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**Violence in Post-Apartheid South  
Africa in Nadine Gordimer's Novel:  
*The House Gun***

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## ***Dedication***

*To my Mom and Dad, My brothers and my sisters especially Feriha and Rabah who helped me alot in my Master Dissertation.*

*To my friends: Sally Othmane and Halima Benseddik.*

*To my colleagues: Fatima Tedjini, Marwa Rouidji, Merikhi. M, and Zeghouane. T.*

*My relatives: The Rouabah family.*

***Wassila***

# *Dedication*

*All the gratitude for my beloved parents those who were the reason behind my existence, for them I give my appreciation, As well all my sisters and brothers.*

*And for everyone I had ever met through my life ,from near or far , since I am sure that any one of them had left a touch in shaping my modest experience which I hope to be deeper than it is ...*

*For all my best friends with whom I spent the happiest times, my colleague Rouabah Wassila, my roommates, Fatima, khadija, Asma, Soumia ...and many other sincere friends*

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## Abstract

This dissertation seeks to give a better understanding of the direct and indirect causes and consequences behind violence in Post-apartheid South Africa through a study of the content of Nadine Gordimer's novel *The House Gun*. For the purpose at hand, we discuss in the first chapter: the historical, social, and personal backgrounds by focusing the most important events in the history of South Africa. In order to show the effects of the apartheid system on the South African society because Nadine Gordimer was the loudest voice that spoke about the state of the society to South Africa and to the world. In the second chapter, we discuss the main themes of Post apartheid South African literature. After that, in the third chapter we look at the ways in which violence has been an inherent consequence of the apartheid era. That was violent and segregative period and in the last chapter, we show how it is an obstacle in face of the efforts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was trying to stop the increase of violence in South Africa from the apartheid era until now.

**Keywords:** apartheid, post-apartheid, racial segregation, violence, and fear of crime.

## ملخص

هذه الأطروحة تسعى لمنح مفهوم أفضل حول اسباب و نتائج العنف المباشرة و غير المباشرة في فترة ما بعد الابرتايد عن طريق دراسة مضمون رواية نادين غورديمر " مسدس المنزل". اولاً في الفصل الاول قمنا بدراسة الخلفية التاريخية و الاجتماعية لمجتمع جنوب افريقيا و كذا الخلفية الشخصية للكاتبة وذلك بتسليط الضوء على اهم الاحداث التاريخية عن طريق اظهار الآثار السلبية التي خلفها قانون الابرتايد على مجتمع جنوب افريقيا وتعد نادين غورديمر الصدى الذي تردد و تحدث للجنوب افريقيا و للعالم عن حالة المجتمع تحت نظام الابرتايد .

اما في الفصل الثاني تطرقنا الى اهم مواضيع ادب جنوب افريقيا في فترة ما بعد الابرتايد وبعد ذلك في الفصلين الاخيرين قمنا بتحليل رواية مسدس المنزل حيث في الفصل الثالث قمنا بدراسة الرواية بوصف وتحليل اهم مظاهر التي بينت ان العنف كان نتيجة لمرحلة الابرتايد التي تميزت بالعنف و الظلم و في الفصل الاخير درسنا بنفس المنهجية المظاهر التي بينت ان العنف كان عائقاً في وجه منظمة الحقيقة و الاصلاح التي ساهمت في الحد من مشاكل العنف في مجتمع جنوبا افريقيا في فترتي الابرتايد وما بعدها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الابرتايد، ما بعد الابرتايد، التمييز العنصري، العنف، الخوف المفرط من الجريمة.

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# **General Introduction**

## **General Introduction**

One of the major themes in Post-apartheid South African literature has been the proliferation of violence. In fact in the different literary genres of fiction, drama and poetry many authors wrote about it because violence is a widespread phenomenon. Moreover there are a lot of writers such as Andre Brink, J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer in South African literature who wrote during and after the apartheid about the facts that violence as inherent consequence of the segregative system. Our aim is to shed light on the impact of violence in post apartheid South African society through the study of the novel of Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*. We have elected to focus on violence in this novel because it is shown that the post apartheid period witnessed high levels of crime. We consequently argue that violence is the inherent consequence of the apartheid era we also argue that reconciliation has been a difficult process due to the increase of violence in the South African Society and to the burdens of the past.

### **Motivation**

We have been interested in the topic because we have noticed that South Africa is one of the countries with the highest rates of crime in the world and our preliminary reading has revealed that apartheid has had a major role in this. Moreover, we admire the novel since it tackles the suffering and oppression of people because of their being in an insecure society with the possibility of being accused of crime or violent behaviour at any moment.

### **The statement of the problem**

What are the different manifestations of violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa in the novel of Nadine Gordimer, *The House Gun*?

In the novel of Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*, there are many aspects of the direct and the indirect causes and consequences behind the spread of violence in Post apartheid South Africa.

### **Hypotheses**

Due to the segregative laws of the apartheid system, violence becomes an inherent consequence of apartheid era in South Africa. That is also what led the violence to increase and the efforts of reconciliation in South Africa.

## **Research questions**

- What is the Post apartheid era in South Africa?
- What are the main effects of the apartheid era on the post apartheid society and literature?
- What are the different manifestations of violence in the novel *The House Gun*?
- To what extent does Nadine Gordimer succeed in representing the reality of South African society in *The House Gun*?
- How did violence become an obstacle in face of reconciliation in South Africa?

## **Methodology**

Our dissertation is a thematic study that describes the aspects of the novel *The House Gun* through the analysis. We incorporate the social, historical, and personal background of the novel in order to investigate the direct and indirect motives behind violence in South Africa. We analyse the novel using the descriptive and analytical method focusing on content especially plot, action, and dialogue to affirm that Gordimer succeeded in representing the widespread violence in South Africa .

## **Plan of the Dissertation**

Our dissertation is divided into four chapters: chapter one deals with the historical, social, and personal context, the historical background tackles history from 1948 till 1994, dealing with the most important historical events that were turning points in the history of South Africa. The social background tackles the social issues of South African society in Post apartheid such as crimes, racism, and xenophobia. The personal background deals with Nadine Gordimer's life, works, and career.

In chapter two, we shed light on the themes and styles of Post Apartheid South African literature through the investigation of three famous South African writers: Andre Brink, J M Coetzee, and Mpe Phaswane, looking at their most successful works as examples of their styles .

In the third chapter, we focus on the aspects of violence that appeared in the Post apartheid society to answer the question why Nadine Gordimer chose those particular aspects and we show the influence of the apartheid system on the South African community through the examples from the novel.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, we have represented violence as an obstacle in face of the efforts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that takes its way in the new South Africa; through analyzing different aspects from the novel such as: the social changes that happened in the post apartheid era, the availability of guns, and the challenges that faced the criminal system after the apartheid era. We have tackled those issues from Gordimer's representation of the novel.

# Chapter One

Historical, social, and personal  
background

### Introduction

In this chapter, we will study the historical background and review the period from 1948 to 1994, by highlighting the historical events that were turning points in the history of South Africa. The natives were under the apartheid system, this segregative system lasted for more than 200 years in which they were slaves, poor and suffered from oppression. When finally started manifestations by 1960 but resulted massacres, hundreds dead because of police and the white control. Then with the coming of the new generation from the 70<sup>s</sup> the manifestations did not stop and spread in media around the world besides few could study abroad and pose the South African state of war to the world which gains the press's ears outside Africa. What also let to change in politics that made the black right for vote and make political group as result, the elections in 1994 when Nelson Mandela won and the black were everywhere in Africa dancing with happiness but this was not the end of violence it was the end of the segregative laws and the beginning of tradition and mentality control.

We then review the social background which is study of the social issues of South African society in post apartheid such as crimes, racism, and xenophobia, were not but a result of mentality and tradition control when the white control ended natives tried to revenge and society were in mess, all people were suffering from that system which increased the will of revenge. Most natives were still poor, unemployed and psychologically needed to cure from the illness of racism, which led them not to forgive the whites after the independence that the TRC trying to succeed. However, both sides were suffering psychological problems, the first were suffering from the result of apartheid and the white were afraid from the black's revenge even with Mandela's and Tuto's efforts to fix the situation. Finally, the personal background deals with Nadine Gordimer's life, works, and her major themes during and after the apartheid where she was a mirror of South African community and the international voice of the victims of apartheid besides her career and political views during and after the end of the apartheid.

#### **I- Historical and Social context**

##### **1- Apartheid era**

##### **1.1- The apartheid era: from 1948 to 1990**

Apartheid is a segregative system used to separate whites from blacks in South Africa. This racial segregation or what the National Party called: « Apartness », created by the government in South Africa and its aim was to maintain the white's domination while extending racial



segregation. Vernon Domingo in his, *South Africa* cited that “*The policy of apartheid—the segregation and domination of all black people by whites—had lasted for more than 350 years. The policy had created poverty, hardship, animosity, and fear*”. (Domingo.V.2004.p9)

This system officially started from 1948 and ended in 1990, but spread its first thoughts as early as the Dutch colonizers in around 1788 when they first made rules of separating whites from non-whites even after the settlement of the British. By the 18<sup>th</sup> C, the colonizers succeeded in taking the natives homelands and denying them from passing those lands without permission, plus making them work for them. The white controlled the whole country from different sides: politics, economy and ownership. Moreover, this system was based on treating the black as slaves with no rights and violently like animals, with no sense of humanity. The white were more important than the non-white; however, the National Party were controlling in the period of 50s, besides the classification of the population according to race so that everyone should not break the legislation of the National Party (NP).

Since 1950 many opposition acts raise and a lot of popular uprising and protests emerged but unexpectedly the government banned all sorts of opposition and imprisoned most of anti-apartheid leaders.

### **1.1.1- Apartheid laws**

This period was a period of laws that controlled people who were following the rules of the coloniser under force, as an example The Prohibition of mixed marriage act in 1949 between races (Europeans and non-Europeans) Anyone who marries from the other colour should be imprisoned. Concerning the areas, the Population Registration Act for the non-Europeans are obliged to hold cards that identify them this was in 1950 while after two years ,the colonial change it to “reference book” anyone who does not have it should be punished. Besides each colour has a specific area and only white have the right to own lands. For the employment, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953it was limited to racial group even if the natives have the same ability with the whites the whites had the high payment and all kinds of facilities and the good work conditions unlike the natives. However in education universities for whites only; black have their own colleges , the whites always get the best education because of the segregative laws that prefer them and prohibit the mixture in school of different colours as a law of reservation. In politics whites have the right to vote while the blacks are not allowed because they were not considered human but a slaves ; vote were for

whites only that have identity cards while blacks few of them have papers just to pass the whites' areas.(Evans.M.K.2007)

### **1.2- The social impact of the apartheid**

As any historical event or political system, the apartheid led to many effects on the social side of South Africa since during this period of time black people were considered inferior contrasting with white people. The local indigenous people socially and politically stood outside the circle of the rights and privileges of the white men; even legally they existed in an ambiguous region between law and the arbitrary will of their masters. (Gordon.D.R.p, 24.2006) Therefore violence appeared as a normal reaction to the long years of pressure, discrimination, and racial segregation. Both types of violence social and political during apartheid affected the locals. As Abraham, D in his review *a synopsis of urban violence in South Africa* about violence in South Africa articulated that on social side in 1983 an estimated 3.5 million people had been affected because of forced removals. Many Africans were subjected to widespread malnutrition, poor health and education systems, overcrowded schools, poor social security, and high levels of unemployment while on the political side. Between 1960 and 1994, 2,500 people had been hanged for political crimes, while about 80,000 people had been detained without trial (Abraham.D.2010). During this period, many official legislations and laws had been emerged to segregate the non-white people providing them with bad education, less health care, and all their life conditions were worse contrasting with whites, they banned from practicing their simple rights. Poverty and other social issues invaded the areas where the blacks live what led them to resist against illegal laws and unfair privileges of the apartheid system. Increasingly, the internal and international pressure urged government to start negotiation for realizing equality and to stop the apartheid.

#### **1.2.1- Black protest**

##### **1.2.1.1- The first reaction against the segregative system**

In South Africa, the effort to get rid of apartheid was called The Struggle. (Domingo.2004.p, 41) March 1960 was the short of the first protests against apartheid, people finally had the courage to move in peaceful protests to change the situation ,Domingo Vernon in his book about *South Africa* articulated that:" it was a period of defiance that would include marches, workers' strikes, economic boycotts, and civil disobedience. Most of those who made the biggest sacrifices were black South Africans.(*ibid*.2004.p, 42) Unfortunately, it resulted in 69 deaths at Sharpeville, near to Johannesburg, this massacre made people angry to

go out for strike. Also made the government angrier and decide to declare the ANC the African National Congress of the Non-white that supported the natives and was led by Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela and the other one was the PAC Pan-Africanist Congress. Both organizations became prohibited, according to (SAHO) South African History Online the National Party (NP) led by Malan. D. F and Hendrik. F. Verwoerd were both the head of apartheid laws, they created a policy of segregation against the blacks. (SAHO.2015)

### **1.2.1.2- Calling for Change**

However, by the coming of the new generation of the 70<sup>s</sup>, the young were calling for change .In Soweto in Johannesburg , a group of children claimed against the educational system of teaching them other languages but Afrikaans, this group called the Black conscious Movement BCM, their peaceful protests were the turning point because the police killed about 100 and more than 1000 injured ,(Richard.R.p149) which led the international hostility to take it as a proof of segregation and decided to change the controllers .With a new beginning with P.W. Botha in1978 the prime minister whom brought the hopes of the collapse of apartheid, everything had changed, pass laws, marriage of different colours was allowed, no specific places for each colour anyone can walk anywhere, black can function legally (Sonneborn.L.p74,2010). But all these were just a cover so he can make his own needs because Botha was focusing on the army he greatly increased the power the army to ruin the ANC supporters and to conquer the neighbouring countries however this system did not last forever the economy of the country destroyed thus another president replaced him.(ibid.p74,2010)

## **II Post-apartheid era “The Multiracial Democracy”**

### **2.1- Elections period**

In the Second half of the 80<sup>th</sup> F.W de klerk turned into a president instead of P.W Botha. Whom his speech paved the way for the free conversation and exchanging ideas in the politics for the ANC and the PAC .

In 1990 because of F.W de Klerk speech Nelson Mandela released after 27 years in jail. After Klerk’s allow officially for the blacks activate in politics they start negotiating the ending of the white minority.

Not all this was the beginning of the Post-apartheid era, this period started with the new thinking, starting new way to organize and administrate politics, economic and everyday life. As an example President De Klerk ,minimized the role of the police whom committed violence against the natives for years, also the ANC-led government had committed itself to reducing crime rates and maintaining social order.( Singh .A.M. p7. 2008)

### **2.2-The fall of apartheid**

In the apartheid system, the whites tried to keep the country under control by treating the black terribly. However, they did not give up they protested and Mandela was the one who encouraged the Afrikaans to speak against the apartheid but he was arrested and the black activists continue protesting which enlarged the anti-apartheid circle in SA and abroad and by 1990 internal and external support that brought the South African government to its knees. (Sonneborn.L,p9.2010) President De klerk in February 1990 decided to release Nelson Mandela and his supporters in prison in order to avoid the collapse of the apartheid system and the end of the white control besides he allowed the free political views for the black what made all South Africans franchised, many voted for the very first time in 1994.From the book of *In Search of Land and Housing in the New South Africa* the government gave the black people the ability to own their lands and work legally through the Environment Conservation Act in 1989 then he repealed the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act in 1998 so that people could sell what they plant.(p,24,p,34.2008)These were examples of the collapse of apartheid laws. However the natives did not submit they were, in fact, creating a democracy by their very action. They had shown that consistent opposition to an evil system could bring about great advances. That steadfast opposition was personified in the life of Mr. Nelson Mandela, a man who sacrificed more than twenty years of his life so that all South Africans could be free from discrimination and oppression. (Domingo. p10. 2004)

In 28 April 1994, Nelson Mandela won the elections and became the first black president in 10 May 1994. South Africa witnessed a new beginning with the great leader whom the country flourished by him. Democratic president spoke to the world not only South Africa his voice was everywhere. He inspired the millions by his speeches one of it when he said:” As long as, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.”( French. 1995)He was motivating people inside and outside South Africa to spread peace, his aim was to decrease unemployment, poor and violence he wanted “ a better life for all” he said. Also “Never, never again will this beautiful land experience the oppression of one by another.” Nelson Mandela (1994)

### **2.3- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**

After the end of apartheid, there were many victims of violence as well as guilty people waiting amnesty from prosecution. For those the assistant was the TRC it is like a court people came to talk about the abuse and segregation they suffered from. Undoubtedly this court-like led by the winner of Nobel Peace prize twice in fight against apartheid, Desmond Tutu. Who was a priest of an Anglican church in Soweto also he was set by the government of national unity. From that time until 1994, a minority, non-democratic government with only 14 percent of the population, governed South Africa—those classified as “white”—being allowed to vote. This official inequality was very upsetting to many people. It was deeply resented by South Africa’s black residents, and by individuals and many countries throughout the world because of its obvious racist nature. (Domingo.P10, 2004)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was charged with investigating political crimes committed during the apartheid. Because many people hanged for wrong reasons, the death penalty is colonial law used to execute people and take people’s life with no evidence. Besides that the colonial rulers claims that execution is an appropriate and effective form of punishment adding to that claim judges specified in detail gruesome modes of execution designed to produce maximum pain and greatest indignity over the longest periods’ and executions were carried out in public because the death penalty was seen as a deterrent to crime. Furthermore, in Johannesburg after 1994 the courts cancelled the death penalty by the words of the president of Constitutionals court that” Everyone has a right to life, and capital punishment is therefore unconstitutional”.

In 1995, the new government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This body was given the task of unearthing the bad deeds of the apartheid era and with providing a forum in which the country could start the healing process. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a staunch opponent of apartheid and the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, chaired the commission. The Commission’s primary task was to hear testimony about the acts committed. Members would then decide if amnesty should be granted. (Domingo.p,15,16.2004)

### **2.4- The social manifestations of the post apartheid era**

Almost everything that happens today in South Africa takes place against the background of the apartheid years. Although the apartheid as official system was stopped, its vestiges remains with the post-apartheid society such as, racism, poverty, assault, rape, bloodshed,

xenophobia, and homosexuality. News of violent crime becomes a part of the everyday life in the post-apartheid South Africa while the end of apartheid was waiting to carry hope of equality and justice. It revealed many challenges and problems need to be faced. According to the institute of security studies levels of recorded crime in South Africa began to increase in the mid-1980s — dramatically so in the early 1990s. The expectations that violent crime would decrease after 1994 have not materialised. While levels of recorded crime stabilised between 1995 and 1996, crime has been increasing since then. The annual increase in the overall number of recorded crimes was greater in 1999 than in any previous year after 1994. Violent crimes increased at a greater rate than the total over this period. According to the latest available statistics at the time of writing, levels of recorded crime continued to increase during much of the first half of 2000. Crime trends in South Africa's major cities have followed a similar pattern as those nationally since 1994. In the occasional paper *Crime in South Africa: A country and cities profile* a comparison of crime rates shows that Johannesburg has the highest volume of serious crime, followed by Pretoria; also crime levels in all the urban centres with the exception of Johannesburg increased between 1994 and 1999, violent crimes such as car hijacking and robbery ( Schönteich .M & Louw .A. 2001)

### **2.4.1- Racism**

Even after the end of the apartheid system, black were still considered inferior because of their social and economic background, even if they had the same capacity as white, the traditional mentality affected the black South African in which they lost their rights. Even if they had good education, high grades or the same qualifications they were paid different wages for performing the same job, especially in the public sector. As an example :”The proportion of African employment as supervisor or foreman increased from 13 per cent in 1965 to about 30 per cent in 1989 (Seekings & Natrass. P18, 2005)

### **2.4.2-Xenophobia**

One of the most obvious features that distinguished the post-apartheid society is the fear of foreigners or so called Xenophobia that is considered a reason behind many violent crimes mainly in marginal urban locations, townships, and inner-city suburbs in South Africa “Everyday animosity frequently spills over into violence against individual migrants and refugees and their economic enterprises. Some of these incidents reach the scrutiny of the media and officialdom” (Crush & Ramachandran, p5. 2014).

### **2.4.3- The widespread violence in Post-Apartheid**

The widespread of violence in South Africa led to many aspects. Which occurred later within the society as the fear of crime, hence people became anxious of any possible risk or horrifying news ,that may come suddenly and in any moment. They worry about their private lives and their families, mainly children and women are at risk of gender violence and rape or they even cannot do their daily activities in normal way. Sociologists claim that this fear of crime and anxiety of violence can be a reason for another violent acts and behaviours so that the whole society fall in confusion and misunderstanding of what is really happen in the country and what may happen in term of psychological fear invades the society.

There is no logical explanation for the increase of violence in post apartheid era. Even after the control of the black, which led the institute of the security studies to make some possible reasons behind the increase of crime in South Africa.The first reason was the political transition were South Africa witnessed years to change to a democratic new nation in which the transition brought about a restructuring of the criminal justice system, the abolition of a number of laws and the promulgation of new ones. As a result, many criminal justice functions have been operationally weakened .Therefore, the violence is considered as one of the most difficult challenges that face the government after the apartheid and obstacles the effort of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa.

### **2.4.4- Domestic violence**

Another aspect of crime occurred after the apartheid is gender or domestic violence. Which spread in the most of the country in large scales, where women and children are afraid of being raped or assaulted from their intimates and cousins even outside their homes, also according to the According to the national Victims of Crime Survey, 60% of assault victims and the institute of Security Studies ISS victim surveys have made similar findings in respect of murder .(Schönteich .M & Louw.A.p,9.2001) The high numbers of those crimes urge the country to react against that, since the transition from apartheid to democracy aims at first to end all the aspects of discrimination and to heal the gaping wounds of the apartheid “violence against women was regarded as a national priority by the government.” (Petersen.E.p,1. 2010).The State of anarchy occupied the post-apartheid society due to the various types of violence called attention of sociologists and psychologists to investigate about its causes, effects, and the possible solutions for such phenomena, and to make numerical statistics of the violent crimes which happens in the everyday life of the South African community. We have

seen in this part the historical background of the South African society and its social background discussing the most important events that happened in the history of South Africa.

### III Personal context

#### 3-Nadine Gordimer's life and works

##### Introduction

In this second part of the first chapter, we will discuss the biography of Nadine Gordimer. This part reviews her works, activities and political views during and after the apartheid to demonstrate the fact of violence in South Africa. What is shown in the first part is the historical and social background that created her literary works and views about the state of South African community.

##### 3.1- Personal background

Nadine Gordimer was born in Springs, Transvaal (now Gauteng) small town outside Johannesburg in 20 November 1923 and died at 13 July 2014. From a Jewish family: Her father, Isidore Gordimer, was a jeweller, traditionally Orthodox, her mother, Nan Myers, was of British descent. She said am Jew forever and religion is not about skin "*It's something inside you, in your blood and in your bones*". Also she said once that: "*Life did not end with apartheid; new life began.*"

##### 3.2- In the Apartheid era

###### 3.2.1- Overview

The Imaginative Guerrillas, the woman of imagination and fantasy. Nadine Gordimer the white South African writer and the novelist, her work is well known both in- and outside of South Africa. Nadine Gordimer was one of the most powerful voices against apartheid in the whole world. She deeply wrote about segregation and the political system in South Africa, for that she has received honorary doctorates and became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Also her award during apartheid were: 1961 WH Smith Literary Award; 1971 James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction); 1974 Booker Prize for Fiction; 1981 Scottish Arts Council Neil M. Gunn Fellowship; 1985 Premio Malaparte (Italy); and 1986 Nelly Sachs Prize (Germany), those were around the world. While also in South Africa, she supported other new young writers who came to her house many times which inspired her in writing



stories, her stories were not but stories of ordinary people reflect real events of the apartheid. She won awards in many places in the world for her great works that touch the audience heart through her style of writing in a way make them feel the same as the character.

History from the inside” that’s what her works were described. Her fictional themes reflected the South African historical experience from the late 1940s to the present. Through her writing Nadine Gordimer reveals the prejudices and ideologies, the tensions and stresses of life in a racially divided society and the corrupting and corrosive effects of the apartheid system.(Shain. M & Pimstone. M.2009)

### **3.2.2- Novels during apartheid and its major theme**

Her first novel *The Lying Days* 1953 was an autobiographical in traditional sense. However, *Burger’s Daughter* 1979 was a political and historical novel about Isle Wilson family, he articulated that Nadine Gordimer was a friend of his parents and he was 16 when she gave him the manuscript to read before the book was published. It is not that she wanted his approval, but she knew that people would make the connection to his family and she wanted him to see it first. He told her: “You have captured the life that was ours.” Also this novels talks about a group of white anti-apartheid activists in South Africa seeking to overthrow the South African government as well the story of *The Late Bourgeois World* 1966 it is about politics, white woman anti-apartheid and an activist.

### **3.2.3- Her activities in SA & around the world**

During her career, she was in touch with politicians and intellectuals from Sophia town and Soweto in Johannesburg, which make her, melt in the atmosphere of courts, politics and lawyers. While the 60<sup>s</sup> when Nelson Mandela and his colleagues were in jail she became a close friend to their defence lawyer, Bram Fischer, (who is a character in *Burger’s Daughter*) from this it is obvious that Nadine’s stories were a reflection of reality of South Africa and not detective stories written for fame or honour.

In 1974, she shared the Booker Prize with Stanley Middleton for *The Conservationist*, which explores Zulu culture and the world of a wealthy white industrialist. .(Ch, Maume. 2014) Beside the award of Modern Language Association of America (1982), and the Premio Malaparte prize (1987).Regardless of colour , she identified closely with the black struggle and testified in the Pretoria Supreme Court in 1988 in mitigation of those found guilty of terrorism.

### **3.2.4- Political views**

Gordimer was anti-apartheid and one of the warriors whom tried to end the apartheid system, refused to live abroad and spoke for the black writers whom could not send their voice in the country of white control. During the apartheid era she wrote what is the life beyond apartheid might be like. Nadine Gordimer during her career was trying to write about the “The Other” which are the black that the segregate system called them so, dealing carefully with her writing to send a clear message can help in ending the apartheid system, as an example her first book *My Son's Story* 1990 that tackles avoiding the term “The Other” .

Gordimer's works suggest two ways for the white female to gain acceptance among black South African: radical political action and sexual contact .For her “*Danger do not come from outside but it is even in walls, in your bedroom, especially with a gun in the house.*”

### **3.3- In Post-Apartheid era**

#### **3.3.1- Overview**

Nadine Gordimer's international literary eminence is complemented by her role within South Africa as an activist in the culture of resistance. Moreover, as an articulate opponent of censorship, detention without trial and as an assiduous organizer of writers across the racial divides. Augmenting Gordimer's importance is the parallel between the beginnings of her career and the rise to power of the Afrikaner-dominated National Party, which has ruled South Africa uninterrupted since 1948. She was awarded in post apartheid era about five times around the world for her efforts of speaking and proclaiming about the apartheid system. Its effect in post-apartheid era and as prove her award in 1991 Nobel Prize for Literature, after that in 2002 International Primo Levi Literary Award, in USA 2003 Mary McCarthy Award also in France 2007 Chevalier de la Légion d' Honneur and finally in 2008 she won Best of the Booker .

#### **3.3.2- Her works and themes**

Nadine Gordimer's works in post apartheid included themes of domestic violence, gender issues and social vestiges of apartheid as an example: “*None to Accompany Me*” 1994 and “*The House Gun*” 1998 these two novels tackles violence as a primarily a heritage of apartheid as result she claimed that violence is related to individual and social responsibility to end it. While her final novel, *No Time Like The Present* (2012), experience of a mixed marriage and follows the fortunes of a family and their friends in a Johannesburg suburb

between the mid-1990s and 2009.(Maume.Ch. 2014) mostly her last novel and during post apartheid were about violence and family.

Themes of Nadine Gordimer's works were about the violence and the apartheid system of exile and the migration of people describing the society's state of mess, adding her activities around the world to discuss the South African society as international issues.

### **3.3.3- Her activities**

She was an activist and against apartheid. She supported the African National Congress (ANC) and became a card-carrying member in 1990 because later in her life she moved from Gauteng to live in Johannesburg. When she testified at the Delmas trial in 1986, to save the lives of 22 ANC members, all of them guilty of disloyalty for her was the best award she ever had. Nadine's influence was absolute: in the post-apartheid era, she was active in the HIV/Aids movement, and in 2004 she collected around 20 famous writers to contribute stories to *Telling Tales*, a fund-raising book for South Africa's Treatment Action Campaign. She was critical of the government's stance, and said she approved of everything President Thabo Mbeki had done except his stance on Aids. (Maume.Ch. 2014)

### **3.3.4- Her political views**

After the fall of the apartheid, Nadine was the first woman whom supported the ANC group before and after the elections, and called for change the traditional thinking about the black race, also she supported the black writers to write officially and have audience like any other writers. Nadine Gordimer awarded around the world many times through years as one of the famous voices that called for ending the apartheid and showing the reality of the colonial.

"I am not a political person by nature," Ms. Gordimer said also "I don't suppose, if I had lived elsewhere, my writing would have reflected politics much, if at all."(Verongos.H.2014) Because of the environment Gordimer she was obliged to write about apartheid, it impossible to dig deeply into South African community without striking repression. And once the Afrikaner nationalists came to power in 1948, the scaffolds of the apartheid system began to rise around her and could not be ignored. (Verongos.H. 2014) as well as she began to achieve international recognition from leaving for short periods teaching at US universities.(Maume.Ch. 2014)In1991, Gordimer's entire body of work was honoured with the Nobel Prize in Literature.

We have seen in this part the personal background of the white South African writer who defended on the rights of the victims of the apartheid system by showing her personal background, views and activities that had a major effect on the South African people.

### **Conclusion**

We have seen in this chapter the historical background that had been from 1948 to 1994. We have focused on the most important events that were a turning point in the history of South Africa. Besides that we have studied the social background by showing the effects of the apartheid system on the South African people .Also what did the government react against the increase of violence in the society through the efforts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Moreover we had concluded the chapter with the second part which is the personal background of Nadine Gordimer ,the white South African author who wrote and reflected the reality of life in South Africa under the apartheid system.

# **Chapter Two**

**Themes and styles of writers  
in the post apartheid  
literature**

### Introduction

Post apartheid South African literature is a literature related to themes such as: violence, political and socio-historical transitions. It reflects the main manifestations of the post apartheid era as direct effects of this era. In this chapter we will shed light on the post apartheid literature, its main themes, styles, and its characteristics through the investigation of three famous writers and their literary works. We will also look at the critical reviews of their literary works in this particular period of time. What are the similar aspects in their writing? Did they have the same perception about the apartheid era and its effects on the South African society? And how would they expect the future of South Africa under those circumstances? We have chosen three foremost writers in the post apartheid South African literature: *Andre brink*, *J. M. Coetzee*, and *Mpe Phaswane*.

### 1- The apartheid and the post apartheid South African literature

During the apartheid era in South Africa, literature was simply a tool of resistance and expressing political and revolutionary thoughts as well as a way to call the world attention to what is really happening in South Africa and how much the black community were the weak link in the game of apartheid. After that in post apartheid era, things became a little bit different; the apartheid as official system was abolished with all its laws of segregation and racial policies, but unexpectedly its effects have taken another dimensions in “the new South Africa” hence violence, racism, rape, xenophobia, assault, and poverty become daily life aspects in the post apartheid society (Tarka Fai.G, 2014). And currently those issues no longer referred to the black skin, those problems were corresponding to both whites and blacks and related to all social classes, because in the post apartheid era violence had been a result not only to the political circumstances but also a consequence of historical, economic, social, and psychological forces that existed in the apartheid, as what JM Coetzee highlighted in his ‘Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech’ (1992, 99):

South African literature is a literature in bondage, as it reveals itself in even its highest moments shot through as they are with feelings of homelessness and yearnings for nameless liberation ...It is exactly the kind of literature you would expect people to write from prison (Jabulani Mkhize, 2001:p170)

Post apartheid writers focused on the effects of Apartheid in their literary works to depict the state of anarchy that afflicted the post apartheid society because of the widespread violence and crimes that made people afraid in their homeland and try to expect the horrifying end to this anarchy in order to show people to what extent violence threatens their lives and

prevents the efforts of reconciliation for realizing the concept of “the new South Africa” as a country without racism and violence.( Tarka Fai.G, 2014)

The Apartheid has not affected only the social and economic sides, but also it affected literary creativity of post apartheid writers. Nonetheless, this influence had not been the same on white literature contrasting with black literature; hence black writers are still embracing realism perspectives in representing reality as it is for the purpose to protest the rights of ordinary people by helping them to have their own views about the reality of society where they live, as well to create space for them to make their own discussions, such as; Mzamane’s two collections of narratives; *In Love with Stranger and other stories (1995)*, *The Children of The Diaspora and other stories of Exile (1996)*, and the collection of Mandla Langa *The Naked Song and other stories (1996)* (Jabulani Mkhize, 2001:p170). In the other hand, white writers do no longer believe in the realistic representation of South African issues, they believe that imagination and creativity are the best way to tackle historical facts in a literary works. Since, they are inspired by the postmodernism most of them apply postmodern characteristics effectively in their works what is argued in Jabulani Mkhize’ *book Literary Prospects in ‘post apartheid’ South Africa ( 2001)*

It is an open secret that white writers such as Breyten Breytenback, J M. Coetzee, Andre Brink and Menan du Plessis have, in the past, embraced modernist or post-modernist techniques in their works. Even Nadine Gordimer, conventionally regarded as realist in the Lukacsian sense, has been shown to have made a shift especially in her latest works which endorse self-reflexivity and postmodernism (Jabulani Mkhize, p173)

For that purpose, we have selected three writers with their literary achievement in an attempt to discuss their themes and styles that they have used in writing their works.

## **2- South African writers**

### **2.1- Andre Brink**

Andre Brink (1935- ) is South African writer influenced by the apartheid and the general anarchy in South Africa. He is a critic, essay writer, novelist known by his creative imaginary works, and translator from English to Afrikaans; he translated many great works such as Shakespeare’s plays. (Osita Ezeliora, 2006)

### 2.1.1- The imaginative style of Brink

Brink was among the first writers who tackle historical realities in a fantastic way; he has a lot of works, about 18 full length novels as *Devel's valley, a dry white season, and the wall of the plague* and many anthologies of essays that define his artistic philosophy. Brink used this particular skill of imagination in his writing as way of bringing liberation to South Africa and resisting the post colonial forces that tries to abolish the South African identity, achieving this narrative mode of writing or what is known in recent scholarships as 'magical realism' by using 'parody, irony, disruption, and pastiche' also time and place are used in hybrid manner and each story is told from an omniscient narrator's point of view, so this mode is used to criticize the political laws and widespread thoughts of racism and segregation in South Africa from an indirect point of view. (ibid, 2006)

One of his famous novels is *Imaginings of Sand*, published in (1996). It is about myth of matriarchal family tree consists of courageous females who defied the traditions and lived for that purpose. The females stories is pictured by Kristien Muller's dying grandmother, Ouma Kristina who was ready to die at her old age (103 years) after witnessing a lot of women's myths and stories. The story ends with Kristien turning out to be a difficult heroine to her family. (Janet Burroway, 1996)

In this novel, it is apparently that Brink takes an anti-apartheid position discussing the South African election and telling the history from woman's point of view who strikes the reader by her views, stories, and her comments. *Imagining of Sand* is very complex in its narrative structure, and complex in terms of themes in which it tackles history of struggle against violence and oppression through stories and myths of women characters as Janet Burroway stated in her review about the novel entitled *Burning Down the House* ;

Ouma Kristina changes her own history from telling to telling. Many crucial points are unknown, disputed or lost in the mist. At any point, as Ouma likes to put it, an elephant may come and blow the story away. A story, Ouma implicitly claims, is all the stronger if its truth cannot be confirmed. Yet the effect of the novel depends on our accepting the emotional truth promulgated by the women. Too often their values are questionable and their behavior lacks an internal logic. (Burroway. J, 1996)

### 2.1.2- The narrative styles in Brink's works

For Brink, the main interest of his writings was to unfold history through literature in order to build the bridge between past and future as well as to raise awareness about individuals' responsibility towards their society. (Rylandsholm. B, 2007):



Brink was uncompromisingly committed to the struggle against the apartheid system, seeing the main issue as the relationship of the individual with his society, and his need to assume responsibility within that society. (ibid, p7, 2007)

As South African writer he embraces his Afrikaner identity, and along his literary career he wrote from this perspective; thus in the apartheid era his earlier works resulted in his position against the apartheid so he wrote about the oppression and racism of the apartheid authorities, in order to open people's eyes to the importance of abolition of the apartheid. The fact that most of his works were banned from authorities is prove of his portraying true facts in his novels as what critics regarded his writings as a set of realities related directly or indirectly to history of South Africa represented in his works (ibid, p8);

each of them links in a chain, mapping the journey of the country from the first encounters between the indigenous people and the European invaders, through times of violent oppression and systematic inscription of otherness by a dominant, white culture, into the openness of a future after apartheid (ibid, p8)

After that, in the post apartheid era his recent works shifts from the historical limitations to be more textually focused on aesthetics of language to help readers to engage more with his narratives, due to his believes that stories are the way to engage with the real world. (ibid, p94)

## 2.2- J. M. Coetzee

### 2.2.1- Coetzee's novels and literary success

John Maxwell Coetzee was born in 1940 in Cape Town, son of school teacher and lawyer, growing up there he experienced first-hand the inequality, injustice, and all sorts of racial segregation of the apartheid laws. Therefore, he inspired his literary works from his own experience. Coetzee's first novel was *Dusklands* in 1974, after that he published many works; *the life & and times of Michael K*, *In the heart of the country*, *waiting for the Barbarians*, *Disgrace* and so many other works along his life. In 1957 Coetzee enrolled at the University of Cape Town when he earned degree in English, then he spent three years in England to continue his education, after that he went to America when he earned his doctorate degree in English in 1968. Coetzee spent his life in learning and teaching literature in Cape Town, England, and America to highlight the conditions of life existed in South Africa in terms of violence and poverty via eyes of a literary man. (Shaun Irlam)

Along his life, Coetzee won many prizes as the booker prize in South Africa (twice) in (1984, 1999) and the noble prize for literature in (2003). Those prizes were considered a proof

of his literary success, particularly his masterpiece *Disgrace* and his autobiographical collection of books; *boyhood* (1997), *youth* (2000), and *summer times* (2009). (*ibid*)

### 2.2.2- Themes of Coetzee's novels

In South Africa Coetzee grew up side by side with poverty, racial segregation, inequality, violence, and a lot of social issues that increased because of the apartheid, therefore he use writing to express his courageous and critical views according to his own experience in life. Also, throughout his career poverty and violence appeared in almost his works to describe the apartheid as a double-edged sword afflicted the society; since poverty was a result to the economic policies that deprive black inhabitants from their lands and properties as when they urged to leave their works what led to an inherent poverty in the black community in the post apartheid era related historically to the apartheid times, in the other hand poverty was in fact poverty of humanity and kindness in relationships between people mainly when they harm each other and commit all kinds of crimes without any sense of guilty or responsibility .as Dr Shaun Irlam stated:

South Africa has bred a violent, hostile culture damaged by a poverty of humanity for more than three centuries. Over the course of three decades, the writings of J. M. Coetzee have ventured further and deeper into that psyche of privation and impoverishment than any other. (p, 01)

Therefore, Coetzee is regarded as the foremost writer who represented the widespread violence in the post apartheid South African society in way that brings global attention to the effects of apartheid on social and economic conditions of life in South Africa.

### 2.2.3- Coetzee's *Disgrace*

J.M. Coetzee is one of the first South African writers who highlighted theme of violence in his literary works as a way of fighting against the apartheid regime during and after the apartheid times due to his roots that related historically and socially to the apartheid era.

Coetzee's take on the circumstances in the former and present-day South Africa is politically charged and one needs to question whether being a writer in South Africa implies adopting a stance on racial and gender issues. (J.P. Vander Motten, 2004).

Coetzee's *Disgrace*, winner of the 1999 Booker Prize, is the foremost work in Coetzee's novels. The story is about *David Laurie*, a teacher in *Cape Technical University* who is twice divorced and still trying to satisfy his sexual needs by making several affairs, firstly with black prostitute *Soraya* and then with his student in the university *Melanie*. His relationship with *Melanie* obliged him to appear before a tribunal at the University what urge him to leave

Cape Town because of disgrace and to return to his daughter's farm where he confronted with another scene of violence from several attempts to burn him to his daughter rape by three black men. Along the story he and his daughter *Lucy* argued the spread of violence around them. By the end of the story David decided to work at animals' clinic when he could get rid from his miseries in which he and his daughter were victims of violence in South Africa (ibid). this novel has written in the post apartheid era when Coetzee tackles the current issues that spread as well afflicted the post apartheid society such as: racial and gender issues, as what clarified in research study of Prof. dr. J.P. Vander Motten entitled; *J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace and Foe: an Analysis of Postmodern and Political Representation:*

Thematic analysis of *Disgrace* shows that this novel does display social and political thematics, such as racist, gender and sexual issues. On the other hand, non-political and private problems – such as David Lurie's personal quest for truth and confession – are apparent as well. (ibid, 2004)

Through this novel Coetzee argued that concept of “the new South Africa” is just dream needs a lot of efforts from both government and society to make it true due to racism, poverty, crime, and violence that are existed in high rates. He mainly focused on hostility and brutality toward other people; “Throughout his literary career,(...), Coetzee has laid open the poverty of spirit with -- what he has called a "failure of love."”.(shaun, p 01)

### 2.3- Mpe Phaswane

#### 2.3.1- Oral tradition in Phaswane's novels

Mpe Phaswane (1970–2004), one of the most successful writers in post apartheid South Africa. Grew in south Africa and graduated from Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, he was a scholar, novelist, poet, and cultural activist whose works were distinct with extraordinary themes and forms that honestly reflects the post apartheid issues and influences readers who seek to the reality of South African Society as well his style inspired many other writers. His literary style rely on the South African oral traditions which mirrors his own experience of urban life in Johannesburg, and based on using different oral idioms and phrases to attract readers inside and outside south Africa in addition to his artistic way in synthesizing new disparate elements from old circumstances (ghirmai negash).

The use of African language idiomatic expressions and proverbs that pervade *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* make reference, for example, to foreign African nationals as ‘stretching their legs and spreading like pumpkin plants’ (26) is sardonically derived from the Northern Sotho proverb monna ke thaka o a naba – meaning that a real African man should not have only one sex partner. (Lesibana Rafapa & Kgomotso Masemola, p84, 2014)

### 2.3.2- *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*

*Welcome To Our Hillbrow* (2001) is post apartheid novel discusses circumstances that existed in the new South Africa. In this novel Mpe Phaswane which tackled the difficulties that face youths at this particular era of transition from isolation during the apartheid to cultural liberation after the apartheid considering the issue of immigration and its negative effects on the South African people as the main concern of this novel (Ghirmai Negash, 2001). Through the story, Referentse the main character with his girl friend Refilwe and their friends leave their homes to go to Johannesburg mainly to Hillbrow for education and searching for better life, but instead of that they were confronted with a lot of crimes and violent events. (Tarka Fai.G, 2014).

Mpe expected a frightening future to South Africa resulting in the current circumstances of the post apartheid era, through his characters thoughts and acts along the story where they were youth, ambitious, and hopeful by future with no poverty nor discrimination but unexpectedly their dreams are cut away by the competition of the foreigners which resulted in hostility and hatred towards foreigners “Xenophobia becomes “apartheid” revisited in another form” (Gilbert Tarka Fai, p158, 2014). What led to violence in different forms; betrayal, rape, insanity, and suicide that all represented in the novel;

The lives of Mpe’s characters intersect, cross over, meet and come to a dead end. By the narrative’s end, he continues, each of the principal characters and even those more peripheral have either lost their sanity or died a violent death. They are either grappling with HIV/AIDS or have committed suicide. (Gilbert Tarka Fai, P158, 2014)

As post apartheid novel, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* comes to highlight some of the effects of the apartheid such gender and xenophobic issues in very successful narrative style that distinguishes Mpe Phaswane from other writers;

*Welcome to Our Hillbrow* provides its readers with substantial criticism and social commentary regarding the lingering and evolving problems of a new South Africa. It focuses on themes that Mpe often referred to as “taboos” or “sensitive issues.” (Ghirmai Negash, 2001)

### **3- Violence as a major theme in the South African literature**

Comparing the works of Andre Brink, JM Coetzee, Mpe Phaswane that set in the post apartheid era, one can notice that all of them tackle the same themes of violence, crimes, and brutality in South Africa; mainly those themes (issues) that resulted from the apartheid regime. Since all of them grew up side by side with those socio-historical realities, and have experienced firsthand the negative effects of apartheid on the social and historical life in

South Africa. Thus, portraying history was their main interest and calling the world attention to what is happening in South Africa after the apartheid times was apparent in their literary works. But their literary styles were different due to the self-consciousness of those circumstances around them, what led to richness in the South African literature. As what Johan Geertsema had explained: “Literature does provide a space for self-aware engagement with current issues and thus forms an important cultural substratum for intellectual responses to such issues.” (Johan Geertsema, p7)

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter we had shed light on the post apartheid literature and its main themes as well the different styles of writing used by authors like; Andre Brink and his imaginative style as one of the magic realists and how he tackled violence in his novels taking *Imagining of Sand* as example, J. M. Coetzee and his successful works mainly his novel *Disgrace*, and Mpe Phaswane and his foremost novel *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. After that, we tried to highlight themes of violence and human brutality in their literary works as a consequence to the apartheid era, and the extent to which they wrote in very different styles.

# Chapter Three

Post-Apartheid violence in *The House*

*Gun*

### Introduction

In this part we will analyze and discuss aspects of the novel and focus on the direct and indirect aspects of violence that represent the post apartheid society. The most important aspects of violence in this chapter are the direct aspects such as, street violence and crime instruments like the gun house which Gordimer's argued that it was the first reason behind the spread of violence in South Africa. In addition, we will discuss types of violence in families such as violence against children and women that were the famous common themes in South African writings. Nadine Gordimer highlighted the fact that the weak criminal justice in SA led the white South African and the outsiders to hide behind the security tools and measures. Violence has had different types: hijacking, kidnapping, beating and murder repeated each time because the criminals are released. As well as Nadine Gordimer focused on these aspects that the most common and obvious facts of the South African society but also she demonstrated that the apartheid system resulted in that what the country faced since its abolition.

In the second part of the chapter, we focused on the indirect aspects that led in a way or other to result violence. That was also an inherent consequence of the apartheid system. We include the issues that led to violence such as suicide in the South African society that was spread and Nadine Gordimer mentioned two examples that also affected the major character's personality. Then, we highlighted racism which was one of her famous themes and the major theme in SA literature and the reason behind all problems that happened in this society. Besides, how family affection would build the personality of the generations in a society that was ruined by the segregated system that also destroyed the political system and led the SA to live in instability. The novel was a white young from a liberal family committed the murder where also his childhood and his environment constructed his personality and behavior. The violence was an inherent consequence of the segregation system of the colonial. All kinds of violence, murder, hijacking, beating, kidnapping and even burning, all kinds of human suffered from it, women, children and mostly the black. People from both races suffered from types of violence, which became a normal aspect of life. Black were still looked at as inferior and poor however white live in urban and better condition even if they had the same diploma with the black. This analysis informs us about the aspects that led to violence in South Africa in post apartheid era through the study of the first part of Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*.

### 1- Direct aspects of violence

#### 1.1- Violence as a Common phenomenon

##### 1.1.1- Street violence

Nadine Gordimer in *The House Gun* well represented violence as a daily life aspect in South Africa. In many passages in the novel the random violence of night streets in the townhouse in Johannesburg they had expected to read in the stranger's face of the messenger. Martin & Antoinette in their review about *Crime Trends in South Africa 1985-1998* especially in townhouses articulated that: violence increased between 1985 to 1998 due to many reason one of it was Violence Street such as mugging, robbery, and car hijacking. (Schönteich. M & Louw. A, 1999) the parents are used to hear about night streets' crimes in their daily life.

The next example the white couple Claudia and Harold were in shock expecting the messenger, Duncan's friend, who tell them about their son's crime to tell them about some accident or facts of random violence in street as they used to hear about, that is what they translated from his face. However, he said that Duncan is arrested for committing a murder. She says: "*The random violence of night streets they had expected to read in the stranger's face of the messenger.*"<sup>P11</sup> The author was mentioning the types of violence that the white couples see every day in the complex city from the street violence to the newspapers headlines. The fact of violence in South Africa was high in the post apartheid era due to many complex issues concerning politics, economy and properties. The country had weak political system and the police were in conflict with the natives because of the apartheid system the police were under the NP control. As well as the example of the violence street as car crash ,mugging and the house break-in were facts of violence as: "*A car crash; street mugging in violent break-in...*"<sup>p5</sup> .Claudia and Harold used to see in newspapers or outside what led them to expect from Julian ,the messenger that Duncan sent, to tell them about his arrest .

In post apartheid, era black people were stealing, mugging and break-in houses of the white in the different neighborhoods rich or middle class. The segregative system then was abusive where the natives lost their lands and jobs for the whites, they suffered from hunger, and unemployment what led most of them to steals only to live.

It was observed that Nadine Gordimer expressed the most common phenomena that this white couple used to see in this complex city "violent city". Also, in the example below she explained the same situation with Claudia in the clinic portraying the life in the violent city



she said:” *in this violent city she has watched those nuggets delved .....,there is no element in the human body that can withstand ,even a dent, a bullet.*”<sup>P13</sup> This can be taken to mean that she chose Claudia the character that shows us the real victims of the segregation system of the post apartheid era. It was observed that Nadine Gordimer’s views through Claudia’s eyes in this example was very sad and angry about the country’s state of violence that she saw that every organ in human body shot by a bullet. Bullets everywhere and any one came to clinic, most of them were victims of different kinds of weapons especially guns. People of South Africa in each house they had a gun for protection and even in street, thieves steal with guns, in shops, and even in schools.

### **1.1.2- The Crime tool**

#### **1.1.2.1- The house gun**

David Medalie in his review ‘The Context of the Awful Event’: Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun* said that from the title of the novel we can understand that violence remains insidiously habitual in South Africa and that the gun was available in the house of the friends where the crime took a place. Besides that, the gun was a domestic item since it was needed in any house (Medalie.D .p, 638.1999).

Nadine Gordimer’s writings were about violence crime and the consequences of the apartheid system. The crime in her novel *The House Gun* was one aspect of a random aspects of violence .Also a part of the South African life context ,her job was portraying that society and what led to violence as in this example about the gun of the house”...*the gun kept in the house as mutual protection against burglars*”<sup>p16</sup> The police during the investigation of Duncan’s crime they found a gun in the garden of the house where crime committed, one of his friend recognized that it was the gun of the house that they keep it as a protection tool from any break-in. Now Gordimer’s want to show the fact that keeping a gun in houses is something random because of the possible burglars who might come at any moment in this violent city and because of the state of insecurity in the community. However this security tool killed a human that suppose to secure him from being killed. That an orthodox in life context, that is what Nadine Gordimer’s said “*danger do not come from outside but it is even in walls, in your bedroom, especially with a gun in the house*”.

### 1.1.3 Crime scene

Violence has been and is still a major theme in South African literature. While it is increasing everywhere, the same is in literature. Writers and authors were discussing the theme of violence in better way that could nearly describe the victim's psychological and physical state. Moving from the apartheid era to the democratic period was a big jump to the South Africans whom were under the violent system. However, the country in the post apartheid era was in state of insecurity, the government was trying to control the crime in the country because of the different means of selling firearms and weapons between people in legal, and illegal way was the principle cause behind the crime and violence increase.

Gordimer tackled violence in the everyday. Also Singh in her book about *Policing and Crime Control in Post-Apartheid South Africa* claimed that Crime was not, and still is not, merely a background feature of daily existence in post-apartheid South Africa, but It became—and it remains – a central object, it was clear that she focused on the crime as the major event in the novel such as :

He had a bullet wound in the head .He was lying half-on, half-off the sofa ,as if (interpretation) he had been taken by surprise when shot and had tried to rise. p15

Duncan killed his friend Carl Jespersen and the police was making a investigation about the crime, that was with a gun. The South African society and the American also are famous for the house gun. Because of the thieves but it is also a reason for the high rates of crime what led Gordimer to shed light on that phenomena that violence in not from the other as the white called the black but it is with a gun in the house. This can be interpreted as meaning that she was proclaiming the danger of the gun in the house that even a child can get it, no matter was the reason the gun means danger.

### 1.2- Insecurity

There is one explanation, which is the increase of robberies and car hijackings after 1994; common robbery such as mugging and bag-snatchings affected a large number of people every year in South Africa. In the occasional paper of *Crime in South Africa: A country and cities profile* it was argued that the crime rates was higher in cities then in small town , due to many factors such as unemployment and overcrowding. What led the South African and especially the white to feel insecure? ( Schönteich .M & Louw.A.2001) From the sources about South Africa and the analysis, those aspects of violence were a result of the

unemployment, hunger and poor of the victims of the apartheid system in post-apartheid era. Consequently, it was observed that what the apartheid system left was the feel of insecurity. The South African ,native, were victims of the state security forces while the black to make strikes to have their rights which was the state security forces aim to commit crime and kill them as an excuse. From the analysis of the novel, it is suggested that Nadine Gordimer focused on the increase of these violent crimes when Harold said:

The court sat ;read every day of the robberies ,rapes ,hijacks— murders—that would bring more and more names to such petitions—imprisonment doesn't deter, life sentences are always commuted ;'good behaviour' in prison releases criminals to kill again :only a life for life is protection ,is justice . page 141

It was interpreted that Harold claimed that the criminal system was weak because the aspects of violence were in every day such robberies ,rape ,hijacks ,murders increasing every day since the prison release them when they behave good as a result they kill again. He said that they should make death penalty to decrease committed crimes and violence in South Africa.

Also the couple recognize the situation that they are now from the society of the inferior class. The class of violence and complexity, which they were hiding from since years. Tereza in her papers about *Journey Towards otherness. Nadine Gordimer's The Pickup* wrote that:

Most often demonstrated via Gordimer's representation of white consciousness, the whites in her novels are often conscious liberals who feel responsible for the ones oppressed, eager to do good as a form of recompense. At the same time, they are conscious of their situation as privileged minority, living outside the sufferings of black majority. They experience a kind of fortress mentality, being imprisoned in their own world. (Stejskalovci .T .2008.P6)

Claudia said that: "*Other people! Other people! These awful things happen to other people.*" She was in moment of recognition, a moment of shock, she realised that the things she was afraid from happened, and her son's crime was one of it. The white couple were living in a house full of security tool, afraid from the other and trying not to be part of the violent society with helping the poor and the victims of the violence in this town. Claudia the one whom was angry and annoyed from the people that their victims came to her in the clinic and lost their body organ for their actions. For a moment, she had a flashback about the victims then suddenly see that her son was a criminal and for any mother she was in shock.

From the study of Nadine Gordimer's themes, the "Other" were her major concern because she was focusing of the black people as victims of the segregate system besides the racist mentality after the end of the system's laws.

### 1.2.1- Security tools

It was articulated in the review about *A synopsis of urban violence in South Africa* that with the black control that period witnessed state of insecurity and the government secured the white minority besides Many areas in South Africa became ungovernable, owing to lack of effort by the police. It can be argued that the police were not effective enough to combat gangsters and prevent crime because they were more reactive than proactive (Abrahams.D.2010.p11). In other hand, as a result the signs of security used to express

people 's feeling of insecurity in the South African society and especially in the big cities and townhouses such as "*Intercom buzzer*" p3 that was a security tool ,Harold and Claudia put in their front door when any want came he/she pushes the button of it. In the novel when heard the intercom buzzer each them stand hearing it again they were afraid of comer, the fact of living in townhouse was scaring them because the townhouses witnessed high rates of crime, violence, kidnapping and thieves. Moreover, that was the first reason of having that security tool, the fear of the outside. That device has a screen to see the comer's face called: "*Security monitored*" p3 Since the country was in problems race and state of insecurity ,Harold and Claudia were hiding in their house and they had security tools that keep them safe from the other or what Nadine Gordimer's calls: the strangers . They had an intercom buzzer with a monitor to see the visitor's face if he/she were thieve, criminal or anyone who is unknown they will translate his face through that screen. When Julian the messenger, Duncan's friend ,came they saw him in the screen. They kept him in the front door trying to translate his face because they were afraid from the bad news he will inform. The voltage of alarm: "*Both at the same instant were touched by a live voltage of alarm.*" p4 when Claudia and Harold saw the stranger's they unconsciously touch the alarm voltage because they were always ready to turn it on in danger. It was observed that Gordimer was showing the state of the South African in this period of insecurity. Where in any moment they were ready and have all kinds of protection , if the town were safe the white couple would not use the monitor or the voltage alarm ,this is how South African live in post apartheid era .Besides that there is an electronic gadget:"*He presses the electronic gadget .*"P35 Electronic tools used in their gate to help them to open or close it without coming closer in case the street was not safe. Harold in the novel in this example when he realised that something wrong happened to his own son he opened the gate for Duncan's friend to tell them what's wrong because they saw his face in the screen and he was worried and in shock.

The Institute for security studies ISS articulated that from 1994 to 1999 about 20% car hijacking was increased what led Harold to have locking device against thieves.

In townhouse and during the apartheid era people were in strikes and manifestations and streets were in mess. It was studied that what led the white and the foreigners to make their houses as secure as possible in case the black were striking in streets. They knew that that system was abusive for the native and they will move against it and they will kill the responsible for that including the ones whom took their lands and jobs. From that, people secured everything even their car because there was car hijacking all the time, as a result Harold had a locking device that he always use it for thieves: *“In the car he released the locking device which secured it against thieves”*. p118 When Harold was going to the court with Claudia he released the locking device in car to get in. He could not let the car without security due to the fact of car hijacking in townhouses was in high rates, because of the unemployment poor were stealing cars and shops from the rich neighbourhoods to live. It was something daily to hear that someone’s car was stolen that is why he could not let his car without security.

### **1.2.2- Violence against women**

Women were the most affected sex in violent crimes in South Africa. According to the institute for security studies domestic violence including violence against women recorded high rates about 10% women experienced intimate partner assault about 1996 to 1999 which Nadine Gordimer demonstrated the victims as a daily image of violence. When she wrote:

To assume the body would represent a woman, the most common form of the act, crime passion from the sensational pages of the Sunday papers, was to accept the possibility that it was committed, entered at all into a life’s context. p10;11

Harold and Claudia went out the court talking about the random violence in public place. Harold wondered why the victim was a man because it is usually woman, because woman are weaker than man and man most of the time who commit crimes out of jealousy or betrayal. In the Sunday newspapers the vent of a died as common fact and news also as part of life context people see it in every sensational papers a woman get killed because of jealousy , her partner has a mental illness or love of possession. Nadine show to her audience that not the crime passion was imaginary fictional works from her but common issues that is truly clear in Sunday papers.

### 1.2.3- Violence against children

The way the child grow raise him/her with negative personality and abnormal attitudes. Beating , assaulting ,and not listening to children more than learning them positive thinking and love builds fear and lie .Besides living away from family, makes the child feel alienated and engage in self-destructive behaviours. (Halimi.p, 24.2013)As the examples of treating children in the novel: “*A child is burned by an overturned pot of boiling water, or a knife is thrust.*” p13 Claudia in the clinic express the violent in the city by these facts of a burned child of boiling water or thrust knife. Since the society was suffering and in state of mess, people were struggling, families’ separates, and all kinds of problems: poor and hunger. Parents were fighting in front of their children and the children were the victims of the parent’s anger, children were living in shelters and parents are drunk, the state of instability in families makes the child the only victim. Since they were born in these circumstances, as a result we see that Claudia found a bullet or knife in child and that is what Nadine Gordimer was saying about the inherent consequence of the apartheid system in South Africa. The child sees his mother dead: “*They passed pages of the newspaper...For him, the photograph of a child clinging to the body of its dead mother*” p 28 Daily events of violence in newspaper a photo of child sees his mother dies in front of him, how could this painful fact build a good generation. Harold and Claudia get up early and read the newspaper as usual reading the violence aspects of the town but nothing was compared with their son’s crime for them his crime was a “private disaster” a turning point in their peaceful life.

The children who born in separated families have a bad attitude and raise their children in the future in the same way .Also they grow with rude and mad attitude that may lead to criminal minds that’s all because of the childhood affect as an example mother killed her children:

Now—here was that woman who strapped her two small children into their safety seats in her car and got out and let it run off a wharf into the water, drowning them. p78

Also in newspapers Claudia and Harold were reading the headlines of common issues of South Africa when Claudia sees a mother kills her children by drowning them in water as if they were a trash bags. Suddenly she remembered their state and said that things happens to the other but why us, she was so sad that these awful things happen to them. The author here from this example was trying to show the mentality of people ,illness , pressure that led this people to do so or because of poor and hunger .It was observed that he black were living in

poor neighbourhoods ,suffering from hunger violence and crime. Because of the apartheid laws the black was poor and lived in this areas no one of them had the right to choose , this state may lead people to kill each other for food and act violently as a result child's treatment could lead to be a violent or a criminal person.

### 1.3- Criminal justice

In post apartheid the Truth and reconciliation commission TRC tried to give amnesty for the guilty people of the apartheid systems and apologize for the victims.(Domingo.2004) .The Centre for the study of violence and Reconciliation Regan CSVR argued that, the chairperson of the Johannesburg chapter of the Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty in South Africa, pointed out that public support for the abolition of capital punishment is still limited in South Africa people seem to think that there are only two alternatives-capital punishment or the release back into society of 'dangerous killers'". (Simpson .G & Vogelmann .L ) . Which means that some of the criminals do not be punished for their crimes, as result Nadine opened her door for the apartheid system victims and testified in the Pretoria Supreme Court in 1988 .(Wastberg.2001)

However, Harold was claiming that the criminal justice at that time was weak because they are making the same thing and spreading violence by releasing the criminals: "*'good behaviour' in prison releases criminals to kill again: only a life for life is protection, is justice.*"P 141 it was clear that Harold was against releasing of the criminals from the prison for just being obedient for a while for him was not enough to be a punishment; he was claiming that any criminal who killed someone should be killed instead. And that's for him was the only way to end South Africa from high rates of crime and violence .Because the apartheid laws left the community in state of mess . The national party made a system of punishment for the criminal that was developed after the TRC efforts to be less affective in way that few had the amnesty from abolition. As a result, some of the criminal whom the government gave freedom to them were repeating crimes and the society had crime that is more violent and abuse then before what had a strong reaction from the voice of the public.

From this Nadine Gordimer was focusing more than direct aspect of violence ,she put an eye on the factors that lead to violence in indirect way that may people do not know about its result and the government will not find solution since it is not obvious or clear.

### 2- Indirect aspects of violence

#### 2.1- Racism

For Owen in his book about *Race, Class and the Changing Division of Labour under Apartheid* articulated that: Africans are moving into traditionally white jobs at the bottom of the skill and income hierarchy, for example the concentration of employment in school teaching and nursing is not unique to Africans as a result the black African had less payment unlike the white according to their educational level. (Crankshaw.O.1997) Motsamai was a black educated person and a successful lawyer who win the attention of a white family that were suspecting his competence of gaining their son's case .Even with the post apartheid era and the end of the colonial years people of both races still hang on the traditional thinking about the classes. the blacks ability because it is rarely to find a well educated black due to the fact that they did not attend good school. In addition, could not pay for good school because of the country's state of poor.

It was observed that Nadine Gordimer chooses Claudia and Harold to represent the educated and middle class white couple with the racist background against the black. To demonstrate the reality, their views and doubts about the black's competence in both work and life. It was like a shock to ask help from a black people and hearing the name of black and touching their skin was on the list of their racial prejudice as in: "*His father took courage :Is he really a competent lawyer?*"p 9 Duncan took a black lawyer because he knew her ability and competence and he was not racist but Harold his father was suspecting in Hamilton's competence because he is black. They used to see them as the last class in the society with the lowest educational level, and all what he was sure about it was that black people were violent and poor.

From this it means that the historical background was still maintaining in post apartheid era were the black people do not see or meet the white in any place, not in facilities, not in institutions ,not in streets. In the apartheid system, the black was not allowed to mix or to be in the same place with the white .Because they see them as slaves and not even a human being. Even with the coming of the new generations, South Africa still suffer from the past of the apartheid system that brought hatred generation from parents were victims of this system from the both races. From this it is resulted that these were a direct aspects of violence in South Africa in post apartheid period and were something common when the Lindgard said "*What is there to fear*"p4. A tone of fear, a thing they saw before and they know it may



happen. “Both stood at the door, confronting these, confronting the footsteps they heard “p4. Some studies defined” the Fear of crime relative to fear elicited by events that have a potential of physical harm but that are not generally perceived as crimes (e.g., automobile accidents, pollution of the environment, inadequate testing of new drugs).(Garofalo.J.1981.p,841)

### 2.1.1- Racial prejudice

In *The House Gun* Gordimer had mentioned some aspects that are indirectly lead to violence. Diala .I in her review of *Nadine Gordimer, J.M .Coetzee, and Andre Brink: Guilt, Expiation, and the Reconciliation Process in Post- Apartheid South Africa* said:”Present violence as an ancient, transcultural and even rather mysterious human experience. Thus, the background, upbringing, and circumstances of the protagonist, Duncan, are set in relief as a contrast to the conceivable profile of a probable murderer.”(Diala.2001-2002.p, 53)

As in the example below, the writer explained the issues that led to violence through the phenomena referred to the remaining thoughts of racism and segregation existed during the apartheid era. Significantly links his racial and financial privileges in post-apartheid South Africa to apartheid-era segregation. The state of asking for help from a black person and that situation of hopelessness draws attention to the ways in which white South Africans, even those who considered themselves liberal benefitted from the apartheid system and allowed for a spatial separation between the white suburbs: “*its beatings and interrogations, maimings and assassinations*” (p142), of which the Lindgards claim, none of it had anything to do with them in:

They had heard it at once, in the chock of the name; the choice of a black man .she’s not one of those doctors who touch black skin indiscriminately along with white, in their work , but retain liberal prejudices against the intellectual capacities of blacks. p33

It was studied that Claudia has a liberal thinking ,from the expression used “black” and “not touch black skin” in her clinic she could not touch the black skin and the name Hamilton Motsamai ,the competent black lawyer that their son choose, made the white liberal couple in shock. They had racial prejudice about the black, and they think that they are better than them.

### 2.2- Suicide

Duncan sent a letter to his friend describing his first shock when he was child.”**A terrible thing happens**”. Diala in her reviews about *The House Gun* argued that the enigmatic nature of murder (drawn attention to also in the inexplicable suicide of Duncan's school

mate). Which makes it a timeless human mystery, accounts partly for the mode of Gordimer's treatment of Duncan. (Diala .J. 2001-2002.p53) The story begins with the expression of Duncan when for the first time in his life sees someone hanged: “**A terrible thing happened**”: “*He saw someone hanging from the beam where the punch bag is ...He was hanging by the neck.*” P68 Duncan's lawyer asked the Lindgard to search in Duncan's past for any evidence that may help him in Duncan's case. His father was curious for the first time to search in his son's private things ,when he suddenly found a letter from his son's adolescence talking about a suicide of his mate but the second page was lost ,Duncan was a kid in junior school playing football when one of his school mate hanged himself in the punch bag.

Duncan's letter suppose to sent to his parents but they did not receive it because they were giving him a freedom to live his life alone far from him and that is may be the reason he didn't sent it. The lawyer was suspecting this event in Duncan's childhood what made a kind of shock and he did not talk about it again. Also had no one to correct his ideas or to guide him since he was far from his parents he builds a wrong base that may led to murderer's personality.

### 2.3- Parents

In the novel Duncan, the major character of the story and the only son of the Lindgards, lives alone far from his parents, liberal parents gave their own son his freedom to how he wants. He lives in a cottage with his friends and his girlfriend but all his life was guided and raise only in schools or with friends what was a kind a struggle in personality and what the offender was that he want his girlfriend but his friend took her from him what Duncan could not live with that and killed him. The institution for security studies gave some explanations for the high rate of violent crime refer to South Africa's political history ,suggesting that families suffered from 'institutional violence' for decades through the disruption of their lives by mass removals and migrant labour policies of apartheid. Political violence compounded this disruption of family life. The resultant weakening of the family unit and thus parental control over children may prompt criminal behaviour among the youth.

It was observed that through analysing and the article of *Crime in South Africa: A country and cities*, the way children grow up, builds their personality. It is not about security but it is about parents love and affection .they were the first cause why their own child committed this crime. (Schönteich .M & Louw. A. 2001) it is about them:

Revulsion was their crime, committed against their own child and they were in it together. The seals of silence had been between them were broken; they shut themselves up in the townhouse. p120

Nadine in this example that the white couple should be blamed for the crime also not only Duncan because were far from their own child in the townhouse afraid from the outside world, with no connection, living in silent with a liberal thinking behind many security tools.

Thinking that the black were violent but their own child shows them the opposite. He attributed in spreading violence in the city that they think it was from the other only, Nadine Gordimer's view was that violence is not from the outside but it is in our houses since there is a house gun, dangerous tools, violence will not end. As well as ,Duncan needed his parents to guide and to show him the right from the wrong ;he need them to listen to him but they were afraid and worried all the time and busy in their jobs trying to fix the society state while their child mature to became a criminal.

### 2.4- Childhood

Gordimer proclaimed the fact that children are the base of the community if they grownup in a good ,peaceful environment the society will develop but if the generation face the worst years of the colonial's abusive laws they will grow criminal and violent youth .Young children develop their thinking abilities by interacting with other children, adults and the physical world. From the social constructivist viewpoint, it is thus important to take into account the background and culture of the learner throughout the learning process, as this background also helps to shape the knowledge and truth that the learner creates, discovers and attains in the learning process (Wertsch .1997).

It was studied in the occasional paper of *Crime in South Africa: A country and cities* that the apartheid system resulted weakening of the family unit and thus parental control over children may prompt criminal behaviour among the youth. The way children grow up, builds their personality. It is not about security but it is about parents love and affection .they were the first cause why their own child became an offender. (Schönteich . M & Louw.A. 2001) .

According to Nadine Gordimer violence was something with different dimensions, people can find it in any image anything could led to violence explaining that in the way Duncan the only child for the Lindgard family was raised, Harold said: " My wife and i, parents and son ,as three independent adults, we're close but we don't expect to be privy to everything in his life". P21

Claudia and Harold invited Julian Verster, Duncan's friend who was the messenger, to ask him about Duncan's attitude, personality, attitudes, friends, and his relationship with his girlfriend. They decided to let their son to live alone to do what he want that's why they asked his friend from it is obvious that this parents were so far from their own child . However, this way of living affected his personality in negative way to be an offender and this was the result of living under the apartheid system that his negative aspects still affect people of South Africa even after its collapse.

### 2.5- Personality

Complexity of life in the post apartheid South African society is one of the vestiges of the apartheid era. What needs to know any community you must recognize people's mentality and way of living, which is the same case with Nadine Gordimer proclaimed the fact of violence in South Africa through a crimes as a subtitle of violence .Through her main characters we can see the community and people's mentality during the post apartheid period.

As an example the main character Duncan he was a child, he did not talk to his parents in all his 27years but rarely: "*Not spoken of at the time, in the child, the adolescent ,the adult man.*" p121 Gordimer said that Duncan was in some stages of his life in need of his family close to him .While his parents were far ,busy and hiding behind a security gate .She was blaming the parents that they were the first reason of constructing this criminal personality because he was raised between his friends, grownup without parent's control and advice, they didn't share his dreams with him or knew what he want to be.

Due to the fact that South Africa was living state of insecurity and racism issues The Lindgards was securing their house with alarm and cameras and sent their own child in liberal school so he do not mix with the other race as a result he committed a crime because of their liberal thing. The way they raise him had a bad influence on his personality .He had everything but their affection, and love .she wrote: "The charm the small boy had used to dominate his friends—all the games had to be his games, chosen and imposed by him." p121 Duncan used to have anything he wanted, good education, freedom, job, and friends. Anything he ask he get, his parents were liberal want him to stay away from violent people far from the black. However they never asked him what he want to be, they just give him money with no listen to his dreams or even know how his mentality is. That is why they called his friend to ask him. As a result, he did what is unexpected, he is charged with a murder, he became a criminal. What Gordimer trying to show is that even if children had everything

,they need parents' control to show them the right way unlike Duncan who used to have everything which led him to kill his friend because he think that he took his girlfriend from what he used to have his own games no one can take his own games. "*Duncan takes on other people. Forces Can't leave them alone. the more he fails, the worse he gets*".p58 It was seen that Natalie ,Duncan's girlfriend, were talking to Motsamai about Duncan's personality in his office, in front of his parent's that Duncan has a bad attitude, that he like to have his own stuff no matter what happen ,he owned her the moment he rescued her from the beach. He used to have her like an object and when she resist he treats her badly.

The reason was that Duncan was raised in society of violence and segregation away from his parents his personality constructed. Children that grown up in during the apartheid control were offenders and violent people and because of families, they had weak personality and mental illness. The youth were affected badly from the apartheid system what will continue the increase of the high rates on violence in South Africa.

### **2.6- Weak political system**

A.M Singh in her book of *Policing and Crime Control in Post-Apartheid South Africa* articulated that: South Africa's transition from apartheid rule to liberal democracy has been marked by a type of (not unreasonable) national anxiety about violence. (Singh.2008.p1)

In the last chapters of the first part, Nadine focused of the issues of the political transition, in:

The application has been made jointly by lawyers representing them ,and associations called Lawyers for Human Rights ,the Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty ,and even the Government itself; a government challenging the laws of the country—a paradox arising out of the hangover of statutes from the old regime.p136

There were two black men killed four people, whom they are going to represent to the court by lawyers from the human rights to give amnesty for them. Harold was attending their trial and he was judging the weak political system of the country that realise in each time new criminals after giving them amnesty ,and he goes with the idea that criminal should be killed .

The old regime , the political system was that of the apartheid era each criminal should be dies by shoot ,poison or hanged but the TRC the government live in a paradox ,the laws says thing the public refuse . People were in conflict with the government and the criminals were living free and killing again. For the study of the criminal justice in the occasional, paper *Crime in South Africa: A country and cities profile articulated that* The South African transition brought about a restructuring of the criminal justice system, the abolition of a

number of laws and the promulgation of new ones. As a result, many criminal justice functions have been operationally weakened. Moreover, the experienced personnel working in the system, who were trained in the policing methods of the old authoritarian order, are now unsure how to function effectively within a new legal framework based on the rule of law and a constitutionally entrenched bill of rights. (Schönsteich . M & Louw.A. 2001) .

Which Gordimer see it also as a paradox and she explained that by words in: “*The abolitionists abhor the right to repeat the crime by killing the killer; neither conceives they themselves could commit murder.*”<sup>P138</sup> The responsible for the death penalty Nadine see them killers because they kill others with the system .The South Africa was in paradox of following the old regime to kill the killers, which were a crime itself. Harold here said that killing the killers was a crime because he knew that his son would also be killed if he did not have amnesty from the law.

### **III Conclusion**

In this chapter we have mentioned the different manifestations of violence in South Africa in post apartheid era through the analysis of Nadine Gordimer’s novel *The House Gun*. By describing the direct aspects of violence in the novel that were facts of daily life in South Africa .Moreover we have studied the indirect aspects of violence through also the different manifestations of it in the novel by showing the affect of the apartheid system on the society that Gordimer shed light on.

# Chapter

# Four

# VI- Violence as a challenge in face of reconciliation

## Introduction

In the post apartheid period South Africa faced many problems and burdens such as: racial history with long period of segregation and discrimination during the apartheid times, total chaos in the political and judicial system which still influenced by the old regime laws, and a lot of crimes and violent acts that shapes the everyday life in post apartheid society. Therefore, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to deal with these complicated issues and to propose appropriate solutions to realize equality and justice in the new South Africa.

In the last chapter we will argue Gordimer's representation of the post apartheid issues that faced the reconciliation efforts(TRC) that takes its way at the aftermath of inauguration of Nelson Mandela, and we will figure out aspects from the novel to clarify how violence, the availability of guns, and death penalty were discussed in *The House Gun*. As example of the political and judicial treatment of the death penalty and the extent to which violence is regarded as an obstacle in face of the establishment of the new South Africa.

### 1- The first step of reconciliation in South Africa:

#### 1.1- The social change

##### 1.1.1- blacks and whites together

The first challenge that faced reconciliation in post apartheid society is to realize social equality, and to abolish racial discrimination, which is why reconciliation depends more on individuals rather than on government.

In review about *The House Gun* by Lois Brown: “the relationship between black South Africans and the Lindgards suggest that Gordimer sees the salvation of the country depending on what they can reconcile to.” (Lois Brown, 1998). *The House Gun* story discusses the social change in South Africa that appeared primarily in the relationship between blacks and whites which becomes more flexible than it was during the apartheid era, represented in the relationship between the white couple Lindgards a liberal white family and the black lawyer Motsamai (Catalin TECULIANU, 2014). The Lindgards have no previous racist tendencies, but they acted passively toward the apartheid rules and did not reveal their liberal thoughts, “If they themselves in the past had not had the courage to act against the daily horrors ...,



risking their professions and lives...” (Gordimer, p165). They did not recognize yet that the fact of widespread violence in this country is more threatening than dealing with blacks, until they experienced this fact themselves when their dear son committed a crime and only the skillful black lawyer “from the other side” who is able to rescue him in the court. “This white couple didn’t have the resilience that blacks have acquired in all their generation ... by the nature of their skins.” (Gordimer, p 163) the fact that their son is accused for crime and imprisoned in jail forced his parents Harald and Claudia to see things from different angle. Before the unfortunate event, they had no idea about the psychological and moral suffering from violence but only when they were touched by violence they realize that they should undergo their racial prejudice toward blacks and acknowledge the common humanity between the two races “them and the other side” (ibid, 2014). “ Harald and Claudia had never been to a black man’s home before...the black man asking, the white man accepting” (p165). The Lindgards presence in a black man’s home and being with his family when Harald shared a deep conversation about the past of ancestors and their suffering to construct an educated qualified black community, and when Claudia talked about Duncan and danced freely with man from the other side; these enjoyable moments with Motsamai’s family help them to recognize their son’s crime and give them hope for living in new society with no signs of violence disturb their lives again (ibid, 2014).

The main social change that happened after the apartheid is the contribution between blacks and whites to prevent violence together because it touches both of the communities and made both of them equal in front of suffering and pain. Gordimer highlighted this manifestation in *The House Gun* by describing in details the development of the relationship between the Lindgards couple and the black lawyer Motsamai.

### **1.1.2- The extreme violence in South Africa**

Another goal that needs to be achieved through the reconciliation commission is the prevention of violence which invaded the post apartheid society. But before that, awareness of violence causes and consequences must be recognized. That sense of awareness clarified by Gordimer herself:

In a letter to Kenzaburo Oe, the famous Japanese novelist (*Living in Hope and History*), Nadine Gordimer said that violence is in the air and that was what made the house gun available in the first place. It is a legacy of the apartheid regime. But more horrifying is the fact that there is the public, social banalization of violence. Such is the manner in which Gordimer reads the signs of the times.( Bertolt Brecht, p13)

In *The House Gun*, The Lindgards are typically represented the fact that South African people should exceed their personal problems and work together to prevent violence invasion in the country following the reconciliation path. Along the novel when they are searching for the truth of their son's crime they confronted with various manifestation of violence, in TV, newspapers, at the court, and even in their son's childhood. Actually, violence was there around them all the time, but they could not see it due to their unawareness of society problems till their personal experience with violence led them to awareness of violence danger.

*The House Gun* is regarded as truthful portrait of South Africa. Hence Gordimer tackled from the very beginning of the novel the issue of fear and awareness of violence that distinguishes daily life in South Africa "what is there to fear,...a car crash, a street mugging, a violent break in..." (Gordimer, p4) to the last pages of the novel "Violence is a repetition we don't seem able to break" (p294).

## 2- Challenges face the justice system

### 2.1 - The availability of guns

Once Jack Miles, A Mellon visiting Professor of Humanities at the California Institute of Technology, stated that:

A nascent gun control movement has been arguing that the more guns there are in private hands, the more dangerous South Africa will become, while the entrenched South African guns culture invokes the country's staggering murder rate to come to just the opposite conclusion: the more guns, the less crime; let there be no house without its house gun. (Miles, 1998)

Analyzing the story of *The House Gun*, particularly at the scene of the crime in which the gun happened to be lying on the table in front of Duncan, it is obvious that the existence of the gun there helps the development of the events and enhances the possibility of committing crime at that time and in such circumstances, in addition to the fact that Duncan spent the whole day in his cottage thinking about what happened the last night in great chock without intending to perpetrate a crime until when he went to the living room again;

there was no premeditation of vengeful bodily harm, this based on the absence of dissimulation in the accused's evidence and the fact that, firstly, it is accepted that he had no weapon of any kind with him when he left the cottage; secondly, although the house gun was not kept locked away in security, (Gordimer, p265)

Thus, the existence of the gun at that moment is naturally ended with crime; while if there is no gun in that living room, it is will be rather difficult to be crime there,

The climate of violence bears some serious responsibility for the act the accused committed , yes; because of this climate, the gun was there. The gun was lying around in the living-room , like a house cat...(Gordimer, p 271).

Also, along the novel keeping guns inside houses was justified by protection against any possible unexpected attack according to what was said about it in the court from every one's own view (Duncan, Natalie, khulu), and there were not any confusing reaction from the court's lawyer since this seems very natural behavior;"It was the gun kept in the house so that if someone was attacked, intruders broke in, whoever it was could defend himself." (p 218)

## **2.2- The Death Penalty**

### **2.2.1- popular attitudes**

"Thou shalt not kill". One of the most debatable issues that have been raised in the post apartheid society is the very issue of the death penalty (the death penalty was suspended in 1989 and abolished in 1996). It is discussed whether it is an effective punishment able to reduce the high rates of violent crimes and deter murderers from escaping justice, or if it is just a way to panish perpetrators of violence and criminals with another form of violence which opposes with the commission of truth and reconciliation (TRC) (Jack Miles, 1998).

Gordimer highlighted this issue in *The House Gun* and, portrayed the contradictory popular attitudes about it. That was shown through the presence of Harald in trail of two murderers who killed four human beings. When he was in the constitutional session he confronted with people who belong to the human rights organizations and others, who are involved politically to positions for or against the death penalty, some of them claims for retaining the legislation of death penalty again in order to stop violence in this country;

The retentionists' Counsel interprets the same section as the State's obligation to protect life by retaining the Death Penalty as the measure effective against violent crime that takes life . A letter

from a member of the public is emotionally quoted: 'the only way to cleanse our land is capital punishment. (Gordimer, p136)

And others are against the death penalty as some lawyers in the court;

The atmosphere is that of a lively debate, with the abolitionists' lawyers basing their contention on sections of the Constitution's Bill of Rights, which they quote (in the aura of lilies the young woman at his right scribbles down what he side-glances to read: Section 9 guarantees the right to life Section 10 protection of human dignity Section 11 outlaws cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment) (p136).

Harald knows as everyone else very well the fear behind this crowd to attend in the court and demand for retaining the death penalty; since they are afraid that human souls become invaluable and worthless due to the easy punishment of few years in jail and then the killer will kill again " 'good behavior' in prison releases criminals to kill again: only a life for a life is protection, is justice." (Gordimer, 141). But currently, he experiences the feeling of a murderer's father who thinks about death penalty as a punishment to his own son's murder and the extent to which he deserves to be hanged because of this unintentional crime. Fortunately the verdict of the court was in his son's favor because the perspective of death penalty is contradicts with the reconciliation views. "Constitutional Court already decided in favor of the abolition of the Death Penalty; the verdict was a foregone conclusion." (Gordimer, p141)

### **2.2.2- The criminal justice system in South Africa**

Discussing the reconciliation commission in post apartheid South Africa, it is very important to mention the criminal justice in South Africa and the radical change that it witnessed from the apartheid era to the post apartheid times. The criminal justice during the apartheid was not as trustworthy as it must be, and could not serve as safeguard against social injustice and racism. Therefore it regarded as an agent of violence in the country due to its unjust legislations and abusive verdicts of sending people to the death penalty. For example;

Amnesty International reports that in the year from June 1982 to June 1983, of the 81 blacks convicted of murdering whites, 38 were hanged. By comparison, of the 52 whites convicted of killing whites, only 1 was hanged and of the 21 whites convicted of murdering blacks, none hanged. (Graem Simpson & Lloyd Vogelmann, 2016)

After the apartheid era, criminal justice has been modified to best fit the new circumstances of the reconciliation era. Thus, current issues such as the death penalty have been opened to debate for those who are interested by human rights and even the constitutional associations of government. All of them are involved in the debate in order to come to an appropriate decision can be apply safely. Gordimer in her novel demonstrated the fact that the decision of

whether abolish the death penalty or not is decided by contribution of various hands; this is obvious in the court trial which Harald attended;

The application has been made jointly by lawyers representing them, and associations called Lawyers For Human Rights, the Society For The Abolition Of The Death Penalty, and even the Government itself; a government challenging the laws of the country a paradox arising out of the hangover of statutes from the old regime. (Gordimer, p136)

After a long period of conflict between those who are with abolition and the others who are against, it is decided to abolish the death penalty completely. What is interesting here is not the court's decision of abolition itself, but the perspective of applying consultation in the criminal justice system in order to give better solutions for the citizens' issues. It is represented in the novel through the details of discussion in the court trail;

The abolitionists' Counsel cuts through the discretionary clauses discourse and argues that even if there is a 'majoritarian' position in favour of retaining the Death Penalty this does not mean it necessarily is the right position: the Court is sharply reminded that the question faced by the Court is whether the Death Penalty is constitutional, not whether it is justified by popular demand. (Gordimer, p137)

Also, another sign of change that touches the new justice system is the multi-dimensional treatment of the crime. As what happened in case of Duncan's crime in which the lawyer requested for the psychiatrist's view, since he recognize that the crime have many different dimensions in which the psychological one is among them what justify the idea that the crime is unintentionally happened against the accused desire. Thus, a deep pathology to the crime resulted to a good verdict for Duncan's favor, "My concern is to demonstrate without any doubt that this young man was driven by circumstances to act totally against his own nature." (Gordimer, p 162). When the two psychiatrists met Duncan, they helped him to open his heart and admit his great shock and as well he could express his unconsciousness when he was committing the crime. Therefore, they could act for him in the court trail;

He is an individual in whom self-control has been strongly established since childhood . It is an axiom of his middle-class background. He is not led by emotion to act on impulse, he's deliberate in every course of action he takes, whatever that might turn out to be. (p 200)

Duncan himself was comfort to the psychiatrists' pathology and way of discovering his silent thoughts and ambiguous attitudes toward what had happened, this was revealed by his own words "It comes back to me through the hours with the two psychiatrists with their carefully arranged patient faces."

Gordimer portrayed every detail in Duncan's trial to clarify that the privileged trial that offered to Duncan in the court; "Duncan has been granted permission to work in the prison library as well as pursue his studies in his cell" (p292) is regarded as a hope that the

legal system in South Africa finally could give to everyone his right of legal trial regardless whether he is guilty or not to come to a fair verdict to each accused, and offered him the appropriate freedom, “such hands can't take up these frail objects, binding and paper, that could offer them the only freedom there is, behind these walls.” (p292)

### **Conclusion:**

In this chapter we have argued Gordimer's representation of the post apartheid problems and issues that faced the reconciliation (TRC) in South Africa, and we have figured out examples from the novel to clarify how themes such as; the widespread violence, the availability of guns, and death penalty were discussed in *The House Gun*. And we have discussed the extent to which violence is regarded as an obstacle in face of the establishment of the new South Africa. Also, we have shown how *The House Gun* is mirroring the transition from violence, crimes, racism, into hope for realizing the commission of truth and reconciliation.

# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

## General conclusion

In this dissertation we tackled theme of violence in post apartheid South Africa in Nadine Gordimer's novel *The House Gun*. In the first chapter we figured out the socio-historical background of South Africa during and after the apartheid and as well we demonstrated the personal background that affected the works of Gordimer and influenced her themes in the post apartheid era. Then, in the second chapter we gave an overview about themes and styles in the post apartheid literature, through the works of three famous writers; Andre Brink, J. M. Coetzee, and Mpe Phaswane. Discussing their styles of writing in the light of their background when all of them grew up in the same conditions of the apartheid era in terms of poverty, violence, and racial segregation but these conditions afflicted them in very different ways what is obvious in their literary works which are totally different. After that, we tried to analyze the novel according to main two perspectives; in the third chapter, we looked at the violence as inherent consequence of the apartheid era through the different manifestations of violence that occurs in *The House Gun*. Finally, in the last chapter we looked at the aspects that represent violence as an obstacle in face of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) from the novel.

In this paper, we aimed to investigate violence in post apartheid South Africa through descriptive analytical study of Nadine Gordimer's novel *The House Gun* to represent her success in portraying the fact of the widespread violence in South Africa after the apartheid era.



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