off by Claudia’s coldness. He seeks her out at her place of work. After his visit, she is so co-operative that she visits his home. That the Lindgards dine and dance at their lawyer’s house indicates that they have done away with racialism. As a saviour, Motsamai proves that Duncan is a victim of circumstances. He blames Natalie and the deceased Jespersen: the former for unbearably taunting and nagging

Duncan, and the latter for betraying his friend. The advocate contends that his client having two sets of moral percepts influencing his life--secular humanism and religious faith--is not capable of killing. He then argues that Natalie and Jespersen hurt and humiliate the defendant, thus pushing him to the point of destruction. The lawyer succeeds in court when he makes Natalie to condemn herself "out of there own mouth" (123). His closing remarks in the defense illustrate that though Duncan committed an offence, he should not bear the burden of collective guilt. He suggests punishment that is redemptive so that Duncan can continue to function in society. After arguing persuasively his client gets a seven years jail-term. Motsamai declares it "the most lenient sentence possible" (275) in his entire experience.

Motsamai's messianic role does not end with the ruling of Duncan's case. He empathises with the Lindgards as they face the reality of their son's imprisonment. He also makes sure that Duncan carries on with his architectural work. Finally, he arranges for Natalie's child to be provided for by the Lindgards, and also for them to gain access to their grandchild. As a saviour, Motsamai makes sure that the Lindgards relate amicably with their son and his former girlfriend. He minimises the hostility amongst his clients by acting as a go-between.

Gordimer's perception in this novel is positive. She sees hope beyond the violence ridden South Africa. This is apparent in the messiah she presents Motsamai saves his client from the death sentence. The state, which encouraged violence in the past, is presently doing the reverse. This turn of events occurs when the Supreme Court suspends the death sentence. This suspension impacts on Duncan's case as Motsamai uses it in his defense.

After considering the messianic motif as vision in Gordimer's three novels that focus on the post-apartheid state, we are persuaded that she has an optimistic and realistic outlook towards the changing South Africa. In "An Exchange: In Kanzaburo Oe, Nadine Gordimer" she writes:

Violence is also a means of expression.... It is the way in which modern urban society expresses itself. If there is a means at all by which we can be effective, as writers, in striving to change this, it can only be to counter it by giving alternative.... (99)

In the works we have examined, she gives peace as the alternative to violence. Our conclusion derives from her sympathetic rendition of messianic characters with heroic traits. They overcome obstacles, excelling in their missions. The messiah who falters is ultimately redeemed. Vera, who combines the positive and negative character traits, works hand in hand with Rapulana, an ideal messiah. Their co-operation reinforces Vera's otherwise weak stature as a messiah. The messiahs are committed to combating violence with peace; they sacrifice for the same. Black messiahs appear as the overall saviours or peacemakers.

In July's People, the black messiah helps his former employers to flee the killing and destruction of property in the city. He succeeds in this humane gesture since none of the Smales is murdered notwithstanding Vera's running away. The messianic motif continues in None to Accompany Me, where a black messiah is juxtaposed with a white messiah. The former is an ideal messiah owing to his achievements. He faces opposition from the violent Odendaal but his peaceful intervention prevails. The former is a realistically presented messiah. Although she succeeds in her messianic duty of settling black people, she loses her family. The House Gun advances the messianic motif too. Motsamai triumphs when he helps the Lindgards to save their son from the death sentence and steer clear of racism.

In this chapter we realise that the messianic motif enhances the cohesion of each work. Since it touches on every character, it affords the reader the opportunity to see how these characters relate to one another. This technique is morally enriching because it presents messiahs who triumph, and it demonstrates that peace prevails over violence. It also ties the three texts by showing their stylistic, and, by extension, their thematic interrelatedness. The messianic motif progresses from novel to novel. In July's People, the messiah is a black man with no career. In None to Accompany Me, the messiahs are a black man and white woman, who pursue their careers. In The House Gun, the messiah is a black man who has been an exile and is accomplished in his career. Having considered the messianic motif in Gordimer's later novels, we can conclude that: she perceives a learned black man who is internationally exposed as the ultimate messiah of South Africa.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to indicate that Gordimer's later novels critically examine the South African socio-political problems and offer possible solutions. At the same time, we intended to demonstrate that these novels constitute a stylistic and thematic continuum. Illustrating that characters are used to illuminate the aspects of change in South Africa was our other concern. In effect we realised our objectives.

The socio-political problems that emerge in the course of studying Gordimer's later novels are: power conflicts at the levels of race, gender and generations; crisis in identity; and violence. We realize that different characters engage in power battles (where power changes from one character to the other one) in the three novels. We observe black characters taking over authority and control from the white characters. In July's People the servant becomes a host while masters become fugitives. None to Accompany Me shows black people taking over property and making of decisions from the white people. The House Gun portrays black and white characters that are equally accomplished in their careers but where the white characters change their racist attitude due to their dependence on the black characters.

While reversed gender roles feature prominently in July's People and None to Accompany Me, in The House Gun they are absent. In July's People, white men are stripped of power, which is vested in white women. Black women in the countryside have power, which is usurped by their men when they return from the city. In None to Accompany Me, the comparison of reversed gender roles both domestically and politically between black and white couples is carried

further. Female characters are more aggressive than their male counterparts. Vera and Sibongile succeed in their careers and are active in politics, which was a male domain.

The three novels show the young generation regardless of their gender and race as the most adaptive to the changes in power relations. In July's People, it is the children who adapt to the new ways of life while the old generation is conservative, preferring the old ways. Characters who resist change in power relations become increasingly alienated. The young generation in None to Accompany Me synthesises the past and present power relations to produce the future. They link Africa and Europe, and black and white races. In The House Gun, the young generation, is the most capable of handling the future power relations in South Africa.

Sharing of power is the solution that Gordimer suggests to the struggle for power in the new South Africa. The young generation is integrated into the shift of power. They show that in the conflict of power between black and white people, there is no winner, rather sharing is the norm. She also posits a gradual change of power and integration from the dramatic revolution in July's People to sober negotiations in None to Accompany Me and The House Gun.

Crisis in identity is the other socio-political problem that Gordimer's novels examine. The characters in these novels desire to change their identities from the negative ones to positive ones. Some characters succeed in their quests while others fail. In July's People black male characters change their identities from servants into hosts. The black female characters get the identity of people whose consciousness is enhanced. The white characters change their identities from being privileged and non-alienated to become dependent and alienated.

In None to Accompany Me, black adult female characters manage to forge their identities as black women in Africa while black young female characters form their identities as black women in the diaspora. White adult female characters fail in forming positive identities and become alienated. The white young female characters establish their identities as rebels. Some white adult male characters move to Europe in a bid to come to terms with their new identities. In The House Gun, both male and female characters of either race or gender acquire their new and positive identities.

Gordimer proposes that when characters have time to reflect on their previous identities, this results in awakenings that lead them to solving their identity crisis. She also suggests journeys as viable means of changing one's identity. These journeys may be within South Africa that is moving from the urban to the rural setup; or they may involve moving outside South Africa. She considers phenomenal occurrences like a murder or a revolution as causing individuals to alter their identities.

Violence pervades the South African society in the novels. Gordimer presents either black or white messiahs who fight this vice with their moral ideal of peace. In July's people there is a sole black male messiah, who works single handedly. None to Accompany Me has a black male messiah and a white female messiah who work jointly to eliminate violence and foster peace. The black male messiah emerges as the overall saviour of both white and black people. White female messiahs need black male messiahs to save them in the end. In The House Gun Gordimer revisits the idea of a sole black male messiah saving white people. This messiah

differs from the one in July's People in that the former is learned, accomplished in his career and internationally exposed

Change is the overriding theme in the three later novels. It manifests itself in power relations, in the quest for identity, and in the messianic motif. There is a reversal in power relations between white and black people as well as between men and women. The characters in the three later novels exhibit the desire to transform their identities, although not all achieve their goal. Black and white characters shed their negative identities to acquire positive ones.

We found that the messianic motif is the central organizing principle in Gordimer's three novels. It is central because it predominates in each of these texts and a principle because it remains uncompromised within the work. This motif is gradually built to the point of an indisputable fact. It is evidenced in the characters with Christ-like tendencies who seek to fight violence with peace. It enhances the theme of change in that the kinds of messiahs vary from text to text. Therefore, the theme of change and messianic motif point to the stylistic and thematic interrelatedness of Gordimer's novels.

As for characterisation, our study found out that these novels present us with a spectrum of characters. They are minor and major, simple and complex, or round and flat, they are also typical. Gordimer's characters are deliberately conceived none is insignificant. They also grow or develop and as a result underscore the theme of change. Owing to the message that she wants to communicate to the reader, she creates characters that represent a particular class,

group or race in the South African society. These characters are not typical in the sense of merely summing up significant social concerns, they are individualised in their own right.

By showing us a variety of characters, her novels become realistic.

We recommend that Gordimer's novels can be looked at from other perspectives in literary theory. An exploration of their narrative techniques especially their use of dashes to punctuate dialogue would result in an enriching stylistic reading. The recurrent use of sexual images in her later novels also points to possibilities of psychoanalytic studies.

After examining Gordimer's three later novels, it emerges that she is a writer who is also a thinker and whose depth of thought and degree of commitment is attested to by the incisiveness with which she dissects the African society, revealing it to itself. She does this through her characters that act as her mouthpieces. One hopes these later novels and their thematic concerns point the way to the future, where female writers feel the urge to contribute more meaningfully to the issues of the day.

WORKS CITED

- Baker, Russel, ed. The Norton Introduction to Literature. New York: Prentice, 1986.
- Bazin, Topin Nancy, and Marilyn Dollman Seymour, eds. Conversations with Nadine Gordimer. 1990. @<http://www.uni-ulm.de/~rturrell/antho4html/Driver.html>. 9 Aug. 2002.
- Brutus, Dennis "Protest Against Apartheid." Protest and Conflict in African Literature. Eds. Cosmo Pieterse and Donald Munroe. London: Heinemann, 1969. 93-100.
- Clingman, Stephen. The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside. London: Allan and Unwin, 1986.
- Defoe, Daniel. Robinson Crusoe. 19?? Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.
- Dillistone, FW The Novelist and the Passion Story. Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel. By Emmanuel Obiechina Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.
- Dostoyevsky, Fyodor Mikhail. 1913. The Idiot. Trans. Julius Katzer. Moscow: Progress. P. 1971
- Driver, Dorothy. "Nadine Gordimer at 70." @ [http://www. Uni-ulm. De / rturrell /antho 4html / Driver .html](http://www.Uni-ulm.De/~rturrell/antho4html/Driver.html). 9 Aug. 2002.
- Erasmus, Chris." S. A. Writer Hopes Her Price will Enhance Peace." Daily Nation. 8 Oct. 1991, "Arts Forum".
- Forster, E(dward) M(organ). 1927. Aspects of the Novel. London: Heinemann, 1980.
- Garner, Dwight. Salon Magazine @ <http://www.penguinputnam.com/static/rguides/us/huse-gun.html#top>. 9 Aug. 2002.
- Gordimer, Nadine. "The Quest for Seen Gold." Sunday Express 13 June. 1937.
- . "Come Again Tomorrow." The Forum 18 Nov. 1939.
- . Face to Face. Johannesburg: Silver Leaf, 1949.

- . The Soft Voice of the Serpent. London: Gollancz, 1953.
- . The Lying Days. 1953. London: Jonathan Cape, 1978.
- . Six Feet of the Country. London: Gollancz 1956.
- . A World of Strangers. London: Gollancz, 1958.
- . Friday's Footprint. London: Gollancz, 1960
- . Occasion for Loving. London: Gollancz, 1963.
- . Not for Publication. London: Gollancz, 1965.
- . The Late Bourgeois World. 1966. London: Jonathan Cape, 1976.
- . A Guest of Honour. London: Jonathan Cape, 1971.
- . The Black Interpreters- Notes on African writing. Johannesburg: Rowan, 1973.
- . "The Novel and The Nation in South Africa." African Writers on African Writing. Ed. G. D. Killam. London: Heinemann, 1973. 33-52.
- . No Place Like Home: Selected Stories. London: Jonathan Cape, 1974.
- . The Conservationist. London: Jonathan Cape, 1974.
- . Some Monday for Sure. London: Heinemann, 1976.
- . Burger's Daughter. 1979. London: Jonathan Cape, 1980.
- . A Soldier's Embrace: Stories. London: Jonathan Cape, 1980.
- . July's People. London: Penguin, 1981.
- . "Inkalamu's Place." Unwinding threads: Writing by women in Africa. Ed. Charlotte H. Bruner. London: Heinemann, 1983.
- . Something Out There. London: Jonathan Cape, 1984.
- . A Sport of Nature. London: Penguin, 1987.

- . The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places. Ed. Stephen Clingman. London: Penguin, 1988.
- . My Son's Story. London: Penguin, 1990.
- . Writing and Being. London: Penguin, 1994.
- . None to Accompany Me. London: Penguin, 1994.
- . The House Gun. London: Penguin, 1998.
- . "An Exchange: Kenzaburo Oe, Nadine Gordimer." Living in Hope and History: Notes from Our Century. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999. 83 - 102.
- . The Pickup. London: Penguin, 2001.
- Gorky Maxim. "Gorky on Western Writers." Literature and Life. Moscow: Progress P, 19?? 90-3.
- Gramsci, Antonio. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Eds. and Trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowel Smith. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971.
- Holman, C. Hugh. A Handbook to Literature. 4th ed. Indianapolis: Bobbs – Merrill, 1981
- Ikiddeh, Ime. Foreword. Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics. By Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. London: Heinemann, 1972.
- Jones, Norman C. "Acculturation and Character Portrayal in Southern African Novels." African Literature Today (13): Recent Trends in the Novel. London: Heinemann, 1983. 180-200.
- Kakutani, Michiko. "Books of the Times: Learning to Lose the Self in a Cause."
@www.nytimes.com/books/98/02/01/home/gordimer-book-review.html. 17 May. 2002.
- . "The House Gun: A Fatal Triangle in the Long Shadow of Apartheid."
@www.nytimes.com/books/98/02/01/home/gordimer-housegun.html. 17 May. 2002.

Kiiru Muchugu. "Another Firm Nail in Apartheid Coffin." Daily Nation 8 Oct. 1991, "Art Forum".

King, Bruce. The Later Fiction of Nadine Gordimer. 1993. @<http://www.uni-ulm.de/~rturrell/antho4html/Driver.html>. 9 Aug. 2002.

Kinsman, Rob. "Nadine Gordimer: The House Gun." 1988. @www.drempel.org.uk. 17 May . 2002.

Larson, Charles R. "Characters and Modes of Characterisation: Chinua Achebe, James Ngugi, and Peter Abrahams. The Emergence of African Fiction 1971. London: Macmillan, 1978. 147-66.

Lukacs, Georg. "The Ideology of Modernism." The Meaning of Contemporary Realism. Trans. John and Necke Mander. London: Merlin P, 1963.

Mills, Fiona. "Diasporic Displacement and the Search for Black Female Identity in Toni Morrison's Tar Baby and Nadine Gordimer's None to Accompany Me." @<http://www.safundi.com/issues7.asp>. 17 May. 2002.

Mugo, Micere. Visions of Africa: The Fiction of Chinua Achebe, Margaret Lawrence, Elspeth Huxley and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1978.

Ndebele, Njabulo. 'Beyond "Protest": New Directions in South Africans Literature'. Criticism and Ideology: Second African Writers' Conference Stockholm 1986. Ed. Kirsten Holst Petersen. Uppsala: Scandinavian I. African Studies, 1988. 211-16.

Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o. Writers in Politics. 1981. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1982.

- Nwoga, D. I. 'Modern African Poetry: The Domestication of a Tradition'. ALT (10): Retrospect and Prospect. Ed. Eldred Jones. London: Heinemann, 1979. 32-56.
- Ousmane, Sembene. God's Bits of Wood. London: Heinemann, 1970.
- Penguin Reader's Guide. Introduction. The House Gun.
 @http://www.penguinputnam.com/static/rguides/us/house_gun.html#top.
- Scanlon, Paul A. ed. Stories from Central and Southern Africa. Oxford: Heinemann. 1983.
- Smith, Rowland. Critical Essays on Nadine Gordimer. 1990. @<http://www.uni-ulm.de/~rturrell/antho4html/Driver.html>. 9 Aug. 2002.
- Tomalin, Claire. "Review of Burger's Daughter." Punch. 27 June. 1979.
- Tyler, Anne. "South Africa after Revolution." 7 June. 1981. @
 //www.nytimes.com/book/98/02/01/home/gordimer-july.html. 17 May. 2002.
- Wade, Michael. White on black in South Africa. 1993. @<http://www.uni-ulm.de/~rturrell/antho4html/Driver.html>. 9 Aug. 2002.
- Waruinge, Gacheche. "South African Writing - A Brief Survey." Teaching of African Literature in Schools. Ed. Eddah Gachukia and S. Kichamu Akivaga. Vol. 1. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1978. 195-215.
- . "Some Scattered Thoughts on South Africa: Alex La Guma and his Latest Novel - Time of The Butcherbird." Department of Literature Seminar. University of Nairobi, Nairobi. 23 Nov. 1983
- Wastberg, Per. "Nadine Gordimer and South African Experience". @
<http://www.nobel.se/literature/artilces/wastberg/> 17 May. 2002 .

Wellek, Rene and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature. London: Penguin, 1970.

EAST AFRICANA COLLECTION

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI LIBRARY