(RE) PURPOSING IDENTITY IN AFRICAN LITERATURES: A POST- COLONIAL ANALYSIS OF NADINE GORDIMER'S SELECTED NOVELS

By

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THESIS

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God the Father, Son, Holy Ghost, angels in Heaven, my mother Morongoa Catherina Montle and my late father Elicent Pheeha Montle.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis titled **(RE) PURPOSING IDENTITY IN AFRICAN LITERATURES: A POST-COLONIAL ANALYSIS OF NADINE GORDIMER'S SELECTED NOVELS** submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Studies has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work and all the sources that I have used have been acknowledged.

_____ _____

MONTLE M.E. DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- To God, the Lord of Glory and Jesus Christ the mighty rock, thank you for everything you have done for me. I would rather lose everything in my life but not your presence, Lord. Indeed! Jesus, you are the way, the life and the truth (John 14: 6). May your will be done!

- To my supervisor Prof MJ Mogoboya, I am grateful for your support, guidance and encouragement. You have supervised me from my Bachelor of Honours research report, my Master of Arts dissertation and now my Doctor of Philosophy thesis. Thanks very much for your efforts and may the good Lord who art in heaven bless you abundantly.

- To my family, thank you for your support and godly advice. Indeed, I can plant the seed, my supervisor and others can water it but it is only the Lord God Almighty who can make it grow (1 Corinthians 3: 6-7).

- To my colleague and friend Ms Moleke, thank you for your support and interest in my study. I appreciate your contribution.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to repurpose identity in African literatures with reference to Nadine Gordimer's novels. The selected novels of Gordimer focus on the post-colonial background of Africa. The advent of colonialists in Africa occasioned a major shift of identities in the continent. It is the contact between Africa and the West that engendered African identity-crisis. This qualitative study which has been predicated on post-colonial theory, Afrocentricity, and feminism aimed to crystalise the issues that come to grips with identity in the post-colonial African context.

Chapter one of the study has outlined the background and motivation, which among other things, probes into the issue of identity in Africa. The coloniser moulded African identities with Western influence. Hence the birth of Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African literatures. Moreover, chapter two has examined the shift of identity in Africa from the pre-colonial to the colonial and post-colonial backgrounds. This noted, African identity has undergone great transitions. The Western culture during the colonial and post-colonial African periods rose to predominance and appears to have a perennial influence on the future of Africa. Thus, the question of who an African is today has a complex answer. Many scholars have questioned the authenticity of defining African identity based on skin colour, language and birth.

Chapters three, four and five have examined the theme of identity in Gordimer's novels. Gordimer is one of the most established specialists of identity and her sampled novels for this study have reflected on Africa's search and acquisition of post-colonial identity. Furthermore, Chapter six concluded that Gordimer's novels have satisfactorily delineated the hurdles that menace Africa's acquisition of a democratic identity such as the remnants of colonialism, which necessitate a robust decolonisation process. The chapter has also recommended that measures such as the rainbow project in (South) Africa should be embraced to break racial boundaries that oppose Africa's acquisition of a democratic identity.

KEYWORDS: Afrocentricity, African Literature, Colonialism, Feminism, Identity, Post-colonialism.

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CHAPTER ONE

(BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The identity of a class or an individual hinges on a variety of factors such as time, place, birth, skin colour and subscription to meaning (Motlagh & Beyad, 2018). It informs inherent ideologies and hierarchies that uphold hegemony and recognition in a society. Thus, Waldt and Prinsloo (2019) opine that an identity that is inclusive of ethnic and cultural identities could be a well-grounded indicator of the position of polarisation in an environment. Equally important, African societies have undergone a momentous repositioning in terms of socio-political, cultural and economic identities from the pre-colonial age to the colonial and post-colonial periods. The colonial brigades invaded Africa between 1800 and 1900, and occasioned a shift of identities in the continent. Consequently, this moulded the autochthonous lineage and administration of the African continent. The white supremacists instigated a cultural upheaval that posed a menace to the aboriginal African identity and precipitated the enforcement of foreign cultural heritage upon African natives. This imperial hegemony engendered identity-crisis which still plagues Africa today (Afisi, 2008).

From the 1950s, most African societies began to subdue the colonial forces and reclaim their independence. Ghana was the first African state to attain independence in 1957 and subsequently, fourteen other African countries also acquired independence around the 1960s and by 1966, almost all African societies had recouped independence (Asante, 2018). This political emancipation galvanised the newly independent Africa to be inclined to rebuild her image, revive her lost identities due to colonial disruption and "define African humanism and to have Africans and people of other identities acknowledge its substantive existence as a distinctive identity" (Rafapa, 2005: 304). Moreover, Sheoran (2014) asserts that the colonial period has ended and is succeeded by the post-colonial era that features the exploration and re-assertion of identities. Therefore, Africans initiated a variety of manoeuvres such as re-essentialising African indigenous languages, heritage and *Ubuntu* to reconstruct their identities as they are now capable, authorised, and in power to steer Africa into a democratic direction. Therefore, the study gives special

attention to post-colonial African identities and their influence on the continent today. For instance, African literatures appear to have assumed a new identity in the post-colonial context. Several scholars in the literature (see Adams & Van de vijiver, 2015; Marovah, 2015; Afisi, 2008; Boehmer, 2005; Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1952) have actively engaged on the shift of identity in African literatures, from oral traditional literatures to modern Francophone, Lusophone and Anglophone African literatures which reflect on African issues of identity. However, inadequate scholarship has been conducted to examine how this shift of identity has moulded African literature and issues in the present-day, and its impact on the future of the continent. The assertion above prompts the study to find the missing nexus, which is how the repositioning of identity in Africa influences the present, and future of the continent

The study will also rationalise the extent to which the colonial past still haunts Africa as reflected in Nadine Gordimer's selected post-colonial novels: *No Time Like the Present* (2012), *The Pickup* (2001), *The House Gun* (1998), *None to Accompany Me* (1994), *July's People* (1981) and *A Guest of Honour* (1970). These novels will be appraised as part of African literatures that unravel an evolution, shifting the centre of attention from the ills of imperialism to the disenchantment that succeeded the indulgence of independence (Nkealah, 2011).

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The invasion of European civilisation in Africa during the 19th century waged a clash of identities in the continent. The European empire subjugated Africa and imposed its decrees, mind-set, leadership, religion and culture upon Africans. The former annexed the wealth of Africa and exercised rights of control over the African race. Hence, European traders sold millions of Africans to one another and enslaved them to work on colonial plantations and do hard labour to a degree that the trade radically diminished the African continent's ability to progress economically and uphold its socio-political stability (M'baye, 2006). This is because Europeans, then, had a stereotypical view of Africans and considered them as backward, unsophisticated and being ignorant to a degree of being possessing no religious, cultural, economic and political traditions of their own which are noteworthy (Roscoe, 1970). Subsequent to taking reins in Africa, the coloniser, forged a new African identity inspired by Eurocentricity and it substituted the aboriginal African identity that Africans embraced

prior to the emergence of colonialists in the continent. Asma (2015) affirms that the newly Western-influenced African identity is a false one. Correspondingly, McLeod (2007) notes that both the coloniser and colonised exemplify the formed identities. Thus, Boehmer (1995) notes that the neo-imperial dimension persists in camouflaging reality, thus, hybridised Western identities cannot produce a precise reflection.

Europeans concluded their judgment on Africans being savage and referred to the continent as a dark society and believed that they should ensure that the continent receives light through them (Bertram, Ranby & Adendorff, 2013). Furthermore, a novel that presents an indication of the pre-colonial backdrop of African societies and the Europeans' stereotypical image of Africans is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). The novel is an enthralling chronicle that presents a brilliant evocation of volatility amidst human lives. Conrad develops the character of Marlow, the European elite, who travels to Africa and gets a glimpse of pre-colonial African societies. With his European stereotypical mind-set of Africans being barbaric and unsophisticated, Marlow was floored when he arrived in Africa and learnt the truth about Africans: "…and I found with humiliation that probably I would have nothing to say" (*Heart of Darkness*:139). His venture did not yield the anticipated results. Marlow coincidentally met his fellow, Kurtz, from Europe in Africa.

Marlow witnesses Kurtz meting out barbaric and unsophisticated attacks upon the Africans: "As to me, I seemed to see Kurtz for the first time…a distinct glimpse of four paddling savages, and the lone white man turning his back suddenly on the headquarters" (*Heart of Darkness*: 44). This questioned the authenticity of his stereotypical mind-set of Africans: "Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle" (*Heart of Darkness*: 20). The European view of their own being flawless took a turn of events when Marlow and Kurtz took umbrage at each other. Kurtz infused a notion of being a god to the Africans and that a white man is a god. However, Marlow refuted Kurtz's evil nature to a degree of bringing out the worst in himself: "I was getting savage" (*Heart of Darkness*: 41), and this indicates a common savage nature amongst Europeans: "You stand the climate-you outlast them all. The danger is in Europe; but there I left I took care" (*Heart of Darkness*: 62). Furthermore, the colonial forces, despite being subdued by the democratic regiment, still influence the African continent in the post-colonial age as remnants of imperialism are yet to be addressed. This is due to the seed of deceit that the coloniser has sown to imbibe the

future of the African continent. Thus, euphoria has “swept through the African continent before and soon after African territories hoisted flags, sang national anthems, and celebrated the rise of African leaders to power thinking that then Europeans had left for good but this was not so” (Hussein, 2015: 240).

1.2.1 Scramble for Africa

European powers in the 1870s developed a tremendous attraction for Africa. As a result, Europeans competed against each other for Africa. However, the rivalry for control in Africa amongst the European forces culminated at the Berlin Conference. The conference was hosted to conspire the colonisation of Africa and reach an agreement to share the continent. Seven European states annexed Africa and these countries are: Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, France and Britain. As a result, 98% of the continent was under the European hegemony, the exceptional 2% being Ethiopia and Liberia (Bertram et al., 2013). Moreover, at the conference, it was argued and concluded that the seven European countries would share, and colonise Africa as illustrated by the map below:

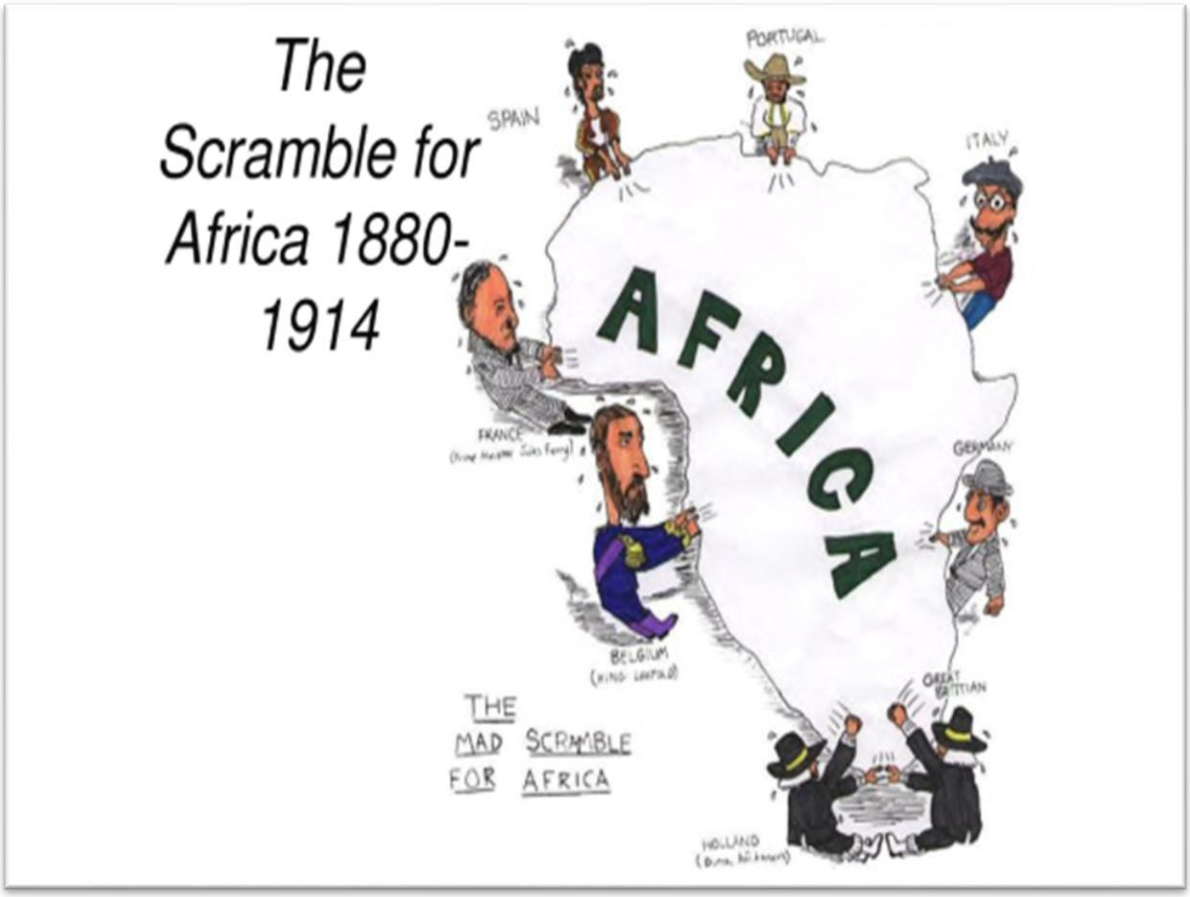


Figure 1.1 Scramble for Africa (Source: engagewithease.com)

The image shows different European countries represented by men surrounding the African continent. Each one of them is pulling a certain portion of Africa. On close examination, this image displays colonial powers' plan to share and colonise Africa. The colonialists, in the wake of the division of Africa amongst themselves, arrived in Africa and seized control from Africans. They employed several strategies to reach their goal of bringing African societies under the subjugation of Europe. The strategies entailed indoctrination, religion and education. Kelly (2009) affirms that the colonial dominion needed a manner of thinking, a discourse in which anything that appears to be sophisticated, civilised and advanced is evaluated according to European conditions. This has meant major changes in the African continent. King Leopold of Belgium II during the Berlin conference referred to Africa as a magnificent cake that he did not want to miss getting a slice of (History commons, 1876).

Notwithstanding African natives' resistance to the colonial rule, the latter still emerged victoriously. Some of the most defiant African factions included the Maji-Maji Rebellion. The Maji-Maji Rebellion is acclaimed for taking a stand against the German colonial forces. As a result, a brutal war broke out between the two factions. The Maji-Maji's weapons involved the use of magic water, known as Maji in Kiswahili, which the corps is dubbed after. The prophet Kinjikitile, who believed that the extraordinary water would lead The Maji-Maji Rebellion to victory against German troops, set the tactic of using magic water in motion (Collins, 1992). The Maji-Maji Rebellion's resistance almost succeeded, however, a year after, the colonial army reinforced with machine guns and attacked, and defeated the African insurgency (Shillington, 1995).

Germany's victory saw east Africa becoming a colony of the former, thus, the latter is rechristened, German East Africa. In 1902, the governor of German East Africa ordered the plantation of cotton and this brought hard labour upon the African natives. Furthermore, the root causes of the colonial forces' victories over Africans were influenced by a variety of factors such as the rivalries that African leaders had amongst each other. The colonialists used the squabbles to their advantage as they persuaded other African natives to assist them to defeat their fellow Africans. They also had more powerful weapons than those Africans had. One of the eminent weapons that have scored European forces numerous victories is the maximum gun, which, Wight (1960) depicts as a weapon linked with the British colonial conquest. The maximum gun,

displayed below, could fire 600 rounds per minute and this became a great advantage for the colonialists to emerge victorious during battles (Barnet, 2004).

Figure 1.2 Maximum Gun (Source: military.wikia.org)

The image displays the maximum gun that was invented by Hiram Stevens Maximum in 1884. It was active during the colonial wars and gave the users an advantage over their nemeses. Thus, the last line of the poem, *The Modern Traveller* by Hilaire Belloc expresses the advantage and pride that the possessor of the Maximum Gun has:

> Blood understood the Native mind,
> He said: 'We must be firm but kind.'
> A mutiny resulted.
> I never shall forget the way
> That Blood upon this awful day
> Preserved us all from death.
> He stood upon a little mound,
> Cast his lethargic eyes around,
> And said beneath his breath:

"Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim Gun and they have not."

1.2.2 Core reasons for colonisation of Africa

The strongest colonial powers during the scramble for Africa were Britain, France and Germany. These countries colonised most parts of Africa, leaving a few sections for Spain, Portugal, Belgium and Italy. The map below illustrates that most African societies were indeed under the control of the British, French and German forces:

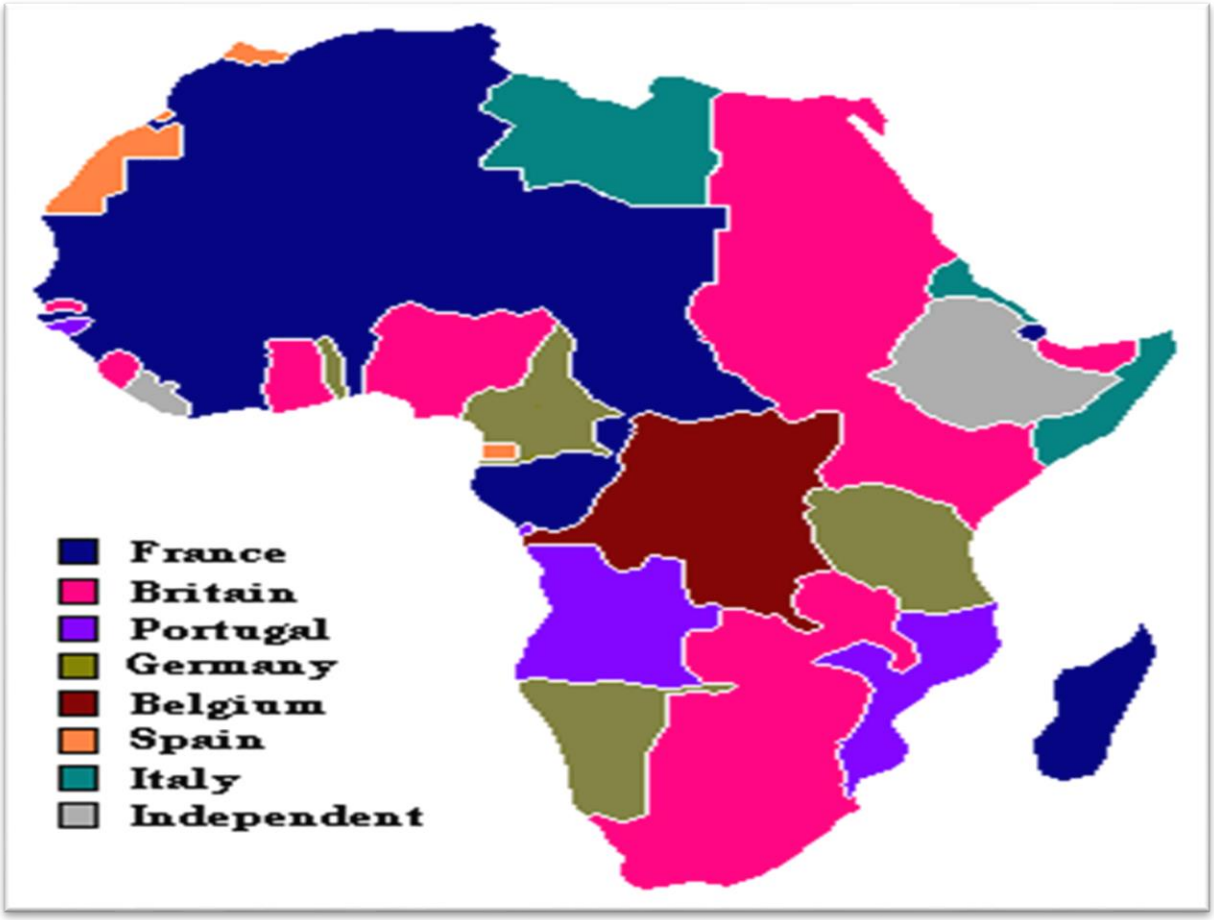


Figure 1.3 Colonisation of African countries (Source: historyonthenet.com)

Europe's interest in Africa, among other reasons, was inspirited by the wealth that the land of Africa possessed. The colonialists wanted to hegemonise Africa to assume utter authority over the raw materials and minerals that existed in the African continent. Henriksen (1973) notes that the Portuguese were obsessed with a campaigning appetite, lust for gold in Guinea, the search for spices and Prester John. Furthermore, the European forces utilised Africa's gold, diamond, Ivory, rubber, cotton and oil to enrich themselves. The desire to control the African wealth saw a series of wars in

Southern Africa for the minerals (see Anglo-Boer War I & II, 1899-1902; Anglo-Zulu War, 1879; Basotho Gun War, 1880-1881; 9th Frontier War, 1779-1879).

Other reasons for the colonisation of Africa include the development of nationalism in Europe. The colonialists were infatuated with wealth and power, and having Africa under its control was a great achievement. The hunger for power and supremacy saw the enslavements of Africans to be domestic servants, work plantations, construction and mines, thus, developing the European empire. Moreover, children were borne to slave mothers and this made them the legal properties of the slave owners who would often sell them in markets as their property. Hence, Eltis (2002) points out that the colonialists had created outposts on the coast of Africa coast where they usually bought slaves from local African leaders. Daniel and Rusch (1962) corroborate that Africans sold one another to the coloniser. However, in the 19th century, different governments in the continent had begun to "ban the trade, although illegal smuggling still occurred and in the early 21st century, several governments issued apologies for the transatlantic slave trade" (Eltis, Lewis & Richardson, 2006: 95).

1.3 ABORIGINAL AFRICAN IDENTITY

The transition from pre-colonial Africa to colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial Africa instigated a major alteration that menaced the pre-colonial African identity. Montle (2020) notes that the colonialists' disastrous invasion of Africa not only seized authority in the continent but also doctored the identity of Africans. Therefore, this section emphasises the pre-colonial African background more than the rest. Furthermore, ancient Africa is distinguished through its active role in traditional practices. Dominant insignias of historical African identities include Kingship, oral literature, initiation schooling, art, farming, hunting, herding and traditional dances. Moreover, Falola and Fleming (2009) point out that another crest of African identity, iron, denotes the essence of African civilisation as it has advanced their weaponry and also capacitated hunters and farmers to kill animals, clear forests and plough fields.

1.3.1 Ancient African leadership style

Pre-colonised Africans submitted under the rulership of kings and chiefs who often performed rituals and worshipped their ancestors to satisfy their spiritual dimension. These kings drew wisdom from their gods and ancestors, thus, Onimode (1983)

comments that pre-colonial African systems stressed consolidated democratic monarch, progression, the impartiality of military action and foreign engagement. Furthermore, Brown and Moore (1970: 79) assert:

> The African societies seem, to have maintained authority in the local or Kingship group with moral sanctions variously supported by the threat of ritual or legal sanctions. Associations were the important organ of government in larger aggregates, where state organisation was absent, and in the less centralised states. They exercised authority over the community by means of ritual or legal sanction or both. States were concerned with disputes in which moral sanctions had failed, and with regulations made by the state which moral authority was inadequate to maintain. In punishing these, they applied legal sanctions, often combining them with the threat of ritual sanctions.

The ruling kings and chiefs were usually assigned lands to rule and attend to all issues that concern the communities under their jurisdiction. As Claessen (2015) avers, kingship is and has always been considered sacred and the king had the power to command and make decisions. For instance, in Wole Soyinka's play, *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) which mirrors the African culture before and After Western identity invaded Africa, the ancient city of Yoruba acquiesced to kingship. When the king died, his equestrian was commanded to commit suicide as a ritual to assist his spirit to ascend to eternal life. Some of the renowned pre-colonial African kings are:

(a) Musa Keita I

> Musa Keita I (Mansa Musa which translates as, "King of Kings" or "Emperor" of Ancient Mali) Keita 1 was the 10th Musa of the Mansa Dynasty. Under his rule, Mali became one of the wealthiest countries in the world. From their gold and salt production, agriculture and imperialistic nature and dynamic trade location, the kingdom flourished. Forbes named him the richest man of all time. Musa Kieta I is famed with enriching the great trading city of Timbuktu, establishing the library and Islamic Universities. (Dwilson, 2015: i).

(b) Sundiata Keita

> Sundiata Keita Founder of the Ancient Mali Empire (The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal) 1210 – 1255. The Mali Empire took control after the Almorvarids Berber Kings of Morocco destroyed the Ghana Empire. Sundiata Kieta is the

renowned hero Prince of the Mandinka people. This prince's rise to fame is chronicled in the poem *The Epic of Sundiata* traditionally told by "Griots" (Dwilson, 2015: i).

(c) Amenhotep III

Amenhotep III (Egypt) 18th Dynasty 1388-1351 BC. Father of the famed "heretic Pharaoh," Akhenaten, and grandfather to the famous King Tut, Amenhotep III was one Egypt's greatest pharaohs and the most successful of the 18th Dynasty. During his reign, Egypt enjoyed wealth, peace and stability. There were several exquisite building projects and monuments he commissioned as well as the first man-made lake outside his palace in Malkata for his wife, the Great Queen Tiye (Dwilson, 2015: i).

(d) Taharqa

Taharqa (Egypt & Nubia) 25th Dynasty Reign 690 – 664 BCE. Taharqa was one of the Great Napatan Nubian kings/Pharoahs. After his father, Piye, successfully conquered Egypt in battle, Taharqa united the two kingdoms to form the largest African empire at the time. His empire spanned from the 5th Nile Cataract in Nubia, throughout all of Egypt, up into the Middle East in Palestine (Dwilson, 2015: i).

(e) Ezana Axum

Ezana Axum (Ethiopia) 333 – c. 356. Ezana is celebrated as the First Ethiopian King to embrace Christianity and convert his entire kingdom. He helped establish the Ethiopic Church. He is also credited with ending the powerful rival kingdom of Meroe (Nubia) (Dwilson, 2015: i).

The role and value of Kingship in the pre-colonial African background could be further substantiated by the historical life and rule of the (South) African King of Zululand, Shaka Zulu. He is recognised as one of the most influential kings from Southern Africa. His descendant, king Cetshwayo kaMpande, is esteemed for leading an army that defeated the British colonial forces in the battle of *Isandlwana* in 1879. The hype that this victory has garnered is delineated in Zakes Mda's *The Zulus of New York* (2019).

In the present age, a full movie, *Shaka Zulu,* portrays the identity of the Zulu nation before and after the arrival of the British Empire. In summation, prior to the presence of colonialists in Zululand, the Zulus were depicted as devout Africans to cultural practices such as ancestor worship. Moreover, Shaka was a very firm and brutal king who ruled with an iron fist. Some of his ruthless actions include his response to the

death of his mother, Nandi. Shaka ordered that there would be no plantation of crops during the period of mourning and there would be no milk to use, otherwise, punishment by death would be meted out to any woman together with her husband who falls pregnant. He also ordered the execution of about 7000 people whom he considered not lamenting enough over the passing of his mother and to a greater extent, these killings escalated to the slaughtering of cows to have calves experience the feeling of losing a mother (Morris, 1994).

1.3.2 Oral literature

Africans augmented their identities through songs, poetry, praises, heroic tales, legends, idioms, proverbs and riddles. These practices are collectively known as oral literature, which refers to a form of literature distinguished by orality and is passed from generation to generation through a spoken mode (Eugenio, 2007). Oral literature aimed to pass knowledge, skills and to bless, guide, and communicate meaning. Thus, Scheub (1985) considers oral literature more of a comment than a chronicle as it observes society and how it feels about itself. For the same reason, Millier (1980) avers that oral literature is not simply a spoken art but a traditional ritual, performance and enactment. An example of oral literature is this praise poem:

The Song of Liyongo

This is my song of warning, here I begin, ending a multitude of songs,
As I proceed I am finishing, I, a nobleman.
I, a nobleman, who sees your goat in trouble;
She was seized by the horns and milked by the milker.

A man who sees humiliation oppressing his home
Will not agree to die yet, as reproach would follow.

He that fights for his honour wins honour by fighting;
No scornful word is said to him as long as he lives.

I am lethal to people; when I take up arms I kill truly;
I am terrible in battle when I hear an evil word.

I am a young lion, I have instilled the wish to die in my heart;
I fear nothing but disgrace if my enemies see my back.

I am a young eagle soaring up, soon out of sight;
I am a terror for the birds, I seize them in flight.

I am like the buzzard when I mount in the sky,
Devouring the young, just like the lion, king of beasts.

But both my feet are in shackles,
And around my neck, an iron ring has been forged.

Yet when in the sea the surf begins to roar,
When the high sea comes rushing in at Ungama,
you will not be capable of standing up!

I am a gallant prince, enjoying the bliss of dying,
To put an end to the enemy who slanders me …
Dying for God and the ship that goes to meet Him,
Do not fear the people of the world even if they hit you with ten thousand arrows …

The poet will receive a reward, the generous God will pay him
On the day of retribution when he will pay the wicked and the good:

The poet is full of generosity, proof of God's goodness, and famous,
In his days there was no one like him.

The poem above is believed to be composed by Liyongo, a Swahili hero who resided in Delta, north of Mombasa (Martin, 1997). He is renowned for bravery, kindness and impartiality. Thus, the poem celebrates his characteristics. It is recited in first-person where the poet praises his might, fearlessness and savagery. He claims: "I am lethal to people; when I take up arms I kill truly; I am terrible in battle when I hear an evil word," (line 9-10) and I am a gallant prince, enjoying the bliss of dying, to put an end to the enemy who slanders me…" (line 22-23). The poet feels proud of himself and goes to an extent of comparing his pride, and bravery to that of a lion. The metaphor, "I am a young lion" (line 11) is an emphasis on the poet's strength.

Equally important, oral literature is predominant in kingship affairs. During royal ceremonies, praise poetry becomes an essential element as it is deeply embedded in the African culture and is performed to exalt the attributes of kings and chiefs as well as to convoke and extend appreciation to past kings (Bhengu, 2018). For instance, in the South African society, Buzetsheni Mdletshe is known as the official praise-singer of the king of Zululand, Goodwill Zwelithini. Mdletshe on Sunday times daily (2018) unravels the gist of his duty to preserve African identity:

> When I sing the praises it's like a sangoma who is entered by the spirit of ancestors. A spirit needs to enter you. Anyone can read the praises in books, but you need to have that gift that is given to you by the spirits that guide your praises…My love for praise poetry started when I was very young. I remember when my brother brought home a commemorative plate that had all the praise names of king DinuZulu and King Solomon. I was instantly hooked…I want to pass this down not only to my children but to the entire Zulu nation because back in the day there was not a single man who couldn't praise the kings. I want to highlight that, wherever you are if you have a passion and the gift of praise poetry you must also give praise when you enter the royal house.

1.3.3 African Traditional dances

Africans also expressed their identities through traditional dances which had different purposes such as to celebrate, convey meaning and please their ancestors. Malone (1996) avows that traditional dances in the African context usually materialise collaboratively, portraying the life of a particular society better than that of a person or sole entity. Some of the examples of traditional dances are illustrated below:

(a) Indlamu

Indlamu is an African traditional dance mostly performed by different tribes of Nguni, each in their style during ceremonial rituals. According to Gumede (2019), Indlamu dance is devoid of Western manipulation, thus, it is regarded as an epitome of African identity. Moreover, this dance is usually executed by men wearing animal skins, ceremonial belts, ankle rattles, head-rings and holding shields, spears and knobkerries (Tracey, 1952).

Figure 1.4 Indlamu dance (Source: svrevelations.com)

(b) Adumu

Adumu is an African traditional dance practised by the Maasais-ethnic group settling in Northern Tanzania as well as in Northern, Central and Southern Kenya. It is sometimes referred to as aigus or jumping dancing, especially by non-Maasai and is performed during Eunoto, the coming-of-age ceremony for warriors (Auter & Rudyk, 2015).

Figure 1.5 Adumu dance (Source: themaasaitribe.weebly.com)

(b) Mohobelo

Mohobelo is an African dance from the Sotho tribal community. It is known as a striding dance of the aforementioned tribe and it is distinguished by slithering along the ground, leaping, sliding and striding. In most cases, three movements arise, which are: slow Bahobela, characterised by kicks, swifter Molapo, the twisting and leaping in the air, and finally, Phethola letsoho, the moving of hands (Tracey, 1952).

Figure 1.6 Mohobelo dance (Source: lifela-tsa-sesotho.blogspot.com)

(c) Moribayasa

Moribayas is a dance from the Malinke people in Guinea. It is a dance for a woman who has overcome great adversity. The woman prepares by putting on old, ragged clothes and musicians accompany her. She circles the village several times, singing and dancing, and other women of the village follow her and sing too. Then, the dancer changes her clothes and buries her old ragged clothes in a special spot (Keita, Kato, & Minamikawa, 1999).

Figure 1.7 Moribayasa dance (Source: mamalisa.com)

(a) Muchongoyo

Muchongoyo is a traditional dance predominately performed by Zimbabwean men with women. The women serve as musicians, singing and playing the tuba while the men perform. This dance is sometimes practised in the military as a training activity and is typically performed by the men holding sticks and shields. It is also used as a social and recreational dance and it is devoid of religious features; however, it portrays the identity of a society (Welsh-Asante, 2000).

Figure 1.8 Muchongoyo dance (Source: tmadhuku.wordpress.com)

1.3.4 Initiation school

Initiation is an essential traditional practice that endeavours to authenticate African identity. It is fostered by many African societies today in an effort to preserve the aboriginal African identity. The initiation process serves as an impulse of transition from teenagehood into adulthood. From a cultural perspective, an individual cannot be undisputedly regarded as a real man or woman if they have not graduated from the initiation school. For instance, in the (South) African Xhosa tribe, Venter (2011) notes that initiation school is regarded as a path through which Xhosa adolescents traverse to reach manhood and earn the respect of the community.

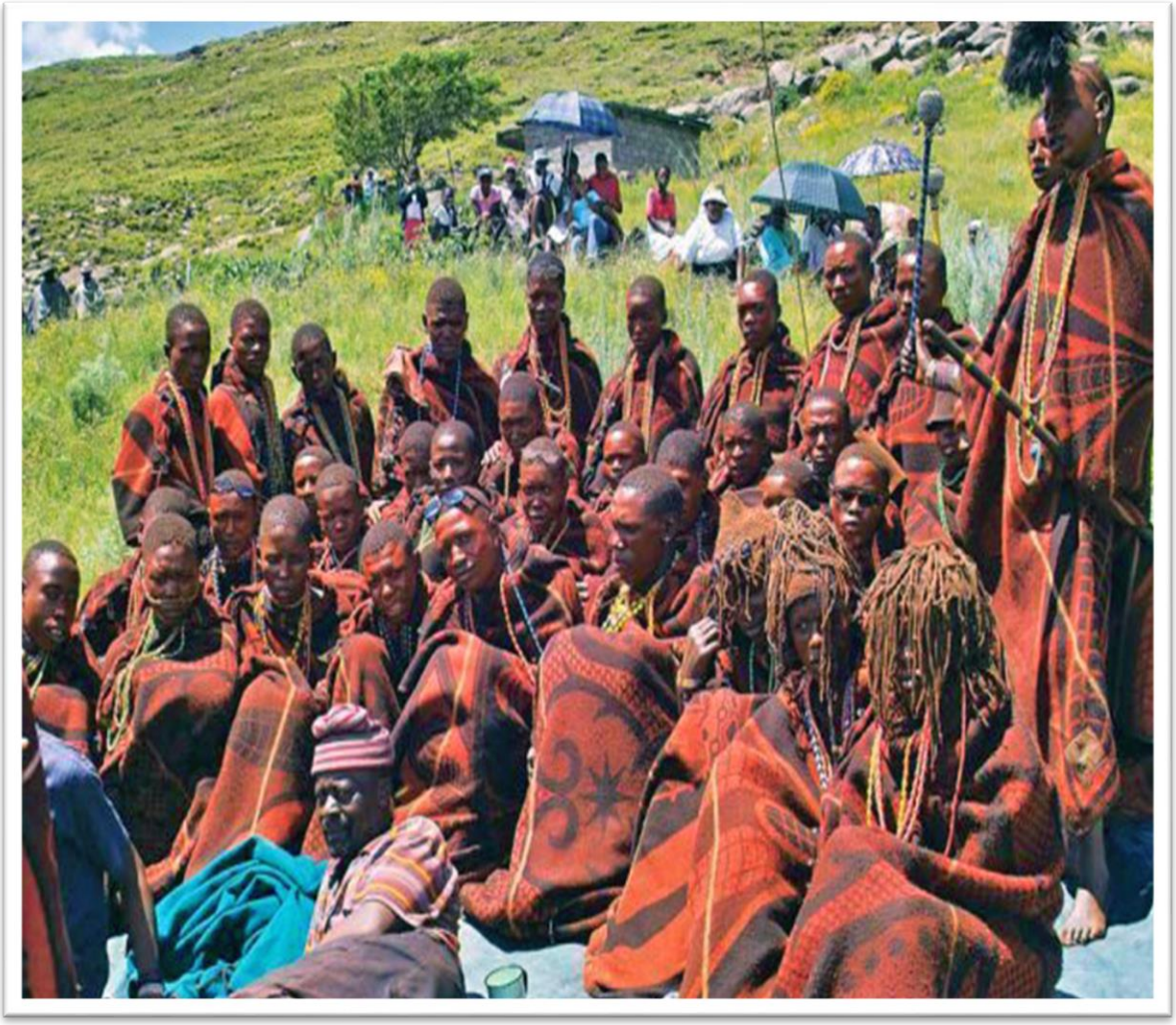


Figure 1.9 Initiates (Source: thenewhumanitarian.org)

The significance of initiation schooling in the African society has been corroborated by a variety of researchers. Pauw (1975) postulates that initiation is a roadway to *Ubuntu* and respect, whereas, Arthen (2010) points out that initiation schools depict a tribe's acknowledgement that a boy or girl is now ready to become a man or woman as they have the level of maturity and responsibility. Furthermore, in the (South) African Venda tribe, girls undergo *Domba* which is an initiation process that qualifies the girls to transition into women of honour. It is held every three to five years at the head-quarters of Chiefs and senior headmen (Malisha, 2005). Moreover, *Domba* is the third and final stage of the initiation process in the Venda culture for women. A girl is permitted into this stage only after completing the Vusha and Tshikanda (Zeitlyn & Fischer, 2002).

Figure 1.10 Domba dance (Source: hadithi.africa.com)

1.4 WESTERNISING AFRICAN IDENTITY

The coloniser manipulated the teachings of religion and education to Westernise African identity. The two apparatus, religion and education were great weapons that the colonial regiment utilised to dehumanise African natives through the imposition of both inner and outer colonialism (Shizha, 2005).

1.4.1 The Colonised African Education system

Colonial education set out to dismantle "the values of pre-settler and pre-colonial notions of learning … [that] were essential in reflecting the social and cultural needs and expectations of the community" (Abdi, 1999: 29). It has propagandised white superiority and sought to indoctrinate African natives to submit to white supremacy. According to Christie (1991), education under the colonial rule comprised conventional

insights that displayed inadequate admiration for African cultural identities, for instance, native cultural history was not included in the school curriculum. Mark and Toker (2010) affirm that colonial education was established based on the notion that the European white race should usher civilisation to the unrefined people of a different race settling in other continents. This colonial education orchestrated the supremacy of European languages over African indigenous languages in the continent today. This has plagued African writers such as Ngugi (1986: 28) who perceives colonial education as:

> The process that annihilates people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves.

1.4.2 Manipulation of Biblical teachings to colonise Africans

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Africa saw a rise in missionary activities (Nunn, 2010). The coloniser promulgated the Christian religion, which combatted the African natives' ancestral worship and rituals. For instance, the scripture, Deuteronomy 18:9-14 renounces worship of any other god, spirit, or material except God:

> When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving to you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no-one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft or casts spells, or who is a medium of spiritist who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord and because of these detestable practices the Lord, your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practise sorcery or divination. However, as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so.

Many scholars perceive the Christian religion as an alien culture, which consists of hegemonic and demonising impacts on African traditional systems (Shizha, 2011). This perception is galvanised by the discovery of several scriptures in the Christian bible that the coloniser has exploited to champion colonial notions such as racial segregation, enslavement and abhorrence of black people. The scriptures include:

- Deuteronomy 32:8:

> When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.

- Genesis 11: 5-6:

> But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. **6** The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. **7** Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

- Revelation 7:9:

> After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

- 1 Corinthians 7:21-24:

> Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. 22 For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings. 24 Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

The scriptures above profess diversity within humanity and justify the segregation of people as per racial and ethnic depictions (Farisani, 2014). A variety of characteristics such as language (Genesis 11: 5-6), tribe (Revelations 7:9), and race (Deuteronomy 32: 8) are accentuated to rationalise heterogeneity. In addition, slavery is also to be endorsed through 1 Corinthians 7: 21-24. This scripture coupled with others such as Philemon 1 has been used by colonialists to perpetuate and accustom the enslavement of black people. Furthermore, biblical scriptures such as the ones mentioned above have attracted the coloniser, by virtue of, their openness and vulnerability to abuse by the authority, which, has used "powers and principalities of both secular and spiritual oppression to usurp its spirit and use it to legitimise economic

and environmental exploitation" (Buehrens, 2010: 4). Thus, Ngugi (1986: 56-57) affirms:

> Religion is not the same thing as God. When the British imperialists came here in 1895, all the missionaries of all the churches held the Bible in the left hand and the gun in the right hand. The White man wanted us to be drunk with religion while he, in the meantime, was mapping and grabbing our land and starting factories and businesses on our sweat.

The interface between the coloniser's religion and African culture resulted in an alteration that defines the identity of Africa today. The coloniser's religion is pitted against the colonised's culture. It is the colonial forces that attempted to tarnish the image of the African culture, which they deemed impolitic and unsophisticated. Thus, stereotypes against African identities are still besieging the continent in the post-colonial age. Cesaire (1974: 104) asserts:

> Wherever colonisation is a fact, the indigenous culture begins to rot. And among the ruins, something begins to be born which is not a culture, but a kind of sub-culture. This then becomes the province of a few men, the elite, who find themselves placed in the most artificial conditions, deprived of any revivifying contact with the masses of the people.

The coloniser portrayed his religion as the percipient, acceptable and heavenly. However, this has been done at the expense of the aboriginal African culture which almost faced utter dissipation. The vexation that arises from the menace posed against African culture becomes acute as religion penetrated all the spheres of life so completely that it is difficult or impossible to separate it (Mbiti, 1989).

Wole Soyinka's play, *Death and the King's Horseman* is a relevant reflection of the threat that African cultural practices endured from the might of colonialism. In the story, Elesin's suicidal death as the king's equestrian according to the Yoruba customs did not materialise due to colonial manipulation. The coloniser convinced Elesin that his African culture is foolish and this resulted in failing to perform his cultural obligation, hence, betraying the Yoruba people. This unscrupulous measure was the coloniser's strategy to outwit Africans. The coloniser hid behind Christianity to masquerade as noble to entice African natives to relinquish their cultures and adopt the Christian religion. This mission even had African natives disenchanted with each other as most of them proselytised into the coloniser's religion. The rift amongst Africans cemented the coloniser's dominion upon their lives and this incited the implementation of a "false

dependence syndrome” which deceived Africans into believing that they need to be dependant on the coloniser for survival (Marumo, 2018: 3).

Today, the Christian religion is dubbed an associate of colonialism because of the lingering image of white supremacy that lies in it. The image is painted with hypocrisy and hatred of black people. Moreover, the religion imagines Jesus Christ as a white man whom Africans perceived as either a father or child of the colonialists (Mbitii, 1969). The image below provides a representation of how Jesus Christ is imagined to look like in the church today:

Figure 1.11 Representation of Jesus Christ (Source: Churchofjesuschrist.org)

To this end, Okon (2014: 193) poses this question, “Is it a good historical judgment to describe missionaries as partners both with the colonial authorities and mercantile powers in the exploitation and marginalisation of Africa?” Various scholars ranging from pioneers to the present day ones have and still about argue about Okon’s (2014) question. The researchers include:

(a) Sanneh (1990: 88), who avers:

> At its most self-conscious stage, mission coincided with western colonialism, and with that juncture, students of the subject have gone on to make all kinds of judgments about the intrinsic bond between the two forces. Historians who are instinctively critical of received tradition in other spheres are more credulous in perpetuating the notion of mission as “imperialism at prayer”. In the nineteenth century, this idea persisted under the slogan of "Christianity and 6 percent ", by which it was understood that mundane interests prospered under a religious guise. Thus, the mission came to acquire the unsavoury odour of collusion with the colonial power.

The scholar above contends that Christianity conspired with colonial forces to mould African identity according to Western values. The church maintained the societal relations of imperialism and emphasised docility, meekness and decency to the advantage of the colonial corps (Lachenicht, 2019). Moreover, Ayayi and Crowder (1968) affirm that missionaries postulated that the African children that grew up under their watch turn into good Europeans, whereas, others held a belief that they will grow to respond positively to their inferiority to Europeans.

(b) Kalu (1980: 183) asserts:

> Missionary ideology was full of paradoxes: while sharing the racist theories of the age, and supporting the official programme to transform the political and economic structure of the colonies, it realised higher values in the biblical conception of the dignity of man... the missionaries colluded with the colonial government when it suited their interests and yet would also at times unleash virulent attacks on certain styles and purpose of government. Missionaries condemned the harsh sanctions of government labour proclamations and criticised merchants for their intemperance, irreligiosity and brutality.

The Christian religion is perceived as two-faced, being an institution of hypocrisy that has aided the colonial empire to fulfil its mission while preaching against its evil tactics (Henneton, 2014). It seems to be an innocent bystander caught up in between the coloniser and the colonised, however, the “believers in trusteeship nevertheless regarded Africans as human beings deserving the protection of their superior” (Bohannan & Curtin, 1971: 331). The Christian religion’s degree of hypocrisy could be better demonstrated by the image below:

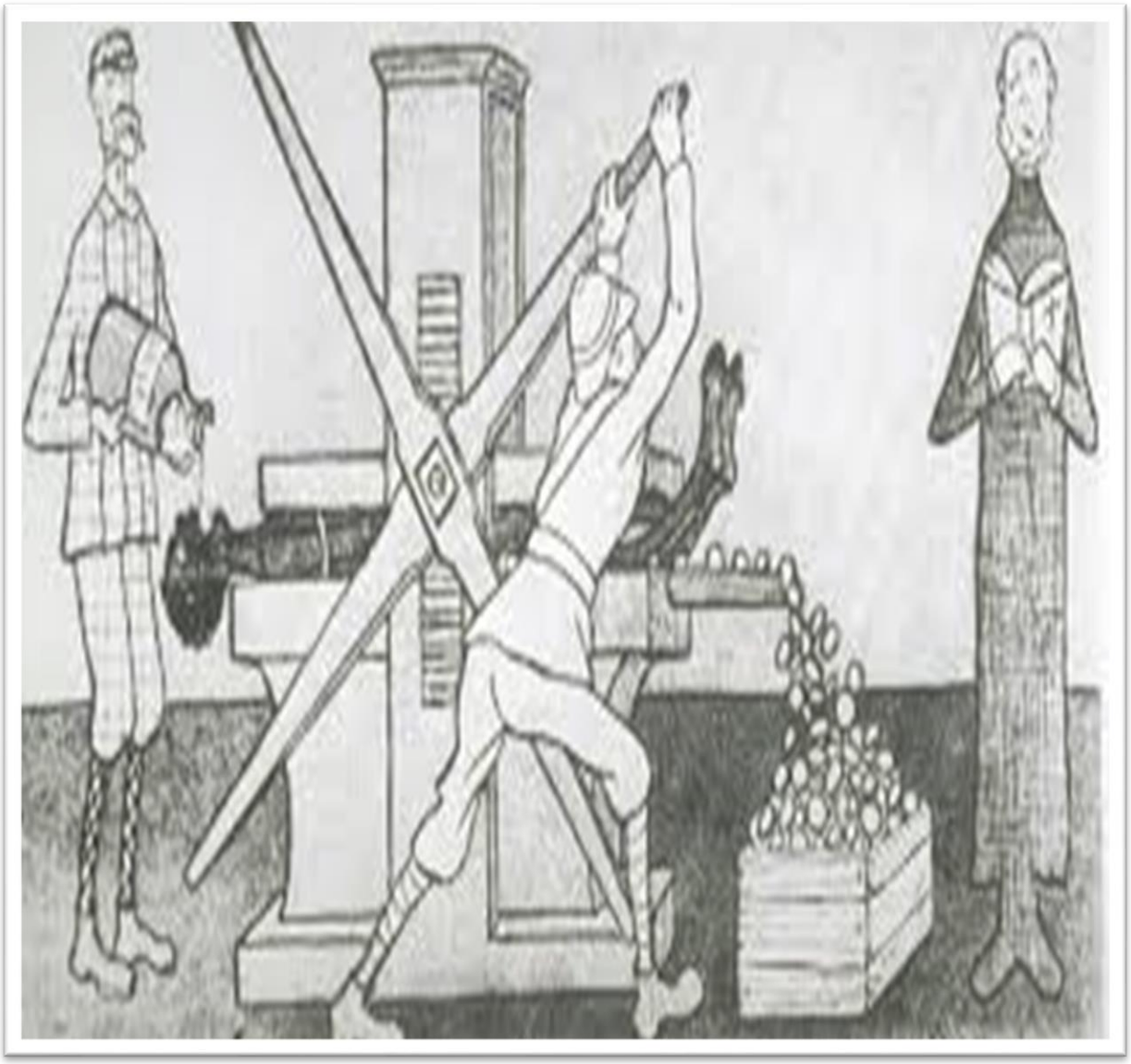


Figure 1.11 Colonisation and Christianity (Source: lewebpedagoquie.com)

The image above shows a black person being tortured by two white soldiers and priest a holding a bible seemingly preaching. One soldier pours alcohol into the mouth of the black man and an Anglican priest drugs him with religious teachings whilst the other soldier draws gold (profits) out of him (Bertram et al., 2013). The soldiers and the priest exploited the black man for profit. This is perceived as hypocrisy as the priest appears to aid perpetrators instead of the innocent man, whereas, the biblical teachings condemn the evil that they are committing.

(c) Ayayi and Crowder (1971: 3) affirm:

> The greater part of this area was occupied by a force of arms, and where occupation was peaceful it was usually because African leaders, having seen the success with which European-led forces overcame their neighbours, decided resistance would be futile. There were, of course, numerous instances of occupation by peaceful negotiation... but few African leaders desired that political control of their countries should be alienated permanently to the newcomers.

The scholar above seems to exempt Christianity from evil deeds by claiming that colonialism had been a peaceful negotiation in some instances. This is buttressed by Gann and Duignan's (1978) assertion that some African societies submitted to the colonial rule, others rebelled while some opted to corporate with the colonialists only to manipulate them to their benefit; others attempted to opt-out of the colonial system forcefully. To this end, the role of Christianity in the colonisation of Africa seems to be controversial. This has also been fortified by various religions in the same fashion but has garnered little evaluation about their nexus to the colonisation of Africa such as Islam, Buddhism and the second wave of Christianity which is Catholicism. Lado (2006) states that during the 16th century, Catholic missionaries followed Portuguese pioneers to sub-Saharan Africa and were confronted by two prominent religions, Islam and African religions. Hastings (1967: 60) notes:

> Neither in the nineteenth nor in the early twentieth centuries did missionaries give much thought in advance to what they would find in Africa. What struck them, undoubtedly, was the darkness of the continent; its lack of religion and sound morals, its ignorance, its general pitiful condition made worse by the barbarity of the slave trade. Evangelisation was seen as liberation from a state of absolute awfulness, and the picture of unredeemed Africa was often painted in colours as gruesome as possible, the better to encourage missionary zeal at home.

1.5 AFTERMATHS OF COLONIAL ENDING

The colonialists in the late 19th century were confronted by a precarious leap of African resistance. Africans had decided to take a stand against the harsh conditions that the colonialists meted upon their lives. Iweriebor (2002) avers that the colonialists' ill-treatment of Africans provoked diplomatic and political reactions and ultimately, military action from the colonised. By the 21st century, most African states had triumphed over colonial forces and reclaimed their independence, although, after a

series of wars. Some of the remarkable wars that moulded Africa's step towards independence are presented in the table below:

Table 1.1 Colonial wars in Africa

Colonial	Year	African state
1) Battle of Adwa	1896	Ethiopia
2) Italo-Ethiopian War	1935-36	Ethiopia
3) Anglo-Zulu War	1879	Southern Africa
4) Gun War	1880-81	Southern Africa
5) South Africa war	1899-1902	Southern Africa
6) Angolan War of Independence	1961-1974	Angola
7) Mau Mau Uprising	1952-1960	Kenya
8) Anglo-Ashanti wars	1824-1901	Ashanti
9) Kongo-Wara Rebellion	1928-1931	Equatorial Africa and Cameroon
10) Somali Land Campaign	1900-1920	Somalia

These wars, along with many more during the colonial period, consolidated Africa's pilgrimage to sovereignty. The tussles for independence in the continent occasioned bloody wars that saw African societies divorcing the colonial government for independence. Rupp and Wallen (2008) aver that Ghana wrested independence from the British colonial power in 1957 and Algeria declared independence from the French colonialists a subsequent to bloody warfare. The full-blown independence record of the entire African continent is outlined in the table below:

Table 1.2 Independence record in Africa

COUNTRY	DATE OF INDEPENDENCE	COLONIAL POWER
Ethiopia	Ancient	-
Liberia	July 26, 1847	
South Africa	May 31, 1961 (end of Apartheid, 1994)	Britain
Egypt	February 2, 1922	Britain
Libya	December 24, 1951	Italy
Sudan	January 1, 1956	Britain; Egypt
Morocco	March 2, 1956	France
Tunisia	March 20, 1956	France
Ghana	March 6, 1957	Britain
Guinea	February 10, 1958	France
Cameroon	January 1, 1960	France
Togo	April 27, 1960	France
Senegal	June 20, 1960	France
Mali	June 20, 1960	France
Madagascar	June 26, 1960	France
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	June 30, 1960	Belgium
Somalia	July 1, 1960	Italy; Britain
Benin	August 1, 1960	France
Niger	August 3, 1960	France
Burkina Faso	August 5, 1960	France
Côte d'Ivoire	August 7, 1960	France
Chad	August 11, 1960	France
Central African Republic	August 13, 1960	France
Congo, Republic of the	August 15, 1960	France
Gabon	August 17, 1960	France
Nigeria	October 1, 1960	Britain
Mauritania	November 28, 1960	France
Sierra Leone	April 24, 1961	Britain
Tanzania	September 12, 1961	Britain

Burundi	July 1, 1962	Belgium
Rwanda	July 1, 1962	Belgium
Algeria	July 3, 1962	France
Uganda	October 9, 1962	Britain
Kenya	December 12, 1963	Britain
Malawi	July 6, 1964	Britain
Zambia	October 25, 1964	Britain
The Gambia	February 18, 1965	Britain
Botswana	September 30, 1966	Britain
Lesotho	October 4, 1966	Britain
Mauritius	March 12, 1968	Britain
Swaziland	September 6, 1968	Britain
Equatorial Guinea	October 12, 1968	Spain
Guinea-Bissau	September 10, 1974	Portugal
Mozambique	June 25, 1975	Portugal
Cape Verde	July 5, 1975	Portugal
Comoros	July 6, 1975	France
São Tomé and Príncipe	July 12, 1975	Portugal
Angola	November 11, 1975	Portugal
Seychelles	June 26, 1976	Britain
Djibouti	June 27, 1977	France
Zimbabwe	April 18, 1980	Britain
Namibia	March 21, 1990	South Africa
Eritrea	May 24, 1993	Ethiopia
AFRICAN TERRITORIES AND ISLANDS NOT INDEPENDENT		
Spanish North Africa		Spain
Madeira Islands		Portugal
Canary Islands		Spain
St. Helena, Ascension&	Tristan da Cunha	Britain
Socotra		Yemen
Mayotte		Dependency of France; claimed by Comoros
Réunion		France
French Indian Ocean I		France

Western Sahara	Occupied and claimed by Morocco; contested by Polisario Front

Source: Griffiths, Ieuan. *The Atlas of African Affairs.* New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 1994.

The table above does not unveil any colonial reference for Ethiopia. There is no record of colonialisation to the Ethiopian people on the timeline of independence in the African continent. This suggests that Ethiopia has not been colonised. Many scholars sought to unwrap some of the reasons why Ethiopia was spared from colonial rule. Abraham (2006) affirms that Ethiopia is the only African society that successfully renounced European invasion during the scramble for the continent, thus, it has metaphorically become a pan-Africanist revolution and international resistance to imperialism although it was atypical.

The Battle of Adwa is acclaimed as a marvel of the African colonial history following a victory that defined the future of Ethiopia. Pankhurst (2007) notes that the Adwa triumph over the colonial forces is an essential incident in the shared memory of Africa as it is an exceptional event in the African continent that has been celebrated for many years with unabated zeal. The Italian colonial forces waged war against the Ethiopian elite who, on 1 March 1986, defeated the Italians in the town of Adwa, Tigray. Hence, christening the war, The Battle of Adwa. The victory at Adwa is perceived as a true loyalty and love for African identity and the invalidation of stereotypical notions such as the West being superlative compared to Africa. Henze, van Driel and Verloop (2007: 10) recount the outcomes of The Battle of Adwa:

> The Italians suffered about 6 000 killed and 1 500 wounded in the battle and subsequent retreat back into Eritrea, with 3 000 taken as prisoners. Brigadiers, Dabormida and Arimondi were amongst the dead. Ethiopian losses have been estimated to be around 4 000–5 000 killed and 8 000 wounded (Uhlig, *Encyclopedia*). In their flight to Eritrea, the Italians left behind all of their artillery and 11 000 rifles as well as most of their transport (Mclachlan, Healy, Robertson, Burger & De Kretser, 1986). Baratieri's army had been completely annihilated while Menelik's was intact as a fighting force and gained thousands of rifles and a great deal of equipment from the fleeing Italians. The 3 000 Italian prisoners, who included Brigadier Albertone, appear to have been treated as well as could be expected under difficult circumstances, though about 200 died of their wounds in captivity.

The Battle of Adwa has qualified and afforded Ethiopia a crown of valiance as the epitome of Pan-Africanism, an advocate of African culture and power. St. Clair (1970) affirms that the inception of Pan-Africanism could be unearthed from various political and religious manoeuvres referred to as Ethiopianisms. Furthermore, Pankhurst (2007: 3) notes:

> The success at Adwa throws light on the normative dimensions of Ethiopian civilization; it challenges the demeaning Western conception of African cultures; it demonstrates that being targeted for colonisation is not a prelude to fatality and that colonialism can be defeated.

The newly appointed leadership of the period of independence across the African continent tasked themselves with re-establishing Africa and remedying her pain, which was afflicted by the coloniser. The revival of Africa to its aboriginal position became a difficult if not virtually impossible puzzle to crack. For instance, the African Union (AU)'s vision of institutionalising unity in the continent is yet to be a success as racism, tribalism and xenophobia are haunting Africans. The West had its influence infiltrated in Africa's most essential dimensions. For instance, the ending of colonialism did not mean the end of the official use of the English language and other Western languages nor Western medicine, clothing and leadership style. Thus, Fanon (1963: 70) asserts:

> Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the part of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.

The democratic forces in the African continent introduced, revised, amended and implemented socio-political and economic initiatives to empower the previously colonised Africans. This is due to the disempowerment, hardships and exclusion that the colonised Africans suffered from the colonial government. For instance, the (South) African society has launched programmes such as Affirmative action and Black Economic Empowerment (BBE) that aim to address the inequalities of colonialism and apartheid. Hussein (2015) notes that it is mystifying as to why Africa's struggle for liberty and prosperity did not succeed subsequent to independence as anticipated. Furthermore, Loomba (1998: 11) notes:

> African novelists since the 1960‘s can […] be regarded as —no longer committed to the nation. The newly independent nation-state makes available the fruits of liberation only selectively and unevenly: the dismantling of colonial rule did not automatically bring about changes for the better in the status of women, the working class or the peasantry in most colonised countries.

The task to break away from colonial identities, which marginalised black people enthused African writers to use the barrel of a pen or literature as a platform to debate issues, raise awareness and communicate possible remedies. The democratic political structures also devised cultures and ideologies to brace the previously demoralised Africans by colonialists. For instance, decolonisation in Africa saw the elevation of indigenous languages, the celebration of heritage and the decolonisation of education. However, this has not exterminated the remnants of imperialism. Cameron, Craig and Paolin (1999: 51) affirm that if post-colonialism “forms part of a struggle over discursive power in the constitution of identity, then history in particular colonial history also plays a significant part.” The imperial ills are:

1.5.1 Racism

The racial tension that is bedevilling Africa today can be traced from the threshold of the colonisation of Africa. The colonialists held stereotypical perceptions about Africans and demonstrated disrespect for African culture (Christie, 1991). They regarded African natives as gullible, impotent and witless; thus, the colonialists treated and interacted with Africans as lesser persons to themselves. Bertram et al. (2013) corroborate that the coloniser normalised the idea that people white-skinned people were intellectually, psychologically, socially, politically and economically superior to black-skinned people. Colonisers began to regard black people as suitable and deserving of domestic work and hard labour. Montle (2020) postulates that the colonial forces are responsible for the racial stereotypes that are marginalising black women today such as the Mammy, Jezebel and Monarch stereotypes.

The political transition from autocracy to democracy meant a clarion call for the abolishment of tyrannical policies, which included racial segregation. As a result, unity and equality became a gospel of the post-colonial period, as Africa had to embrace multiracialism and dovetail diverse races in the continent: Black, Coloured, Indian and white. Due to the favour that the previous colonial government bestowed on the white

race, white supremacy lingers as a hurdle for unity. It is the colonial jurisdiction that referred to black people as apelike, which to them, meant that they are inferior beings (Plous & Willians, 1995).

Most African societies and the world at large saw black people referred to with offensive names that often dehumanised, humiliated and mocked them such as *'kaffir'* and 'nigga'. The term, *kaffir* was widely used by white supremacists in South Africa to refer to black people during the apartheid. In the democratic age, the word is considered a hate speech term and the government in 2001, passed a Promotion of Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act. Hence, anyone found guilty of abusing the term is subject to a hefty fine or imprisonment. Moreover, the other term, 'nigga' is also an offensive term used to refer to black Africans specifically those in the diaspora, mostly, in America. The term is also considered racist and is condemned by judicial systems in the world. Plous and Willians (1995: 795) point out the discomfiture of racist undertones:

> This view of blacks was so widely accepted that the entry for Negro in the ninth edition of the Atteridge (1884: 316) stated authoritatively that the African race occupied the lowest position of the evolutionary scale, thus affording the best material for the comparative study of the highest anthropoids and the human species. According to the Encyclopaedia Britan-nica, these anthropoid features included, among others:
>
> (a) the abnormal length of the arm, which in the erect position sometimes reaches the knee-pan;
>
> (b) weight of the brain, as indicating cranial capacity, ounces (highest gorilla) inferior beings; that is less than human.

The racial stereotypes not only threaten unity but also disadvantages black people socio-economically. For instance, Sniderman and Piazza (1993) maintain that majority of black and white people concur that average white people are more likely to earn a handsome salary, access quality and secure regular jobs than average black people. This observation is still perceived by many scholars after twenty years plus in the period of democracy. The minister of higher education, Blade Nzimande on times live (2012) said that black graduates experience more difficulty in securing employment than whites after. Correspondingly, Oliver (2019) notes that unlike their white

counterparts, young black professionals are struggling to make ends meet as they are haunted by the black tax.

1.5.2 Stereotypes against black identity

The remnants of colonialism in the democratic African period include the stereotypes that revolve around the concept of beauty. The black identity is victimised by Eurocentric terms of beauty. Hence, the African continent saw several black women resorting to skin whitening which is also referred to as skin bleaching, skin brightening and depigmentation in order to also partake in the glory of beauty. This means the attempt to reduce melanin or make the skin colour to be bright. Pedwell and Whitehead (2012) postulate that the difference in terms of skin colour amongst people is contingent upon the variation of melanin in the skin as little or lack of melanin results.

It is the racial tension and depictions of imperial racism that have left a profound trademark on the conceptions of beauty in Africa and the world (Erasmus, 1997). Due to desperation to look beautiful, black women have fallen victims to skin whitening. This is because colonial forces sold the notion that black is ugly and white is beautiful. Riazuddin (2011: 2) affirms:

> When we look at, for example, a lack hair care industry or skin Complexion or colourism and skin bleaching, when we analyse music videos and what type black beauty is accepted within Black communities as well as by White mainstream media, we reveal a world in which ideas of beauty are placed within a historically racist as well as gendered framework.

The colonialists' trivialisation of black people meant that everything that is associated with the black identity deserves mediocrity and can never surpass anything that is linked to whiteness. This belief became a benchmark of beauty in the post-colonial age. Notwithstanding the Eurocentric beauty standards, authentic beauty can be perceived as a counterpoint to depict what beauty has come to mean in society and this could be seen as a deviation from the ideals of oppressive systems of beauty perpetuated by the West (Thomik, 2014). Moreover, black women's societal pressure to use skin whitening products has not only had them brightening their skins but also risking their lives. This pressure is often fortified by the advertorials on social media. An example of these adverts is displayed below:

Figure 1.12 Beauty standards (Source: pinterest.com)

The image above advertises a skin whitening product through a woman with two men who, according to the title, now adore her white skin. This could imply that her skin was not as white as it is now and therefore, was not adored before. To achieve this white skin, the passage next to the picture reveals: "…she learned of a delicate, dainty White cream called Golden Peacock Bleach Crème. This new discovery brought out the hidden natural whiteness of her skin in three days" (line 4).

Nombulelo Pakkies (49) from Lamontville on DailySun Newspaper (26 August 2016) explicated how skin whitening posed a threat to her health. She admitted to using a face lightener for over 18 years unaware of its side effects until her skin began to become itchy when exposed to the sun: "I didn't know there was a problem until a doctor told me how the cream was affecting my skin." Moreover, Tshabalala (2015) in

her study found that women held a perception that men are attracted to a lighter skin tone, hence the shocking use of skin whitening products and directly promoting colourism-favour towards identity. The skins of the users of the products often turn like this:

Figure 1.13 Side effects of skin whitening
(Source:howtowhitenyourskin.wordpress.com)

Skin whitening creams come with severe side effects that could result in death. Medical experts from the University of KwaZulu Natal conducted research and found that 90% of people that utilise skin whitening products are ignorant of the complications of using which include, swelling and itchy skin, permanent scars, cancer and undoable thinning of the skin (Naidoo, 2019). Furthermore, the head of dermatology at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, Professor Ncoza Dlova brought his concern:

> It saddens me to see patients with damaged skin and having to tell them: 'I'm sorry there is nothing I can do to help you.' It makes me even more sad to realise that patients did not even know the active ingredients of the creams they used nor the complications of such use. Hence, our main objective is to get the word out there and inform and educate our consumers so that they can make informed choices (Naidoo, 2019: i).

1.5.3 Inequality

The departure of the colonial government left Africa with a mountain of challenges that include appalling socio-economic equalities. Although the democratic leaders embarked on a mission to unite and institutionalise equality amongst racially diverse Africans, inequality has kept on deteriorating since the advent of colonialists in Africa. Chen and Ravallion (2012) rank Africa the second top continent in the world in terms of inequality with the first position acquired by Latin America. Inequality is a descendant of colonialism. Black Africans during the colonial rule were deemed mediocre and beneath white people. This has manifested in the democratic era where many black people live in poverty, are unemployed and stereotyped. Schensul (2009: 16) concurs that colonial policies that formerly governed are responsible for the socio-economic disparity of black people:

> unemployment reflects the overhang of apartheid's race-based labour markets, with moderate unemployment in White areas, compared to a continued and increasing crisis of joblessness in African areas. Indian areas fall between the two, as is the case geographically. Housing and service figures (the latter using in-home toilet access as a proxy) show the near-universal formality and servicing of White and Indian areas, in stark contrast to far lower figures for African areas.

The concern against inequality saw plenty of attention on the subject of land ownership. In the (South) African context, land ownership is an ongoing subject of debate in the modern-day. Frankema (2006) confirms that the colonial heritage of land-crisis is still, subsequent to two centuries of sovereignty, a prime pillar of persistent levels of inequality. The land is one of the major determiners of the wealth of an entity and Africa by virtue of being the second largest continent in the world with approximately 23% of the world's entire land area, has caught the eye of European powers. Thus, Manning (2013) notes that imperialism in a great swath of the African continent and the colonial policy known as apartheid in South Africa has left a huge gap in the distribution of land. Moreover, Callahan and Zukowski (2017) assert that

white people owned 80% of the land in 1994 whereas 50.000 white farmers owned 85 % of the agricultural land. The president of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in South Africa, Julius Malema corroborated this claim during a cape chamber debate (2016) with Clem Sunter:

> …80% of land owners in this country [South Africa] are white people yet 80% of the population is black people. It is unacceptable, which is why we have to have this debate…almost 10% of the [South African] population owns the land.

1.5.4 Human trafficking

The colonial government during its rule in Africa instilled Western mind-sets, policies and identities in the continent to steer at ease the future of Africa in the direction handpicked by European forces. African natives were enslaved and made to believe that slavery is their destiny and should be obedient to their master, the white man. Africans like other colonies such as the Arabs were captured, enslaved and moved to different parts of the world to perform tasks that the slave-masters had for them. At times, the tasks would include sexual abuse, domestic work and hard labour.

The most chanting example of the colonial exploitation of African natives is the trafficking of the African Khoisan woman, Saartjie Baartman. She was sexually abused several times by colonialists and sent to different parts of the world where her body was commodified. Baartman, due to her large buttocks which colonialists deemed extraordinary, was captured in the 19th century and taken to Europe where she had been displayed as a freak show using the name, Hottentot Venus (Davie, 2012). She was often forced to strip naked and exhibit her body for people to watch and pay a lot of money. The colonialists sold and resold Baartman amongst themselves until her demise in December 1815 (Crais & Scully, 2010). According to Qureshi (2004), subsequent to Baartman's death, her body was dissected and the remains were exhibited in the Museum of Man in Paris for more than a century until her remains were brought back to South Africa in 2002 and buried in Eastern Cape. Baartman's case substantiates the appalling human trafficking, particularly among women who are forced into drugs and prostitution. Even after her death, Baartman's body was still treated as a commodity and kept in a museum. See it below:

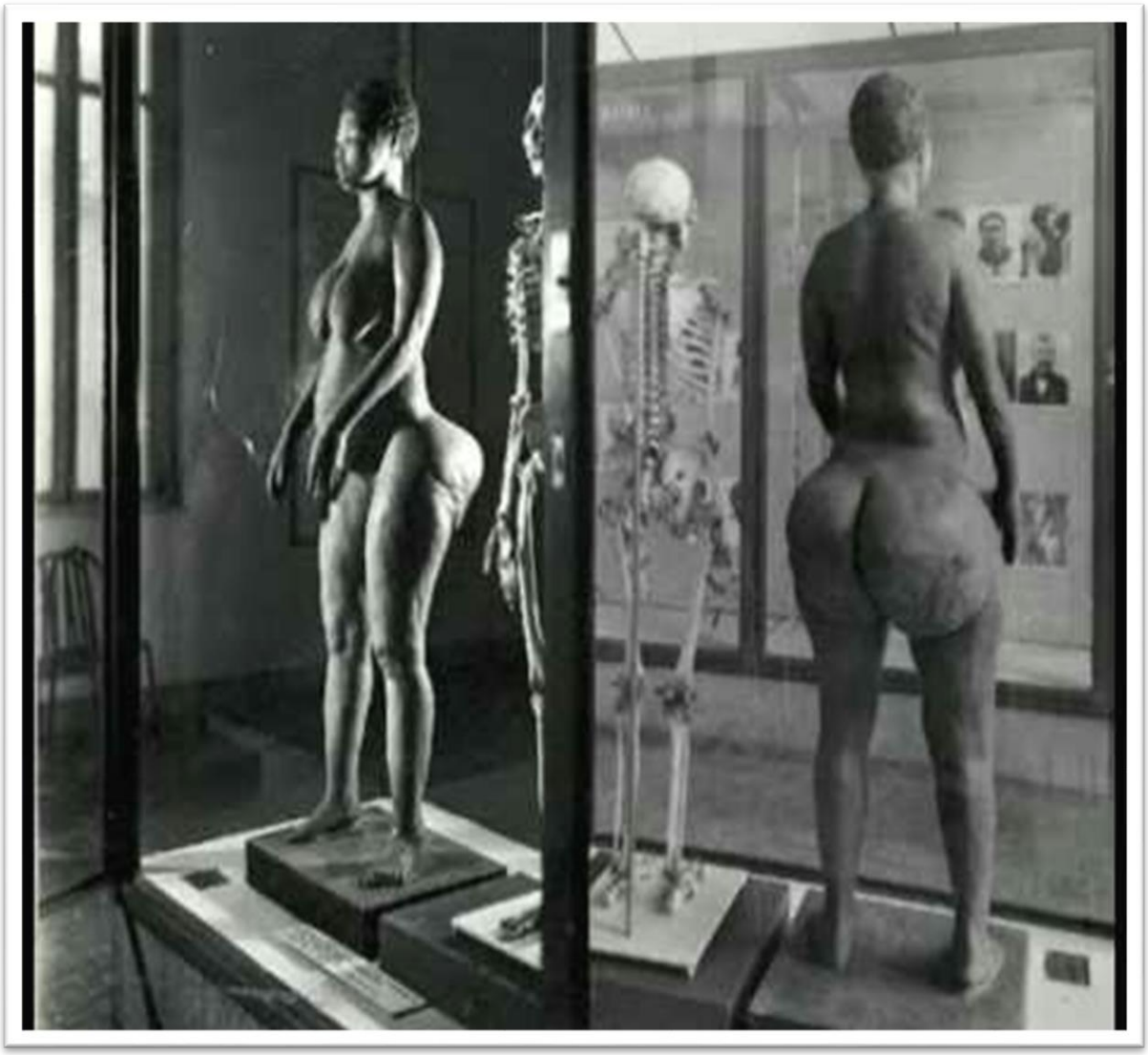


Figure 1.14 Saartjie Baartman (Source: thepatriot.co.zw)

The image displays the body of Saartjie Baartman. Her genitals are shown off to attract attention to the Museum: “People came to see her because they saw her not as a person but as a pure example of this one part of the natural world” (Crais & Scully, 2010: 25). Her body was dissected by a European scientist, Georges Cuvier who described Baartman in line with his racial evolution theory as possessing ape-like traits as he perceived her small ears as homogeneous to the ones of an orangutan and analogised her vivacity, while still alive, to the briskness of a monkey (Sadia, 2004).

Racial stereotypes against black people not only dominated the socio-economic and political sphere but also the world of science as evidenced by Baartman’s case. Furthermore, slavery has manifested as human trafficking today and the historical

effects of colonialism are presented as the pretexts of human-trafficking, prostitution and sexual exploitation of black women (Tocher, 2012).

1.5.5 Xenophobia

Prior to the colonisation of Africa, the continent embraced an identity that had no Western depiction. Africans subscribed to one identity, culture and influence under the authority of kingdoms. The sense of oneness and identity that all Africans lived by, meant that there were no fixed boundaries amongst the kingdoms (Bertram et al., 2013). This is further evidenced by the map of Africa in 1800 below, which portrays a borderless African continent:

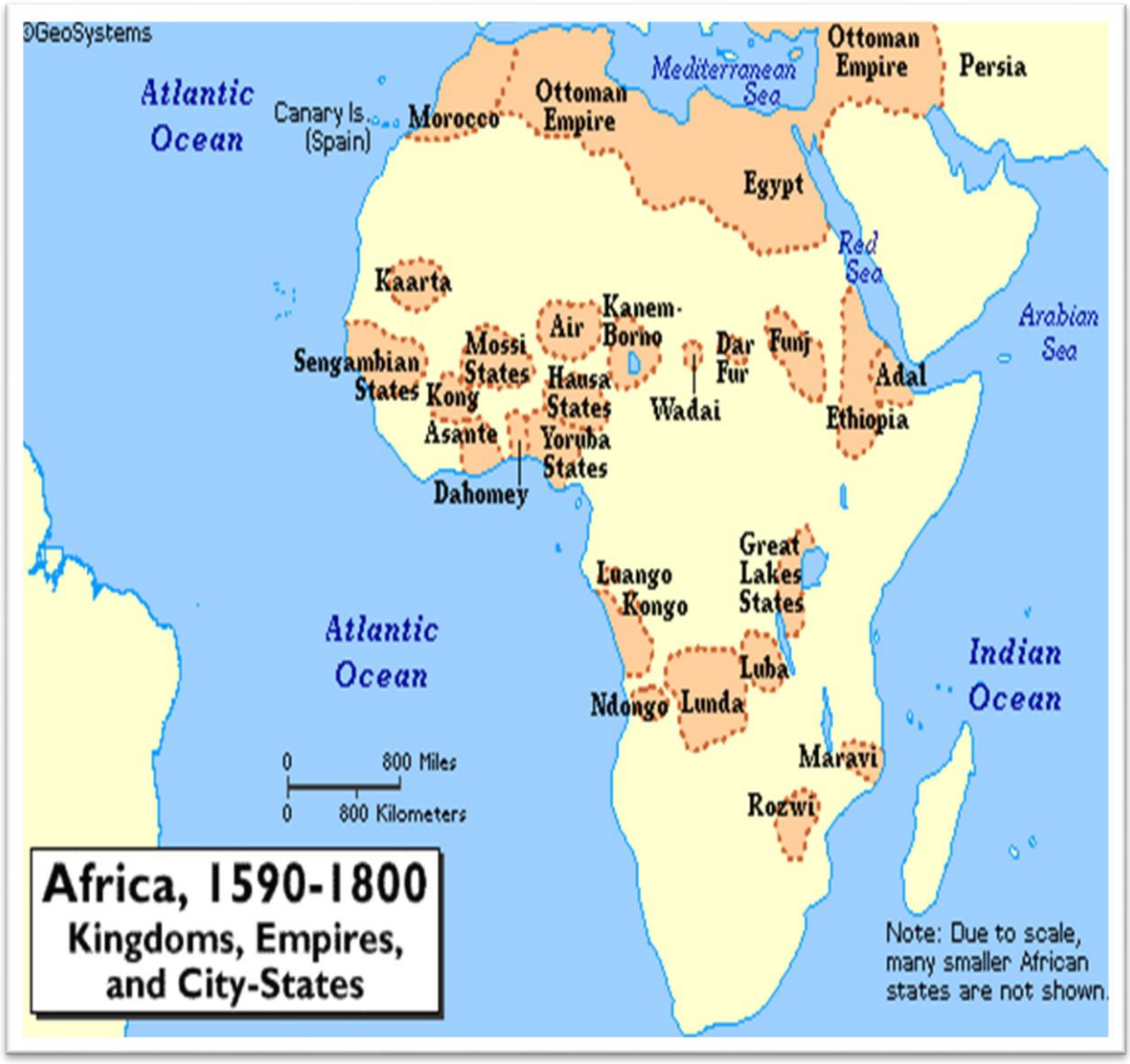


Figure 1.15 Borderless Africa (Source: sahistory.org.za)

The image above shows Africa before it was divided and shared amongst colonial powers. It shows Africa as one and there are no fixed boundaries between the African kingdoms displayed on the map. This evinces the culture of separation that the West vitalised in the continent as Africans already has squabbles that menaced their unity and this could be substantiated by various African wars where kings fought for territories. As a result, Africa is now a demarcated nation. See the map below:

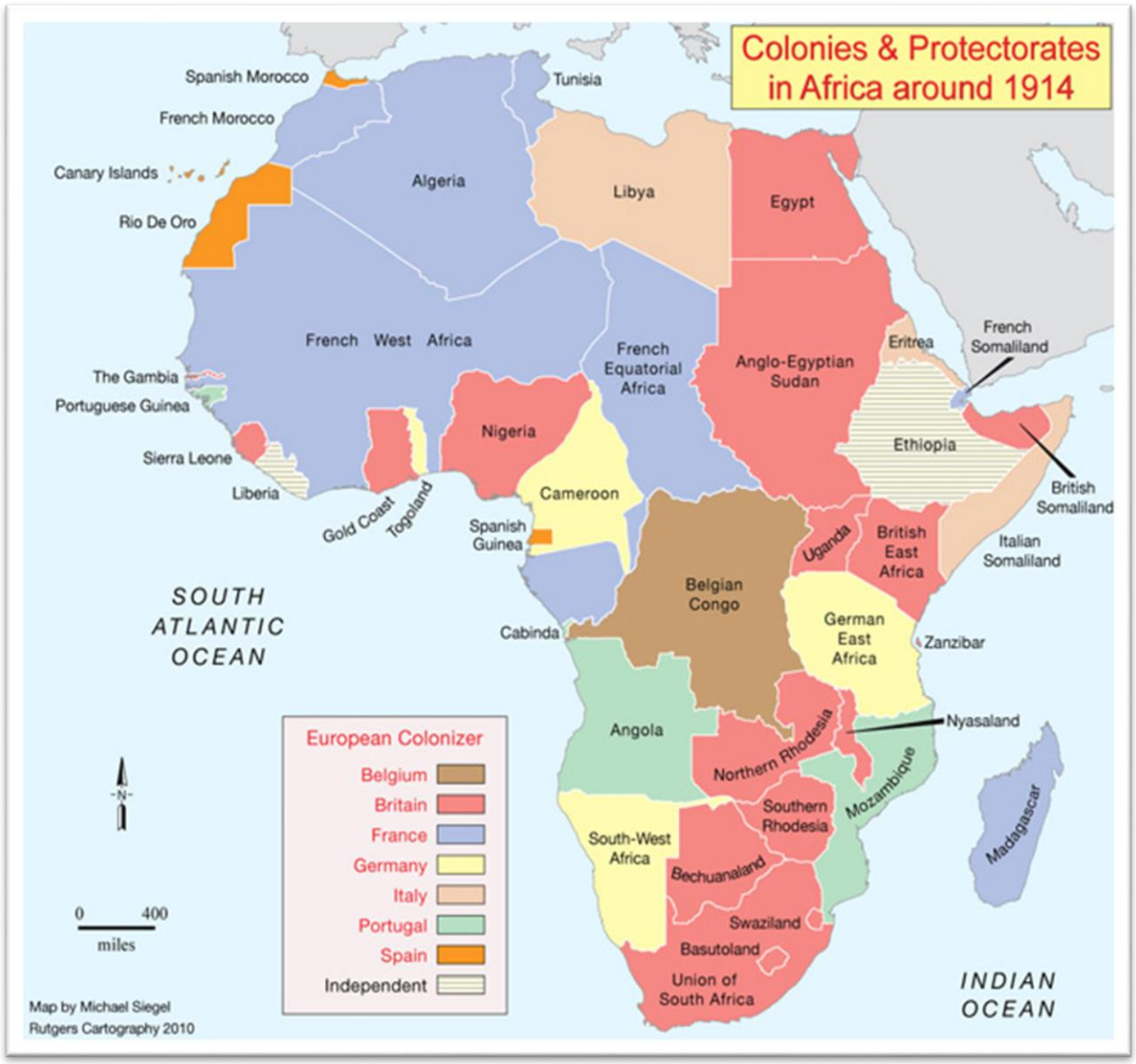


Figure 1.16 Demarcated Africa (Source: seriousexpat.wordpress.com)

The colonialists divided the African continent into 54 states and each European power had several African countries under its rule; the key in the map above indicates the allocation (Sayre, 1999). This division has not ended with the demise of the colonial government and has bred challenges that question the *Ubuntu* today such as

xenophobia. Independent Africa adopted *Ubuntu* as an agent of peace, unity and progress. Mogoboya (2011) notes that *Ubuntu* has qualified Africans to embrace their identity and sense of oneness through the communal lives they harbour. However, *Ubuntu* appears to be inadequate to harmonise and equate diverse Africans.

The division normalised through borderlines in the continent birthed the vexing xenophobia in present-day Africa. Neocosmos (2008) avers that xenophobia is a hurdle of the post-colonial era, one that is linked with the politics of predominant groups in the era subsequent to independence. In the year 2019, Africa saw a concerning deterioration of xenophobia. In the (South) African society specifically, a surge of hatred against foreign nationals threatened the country's peace and values. In 2019, the president of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa, during the funeral of the former president of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe, gave an apology in his speech: "I stand before you as a fellow African to express my regret and apologise for what has happened in our country [South Africa]." Xenophobia has not only comprised *Ubuntu* but also relegated "social cohesion, peaceful co-existence, and good governance, and constitutes a violation of human rights" (Solomon & Kosaka, 2013: 5).

South Africa's democratic dispensation intensified the influx of foreign nationals. People from neighbouring countries migrated to South Africa due to several factors such as oppressive systems in their countries of birth as well as economic hardships. This massive migration to the country angered South Africans who muttered that their jobs are stolen, crime-related activities as human trafficking, drugs and sexual exploitation of girls are fortified by the foreign nations. Solomon and Kosaka (2013: 5) affirm:

> Possibly, the most remarkable feature of xenophobia experienced in South Africa is that it appears to have taken on a primarily racial form; it is directed at migrants, and especially black migrants, from elsewhere on the continent, as opposed to, for example, Europeans or Americans, who are, to a certain extent, practically welcomed with open arms. This racially selective xenophobia is exemplified by the fact that many of those in leadership positions are of foreign origin, suggesting that exclusion is not simply directed against 'foreigners' but against those who seem to correspond to stereotypes of the stranger, especially, that come from Africa.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Apartheid

Apartheid is an Afrikaner term, which means separateness (Comfort, 2009). The term has been commonly used to refer to a political system that promoted colonial ideals of discrimination against non-white Africans. It was characterised by an authoritarian political culture based on white supremacy which ensured that South Africa was dominated politically, socially, and economically by the nation's minority white population (James, 1999). Moreover, Apartheid devalued *Ubuntu* in South Africa and priced racial separation above unity, hence, non-favoured Africans by the system, black people were dehumanised, shamed, tortured and often killed.

1.6.2 Colonialism

Colonialism is associated with the transference of a nation to a different territory where the advent settled permanently and maintained allegiance to the countries of their origin (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). The term emerges from the word ‘colony’, which in Latin, is *colonus* and refers to a farmer. A colonised state becomes known as a colony. Jürgen (2005) posits that colonialism is a rapport between the native and minority foreign invaders. The colonial rulers are the ones that mete out the integral decisions that impact the lives of the victims of colonialism. Moreover, colonialism can be classified in four different forms:

- Settler colonialism which involves large-scale immigration, often motivated by religious, political, or economic reasons. It aims largely to replace any existing population. Here, a large number of people emigrate to the colony for the purpose of staying and cultivating the land (Baker, 2009: 325).

- Exploitation colonialism involves fewer colonists and focuses on the exploitation of natural resources or population as labour, typically to the benefit of the metropole. This category includes trading posts as well as larger colonies where colonists would constitute much of the political and economic administration (Roisin & Enrico, 2014: 125).

- Surrogate colonialism involves a settlement project supported by a colonial power, in which most of the settlers do not come from the same ethnic group as the ruling power (Veracini, 2007: 271).

- Internal colonialism is a notion of uneven structural power between areas of a state. The source of exploitation comes from within the state. This is demonstrated in the way control and exploitation may pass from whites of the colonising country to a white immigrant population within a newly independent country (Gabbidon, 2010: 8).

1.6.3 Diaspora

Diaspora depicts the dispersion of languages and cultures through the spread of people to different parts of the world. The Sub-Saharan Africans are recognised as one of the greatest Diasporas of the modern-day and are occasioned by the colonial past where 9.4-12 million West Africans were transported to America during the Atlantic slave (Jayasuriya & Pankhurst, 2003). Moreover, Safran (1991: 10) established characteristics that better define diaspora:

- For something to be referred to as diaspora there should be a dispersal from homeland to two or more foreign regions;
- Those people who are away from their homeland have a collective memory about their homeland;
- They have a belief that they will always be outrageous in their host state;
- They idealise their putative ancestral home;
- There is a belief that all members of that society should be committed to the maintenance or restoration of the homeland and a strong ethnic group consciousness with a belief in a common fate.

1.6.4 Hegemony

The term hegemony refers to the power and authority that one entity possesses over another. Hegemony hinges on the degree of influence that the entity in power can exert over others. Hall (1977) asserts that hegemony is framing all rival definitions of veracity within the authoritarian's class range bringing substitutes within their prospects of thought. The domineering entity sets the mental and structural limitations on which subordinate entities live and comprehend their subordination to sustain dominance.

1.6.5 Identity

Identity denotes the identification of something or someone through a variety of characteristics such as period, lifestyle, age group, race, tribe, name, meaning, culture and religion. These qualities can serve as indicators or defining agents of a person, group of people, country, or continent's identity. Different scholars define identity according to their set of beliefs about life:

- Jenkins (1996: 4): how individuals and collectives are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectives.
- Deng (1995: 1): describes the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others based on race, ethnicity, religion, language and culture.
- Bloom (1990: 52): National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols – have internalised the symbols of the nation.
- Abrams (1988: 2): people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others.
- Wendt (1992: 397): relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self.

1.6.6 De-coloniality and Post-coloniality

The binaries, de-coloniality and post-coloniality, are domains that derive from the concept of coloniality. It is imperative to remark on the distinction between coloniality and colonialism. Coloniality refers to the perpetuation of colonial notions of dominion subsequent to the ending of colonial administrations (Grosfoguel, 2007: 219). However, colonialism is a historical activity that culminated in the subjugation, conquest and administration of a state or continent such as Africa, which was invaded by European countries such as Britain, France, Portugal and Spain for the specific purpose of creating and advancing their empires, seizing human and natural resources and the enslaving African natives for European profit (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

The prefixes, (De-) and (Post-) are added to the term coloniality, thus supplementing the meaning of the latter differently. The prefix (De-) means opposite or reverse whilst (Post-) means after. For this reason, despite deriving from the same concept, de-coloniality and post-coloniality convey diverse perspectives. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013: 13) defines de-coloniality as:

> born out of a realisation that ours is an asymmetrical world order that is sustained not only by colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to produce alienated Africans who are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them, and liking the Europe and America that rejects them.

On the other hand, Ashcroft, Griffits and Tiffin (1995: 119) refer to post-coloniality as:

> the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: of a relatively small, western-style, western-trained, group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism of the periphery. In the west, they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the west they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other and for Africa.

On the basis of the information noted, it is patent that both de-coloniality and post-coloniality are premised on the ideology of coloniality. What fuses De-coloniality with post-coloniality is that "it arises from this context in which the humanity of black people is doubted and emerges as one way of telling the story of the modern world from the experiences of slavery, imperialism, and colonialism" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 12), and post-coloniality, in this case, asserts the *status quo*.

1.6.7 Imperialism

The term 'imperialism' stems from the Latin word, *'imperium'* that means authority, power and sovereignty (Lewis, 2016). It is a practice of a country or empire enforcing its rule over others and as it usually includes unprovoked exertion of military power, it is historically considered unacceptable (Lonely, 2020). Moreover, it is often conflated with colonialism. The variation between the two terms is that while "imperialism operates from the centre, is a state policy and is developed for ideological as well as financial reasons, colonialism is simply the development for settlement or commercial intentions and colonialism still includes invasion" (Phipps & Young, 2015: 54).

1.6.8 Whiteness

In colonial studies, the concept ‘whiteness’ is associated with white privilege or white supremacy. The term is inspired by the evaluation of what whiteness would mean when examined as a culture, race and systemic racism (Desmond-haris, 2015). Hence, “the rhetorics of white guilt are tiresome, clichéd, disingenuous, and everywhere and now that the stereotype of 'the guilty white' is almost entrenched in its negativity as 'the racist white', people actively try to dis-identify from both” (Shanon (1998: 49).

1.7. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The colonial empire altered the landscape of African traditional societies to African-westernised societies. The Western identity was imposed upon Africans and this “vaporised” the aboriginal identity of Africans. European elites overpowered African natives and colonised them, and conquered their land and wealth, and subjected them to: hardships, slavery, destitution, torture and misery. The colonisers capitalised on their power and attempted to supplant the African identity with Western identity by introducing Western culture, religion, medicine and visions in Africa. Eelungisi (2017) asserts that the colonially-orientated estrangement of the African mind-set, which participates in the corruption, moral decay and anarchy in Africa, contributes to the prospect of an authentic African identity pending.

Today, Tembo (2016: 20) asks, “how do we go about imagining socio-political and cultural spaces of agency in the contemporary African situations when the main conceptual tool of liberation which is African identity is stuck between the polarities of essentialism and anti-essentialism?” Nevertheless, the European empire was forced out of power from the 1950s and this enthused Africans to embark on a quest to revive the true African identity and recreate a new independent Africa. Notwithstanding the dispensation of independence in the African continent, Africans are still challenged by colonial identities. This includes the rise of poverty, moral decay, debasement of standards and underdevelopment, and “it is disputable that all these demeaning issues bedevilling the contemporary African society emerge from the cardinal point of identity-crisis, which a variety of African states are ravaged with (Afisi, 2008).

Since the democratic dispensation, Africa has and is still on an expedition to re-establish and re-claim the pride and identity that it has lost to the West. This is because "the quest for a personal and racial-cultural identity built on spiritual guardianship of traditional laws; the belief that writing is an integral part of self-definition; the emphasis on historical reconstruction; the ethical imperative reconciliation with the past" (Boehmer, 2005: 221).

1.8 THE ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

The theoretical background is essential as it provides the basic premise of the study. It gives the study a standpoint and contextualisation, thus creating the basis of argument throughout the study. This study focuses on and uses post-colonial literature to discuss the theme of identity in post-colonial Africa. According to Ngugi (1986), post-colonial studies aim to aid and intensify the process of intact decolonisation of societies politically and psychologically involving colossal and powerful convalescence of the pre-colonial cultures. It is underpinned by Post-colonial theory, Afrocentricity and feminism, which aid the researcher to navigate through post-colonial literature. These theories draw relevance to the study from the ending of colonialism that challenged scholars to devise theories with which they approach the colonial past. They are chosen because of their role in Post-colonial criticism and reflection on the culminating period of colonial forces and the previously colonised's expedition to political emancipation and recuperation from the ills of colonialism (Ashcroft et al., 2002). Intellectuals in the field of literary studies and linguistics argue that the human psychological dimension comprehended everything by means of language and in some sense, a text (Evans, 2008).

1.8.1 Post-colonial Theory

Subsequent to the fall of the colonial regiment, the new age, the post-colonial period sets out to assert a democratic direction for the peoples living under independence. The post-colonial period saw the reinforcement of post-colonial literature, which in the African context, contemporary scholars used as a platform to raise their authentic voices in an effort to contribute to the rebuilding of African societies. These scholars found themselves confronting remnants of colonialism and the *status quo* of the post-colonial Africa, mostly through literary criticism. The post-colonial theory became a

relevant lens to crystalise, argue and discuss the issues that come to grips with Africa in the post-colonial period. Ashcroft et al. (2002) assert that post-colonial theory has been evidenced to be amongst the most distinct and contentious spheres in cultural and literary studies.

Post-colonial theory has become a basic premise of post-colonial studies to redefine new identities, address the colonial past, and compensate for the damages caused by colonial powers. This study centres on the post-colonial period of the African continent and post-colonial theory will be used to critically examine African literature that challenges the colonial past that has warmed its way to dominance in the independent states of Africa. Eelungisis (2017) notes that subsequent to independence, a major crisis is still persistent owing to the leadership of the British colonial administration. This noted, post-colonial theory becomes a relevant theory to explore the aftermaths of colonialism and the issues that originate from colonial inspiration. Moreover, Lye and Waldron (1998: 10) describe the post-colonial theory as:

> Post-colonial theory deals with the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonised countries, or literature written in colonising countries, which deals with colonisation or colonised peoples. It focuses particularly on the way in which literature by the colonising culture distorts the experience and realities, and inscribes the inferiority, of the colonised people on literature by colonised peoples, which attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of that past's inevitable otherness.

1.8.2 Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity is a strand of post-colonial theory that gives special focus to Africanism. The compound word, ‘Afrocentricity’ derives from the terms, ‘Africa’ and ‘centre’. The motivation behind the coinage of the term is its focus on African identities and function as the situating of ‘African ideals’ at the centre of post-colonial analysis that comprises African cultures, identities and behavioural patterns (Asante, 1998). Afrocentricity has become an essential approach in literary studies as it provides grounding for African literary criticism. It is a theory premised on the thought that Africans need to activate a sense of agency to attain sanity (Asante, 2009). This study aims to re-conceptualisation and re-examine African identity from a post-colonial standpoint and leans on the theory of Afrocentricity to depict the aboriginal African identity that can

utterly distinguish African natives from West influence. This, *inter alia*, "directly combats European hegemonic discourse in order to negate its inherent Eurocentrism as a pole diametrically opposed to that associated with Africanists" (Rafapa, 2005: 11). In this manner, Afrocentricity will framework this study and unveil the historical unfolding of the African identity-crisis in the continent from a literary perspective. Andersson (2004) notes that African literature has been on its excursion from responding to colonialism, encountering post-independent disenchantment and ultimately pursuing development and regeneration amongst refutals and persistent race, gender and class struggles of the post-colony.

The theory of Afrocentricity is relevant to African literatures as it aims to redefine Africa and re-establish African identity. Most of the trending themes in African literatures revolve around the confrontation of the colonial past that has moulded the landscape of present Africa. The downfall of colonialism gave prominence to the movement of Afrocentricity to confront colonial legacies such as language, religious and cultural identity crises. The pioneers of Afrocentricity advocate the claim the efforts of a variety of black Africans have faced discretisation as part of the colonial legacy and slavery's pathology of facing African contribution out of history (Andrade, 1990). Asante (1998), a professor in the Department of Africology at Temple University has widely contributed remarkable ideas on the theory of Afrocentricity such as the five general characteristics of the Afrocentric method:

- The Afrocentric method considers that no phenomena can be apprehended adequately without locating it first. A phenomenon must be studied and analysed in relationship to psychological time and space. It must always be located. This is the only way to investigate the complex interrelationships of science and art, design and execution, creation and maintenance, generation and tradition, and other areas.

- The Afrocentric method considers phenomena to be diverse, dynamic, and in motion and therefore it is necessary for a person to accurately note and record the location of phenomena even in the midst of fluctuations. This means that the investigator must know where he or she is standing in the process.

- The Afrocentric method is a form of cultural criticism that examines etymological uses of words and terms in order to know the source of an author's location. This allows us to intersect ideas with

actions and actions with ideas on the basis of what is pejorative and ineffective and what is creative and transformative at the political and economic levels.

- The Afrocentric method seeks to uncover the masks behind the rhetoric of power, privilege, and position in order to establish how principal myths create place. The method enthrones critical reflection that reveals the perception of monolithic power as nothing but the projection of a cadre of adventurers.

- The Afrocentric method locates the imaginative structure of a system of economics, bureau of politics, policy of government, expression of cultural form in the attitude, direction, and language of the phenomenon, be it text, institution, personality, interaction, or event.

1.8.3 Feminism

Many branches of feminism stemmed out to confront different challenges against women from the colonial background to the post-colonial present day. This includes: ecofeminism, multicultural and global feminism, marxist feminism, socialist feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, existentialist feminism, postmodern feminism, radical, liberal, cultural, positive sex feminism, etc. Amongst the aforementioned aspects, positive sex feminism becomes more relevant for this study as it explores the odds against women's sexual freedom in the democratic space as reflected in Gordimer's novels. Most positive sex feminists postulate that "prostitution is not necessarily bad for women if prostitutes are treated with respect and if the professions within sex work are destigmatized" (Bell, 2009: 27).

Gordimer's novels set to out define democratic identities and depict what political emancipation means for women. In her novel, *None to Accompany Me,* Gordimer portrays the post-colonial era as a space for women to seek, assert and reassert their new identities by breaking oppressive socio-cultural and political structures that marginalise them. The colonial empire and its capitalist economic dimension had an impact on the lives of African indigenous women who in the pre-colonial era had diverse but valuable societal roles (FemNorthNet, 2016). Feminism is an institution where women are empowered, their rights embraced and it "incorporates the position that societies prioritise the male point of view, and that women are treated unjustly within those societies" (Gamble, 2006: vii). This noted, feminism becomes a relevant

theory to aid post-colonial theory and Afrocentricity in the repurposing of identity in the post-colonial period through Gordimer's novels.

1.9. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.9.1 Aim of the Study

This study aims to repurpose identity in African literatures with reference to Nadine Gordimer's post-colonial novels: *No Time Like the Present* (2012), *The Pickup* (2001), *The House Gun* (1998), *None to accompany Me* (1994), *July's People* (1981) and *A Guest of Honour* (1970). Gordimer's chosen novels present a reflection of identity-crisis in independent Africa.

1.9.2 Objectives of the Study

- To explore the identity of Africa in the post-colonial period through the prism of Nadine Gordimer's selected novels.
- To probe into the root cause of African identity-crisis.
- To examine the characteristics of Africanism and who an African is.
- To conscientise Africans about their true identity.
- To investigate the remnants of colonialism in the post-colonial African societies.

1.10. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section focuses on the research method and design, data collection and quality criteria of the study.

1.10.1 Research method

This study predicates on the qualitative approach, which will positively qualify and enhance the researcher's ability to make applicable interpretations of the phenomena under the study. The qualitative method is a scientific technique of observation to accumulate non-numeric data and this method often draws from the depiction of phenomena excluding counts or measures, characteristics, concepts, meanings, definitions, metaphors and symbols (Babbie, 2014).

1.10.2 Research design

A qualitative textual analysis design is adopted to undergird this study. Allen (2017) notes that textual analysis design involves comprehending language, symbols and messages present in texts to gain information regarding how people make sense of and communicate life experiences. To this noted, textual analysis becomes the relevant design for this study to depict, interpret and understand the elements of literary content in Nadine Gordimer's selected texts (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). The design has aided the researcher to collect thematic or stylistic patterns in Gordimer's selected literary texts and intently evaluate them.

1.10.3 Sampling

This study employs purposive sampling as the researcher selects the sample based on who is thought to be appropriate for the study (Lucas, 2014). Purposive sampling could be defined as "a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher" (Black, 2010: 15). The researcher chooses to explore Nadine Gordimer amongst other African writers. This is because, Gordimer is a (South) African political activist, 1991 Nobel Prize recipient and fiction writer considered to have been "of very great benefit to humanity" (Nobel Media AB, 2019). She has persistently sought to deracinate colonial exoticism through her fictional work and this led to some of them such as *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People* being banned by the colonial government of apartheid in (South) Africa (Medallie, 1999).

Gordimer's six novels: *No Time Like the Present* (2012), *The Pickup* (2001), *The House Gun* (1998), *None to accompany Me* (1994), *July's People* (1981) and *A Guest of Honour* (1970) are sampled for this study and will be analysed from a post-colonial perspective. The research selected the above-mentioned novels because they mirror the issues of identity-crisis, racism, poverty, debasement of standards and moral decay in the post-colonial Africa. For this reason, the study will employ the theory-guided type of purposive sampling technique as it is "the process of selecting incidents, slices of life, periods, or people on the basis of their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical constructs" (Patton, 2001: 238). It is worthy to point out that some of Gordimer's literary works provide "analysis

via postmodernism as a literary backdrop to interpret the representation of the socio-cultural condition in [post-colonial Africa] where the reconsideration of meta-narratives of pre-conceived truths reflects not only the crisis of the individual but also that of a whole nation" (Diallo, 2018: 114).

1.10.4 Data Collection

The researcher has used both primary and secondary materials for this study.

1.10.4.1 Primary sources

This study is a textual appreciation of Nadine Gordimer's selected novels reflecting on the post-colonial Africa: *No Time Like the Present*, *The Pickup*, *The House Gun*, *None to Accompany Me*, *July's People* and *A Guest of Honour*. Data has been collected from the chosen novels as primary sources. The researcher has studied, analysed and interpreted them.

1.10.4.2 Secondary sources

The primary sources have been supplemented by critical works, pictures, essays, research papers and journal articles, which were collected from the internet, archives and libraries and used as secondary sources.

1.10.5 Data Analysis

Data from both primary and secondary sources will be examined to juxtapose, analyse and interpret a variety of ideological perspectives. The ideas acquired from the sources outlined (6.2) will be critiqued and synthesised using the thematic analysis technique. Maguire and Delahun (2017: 3352) define thematic analysis as "the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data." The researcher chose the thematic analysis technique as it provides the core skills needed for conducting many kinds of analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1.10.6 Quality Criteria

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the trustworthiness of qualitative research is determined by the four criteria: credibility; transferability; dependability and; confirmability.

1.10.6.1 Credibility

Credibility is one of the fundamental factors of ensuring trustworthiness and is about determining how congruent the findings are with reality (Cameron, 2011). The study is systematic, scientific and scholarly in that it follows the principles of literary research.

1.10.6.2 Transferability

Transferability requires the researcher to provide sufficient data and context to enable the audience to judge whether or the findings can be applied to other situations and contexts (Cameron, 2011). This study is foregrounded on trending developments and discussions in the field of African literatures and on established scholars who deliberate the issues.

1.10.6.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to having sufficient details and documentation of the methods employed so that the study can be scrutinised and replicated (Cameron, 2011). The study also exudes the ethos, terminology, and epistemology of the field of African literatures.

1.10.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to ensuring that the study's findings are the result of the experiences of the informants rather than the preferences of the researcher (s) and can be achieved through an audit trail of the raw data, memos, notes, data reduction and analysis (Cameron, 2011). The researcher has defended his proposal at the Departmental, School and Faculty levels. The thesis will be externally evaluated in order to assess its credibility. There may also be a viva voce held on the thesis.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will make a significant contribution to the existing body of post-colonial African scholarship. It will proselytise literary interrogations of challenges vexing Africa today, notably, identity-crisis through the study and exploration of texts created in English literature. Fresh perspectives and knowledge will be produced from the findings of the study to empower and strengthen scholars of African literature in English including students, lecturers, researchers and philosophers. This noted, the study becomes a need because of its value to literary appreciation, African

renaissance, English discipline and the course of remedying socio-economic issues perpetuated by identity-crisis in Africa.

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This study does not require any ethical clearance because it does not use human subjects. It is primarily text-based and it debars any form of participant observation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. However, the researcher will obtain permission to proceed with the study from Turfloop's Research Ethics Committee (TREC).

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the historical development of African identity-crisis which is a demeaning odd in the post-colonial age. The ending of colonialism saw the birth of colonial fragments in the independent African societies, which continue to marginalise Africans despite the dispensation of independence. Today, Africa is yet to utterly abrogate the problem of identity, which engendered the erosion of the aboriginal African identity. Hence, the "heritage of moral discipline, dignity, diligence, faithfulness, honesty and sound integrity; second, unbearable level of conflicts emanating from intolerance due to unguarded acceptance of alien western doctrines that constitute threats to human and material resources on the African continent" (More, 2002: 58).

CHAPTER TWO

(LITERATURE REVIEW)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Many African literary scholars have and still endeavour to preserve and cement the future of African literature by justifying and standing firm to the revival of aboriginal African identity. This standpoint has incentivised a clarion call for African literature and identity to undergo the process of decolonisation in the democratic world. The necessity for a decolonial turn arises as colonialists had once trivialised and perceived African literature as emanating from the underdeveloped sphere, hence, not worthy of interest. Ojaide (2012: xii) notes that African literature, generally, has always been "informed by other disciplines, more than ever before it now carries so many issues that were once thought to be far from it. African literature is unique in the sense of expressing the African condition." To a greater extent, disputes emerged amongst scholars as to whether the African continent literally had a literature or it was just orature (Anaso & Eziafa, 2014).

African literature predominantly fictionalises and criticises a set of issues incited by identity-crisis that colonialists engineered. The maladies comprise cultural decay, economic disparity, political immorality and social stereotypes revolving around blackness and whiteness. Anaso and Eziafa (2014) postulate that African literature can also be perceived as the utilisation or manipulation of language creatively for the sole purpose of examining human endeavour in different circumstances. Therefore, this chapter aims to dovetail theoretical perspectives from a variety of African literary scholars to assert and reassert African identity. The literature that reconceptualises and limits the broad concept of identity from the historical development of Africa to the present will be appraised, acknowledged and scrutinised.

2.2 RECONCEPTUALISING AFRICAN IDENTITY

According to Diyaiy and Hasan (2013), the subject identity has become a characteristic of contemporary African literature, in which, the writers usually have it incarnated within the frame of their artistic productions. Equally important, colonialists conquered the African continent; they diluted African identity with Western identity, thus altering

the aboriginal African identity. The democratic corps have not successfully redressed the ills that are linked to identity crisis such as this question, 'who is African?' Identification and reservations about who belongs to Africa birthed a threat to the African Union (AU)'s vision of institutionalising unity in the continent. Ikpe (2010) notes that the homogeneity, which has once defined Africa is dissipating as Asian and European descendants become naturalised Africans and mixed unions result in hybrids. Afisi (2008: 89) postulates that any answer to the question, 'who is African?' does not provide a universal perspective on the definition of an African: "The conclusion of many scholars before this time is that the African is a Black man. But the question is, does the colour of the skin absolutely determine the race of a person?" This question provides confirmatory evidence to the point that discourses on African identity need intense scholarly attention.

It has become mystifying and difficult to undoubtedly define the characteristics of a real African. This is due to the shift of identities that occurred on the continent because of contact with the West. However, from a geographical perspective, "Africa is quite easy to define and demarcate, the same cannot be said about African(s) as an identity concept and the disparity in African identities used in philosophical literature makes this apparent" (Ikpe, 2010: 3). Moreover, predominating speculations regarding who an African really is, could be, skin colour- black identity, place of birth and an African language as mother-tongue. Haris (2009) avers that the ancestry of all black people in different parts of the world is Africa. The former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki recited a poetic speech in 1999 where he gave reasons why he thinks he is an African:

> ***I am an African***
>
> I am an African.
>
> I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land. My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.
>
> The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld. The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, iGqili noThukela,

> and the sands of the Kgalagadi, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day.
>
> At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito. A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say - I am an African!..

Former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki who celebrates his Africanness, delivered the speech above. Mbeki's speech titled, *I am an African* can aid the researcher to try to make sense of who or what is African. The speech opens with appreciation: "I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land" (line 1-3). Mbeki refers to Africa as his native land and according to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary Fourth Edition, the native refers to the place or circumstances of an individual's birth. Therefore, a place of birth becomes one of the reasons Mbeki believes that he is African. Moreover, he celebrates Africa: "The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld" (line 9). From the line above, Mbeki points out citizenship as another determiner of his African identity. He also declares: "I know that none dare challenges me when I say - I am an African!" (line, 20). The characteristics, which Mbeki has pointed out and is in possession of, give him the esteem to undoubtedly, state that he is African.

African identity is sometimes associated with black identity or skin colour. Thus, Afisi (2008) holds on to the question, if an African is actually black, then how would Arabs of North Africa be identified? Or would they be referred to as Africa by virtue of geography alone? Today, there are many black people that are residing in different parts of the world such as America where they are referred to as African Americans. This is because it is believed that these black Americans are a racial portion whose predominant ancestry is from Africa (Haris, 2009). However, it has barely happened that white people's ancestry, which is postulated to be from Europe were ever dubbed something like 'European African' or 'European Americans'. Furthermore, Afisi (2008: 89) claims:

> Then again, what do we say of the blacks in other parts of the world like the Carribbean, South and North America and to mention the least. If we say their ancestors were taken away from Africa and enslaved in those places, are these people still Africans or they are indigenes of where they were born?

Different factors are often employed as a criterion to define African identity and with them; Africans identify themselves the same way they are also identified by others. Moreover, language is one of the fundamental features of identification. Godfrey, Bull, James and Murray (2009) note that an individual's mother tongue is a common identifier amongst the variety of criteria usually reserved for identification. It has become another aspect of determining (African) identity. Every language has its origin and ancestry. For instance, the global language, English is believed to have originated from Europe, which has formerly colonised Africa. Thus, the prominent African writer, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o was sceptical about using the language in his literary work by virtue of its deeply-rooted association with the coloniser:

> This very lack of identity in its social and psychological make-up as a class was reflected in the very literature it produced: the crisis of identity was assumed in that very preoccupation with definition at the Makerere conference. In literature as in politics, it spoke as if its identity or the crisis of its own identity was that of society as a whole. The literature it produced in European languages was given the identity of African literature as if there had never been literature In African languages (Ngugi, 1986: 22).

Prior to the invasion of Africa by European powers, scholars assume that the dominating four African language families were Niger-Congo, Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan and Khoisan (Godfrey, Bull, James & Murray, 2009). The colonial intervention has resulted in the languages above being supplemented by European languages. Moreover, Mercer (2008) notes that identity only becomes a concern when it is questionable just like when something presumed to be consistent, stable and coherent is disrupted by reservations. Despite their skin colour, birth or language, black people in the world are brought to acknowledge their common identity which is being descendants of former colonised Africans. For instance, Ashing-Giwa, Padilla, Tejero, Kraemer, Wright, Coscarelli, Clayton, Williams and Hills (2004) aver that African-American women have the same experience of being black women in environments

that deprecate women of African descent and this common experience points out specific aspects that will be dominant in black women's movement.

2.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN LITERATURE

According to Soile (1998), literature refers to the works of emotion and imagination distinguished by outstanding expressions, enduring interest and styles. The materials are categorised into three genres, which are drama, poetry, and prose. This noted, the aforementioned artistic body of oral and written works that voiced out African identities, are aggregately known as African literature. Owomoyela and Brannelly (2009) affirm that Africa had a literary tradition for a long time but this was barely recorded until the 20th century and therefore, it was mainly oral expression, which succeeded to the next generations through the recitation of legends, riddles, myths, songs, folktales and poetry. The researcher confirms that African literature has kept on evolving, from ancient Africa to the contemporary space.

2.3.1 Pre-Colonial African literature

From the 16th to mid-20th centuries, European forces had influenced and assimilated aboriginal African identities. This includes the style, depiction and identity of African literature. African natives in the pre-colonial times had embraced African literature in a unique style, which featured oral literature, also rechristened orature. Mbunda (2006: 125) defines oral literature as "the verbal art of essentially non-literate societies composed extemporaneously before a traditional audience and transmitted from one generation to another by word of mouth…" Oral literature became a platform for Africans to showcase their talents and creativity. It projected African societies'' identities and provided a clear image of the African world by treating occasions in which literature formed a significant part (Odaga, 1985). Moreover, Aoudjit (2017) referred to oral literature as a form of African literature expressed by the people of Africa. Conversely, Emezue (2018: 1) notes:

> But in recent times, advocates of the use of the terms, *orature* and *oral literature*, seem to be unrelenting in their quest to impose either of the terms as the more appropriate. The promotion of the use of orature is hinged on the Eurocentric thinking that literature, strictly speaking, is any written artistic-cum-creative work. And since oral literature is principally verbally narrated (spoken) and not written, it should not be associated with literature.

Oral literature lingers as one of the literary appreciations and insignias of African identity. For this reason, colonialists sought to obliterate this form of literature through the perpetuation of the notion that it does not qualify as literature. Emezue (2018: 1) debunks the aforementioned Eurocentric stereotype and maintains, “being written is not all that gives literature its distinctiveness; for every literature - whether written or oral - is a product of some ingenious creativity.” Anaso and Eziafa (2014: 81) who also corroborate and justify the excellence of orature as a worthy component of African literature note:

> …Literature has become a veritable element for cultural globalisation, especially for Africa whose literature has been denigrated and repudiated by Western critics all along, on the claim that African literature does not aspire to ideological universalism; which they claim to be peculiar reserve of the Western works, to the exclusion of works from other races.

Oral literature aimed to reinforce Africans’ perceptions and identities, fortify their sense of belonging and educate them about morality. Examples of oral literature include riddles, life histories, ritual and curative chants, historical narratives, folktales, tongue-twisters, creation tales, songs, proverbs, musical genres, epic poems, and myths. These aspects of oral literature seek to educate, warn, praise and embrace as demonstrated below:

(a) Proverbs

According to Odaga (1985), proverbs as a form of oral literature were employed in conversations and tales to clarify, and interpret certain meanings or situations of life and to strengthen the significance of words and cultural roles. African proverbs from the Pedi cultural tribe of the South African society are outlined below to substantiate the relevance of oral literature:

(i) *Monna ke nku o llela teng*

Literal English translation: A man is a lamb he cries inwardly

This Northern Sotho proverb seeks to comfort men during difficult times and remind them that they should always remain strong and brave. It is inspired by cultural perceptions towards men that define them as heads of families, protectors and

providers. Therefore, it is anticipated of them to be audacious and endure the pain no matter the circumstance.

(ii) *Mosadi o swara thipa ka bogaleng*

Literal English translation: A Woman holds a knife by the blade.

This Northern Sotho proverb aims to advise, praise and sympathise with women. It reveals that women endure severe pains in their lives to an extent that they have no choice but to bear the pain no matter how difficult it is. It also inspires women to go to extreme lengths to achieve their goals, which points out their fortitude.

(iii) *Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi*

Literal English translation: A woman's grave is at the home of her husband

This Northern Sotho proverb gives women marital guidance. It conscientises women about the consequences of marriage, of which, one of them is to leave their maiden family and become part of her husband's family and adopt their surname until death.

(iv) *Tau tsa hloka seboka di sitwa ke nare e hlotsa*

Literal English translation: Lions that cannot work as a team struggle to bring down a wounded buffalo.

This Northern Sotho proverb emphasises the importance of teamwork. It advises people who are working as a team to get along and be united because conflicts amongst them can lead to failure. It uses the pride of lions as an example, that even if they are known to be the most ferocious animals, they still need unity to conquer their prey.

(v) *Se bone thola boreledi teng ga yona gwa baba*

Literal English translation: Do not be misled by good looks and inwardly is bitter.

This Northern Sotho proverb warns people to be aware of good looks that are often misleading. It reveals that some people appear to be beautiful, kind and loving whilst they have hidden their true selves within and shockingly, they are the evilest and most heartless.

(b) Riddles

Riddles consist of words, phrases and sentences that carry a meaning of something and it is often complex to interpret them and find the answer. Makopo (2015: i) asserts that “riddling is a game, mainly by the youth, as a positive and constructive way of whiling away time.” Furthermore, this game is good for memory as it encourages critical thinking in order to find the answer. Examples of riddles are:

(i) *Thai! Monna o motelele o rotha ditete.* ***Kerese***

Literal English translation: The tall man’s saliva is dripping. **Candle**

This Northern Sotho describes a candle when it is lit and starts to melt. A candle is a piece of wax perched vertically during the time of use and when it gets hot, it drips slowly. The riddle figuratively uses a tall man whose saliva is dripping to hide the literal meaning of the candle. The pictures below displaying a lit candle dripping can better interpret the answer:

Figure 2.1 Dripping candle (Source: dreamstime.com)

(ii) *Thai! Sese, se kae?* ***Letsetse.***

Literal English translation: Here it is, where is it? **Flea.**

This Northern Sotho riddle portrays one of the most critical characteristics of a flea. The latter is an extremely small blood-sucking insect that is known for its almost invisibility and ability to escape without trace. The statement says, “Here it is, where is it?” For one to come up with the answer, they need to profoundly think about anything that is difficult to locate and trace after disappearing and a flea is a suitable answer in this case. The picture below substantiates the derivation of the answer. The flea biting the person’s hand in the picture is so miniature that it is difficult to see or feel it when it is on the flesh until it bites:

Figure 2.2 Flea (Source: colonialpest.com)

(iii) *Thai! Wa mpona ke a go bona.* ***Seipone***

Literal English translation: You see me I see you. **Mirror**

This Northern Sotho riddle describes an incident of reflection. A mirror is a highly reflective surface and the statement states, “You see me I see you,” which describes a moment when one sees his or her own reflection on glass or polished metal. This is illustrated by the picture below, which shows a man gazing at a mirror only to see a reflection of himself which is how the answer is derived:

Figure 2.3 Mirror (Source: pixel.com)

(iv) *Thai!! Bana ba kgosi ka dikepisana tsa go swana.* ***Mahlokwa a mentšhisi***

Literal English translation: Children of the king with matching caps. **Fire-sticks**

This Northern Sotho riddle signifies one of the elements of fire-sticks, which are identical and this is the top and bottom part. The fire-sticks are usually used to set fire and for one to come up with the answer, it is important to think and imagine things that

are similar on the top and bottom. The picture below where the heads of the fire sticks are the same demonstrates the discovery of the answer to the above riddle:

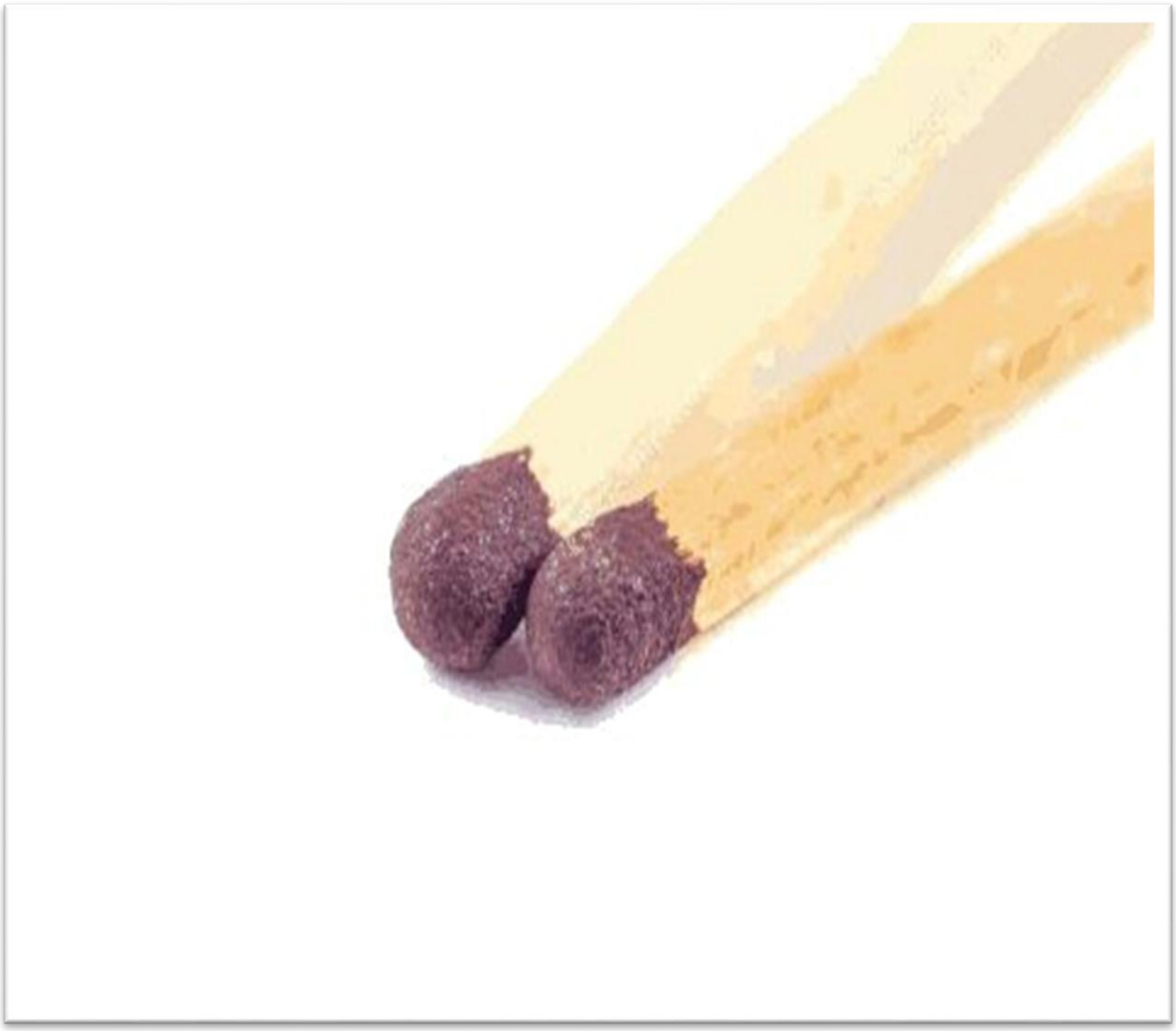


Figure 2.4 Fire sticks (Source: glstock.com)

(v) *Thai! Ba ntshumisa ke otile.* ***Nalete***

Literal English translation: They use me while I am thin. **Needle**

This Nothern Sotho riddle describes a needle. A needle is a thin metal pin that is mostly used for sewing. This riddle requires one to critically think about something that is thin and is frequently used as it appears. A needle becomes a relevant answer for this riddle. It is one of the things that an individual can think of when asked about thin objects. It is demonstrated in the picture below where it is hard to recognise when it is in the hand of the sewer:

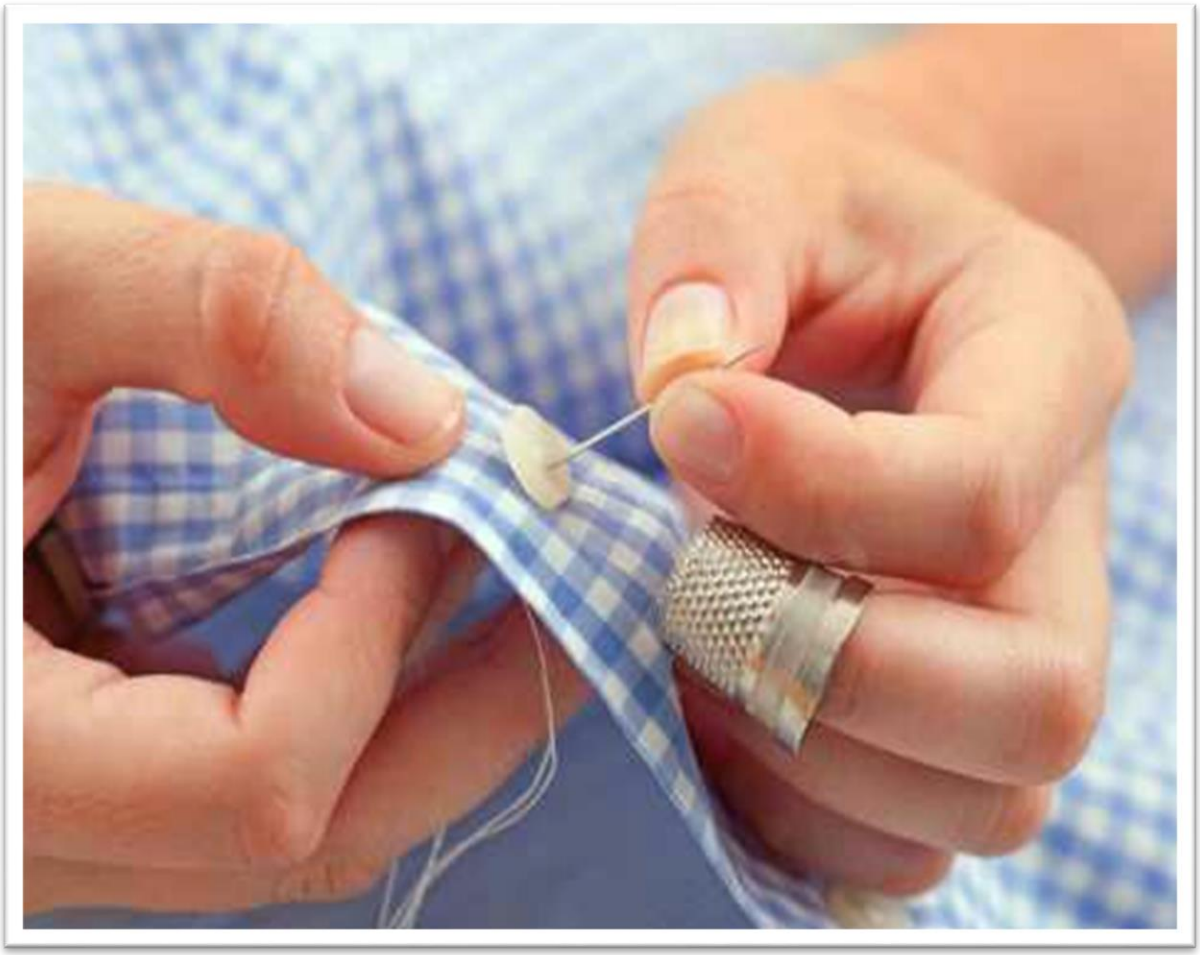


Figure 2.5: Needle (Source: sewing.com)

(c) Idioms

Idioms are words or phrases that consist of both figurative and literal meanings towards something or somebody. Idioms consist of a variety of degrees of mobility, whereas, some of them are employed only sequentially whereas some "can undergo syntactic modifications such as passivisation, raising constructions and clefting" (Horn, 2003: 245). Some of the examples of African idioms from the Northern Sotho culture are:

(i) *Go loma motho tsebe.* ***Go fa tshedimošo***

Literal English translation: To bite somebody's ear. **To give information**

This Northern Sotho idiom describes a situation where somebody tells another person that something is not known or is meant to be kept a secret. An ear is a part of the human body responsible for hearing and its use in this idiom informs or gives the interpreter a hint about the conversation-taking place.

(ii) *Go gata taba.* ***Go swara sephiri***

Literal English translation: To stomp information. **To keep a secret**

This Northern Sotho idiom refers to an act of making something a secret. If something is stomped, it cannot be known, seen or heard of. The use of stomp in this idiom gives the interpreter a pointer to something being kept away or hidden.

(iii) *Go ba le molomo****. Go bolela kudu***

Literal English translation: To have a mouth. **To talk too much**

This Northern Sotho idiom describes somebody who talks too much. A mouth is a human part responsible for talking and therefore, the use of this part in this idiom leads to the interpretation of the meaning being a reference to a person who talks too much.

(iv) *Go bakwa le badimo****: Go ba kgauswi le go hlokofala***

Literal English translation: To be in a war against ancestors. **To be ill to the point of death**

This Northern Sotho idiom describes a situation where somebody is sick to the point of death. In the African culture, it is believed that when one dies; he or she will meet their ancestors in the afterlife. Thus, Mishna, Newman, Daley and Solomon (2009) note, “It is not so much worship of ancestors as it is recognition of the importance of community—past, present, and future.” The involvement of ancestors in this idiom gives the interpreter an idea of relation to death.

(v) *Go ba le lenao.* ***Go sepela kudu***

Literal English translation: To have a foot. To walk too much

This Northern Sotho idiom refers to a person who walks too much. A foot is a human part responsible for walking. The mention of this part in this idiom leads the interpreter to the correct meaning, the answer being somebody who walks too much.

2.3.2 Colonial African literature

Colonial African literature comprises oral and written literary material, performed, recited and penned in the midst of contact between Africa and the West. Most African literary works during the period of colonialism focused solely on expressing concerns

against the ruling colonial forces. Literature became a recreation of Africans' account of their cultural, economic, political and social perspectives (Nolin, 2009). Moreover, Ngugi (1981: 6) affirms:

> At the same time, literature is more than just a mechanistic reflection of social reality. As part of man's artistic activities, it is in itself part of man's self-realization as a result of his wrestling with nature; it is; if you like, itself a symbol of man's creativity, of man's historical process of being and becoming.[…] but more important, it does shape our attitudes to life, to the daily struggle with nature, the daily struggles within a community, and the daily struggle within our individual souls and selves.

Literature was a weapon for African natives to fight for liberation intellectually. Africans related their experiences to others through literature and also raised awareness through it, and contributed to Africa's attainment of independence. Africans incorporated the barrel of a pen into their weaponry to defeat the colonial empire (Ngugi, 1993). Prominent literary scholars such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Leopold Senghor capitalised on their talents to divulge the maladies of colonialism. Thus, African literature in the colonial period was domineered by protest, black consciousness, Eurocentric criticism, radical voices and pan-Africanist thoughts. This is substantiated by the dominance of literary works that reflect on famed anti-colonial movements that were set up to overthrow the colonial government in Africa. These anti-colonial movements in the continent were:

> responses to European imperialism on the continent in the late nineteenth century and the greater part of the twentieth century. African responses to colonial rule varied from place to place and over time. Several forms of both armed and nonviolent resistance to colonialism occurred Nonviolent forms of anticolonialism included the use of the indigenous press, trade unionism, organized religion, associations, literary and art forms, and mass migrations. Various African states used one or several of these nonviolent forms of anticolonialism at one time or another, but what is significant is that most of them resorted to armed resistance or cataclysmic actions to safeguard their way of life and sovereignty (Appiah & Gates, 2009).

Some of the renowned anti-colonial movements in Africa, which received plenty of attention due to the impact and role that they have assumed during the liberation struggle are:

a) Mau Mau rebellion

The Mau Mau was a Kenyan secret guerrilla regiment that opposed the colonial government. It is distinguished for its maximum force of violence. The name, Mau Mau, is an acronym for the Swahili expression, *Mzungu Aende Ulaya Mwafrika Apate Uhuru* (Let the White man go back to Europe so the Africans can get independence) (Msellemu, 2013). Moreover, Maxon (2009: 95) asserts

> The rebellion proved also to be a Kikuyu civil war: Those who fought against British rule were drawn from the poorest segment of Kikuyu society, while wealthier Kikuyu, who had profited from colonial rule, fought against the rebels. After four years of fighting and thousands of deaths (mostly of Africans), the British finally suppressed the rebellion in 1956.

b) Negritude

Negretitudes set out to assert the black identity, empower black people and celebrated their historical culture and heritage. Its pioneer, Léopold Senghor's quote, "negritude is the sum total of the values of the civilization of the African world. It is not racialism, it is culture" (Césaire, 2005: 23), delineates the mission and vision of the negritude movement. The negritudes were lionised by a variety of scholars for debunking the myths and stereotypes that colonialists held about Africans. This includes opposing the colonial notion that the white identity is beautiful and the black is ugly. The negritudes essentialised the Afrocentric identity of beauty. Thus, Beier, Starkweather and Miller (1997) note that African writers are all negritudists as they one way or another have the sentiments of negritudes deeply rooted in them.

c) Black Consciousness Movement

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) is one of the infamous movements of political emancipation in South Africa. It was established in the late 1960s as a black students' rebel. This movement aimed to conscientise black (South) Africans about liberation, and unite them to fight against the indomitable system of apartheid which perpetuated colonial policies of discrimination against people. One of its pioneers is Bantu Stephen Biko. This anti-apartheid activist is exalted for contributing towards the liberation of black people's mindset, thus, earning the description, "martyr for black

nationalism upon his death in prison" (Davis, 2009: 120). The apartheid initially viewed the BCM as:

> …associating the aims of the movement with the racial separatism of the apartheid system, the government encouraged it, and a network of Black Consciousness social and cultural organizations was established. The appeal of Black Consciousness soon came to be seen as a threat by the government, however. The movement's influence played a part in the 1976 mass protest of school children against the introduction of Afrikaans as the language of instruction in schools. The uprisings in the black township of Soweto, near Johannesburg, which began in 1976 and had resulted in at least 575 deaths by February 1977, were in part a result of the Black Consciousness Movement. In October 1977, 18 Black Consciousness organizations including SASO, were banned and 50 of their leaders detained. The arrest of Stephen Biko in August 1977 and his death while in custody due to maltreatment by the police caused an international outcry. In the immediate aftermath of the Soweto riots, many young people escaped across South Africa's borders to join the armed wings of the liberation movements.

d) Algerian revolution

Algeria, like the majority of African states, was colonised by the French colonial power until 3 July 1962 when it wrested its freedom from the coloniser. It is situated in the Northern region of Africa. Moreover, when Algeria demanded independence, the French colonial forces were sceptical and war broke out between the two states. According to Mazzola (2006), in the course of the Algerian war of sovereignty which ran from 1954-1962, 3 525 000 Algerians left their homes and 2 350 000 of 3 525 000 went to reside in camps established by the French colonialists, whereas, the remaining 1 175 000 inhabited the pre-existing areas that were close to the French regiment outposts. The Algerian war is notable for the degree of brute and bloodshed during the warfare. Kutan and Muradoglu (2014: 80) corroborate:

> By the second half, the 19th century there was a broad understanding between these powers about colonies and regions of influence. The 20th century witnessed a rising tide of resentment against colonial rule. As all other colonies Algeria was exploited by the French and his people were treated a little better than cattle. The French occupation of Algeria showed the classic signs of colonialism, and was characterised by rabid racism, religious bigotry and exploitative capitalism. The peoples of Algeria were pawns, second class citizens at best and slaves at worst, their resources at the disposal of the colonising power, their destinies decided in European capitals tens of thousands of miles away from home. Political movements arose calling for the rights of them. It was a

> slow, tortuous and painful struggle. The French colonial powers were dug in by a Nationalist movement in Algeria. The Algerian war for independence is known as one of the most brutal and violent confrontations in the world‘s recent history.

e) Angolan Colonial War of Liberation

The Angolan colonial war is one of the prominent struggles and resistances that led to the attainment of independence on the African continent. The war resulted in the dethronement of the Portuguese colonial power. In the course of the 1960s, a variety of armed revolutionary wings, which became active include the National Union for the Total Independence of Angolan Angola, People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola and the National Liberation Front of Angola (Walters & Castro, 1977). The war exerted extreme upon the Portuguese empire, which ended up withdrawing its remnant colonial forces and accorded to a swift exchange of reins with the African guerrillas. This process saw an exodus of many Portuguese, including military personnel, of European, African, and mixed ethnicity emerging from the newly independent African territories of Portugal.

f) Guinea-Bissau War of Independence

Guinea, which is situated in the North-Western part of Africa, also made a clarion call for independence to the colonial powers and this meant defiance unto the oppressive government. Consequentially, the Guinea-Bissau War of Independence was birthed. Guinea-Bissau acquired independence on September 10, 1974, after a bloody with the Portuguese colonial power. Beuman (2016) asserts that Guinea-Bissau experienced a prolonged war of independence from 1963 to 1974 piloted by Amilcar Cabral, who was a venerated figure in the state and had support from Cuba. Buettner (2016: 65) depicts The Guinea-Bissau War:

> The Guinea-Bissau War of Independence was an armed independence conflict that took place in Portuguese Guinea between 1963 and 1974. Fought between Portugal and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, an armed independence movement backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union, the war is commonly referred to as Portugal's Vietnam due to the large numbers of men and amounts of material expended in a long, mostly guerrilla war and the internal political turmoil it created in Portugal. The war ended when Portugal, after the Carnation Revolution of 1974, granted independence to Guinea-Bissau, followed by Cape Verde a year later.

g) Mozambican War of Independence

The guerrilla militants in Mozambique also collided with the Portuguese colonial forces for the ultimate price of independence. Mozambique is located in the Southern part of Africa. The Mozambicans became increasingly perturbed by the alien forces that meted out harsh conditions to the colonised and ruled them with an iron fist. Chandler (2014) asserts that Mozambique encountered a lengthy and cold-blooded war that paid off when it claimed independence from Portugal, hence, bringing the war to end in 1975 after 477 years of colonial rule. World peace foundation (2015: i) recount the built up to Mozambique's victory:

> The end of the mass atrocities in Mozambique coincided with the conflict's abrupt conclusion in the aftermath of Portugal's 1974 military coup d'état. Following Antonio Salazar's death in 1970, the Caetano administration faced increasing levels of domestic anti-war sentiment and international pressure to decolonise, accompanied by decreasing levels of morale within the PAF. These currents of change led to a swift reversal in colonial policy after the PAF overthrew the Caetano government in April 1974. This leadership change, coupled with the moderating influence of domestic and international opinion external to the regime, led directly to the cessation of violence.

The rebellious movements above were the genesis of Africa's journey to independence. The movements meted out upheavals that paid off as the colonised African states regained independence. The violence nudged the colonialists to the intense pressure that forced them to relinquish governance and return the power to African natives. Fanon (1986: 198) notes:

> Come, Comrades, it would be as well to change our ways… We must leave our dreams behind… Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of all their own streets, in all the corners of the globe…Come then, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe.

2.3.2.1 Protest literature

Many African literary works of the colonial period served as psychological attacks upon the colonialists. The creative writing talent and scholarly criticism amongst African natives posed a threat to the colonial government. This saw many poems, plays, novels and critical works that confronted the colonial system being banned. Not only

have Africans fought physically and politically but also emotionally, psychologically and socially. Thus, Mellon (2011) affirms that the presumption that African opposition to colonial forces was mostly asserted in terms of (European) white and African (black) African struggle trivialises the complicated and tactical thinking that Africans usually utilised to confront the ills of European colonial rule. Some of the acclaimed and spirited African writers during the period of colonialism are:

(a) Ngugi Wa Thiong'o

Ngugi is one of the most radical and vocal African scholars against colonialism. He is a pioneer of protest literature and his literary set opposing colonial power include: *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977), *A Writer's Prison Diary* (1981), *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (1977), *I Will Marry When I Want* (1982) and *Matigari* (1989). These plays and novels are distinguished by a similar aim, which is to eradicate the remnants of colonialism and lead Africa to utter political emancipation. He comments on his work: "The present collection of essays is an integral part of the fictional world of The River Between, Weep Not Child, and A Grain of Wheat. Most of them were written about the same time as the novels; they have been products of the same moods and touch on similar questions and problems" (Ngugi, 1993: 14).

(b) Chinua Achebe

Achebe is another seasoned scholar of protest literature in the African context. His works exposed and challenged the colonial culture in the African continent. Some of the works include *Things Fall Apart* (1958), which has reflected on the shift of identity in the South East of Nigeria when colonialists propagated Western culture throughout the continent. Achebe's play sought to respond to the British colonial forces that engendered the calamities in the Igbo society. Moreover, Achebe's other literary works are *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and critical works such as *Beware, Soul Brother* (1971) and *Christmas in Biafra* (1973), the short-story collection *Girls at War* (1972), and the children's book, *How the Leopard Got His Claws* (1972), as well as a collection of essays, *Morning Yet on Creation* Day (1975), later modified to the title *Hopes and Impediments* (1988) which consists of, notably, the essay, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,*" and *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983).

(c) Es'kia Mphahlele

In the South African society, Es'kia Mphahlele is one of the prominent writers of protest literature. He is renowned for his autobiography, *Down Second Avenue* (1959) which depicts life in South Africa under the apartheid regime which is a successor of colonial policies. The novel mirrors some of the harsh conditions that black people endured under the indomitable system of apartheid. Other works are: *Man Must Live* (1947, *The Wanderers* (1971), *Chirundu* (1979), *Afrika My Music* (1984), *Father Come Home* (1984), *The African Image* (1962) and *Voices in the Whirlwind, and Other Essays* (1972) and a collection of letters, *Bury Me at the Marketplace* (1984).

(d) Wole Soyinka

Wole Soyinka is an African writer whose literary work confronts the invasion of the British Empire in Africa. His play, *Death and King's Horseman* portrays the influence of colonialists in the ancient city of Yoruba. He characterises this issue through the clash of African and Western cultural identities. His other works are: *Prison* (1969) republished as *A Shuttle in the Crypt* (1972), *The Man Died* (1972), *A Dance of the Forests* (1960), *Kongi's Harvest* (1965), *A Play of Giants* (1984), *From Zia, with Love* (1992); *The Beatification of Area Boy* (1995); and *King Baabu* (2001), *The Interpreters* (1965), *Season of Anomy* (1973), *Idanre* (1967) and *Mandela's Earth* (1988), *The Credo of Being and Nothingness* (1991), *Myth, Literature, and the African World* (1976).

(e) Ayi Kwei Armah

Ayi Kwei Armah has demonstrated radicalism against the ills of imperialism in his novels, especially in the era of independence. His notable work, *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968), reflects on the legacies of colonialism in the period of independence in Africa using Ghana as a case in point. The vestiges of colonialism in the novel include: corruption, poverty, economic crises and moral decay. His other works are: *Fragments* (1970), *Why Are We So Blest (1972), Two Thousand Seasons* (1973), *The Healers* (1979), *Osiris Rising* (1995), *KMT: the House of Life* (2002), *The Resolutionaries* (2013), *The Eloquence of the Scribes: A Memoir on the Sources and Resources of African Literature* (2006), and *Remembering the Dismembered Continent* (essays) (2010).

2.3.2.2 Intricacies of resistance to colonialism

Protest literature has united the scholars above to unite and resist colonialism through the barrel of a pen. The colonialists had conspired to outwit Africans by imposing colonised education, culture, religion and lifestyle upon them. This tactic emerges as a result of the stereotypical contemplation about Africans being uncultured (Roscoe, 1970). It is worthy to note that colonialists capitalised on squabbles and grudges that African kingdoms had against each other. Betrayal coupled with selfishness and greed amongst African leaders became a demeaning odd that has blindsided from recognising the real enemy. For instance, the ancient kingdoms of Fante and Asante in Ghana had an altercation during the second half of the 19th century which the colonialists manipulated to their benefit. The colonialists dynamised Fante to join forces with them against Asante whom they had considered a major threat to their mission (Mellon, 2011).

The dissension amidst African kingdoms intricated and weakened their resistance to colonialism. This afforded colonialists an advantage to deftly conquer Africa. In most parts of Africa, colonialists defeated African rebels with the assistance of other Africans. For instance, in (South) Africa, British colonialists only triumphed over the Zulu nation with the aid of other Zulu kingdoms. Likewise, in ancient Zimbabwe, the conflict between the Ndebele and the neighbouring communities allowed the British forces to intervene and eventually seize control. Mellon (2011: 60) recounts the experiences of loss:

> They came and were overbearing and we were ordered to carry their clothes and bundles. They interfered with our wives and our daughters and molested them. In fact, the treatment was intolerable. We thought it best to fight and die rather than bear it. There was much bitterness because so many of cattle were branded and taken away from us; “we had no property, nothing we could call our own. We said, “It is not good living under such conditions; death would be better-let us fight.” We knew that we had very little chance because their weapons were so much superior to ours. But we meant to fight to the last, feeling that even if we could not beat them we might at least kill a few of them and so have some sort of revenge.

The tradition of disunity amid African natives has contributed to the colonisation of the continent. Resistant African forces such as the Maji Maji rebellion, etc., suffered defeat from the coloniser owing to, *inter alia*, receiving little or no support from fellow Africans. In the post-colonial age, unity is yet to be a fixed identity that Africans cherish (Marais, 2011). The continent is still plagued by racism, tribalism, Afrophobia and Negrophobia despite its state of independence that promotes unity. Moreover, Amarh's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* argues that the new leadership of independence instead of empowering the previously colonised people of Africa betrayed them and pursued their selfish desires and greed that saw them enriching themselves at the expense of the poor people of Ghana.

Stereotypical sentiments about black identity are still held today. A variety of activities that appear to demonstrate dislike or hatred of the black identity have emerged rapidly in the democratic dispensation. Skin whitening endorses the notion of black being ugly and white, beautiful. In addition, the straitening of hair by black women dispirits African hairstyles while championing Eurocentric ideals. Furthermore, most (South) Africans have referred to a song titled, *Blacks are Fools* by Siya Metane as negrophic. Metane, publicly known as Slikour, is a black African artist whose song contains dissentient remarks about black people:

Blacks are Fools

[Foreword]

A nation without education will not know its worth.
What I'm about to say is going to determine whether you know your worth
(and if you don't know) this is not book education, but it's your present!"

[Verse 1]

Ten years in the game I know white bands that only seen
Two years of fame but they set for life
Look at the Parlotones and KFC
I ain't knocking them it's really just what I see
Zola was the biggest star that we've ever seen
But what's sad was it was only seen by Cell C
While we work hard just to sell a CD
They make millions of a couple of mp3's
And break bread for their own race, own creed

I wish black executives could take the lead
But they put us down like we embarrass them 14
And give us deals that equate to embarrassment
And when we broke they blame it on money management
I must say black people are stagnant
BEE billions we brag with it, while black schools are less than average
Then what's up with that?

Slikour's *Blacks Are fools* has been lambasted by many (South) Africans who feel that it discredits and denigrates the black identity as the colonial system did. In Saturday Star March News (2012), Slikours justified the song: "if 98 percent of the song is objective and progressive we'll be quick to highlight the two percent. This again is an example of our attitudes towards each other." In the talk show, The chatroom (2012), Mzwakhe Mbuli asserts his disquietude against the title of the song:

> it doesn't say blacks are beautiful, blacks are intelligent, blacks are gifted, blacks are made in God's image, it says blacks are fools. And, the word fool means idiot, it means brainless. It says a lot, it is a denigrating word, it is belittling. So it is not a nice word…Paulo Arrais said that black people are baboons…it is a big matter in this country.

The opening part of the song metes out criticism against the role of black people in different dimensions of life: "I wish black executives could take the lead but they put us down like we embarrass them. And give us deals that equate to embarrassment" (line 13-15). The singer berates black executives for relegating their fellow blacks by affording them defective opportunities. Another participant in the talk show, The chatroom (2012) claims:

> It is not so much black business, that what I am trying to say. Let me, first of all, explain it, my understanding of this. His view and what is in the song may not necessarily be a reflection of black people's experiences. He is entitled to that because he has experienced it and contextualised the lyrics of the song. Having said that, he also raises issues which are absolutely true and are a reflection of how we as black people portray ourselves in whoever is looking at us. I made mention of that, first of all, the way in which we define success is very materialistic. The flashy BMWs he is talking about, the Lois Vitton…which actually drive a stereotype that black people are more consumers than they are creators.

Slikour intones, "And when we broke they blame it on money management I must say black people are stagnant" (line 16-17). Slikour also castigates black people who do not assume responsibility for their success and comments that black schools are only mediocre. Keswell (2010) affirms that both social and political emancipation have not

brought tangible changes in terms of racial inequality and the educational system that had to recuperate from the injustices of the Bantu Education Act of 1954.

Chorus]

Coz we blackz are foolz they just want to fresh
And they want to be cool
Give them a little money and they think they rule
But I hope we, but I hope we're, but I hope we're,
But I hope we better than that
We better than that
We better than that that that that that

The chorus dispenses offensive remarks about black people. It accords with Eurocentric postulations that Africans were imbeciles worthy of no respect (Christie, 1991): "Coz we blackz are foolz they just want to fresh, And they want to be cool Give them a little money and they think they rule" (line 20-22) The singer claims that black people cannot make informed decisions and are often blindsided by money. In his conversation with Saturday Star March News (2012), Slikour claims, "It (song) questions the legacy of pre-apartheid government conditioning which made us or still makes us believe we are insufficient. The twist in the song though is that I say we are better than that."

[Verse 2]

Now in the struggle we used to burn traitors
I guess that's how they could to separate us [sic].
Nowadays it's money and political favours,
Politicians wanna be Celebs and famous.
Celebs want to be politicians, buy faces

I guess our society has gone pretentious
And when you tell the truth they say you have envious [sic]
I'm going to be blatted coz now this is strenuous
Media undermine us
They even offend us
Radio don't play us

They don't even recommend us
Journalists with scandals to misrepresent us
Meanwhile they building companies of the oppressors
For minimum wages they make us look lesser

So who should the kids look up to? America

Of course, our heroes are down played by editors
So why blame white people when we can credit us

For our own lack of progression that we bring to us
And we think we are progressing but we are delusional

Slikour, in the verse above, condemns the political platoon as the agent of perpetual economic disparity in South Africa: “Nowadays its money and political favours” (line 30). This implies that success is dependent on favouritism and financial stability. His point is substantiated by headlining reports about jobs for sale, sexual favours for jobs, nepotism and preferential distribution of tenders in the South African society. Cassim and Oosthuizen (2014) note that the unemployment rate vexes the youth of South Africa who does not have strong networks or capital to aid them create opportunities for themselves and others. In Saturday Star March News (2012), Slikour maintains, “the biggest concern I have is black people failing themselves [and] I think of leaders like Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Steve Biko and remember that the struggle to liberate our minds could get worse than any negativity awaits me.”

[Chorus]

Coz we blackz are foolz they just want to fresh
And they want to be cool
Give them a little money and they think they rule
But I hope we, but I hope we’re, but I hope we’re,
But I hope we better than that
We better than that x2
We better than that that that that that

[Verse 3]

We show off the BMW’s, and VWs but doesn’t that trouble that they don’t consider you
In their marketing strategy that’s my
But they know that you have the fashion IQ
Chances they don’t even like you
But they know you going to make their brand cool

Coz we so materialistic we’re such fools
They don’t give a buck to the same hoods
Spending money on extravagant foreign goods
Gucci, Versace, Louis

We advertise them so much you think we get Loeries

And supporting our own is such a duty
That's why we don't own nothin,
'cause we think of ourselves as nothing
Black people always be job hunting,
Is BEE the only way to be something? But

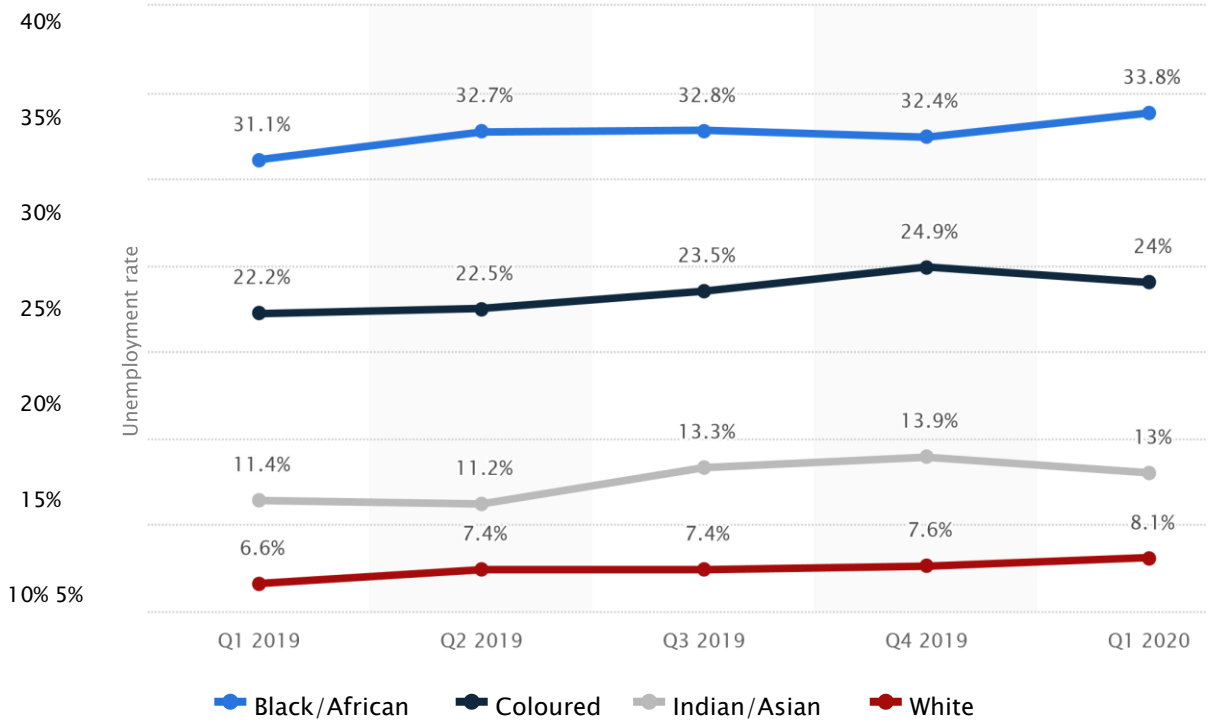
[Chorus]

Coz we blackz are foolz they just want to fresh
70
And they want to be cool
Give them a little money and they think they rule
But I hope we, but I hope we're, but I hope we're,
But I hope we better than that
We better than that x2
We better than that that that that that

In stanza 3, Slikour asseverates that black people's infatuation with expensive items is the reason why some of them still linger in a position of financial distress despite being employed. He also implies that materialistic decoys can easily shift black people's attention to social transformation: "we show off the BMW's, and VWs but doesn't that trouble that they don't consider you" (line 55), "Coz we so materialistic we're such fool" (line 60). Moreover, on Saturday Star March News (2012), the singer states, "I've heard people call us fools, lazy and incompetent. I'm one of those things. I'm out here in the streets grinding, I represent the generation that's trying to leave a mark and make a difference."

Above all, this song exudes resentment, specifically, to black people amongst diversified racial groups of South Africa. The concluding lines, "cause we think of ourselves as nothing, Black people always be job hunting" (line 67-68), encapsulate black people's reasons for failure to succeed socio-economically. South Africa is indeed besieged by a massive rate of unemployment that has affected mostly, black people. Gould and Wilson (2020) note that there is compelling evidence that accord that the Corona Virus pandemic that has handicapped the economic facet of the world has affected most black and Hispanic employees than white workers. The graph below based on the unemployment rate in South Africa corroborates this:

Unemployment rate by race in South Africa



Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1129481/unemployment-rate-by-population-group-in-south-africa/

The graph above points out the rate of unemployment in South Africa from the first quarter of 2019 to the first quarter of 2020. The latter marks the genesis of the Corona Virus pandemic in the South African society, which galvanised the government to impose a hard lockdown from 27 March 2020 until the relaxation of some restrictions of the lockdown from 01 May 2020. This lockdown severely affected the economy of the country as many South Africans lost their jobs.

According to the graph above, black people experience a huge surge in unemployment due to lockdown than any other race group in the country. However, black people have been the greater victim of unemployment even before the lockdown as demonstrated in the graph. By the end of 2019, the fourth quarter, the unemployment rate for black people stood at 32, 4%, for coloureds 24, 9 %, Indians 13, 9% and Whites 7.6%. The aforementioned figures show that unemployment in South Africa has demonised black people more than any other race.

In the first quarter of 2020, South Africa and the world at large experienced a massive spread of Corona Virus, resulting in many death cases and economic-crisis. South Africa saw an appalling increase in the unemployment rate. From the fourth quarter of 2019 to the first quarter of 2020, unemployment for black people increased from 32, 4% to 33, 8%, for coloureds it has decreased from 24, 9% to 24%, for Indians also it declined from 13, 9% to 13% and White increasing from 7,6% to 8.1%. The black group obtained first place in terms of the unemployment increment from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2020 by 1.4% followed by the white cohort by 0,5% and the coloured and Indian groups experiencing no increase by a decline both by 9%.

2.3.3 Post-colonial African literatures

Post-colonial literature depicts a set of issues that marginalise and implicate civilisations that had once been submitted under the colonial rule. The African continent at large had capitulated to European forces that colonised them until the1960 when most of the colonised African states dethroned colonial governments and assumed power and the year earned the motto, “Year of Africa”. The expulsion of colonial governments from the African office has not been adequate to circumvent the resurgence of colonial behaviour in the period of independence. This encompasses the development of African literature, which evinces a colonial touch.

The compression of African literature has oscillated amongst the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. In the modern-day, African literature has shifted from the position and status that it had rested on during the pre-colonial and colonial eras. One of the pretexts of this shift is the reconstruction of African identity and rehabilitation of the continent. Ashcroft et al. (2002) assert that post-colonial writers explore the traditional colonial movement by either revamping or destabilising it and times, both. Therefore, post-colonial African literature has become an arena where issues that vex Africa and are inspired by the colonial past are cognised and redressed. Thus, the post-colonial theory is enshrined in African literary studies and scholars utilise it as a perennial lens to criticise and appreciate post-colonial African issues. Jullie (2010) avers that post-colonial theory re-evaluates colonial and post-colonial literature specifically focusing on the social aspects between the coloniser and the colonised that have moulded and established the literature.

A variety of African writers in the 1960s and 1970s reflected on the course of democratisation after the downfall of colonial powers. Their discourse specifically celebrated the attainment of independence whereas acknowledging the mountain of challenges that Africa has to triumph over:

> The post-imperial writers of the third world […] bear their past within them- as scars of humiliating wounds, [...] as potentially revised visions of the past tending toward a post-colonial future, […] in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as part of a general movement of resistance, from the colonist (Blum, 2007: 44).

Colonial forces had protracted African natives under Western ideals, style and culture. This impelled the post-colonial Africa to set in motion measures that aimed to deconstruct colonial attachments. The measures often received criticism, repudiation and at times positive reception such as Ngugi's exhortation to de-accredit the English language in Africa. Moreover, writers such as Ayi Kwei Armah, Nadine Gordimer, Es'kia Mphahlele, Mariama Bâ, Buchi Emecheta, Bessie Head, Ousmane Sembène, Nuruddin Farah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie presented African issues driven by the colonial past in their literary works. Some of the dominating thematic patterns are leadership crisis, corruption, racism, tribalism, xenophobia, poverty and cultural crisis. For instance, Ayi Kwei Armah's novel, *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is a literary criticism of the *status quo* in the post-independent period. It mirrors the challenges that Africans confronted after securing independence in the continent. Furthermore, the author unveils a series of perturbing issues that are galvanised by the colonial past such as:

2.3.3.1 Post-colonial leadership-crises

The indomitable system of colonialism was ultimately subdued by African elites and this meant a political transition from the autocracy to democracy throughout the continent. Fage and Oliver (1970) note that African elites of the period of independence engineered the initial course of African nationalism that obliged its political requests. Independent Africans anticipated a leadership of democracy to assume office and empower them. These expectations have been met with appalling disappointments in most African societies as mirrored by Armah's in *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born.* Macheke (2014) asserts that the novel above subscribes to

the perception that independence is a root of disillusionment to black Africans as it has disappointed many and failed to fulfil the chief objectives that prompted the pursuit of independence.

In *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, African elites demonstrated and adopted what seems to be a colonially-imbibed leadership style. Like colonialists, the African leaders disempowered their fellow black Africans through their engagements in corruption, nepotism, embezzlement, mass apathy and the demonisation of democratic values. These ills impacted the peoples of Africa and dismantled their hope for a liberated society. In the novel, the leadership of the African corps is perceived as a second wave of colonialism manifesting through black elites. For instance, Koomson and his entourage, the conductor, boatman, watchman, clerks and drivers abused their power the same way colonialists did (Macheke, 2014).

2.3.3.2 Corruption

The post-colonial African leadership as Armah's the *Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet* avers, is haunted by corruption. The novel divulges the degree to which corruption has deterred the progress of Africans and deprived them of a sense, benefits and status of political emancipation. Macheka and Kockelkoren (2012) state that the hopes and dreams attached to the dispensation of independence have been thwarted by the corruption of political leaders. Corruption has become a catalyst for inequality, poverty and unemployment; especially, for black Africans; thus, perpetuating the colonial abhorrence and marginalisation of African natives. Mutharika (1995) notes that it is societally intolerable and morally demeaning for leaders to acquire great benefits from swindling their people or exploiting the economic development for individual gain.

In the novel, the African leaders yearned for power and executive positions in pursuit of their selfish desires. They compromised the human rights and needs of the people in an effort to expand their territories. This is homogenous to the colonial behaviour of denigrating and violating black people's rights. Macheka and Kockelkoren (2012: 16) affirm that the normalised corruption amongst the leadership of independence has prevailed over human morality. In the novel, the bus conductor who cheats on his clients to enrich himself portrays insatiable greed and corrupt behaviour:

> he gives the wrong change to the man who has given him a cedi…The man who had given him a cedi was fast asleep in the bus with eyes wide open, showing his withdrawal from the social world, but the conductor assumed that he had been seen. In fear of exposure and in a desperate bid to save himself, the conductor attempts to bribe the man with a cigarette (*The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*: 92).

According to Palmer (1979), the bus represents a society that is in a position of decay and the passengers are like usual citizens, whereas, the conductor and driver both embody authoritative figures that conspire to swindle the people and if busted, they bribe their way out. These words, "you see we can share" (95), reveal that the bus conductor is used to the life of corruption and has no regrets about his immoral actions. Moreover, Koomson's greed escalates to thievery, heartlessness and autarchy. He drives luxurious cars, which, some of them, are stolen. To maintain his flamboyant lifestyle, he abuses his office power and distributes job opportunities according to favour and his individual benefit. Koomson annihilates the vision of the post-independent African natives and steals money meant to establish projects that sought to empower the poor. Koomson's character is a reflection of how the post-colonial Africa has turned into the receptor of normalised corruption as the society is aware of their leaders' shenanigans like Koomson's but remains silent and this qualifies corruption as a familiar problem in the modern-day Africa (Macheka & Kockelkoren, 2012).

2.3.3.3 Class struggle

African leaders like Koomson in Armarh's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* enkindled socio-economic inequality amongst people. According to the Marxist theory, a class is categorised into two parts, the bourgeoisie which authorises capital and production and the proletariat that provides labour, whose human and employment rights are often disregarded by the bourgeoisie. The novel portrays these two divisions and points out that independence has only benefited a select group of people such as the bourgeoisie and left others lingering in the same position since the colonial rule. Gakwandi (1977) suggests that the present society is like a world in which historical sewage pipes have been denoted to pollute everything.

In the novel, rich and powerful men misused their influence to sexually abuse mostly poverty-stricken women. Success became an institution or license that men need to acquire to be active in promiscuity: “Have you ever seen a big man without girls. Even the old ones?” (*The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*: 78). Machete (2014) avers that Armah points out the height of sexual perversion amongst the successful men, for instance, in their toilets, there is sexual drawing. Moreover, young women were taken advantage of as they slept with the men for only expensive perfumes, diplomatic bags and hair extensions (Achebe, 1966).

2.3.4 Manifestation of contemporary African literatures

According to Ojaide (2012: xii), contemporary African literatures are literatures that arose as a result of “several years of reassessing African literature from multiple perspectives, including the interdisciplinary ethical and scholar-poet traditions.” The colonialists’ evacuation from African authority has coerced all henchmen of imperialism to dissipate. However, obliterating vestiges of colonialism persist on being insurmountable as post-colonial African societies have for many years attempted to restore the African identity. This includes the identity of post-colonial African literatures, which appear to have been imbibed by colonialism. The aesthetics of African literature in the post-colonial period convey colonial characteristics. Kapanga (2005) avers that the predominance of colonial elements in the establishment of post-colonial African literatures brings reservations on the crux of African literature and Africanness.

Scholars such as Ngugi postulate that the utilisation of European languages to appreciate and assert African literatures is only a step back to the colonial backdrop, thus, he believes that “with the death of colonialism, a new society is being born. And, with it new literature.” (Ngugi, 1993: 7). For instance, in the (South) African society, the apartheid government, which perpetuated colonial policies, imposed the Afrikaans language upon all citizens of the country. The apartheid government sought to officialise the Afrikaans language as the medium of instruction in South African schools. Black South Africans revolted against the government’s motion and a massacre ensued. On the 16th of June 1976, many black students protested against the use of this language in schools and for that, they paid a hefty price as some were murdered and others severely injured. The killed students include Hector Pieterson

whose moments of last breath were photographed and the picture received iconic recognition in the democratic society. See it below:

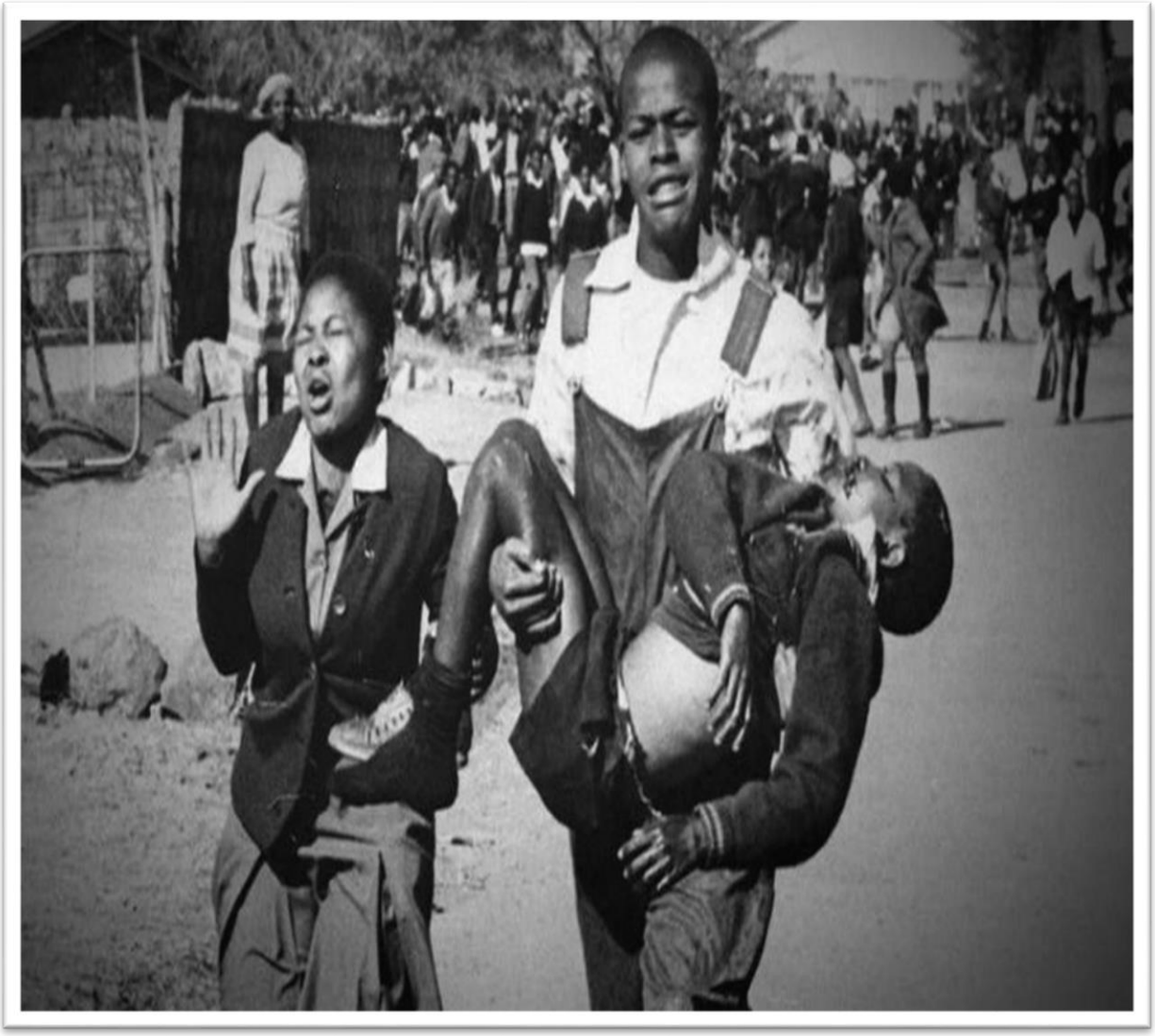


Figure 2.6 Demise of Hector Pieterson (Source: Sam Nzima)

en.wikipedia.org

The picture is believed to have been captured by the late South African photographer, Sam Nzima. It is recognised for exposing apartheid and activating the world to criticise and oppose the South African colonial government.

The students' reasons for resisting the Afrikaans language comprise the language's association with colonialism and the underlying intention to subjugate Africans under white supremacy. The Afrikaans language originates from Dutch; one of the European colonial forces that once oppressed black people in Africa. Baron and Kotthoff (2002)

note that Afrikaans claims similar literary roots with the contemporary Dutch as the duo both emanates from the 17th century in Dutch. Today, Afrikaans is one of the official languages of South Africa. Furthermore, Scheub and Gunner (2018: 71) attempt to define Afrikaans literature in the South African context:

> In the context of Dutch literary tradition or South African literary tradition. Within an African context, Afrikaans literature will be forever on the outside. As is the case with the language, it is caught in an identity crisis that was created irrevocably by the fiercely defended political and cultural identity of the Dutch settlers who arrived in South Africa in 1652 and whose descendants, together with English-speaking whites, took over the government in 1948, after which the notorious system of apartheid was enshrined in laws that would be demolished only in the early 1990s.

The contact with the West has compromised the aboriginal African literature as today, there are African literatures established in European or European-derived languages. The literature in the aforementioned language has become increasingly dominant than the one appreciated in African indigenous languages. For instance, the most domineering language in the African continent, English has a historical association with colonialism. The British colonialists' first language is English and through them, the language gained entry into the African continent:

> And as a beginning and to create a channel of communication between the colonizer and the colonized, the colonized subjects learn how to speak the settlers' language, and bit by bit, they find themselves mixing their native language with that of the colonizer because of the brutal encounter with the colonizer who introduces his language either through education or through subverting the colonized and forcing him to learn his language in order to communicate with him (Asma, 2015: 8).

The coloniser enforced the English language upon African natives for the sake of, *inter alia*, colonial territorial expansion. Afisi (2008) states that language is an essential denominator in the identification of an individual's cultural identity and it could also be deemed as an expression of a specific culture and a determining element in a person's race or ethnicity. Moreover, the championing of the English language has compromised the identity of Africa:

> …and yet Africans describe their countries as being English-speaking in spite of the act that the proportion of speaker of these imperial languages is so small, and in a manner never encountered in ex-colonial Asia. One of the gross linguistic anomalies of post-colonial Africa, in fact, is that whole classes of countries are named after the imperial language. We do constantly refer to Franco-phone Africa, English-speaking Africa, Hisophone Africa and the like (Mazrui & Ali, 1998: 6).

According to Ngugi (1986), the literature established in European languages is afforded the identity of African literature to an extent that one would believe that literature in African languages had never existed. Therefore, the predomination of European languages in African literature becomes an identity that Africa is yet to be liberated from: "In literature as in politics it spoke as if its identity or the crisis of its own identity was that of a society as a whole" (Ngugi, 1986: 22). Consequently, contemporary African literature has manifested as:

2.3.4.1 Anglophone African literatures

Anglophone African literatures comprise literary appreciation in the English language. The compound word, 'Anglophone' is coined from the terms, 'Anglo' which alludes to England or of English descent and 'phone' which denotes a speech sound or voice. Therefore, the term Anglo has come to be used to refer to an English-speaking person or descendant. It derives from Latin 'Anglia' and its conjoiner, 'phone' stems from Greek '*phōnē'*. The rise of Anglophone African literatures has materialised at the expense of African indigenous literatures which are not as spirited as English is in the context of African literature. Ojaide (1992) claims that there is a Eurocentric intention to assert modern African literature in European languages as an expansion of European literature.

There are many African literary texts; plays, poems, novels, short stories and critical works that are penned in English by African natives to redress African issues. These are African writers concede with Achebe's (1965: 286) view:

> I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.

The writer's preference for English over their indigenous languages heightens the territory of Anglophone African literatures. Cloete (1996) affirms that Anglophone African literary writers emerged in the late 50s with the writers such as Achebe and Soyinka in their prime. These writers perceived English as a convenient tool to propagate their authentic voices across the globe as the majority of countries in the world have adopted English as an official language. Prah (2003) notes that in the past and present Anglophone Africa, it is difficult to make ends meet with monolingualism. It is worthy to point out that Anglophone in the African context accrued as a result of the colonisation of the African regions that were formerly under the British authority such as Northern, Southern, Central, Eastern and Western regions of Africa.

2.3.4.2 Francophone African literatures

Francophone African literature features the criticism of literary aspects devised and vocalised in the French language, however, in the African context. The term, 'Francophone' comprises 'Franco' and 'phone', the former refers to a relation with France or a French descendant while the latter signifies a speech sound or voice. The term, 'Franco' originates from Latin 'Francis' whilst 'phone' arises from Greek '*phōnē'.* Kapanga (2005) adds that Francophone derives from the neologism, Francophonie and is pioneered by Onesine Redus. Thus, Francophone alludes to a French-speaking person.

The French colonial force was amongst the European powers that shared African states and it had several of them allocated to it to annex. Bokamba (1991) notes that African natives have sustained the legacies and policies of colonial languages introduced by the French in their educational system that comprises a level of illiteracy higher than that of their counterparts. Thus, the contemporary African literature consists of a French identity as numerous literary works by African writers; especially, from Benin, Burkina-Faso, Cape Verde, Madagascar, Mali, and Senegal are penned in the French language. Francophone African literature since the dispensation of independence has unfolded along a route akin to its English counterpart and in the 1960s, several writers dealt with the friction of cultural identities, disappointments with native elites and their overt misconduct of public affairs (Kapanga, 2005).

2.3.4.3 Lusophone African literatures

The Portuguese colonialists hegemonised African states such as Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe. The dethronement of the Portuguese colonial government in the aforementioned countries ushered in a democratic direction but did not dematerialise the remnants of colonialism. Today, Portuguese, the coloniser's language, is an official language in the above previously colonised African countries. As a result, African literature emerged in these states penned in Portuguese. Thus, they are dubbed Lusophone African literatures. The term Lusophone refers to a Portuguese-speaking person or origination from Portugal. The prefix, 'Luso' derives from Latin '*Lūsitānia*' and suffix, 'phone' from the Greek '*phōnē'*. Rees (2009) avers that Lusophone, which denotes Portuguese-speaking people, refers to the tribes that settled in the Western part of African states such as Iberian, Peninsula and Lusitani.

The Portuguese colonial power left a perennial legacy in Africa. The countries previously colonised by Portugal acquired an identity as Lusophone African countries. Portuguese is an officialised language in those countries and its dominance in Africa more so than that of political, social, and religious institutions, has unquestioned emotional and ideological appeal, even for those Portuguese intellectuals of a liberal bent (Hamilton, 1991). Moreover, Weeks (2012) notes that Lusophone Africans portray an impressive admiration for Brazilians who possess an essential impact in Lusophone African countries through the propagation of media; soap operas, music and soccer. Sanyal (2020: 118) affirms:

> It was during this time that proper literary activities in Portuguese began in the Lusophone countries of Africa --- Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and São Tomé e Principe. The body of literature in Portuguese that emerged in the Lusophone countries has been divided by Manuel Ferreira (1986) into groups: "Literatura colonial" (colonial literature) and "Literatura Africana de Expressão Portuguesa" (African literature of Portuguese expression). The narrative or poetic discourse of colonial literature is characterised by the presence of the Europeans in its very centre. The "Black" whenever he/she appears, though rarely, assumes a much degraded position. The "White", in such literatures, is depicted, though strangely, as the hero who is sacrificing himself for the good of the colonised, assuming an image of Salvador. The "Black" in general was "coisificado", i.e., he was depicted as "coisa" or an object.

2.3.4.4 Afrikaans literatures

Afrikaans language's pre-existence in (South) Africa could be traced from the colonial background of the continent. It is a creolised language that has dominant roots in Dutch. In the course of colonialism, the Dutch; people who originate from Netherland colonised different parts of Africa such as Angola, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Namibia and Senegal from the 17th century (Bashal & Kavak, 2018). The colonialist, Jan Van Riebeeck and his entourage arrived in the South African city, now Cape Town in 1652, which was then referred to as the Dutch Cape colony after these colonialists, conquered the city. Today, many Afrikaners in South Africa perceive Van Riebeeck as the founding father of their population (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

Van Riebeeck's administration massacred the Khoisan people in 1659, 1673, 1674 and 1677 to colonise and enslave them. Thus, it also combated the British colonialists for power in South Africa. The battle is known as the Anglo-Boer war and transpired from 1899 – 1902. This noted, Dutch and British colonial governments were evacuated from office and succeeded by a democratic regiment in South Africa. Despite this transition, like English, Afrikaans is also an official language in the country. As a result, (South) African literature in Afrikaans assumed status and recognition as African literature:

> Populated by diverse ethnic and language groups, South Africa has a distinctive literature in many African languages as well as Afrikaans (a vernacular derived from Dutch) and English. Although Afrikaans had emerged as a distinctive language by the mid-18th cent., Dutch remained the official language in government and was compulsory in the schools. The pressure of nationalism led finally to the legal recognition of Afrikaans in 1925, and it replaced Dutch completely. There soon emerged several authors writing in Afrikaans. Notable among them was C. J. Langenhoven, who wrote novels and poems, translated the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam into Afrikaans, and wrote the words of the national anthem. His efforts led to the compilation of an Afrikaans dictionary (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 2012).

2.4 DECOLONISING AFRICAN IDENTITY

The decolonisation process aimed to eradicate the remnants of colonialism that prevailed in democratic African societies. Even though the colonial forces eventually capitulated to African natives that demanded independence, several identities

established by colonialists in the colonialists prolonged. Hence, the clarion call for decolonisation. Moreover, decolonisation is not only about political independence but also points out that organisations of government and various institutions as well as the manner in which a state is economically systematised, and how previous colonial subjects were inspired to think are still manipulated by former colonialists (Oelofsen, 2015).

The dispensation decolonisation process has come to be perceived as a contrivance to liberate post-colonial African countries. The undertaking involves re-examining Africa as a ramification of 350 years of devastating tussle against slavery then and coloniality in the present day (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Today, efforts for full-blown decolonisation of Africa saw virtual impossibilities and plenty of criticism. Asma (2015) affirms that in the course of decolonisation, post-colonial subjects do not only demand their lands to be free but also for their cultures to be emancipated. African cultural identities have been moulded and Westernised by colonialists, and in this case, decolonisation would mean de-Westernising African cultural identities. This warrants an exploration of modernity versus tradition in Africa.

The advent of modernity in Africa could be traced to the onset of colonial dominance. The West claimed authority in Africa and ruled Africa according to Western values that almost brought the aboriginal African cultural identities to a dead end. Mungwini (2014) asserts that the contact between the African life and Western modernity through terrorising seizure and usurpation has to a greater degree moulded the philosophical and social aspects developing in the African continent.

Africa like other continents in the globe is constantly evolving through modernity at the expense of African culture, as a result, Africa “should concern itself with the analytic task of unmasking the darker side of modernity in order to open up those horizons and experiences once held hostage by modernity and coloniality” (Mungwini, 2014: 16). The association of modernity with the West, which has previously colonised Africa, implicated modernity in the process of decolonisation. Several activities or items that are inspired by Western modernity and seem to be predominant in Africa today are explained and illustrated below:

(i) Costumes

The contact between Africa and the West occasioned a transition in dressing code in the African continent. Prior to the interface, both Africa and the West had different costumes, which they wore and embraced. However, the conquest of Africa saw the continent adopting many identities of the coloniser that include dressing code. The costumes of the coloniser illustrated below, triumphed over African indigenous ones and today, they are institutionalised in both the African continent and the globe:

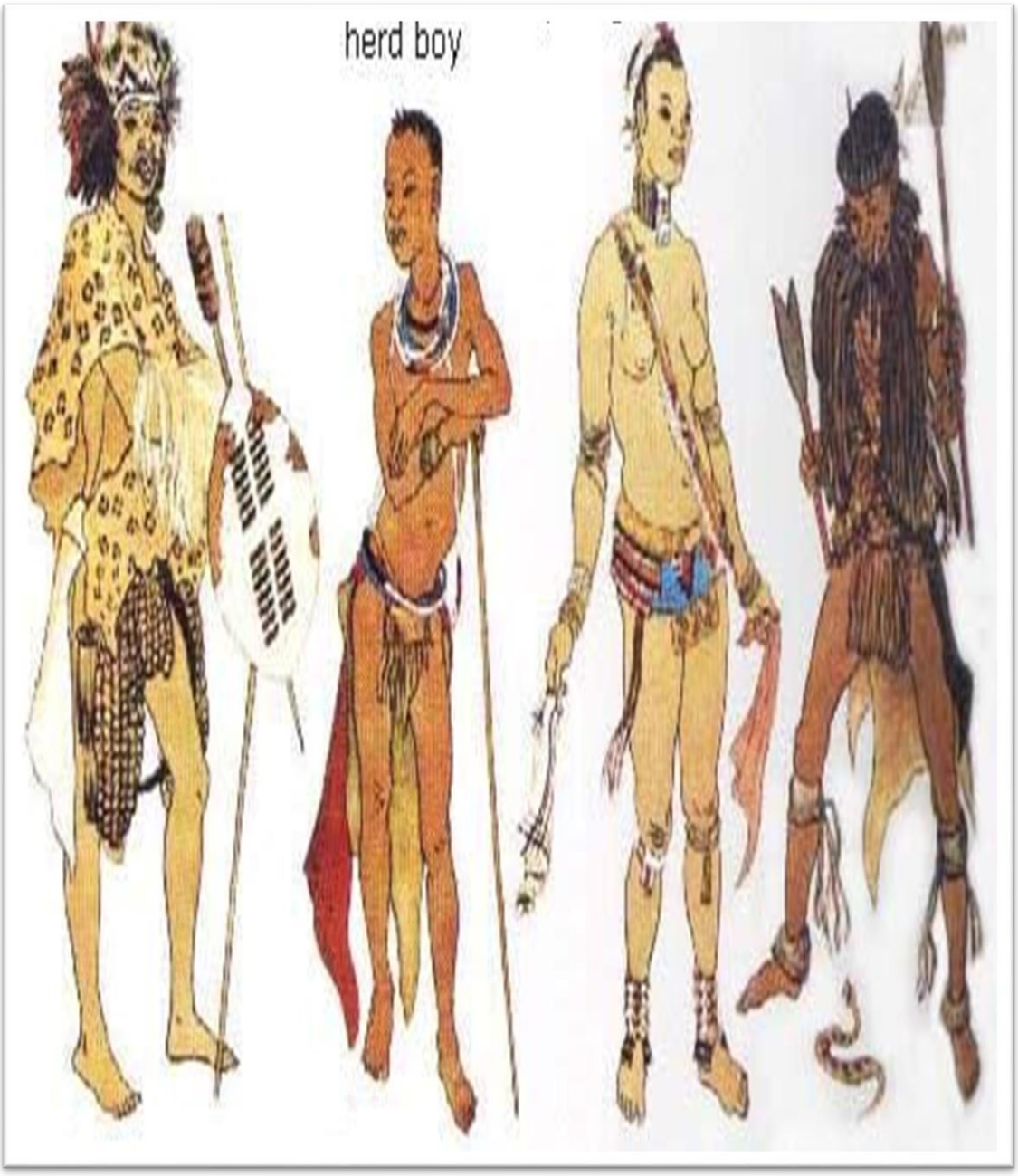


Figure 2.7 African costumes (Source: rebirth.co.za)

Figure 2.8 Ancient European costumes
(Source:historyofeuropeanfashion.wordpress.com)

The ancient African and Western costumes above epitomise primaeval African and Western identities respectively. However, the latter has domineered over the former in modern-day Africa. Even though the majority of Africans have conformed to Western clothing, there are some who have opted for tradition instead, and the traditional attires encouraged many Western costumes, designs and experts that have solicited identities and stimulation from different African systems but gave inadequate or no recognition, record or recompense (Mastamet-Mason, Muller & Van der Merwe, 2017).

The fashion industry in Africa appears to have compromised the ancient African costumes to develop the Western dressing styles in the continent. See the representation of domineering dressing styles of modern-day Africa below, which are borne by Western modernity:

Figure 2.9 Dressing code in modern-day Africa (Source: Dhgate.com)

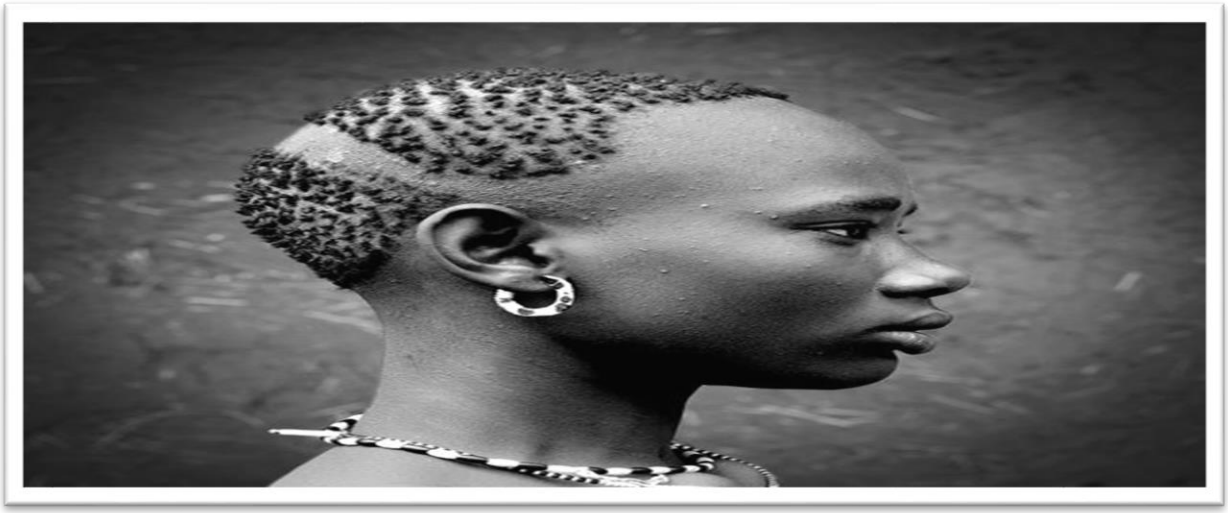
Even though Western modernity dominates the fashion industry in the African context, African indigenous dressing styles are still commemorated to celebrate the Aboriginal African cultural identities and exemption from colonialism. This is because ‘’European fashions were elements of a system designed to sweep away the culture and traditions of the colonised Africans” (Hendrickson, 1996: 11). Hence, every 24 September in (South) Africa is declared a National Heritage Day where Africans embrace their

cultural identities. The late former President of South Africa in his speech 1996, said, " When our first democratically-elected government decided to make Heritage Day one of our national days, we did so because we knew that our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our new nation." Mastamet-Mason et al. (2017: 144) postulate:

> Through decolonising fashion history curricula and incorporating more indigenous ways of creating contemporary African fashion, such content can be guided by but not dictated by Western norms. The aim is to build and enrich the African Fashion Design knowledge system with an indigenous-centred approach.

(ii) Hairstyle

Hairstyling has also undergone Westernisation in Africa. According to Montle (2020), the aboriginal African identity had been encapsulated by natural hair and Africans often presented themselves in short hair. The colonial intervention that perpetuated myths and stereotypes that black (Africa) is ugly and white (European) is beautiful threatened African styles. In modern-day Africa, Western hairstyling has become so dominant that the majority of African women now straighten their hair if not use extensions and this is a fulfilment of the colonial vision. Thompson (2009) avers that straightening hair and emulating Eurocentric ideals of beauty was the elect calibre of depiction for black women post slave age, with straightened long hair being the greatly desired after product, and the aftermath was that delineations began to ensue in black societies. Furthermore, ancient African and Western hairstyles as well as the domineering hairstyle in the modern-day Africa are illustrated below:



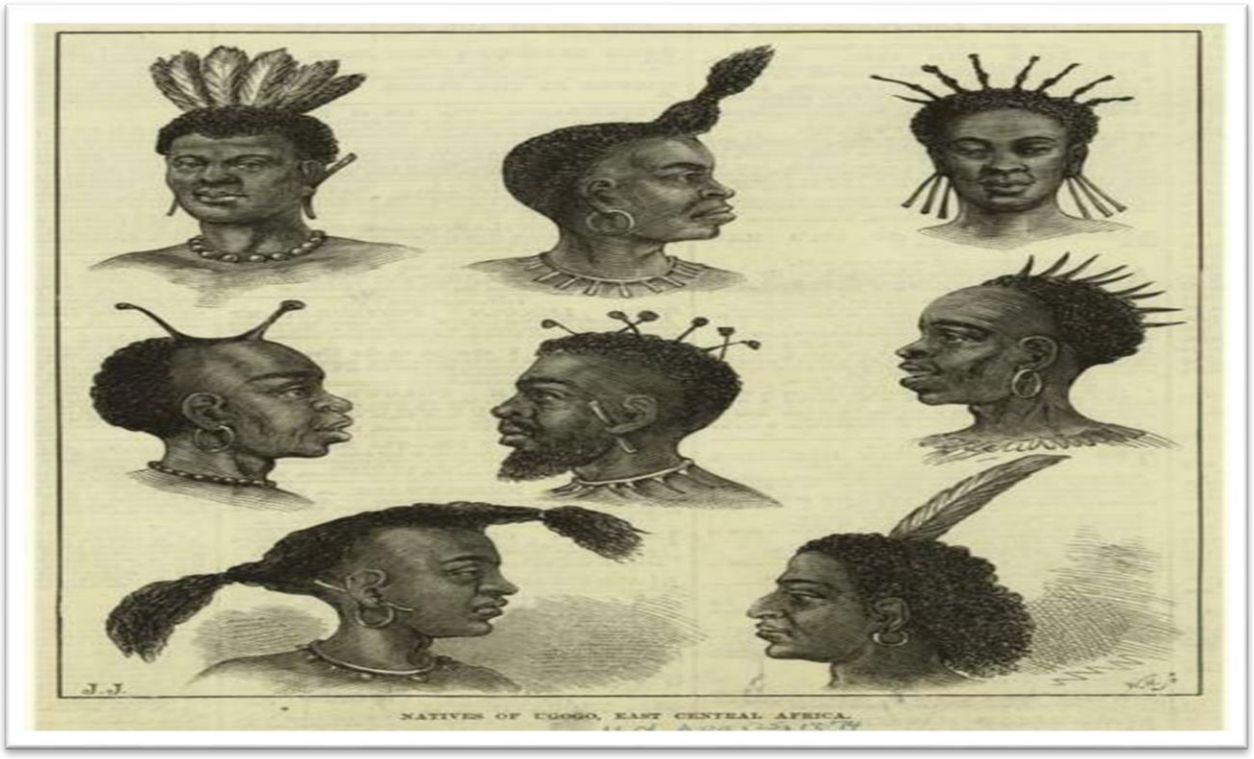


Figure 2.10 African hairstyles (Source: pinterest.com)

Figure 2.11 European hairstyle (Source: nationalclothing.org)

The images above represent traditional African and Western hairstyles respectively. The coloniser proselytised many Africans into Western identities. Thus, Western hairstyles are adopted and reign supreme in present-day Africa. Women are moulding their hair according to Eurocentric depictions and utilising weaves and extensions. Some of the most trending hair extensions are Brazilian, Peruvian and Eurasian weaves. See the representation of modern-day hairstyling in Africa below, which renounces the African hairstyle displayed in figure 2.10 while complimenting the Western hairstyle shown in figure 2.11:

Figure 2.12 Hair extensions (Source: hairextensionexperts.co.za)

According to Mushure (2010: 30), “the use of hair extensions by African women is a symptom of self-hatred and …if black women feel that their race is inferior.” Moreover, on 3rd degree: It’s just hair, isn’t it? In part 1 episode (2012), Deborah Patter states:

> …here is an important part of our identity, we spend an oddment amount of time and money on it and is not just about looking good, it says something about us, whether we colour it, straighten it or make it curly, it is intimately connected to our self-image, for black women, it is even a more complex issue, natural hair versus the weaves [and] it may sound frivolous but that frivolity lies beyond a far deeper issue, it is about race, Western versus African ideals, and what exactly defines beauty.

(iii) Architecture

Unmasking housing styles qualifies a compelling reason to argue that colonial influence has almost successfully found a hide-out in the post-colonial age through architecture. Milelo and Lokko (2019) postulate that architecture has a profound and embedded rapport with spatial activities; colonialism, settlement and dispossession. Moreover, Du Toit (2019) notes that if one could drive around (South) Africa, they would realise that there is a pattern: many buildings or houses in the same Victorian style. According to Hohendal (2020), Victorian architecture or style refers to a specific design used in construction, which was established and christened after the reign of Queen Victoria in the United Kingdom of Great Britain (1837-1901). The British force being a coloniser of many African states makes the Victorian style of the house a colonial vestige. This noted, Pezzani (2010) asserts that decolonising architecture delineates not only a transition of terminology but also a paradigm repositioning. Furthermore, Domínguez and Luoma (2020) affirm that the persistence of colonial land regiments in the African continent means that the exodus of colonial powers did not usher in a return to customary land tenure. The Victorian style of housing that has prevailed over ancient African housing patterns is illustrated below with African house designs of pre-colonial and post-colonial periods:

Figure 2.13 Ancient African design (Source: pinterest.com)

Figure 2.14 Ancient Victorian design in England (Source: victorianchildern.org)

Figure 2.15: Victorian style in post-colonial (South) Africa (Source travelground.com)

The images above compare house designs from ancient Africa and Europe to modern-day Africa. The European Victorian-style still appears to be favoured more than the ancient African housing style which is at a point of extinction. Thus, Pezzani (2010) states that if the occupation has been impelled through architecture, then in the age of decolonisation, the architecture should be dismantled. This is an inspiration from Fanon (1986: 27) who declares, “decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon.”

(iv) Statues in the post-colonial Africa

The process of decolonisation in Africa precipitated the demolition of statues postulated to represent white supremacy. The majority of vandalised statues are those of colonialists that headed the oppression and marginalisation of Africans. Amongst the acclaimed cases of the removal of colonial statues is the #RhodesMustFall movement in the South African context. The statue of Cecil John Rhodes was undignified and destroyed. This is due to the belief that the statue does not deserve a place in the democratic Africa and it perpetuates white supremacy if not remind Africans about the hardships of the colonial past.

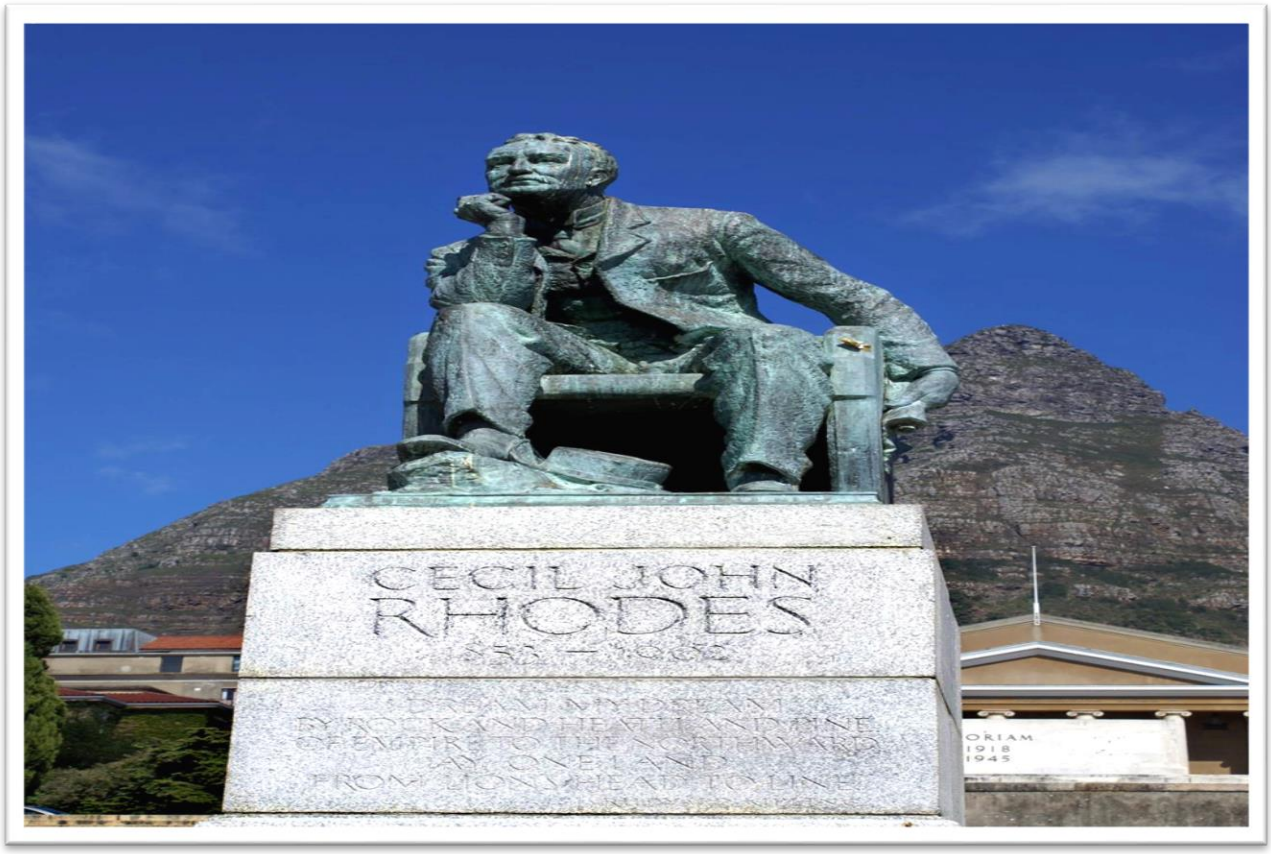


Figure 2.16 Statue of Cecil John Rhodes (Source: en.wikipedia.org)

Rhodes was a colonialist who served as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to1896 (Mclachlan, Healy, Robertson, Burger & De Kretser, 1986). Today, the (South) African institution, Rhodes University and Rhodes scholarship are named after him. His statue was erected in several areas in the (South) African society, notably the University of Cape Town during the petition for the decolonisation of Education. Rhodes' legacy in the democratic period came under criticism for his advocacy and role in the colonisation of Africa. His utterance, "if the whites maintain their position as the supreme race, the day may come when we shall all be thankful that we have the natives in their proper place," (30 July Rhodes, 1894) validates his stereotypical perception of black people.

Decolonisation manoeuvres such as the demolition of colonial statues such as Rhodes' authenticate the possibility of the existence of many hidden remnants of colonialism that are yet to be unearthed. Furthermore, the decolonisation motion has recently been active in the domain of Education. Fataar (2018) asserts that demands for a decolonised education curriculum initially surfaced in Africa in the context of decolonisation tussles against the colonial rule during the 1950s and 1960s.

Education, as widely discussed in Chapter 1, was utilised as a tool to proselytise Africans into Western thinking and culture. Therefore, the downfall of colonial powers has warranted a decolonising of the Education system that the West propagated in Africa in an effort to expand its territory. Thus, the decolonisation process becomes premised on the denial of colonial education, consisting of principles focusing on moulding the colonised into colonial subjects and dehumanising them (Fataar, 2018).

In the (South) African society, the second wave of colonialism, apartheid excluded black people from quality education and any privilege that became with education. The apartheid government passed the Bantu Education Act, in 1953. This act saw the rise of racial tension in the sector of Education as non-white South Africans were discriminated against. Black people were obliged to learn in the colonial languages, Afrikaans and English, hence, the Soweto Uprising was born. Extension of University Education Act, 1959 that criminalised the registration of a non-white South African in declared white Universities, supplemented the hardships of the Bantu Education Act that black people endured:

> Bantus (Africans), Coloureds (persons of mixed racial antecedents), and Asians — and as these come into being, an absolute ban will be imposed on the registration of non-white students at white universities. All personnel of the new institutions, administrative and faculty will be civil servants appointed by the Minister of Education, except for the Bantu universities, which will be controlled by the Minister of Native Affairs (Collier & Levitsky, 1997: 10).

The university admission as per racial depiction garnered great criticism from the victims; non-white Africans. The Extension of University Acts faced a torrent of protests from students and academics as well as both local and national criticism. However, “the government would be in a position to enforce its political ideology on institutions of higher learning, and that the country could hardly afford to establish five new universities when the existing ten are all handicapped by lack of funds” (Collier & Levitsky, 1997: 50). The denial of black people to access education meant to mentally disarm and disempower them to allow a smooth and unchallenged perpetuation of white supremacy.

The decolonial direction saw the University of Pretoria (UP), South Africa in 2019 rescinding Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in the institution. A variety of opinions regarding this initiative emerged:

> Minister of Finance, Tito Mboweni: I publicly, and in my personal capacity, disagree, with the phasing out of Afrikaans as one of the mediums of teaching at the University of Pretoria. As a country, you are shooting yourselves down. You will regret it in 30 years' time (Twitter, Jan 24 2019).
>
> Afriforum: Afriforum finds it worrisome that the university, notwithstanding many international research projects and expert opinions, still does not understand that unilingual education, in fact, undermines social cohesion and increases the potential for conflict and student non-performance (Afriforum, Jan 24 2019).
>
> Delport: It's [removal of Afrikaans] aimed at facilitating social cohesion on the campus. We will continue to encourage multilingualism to foster unity and provide equal opportunities for students of all South African languages. We encourage the practice of assisting students in their home language where possible (The South African News, 24 Jan 2019).

Other institutions did the same as UP and scrapped Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. The University of South Africa also removed Afrikaans as its official language but the decision was ruled unlawful and unconstitutional (Grobler, 2020). It is worthy to note the controversy and inclusion of Afrikaans in the decolonisation process is by virtue of the belief that it is the language of the oppressor. Furthermore, a Fees Must Fall movement erupted in 2015 as a part of the decolonisation process of Africa. The movement was described as:

> a clear call for a free decolonised, afrocentric education…this call is rooted in the liberation of black people and the total dismantling of the anti-black system that maintains black oppression. Fees Must Fall is an intersectional movement within the black community that aims to bring about a decolonised education. This means that the Fees Must Fall movement is located as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate the western imperialist, colonial, capitalist patriarchal culture (Business tech news, 26 Oct 2016).

South African students from different universities made a clarion call for a decolonised education. The #FeesMustFall movement became a platform to denounce colonial vestiges lingering in the education system. A similar approach that black youth in 1976 employed to resist colonial education. The demands of the movement were:

(i) Make provision for funding free Afrocentric education up until undergraduate degree a reality for all excluded black people. An education that is rooted in putting black people first; both in learning content, how it is transferred.

(ii) Scrap all historical debt dating back to 1992, recognizing that debt is one of the key challenges hindering black graduates from making a meaningful impact on the economy and improving the lives of their families.

(iii) End Outsourcing – Insource all workers, paying all a decent living wage and ensuring full institutional benefits for employees.

(iv) A national commission based on justice for students and workers. Immediate demilitarisation of campuses, insourced security must serve to protect students and workers, all students and workers who have been suspended, interdicted, expelled, dismissed, financially and/or academically excluded must return; this is the basis for the commission to seek justice for participants in the broader #FeesMustFall Struggle.

(Business tech news, 26 Oct 2016).

The reconstruction and empowerment of the black identity, which was demeaned by colonial policies, engendered the emergence of Pan-Africanist ideologies. According to Ronald (2009), Pan-Africanism foregrounds all-black African people and people of black African descent; to all people on the African continent, including nonblack people; or all states on the African continent. The Pan-Africanist thought meant to vitalise and give African identity eminence and confront fundamental activities of European colonialists such as racism, the slave trade and the European colonisation of the African continent" (Thompson, 2005). Moreover, Ronald (2009) asserts that Pan-Africanism was first established outside the African continent during the 19th-20th centuries and developed as a response to the effects of the colonisation of Africa and her people, and in the 20th century, African activists adopted Pan-Africanism as a weapon to resist colonial stereotypes. Tondi (2002: 71) outlines some of the key factors in Pan-Africanism's plan of action:

- Pan-Africanism: a universal expression of black pride and achievement;
- Pan-Africanism: a return to Africa by the people of African descent living in the diaspora;
- Pan-Africanism: a harbinger of liberation; and
- Pan-Africanism: the political unification of the continent.

The Pan-Africanist philosophy advocated unity amongst Africans and efforts to reclaim independence and decolonise Africa. For instance, the political organisation, Pan Africanist Congress of Azania founded by Robert Sobukwe based on Pan-Africanism ideology in its prime during (South) Africa's struggle for democracy demurred the option of multiracialism and proposed a (South) Africa on the basis of Black nationalism and alienation of other ethnicities (Alberto, Kemmick, McKenna, Roby & Ortega, 2014). The intention was to aggrandise the black identity, which was formerly denigrated by the "other" (colonial identity). Furthermore, Maimela (2013: 35) avers, the expansion of pan-African mission depends on these two essential perceptions:

> we need to reclaim, revive and reassert pan-Africanism and defeat neo-colonialism; secondly, that no society has ever made history or progress without relying on its own resources – financial, human, technological, ideational or leadership.

2.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to divulge the shift of identity in African literatures. The clash between Africa and the West culminated in the latter in power and moulding the identity and direction of African literature today. Colonial vestiges, which include the supremacy of foreign languages such as English, French, Portuguese and Afrikaans, kindled a decolonisation tenure to liberate African identities such as African languages and the black identity in the post-colonial age. The stigmatisation of African identities such as the aforementioned ones notwithstanding the dispensation of independence hinders democratisation and the next section reflect on the ramifications of the stigma against Africanism.

CHAPTER THREE

(*A GUEST OF HONOUR* AND *NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT*)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Nadine Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* (1970) dispenses her envision of a post-colonial identity in Africa whilst her *No Time Like The Present* (2012) serves as a fulfilment of her prognostication in *A Guest of Honour*. She envisages the status quo of a liberated African continent and characterises or fictionalises her anticipations, and the incidents, which she presumes are likely to unfold in the post-colonial future of Africa. Gordimer's aforementioned novels often utilise the South African society as a lens to crystallise the prognosticated Africa. This chapter aims to dovetail postulations from both *A Guest of Honour* and *No Time Like The Present* and confirm Gordimer's prophecy and reconstruction of a post-colonial identity in Africa. The researcher will provide detailed analyses of the novels with a special focus on the shift of identities from the colonial to the post-colonial background of the African continent, with the South African society employed as a reference point. South Africa appears to be Gordimer's elect and prevalent reflector of African identity-crises. Thus, most of Gordimer's novels predominately utilise the South African context to mirror the issues that come to grips with African identity in the post-colonial period.

Gordimer's interest and inspiration to prophesy the future of the African continent through South Africa is triggered by several factors. She grew up under the difficult colonial (South) African background, which moulded her to be one of the staunchest resistors of colonial systems such as apartheid (Kumar, 2014). Moreover, South Africa like other African societies was a victim of European forces that colonised the continent (Montle & Mogoboya, 2018). It also coerced the British colonial power out of governance on May 31, 1910; the year recorded on African countries' independence timeline. From 1948, South Africa experienced a second wave of colonialism when the apartheid government claimed authority. Apartheid perpetuated colonial policies and stereotypes against black people. Hence, Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* published in 1970 during the era of the colonial government rechristened apartheid imagines a period of liberation and decolonisation in South Africa and her prognosis is confirmed in *No Time Like The Present* published in 2012, which is almost two decades subsequent to the dispensation of democracy in South Africa.

Most of Gordimer's novels are famed for their portrayal of significant trends in African literature in English and have contributed widely to the reconstruction of identities in the post-colonial context. Her novels have acquired new essence and diversity in the present-day African writing than in the past where the plot in protest or struggle fiction was often divagated into the path of stereotyping (Kumar, 2014). Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* and *No Time Like The Present* that predicted and confirmed that the colonial rule will eventually be dethroned serves as a literary weapon utilised to challenge the hegemonic structures and elements that foster unequal dispensation of power on the basis of the binaries, 'us' and 'them' (Kehinde, 2010). Hence, it is through the aesthetics of literature that societal attitudes, experiences and perceptions are sought to be understood, likewise, the African literary canon is relative to the experience of Africans, which blatantly has a solid cultural and historical foundation (Ojaide, 2012: 4).

3.2 GORDIMER'S *A GUEST OF HONOUR*

Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* is an imagination of the post-colonial identity of Africa. It prophesies the series of events that would lead to the ending of colonialism as well as the status of Africa in the post-colonial period. It presents an Englishman known as James Evelyn Bray who serves under the British colonial office as a Colonel. Bray dwells and labours for the colonial administration in an unspecified African country. He is later demoted from his position because of his reservations about the colonial mission, which kindled compassion and leniency within him for the colonised African natives. Bray began to condemn the attacks that colonialists carried out against Africans:

> A company's riot squad led by white strangers— "*You see,"* Vivien interrupted her husband, "I knew they'd get round to using those men from the Congo and Mweta wouldn't be able to stop them. I knew it would happen"—had opened machinegun fire on strikers armed with sticks and stones. The white men dealt with them out of long experience of country people who needed a lesson in the name of whoever was paying—they burned down the village (*A Guest of Honour:* 459).

Fellow colonialists perceived Bray's emerging philanthropic element as a threat to the colonial plan of taking over Africa. The colonialists considered declassing and disempowering Bray as the best solution. This undertaking set up Bray for a search of

identity, as questions his sense of belonging, characteristics and principles, which clash with those of former colonialists:

> If you have any trouble with the boiler, for heaven's sake let Mackie look at it before you send to town. What a pity you gave away your shorts. There's no knowing if I'll be anywhere where I could dare appear in shorts, any more. —But your waist measurement hasn't changed by so much as half an inch—I know by your pyjama trousers, I use exactly the same measurement for new elastic as I always did (*A Guest of Honour:* 8).

Bray ultimately decides to leave Africa and return to his country of birth, England to find his identity. Gikandi (2000) avers that identity could be searched and found through alienation and a failed passion. Prior to his departure from Africa, Bray establishes a rapport with the leader of the African Independence movement, Adamson Mweta whom he earns the trust of and becomes good friends with:

> Three months before, Adamson Mweta stood outside a steak house in Kensington and said to him, of course you'll come back to us now! He had driven home, slowing down on the empty road that led through the fullness of a deserted summer twilight, at last, to the house. Housing estates overrun villages all over England, but here the process had been reversed; the house had once been a manor (Olivia thought that, even earlier, it had been a priory) but in the nineteenth century the village was depopulated by the drift to industrialized towns, lost its autonomy, and died (*A Guest of Honour*: 8).

Bray maintains contact with Mweta and other leaders of the African Independence movement during his stay in England. It is in his (Bray) country of birth, England where he discovers and makes peace with his identity that disputes the mission and vision of fellow Englishmen, which is to conquer Africa. Asma (2015) notes that it has become difficult to maintain a pure identity in the new world order due to the hybrid multicultural nature. Bray's contact and comprehension of African natives had an impact on his identity and earlier stereotypical anticipations about the Africans. He decides to acknowledge his inner identity, which precipitates him to take a stand with the African natives and help Mweta, and the leaders of the African independence movement to subdue the English colonialists and reclaim sovereignty:

> He had kept up, since he finally left Africa ten years ago, a close contact with Adamson Mweta and the other leaders of the African independence movement. He spent a great deal of time going back and forth to London to advise them when they conferred with the Colonial Office, and to do

> what he could to smooth the way for various delegations that came to petition against the old constitution and to negotiate independence for their country. It was there, in this Central African territory, that he had been a colonial servant until the settlers succeeded in having him recalled and deported for his support of the People's Independence Party. He said to his wife, "Mweta's invited me to come back as their guest." "Well, you ought to be at the Independence celebrations, if anyone is. That's marvellous" (*A Guest of Honour*: 8).

The character of Bray in the novel is a representation of the few colonialists who have previously attempted to comprehend that the degree of their official rapport with Africans had in it, the roots of its own debasement (Wade, 1978). When African natives seized independence, Mweta invited Bray back to the continent to assist in its rebuilding and he agreed. Several factors revolving around his newly found identity inspired his decision to accept Mweta's invitation and return to Africa. Bray found himself at peace with Mweta and his entourage than with the fellow Englishmen and colonialists who stereotyped African identity. Bray assumed a position in the Education sector as an Educational adviser. Pawlicki (2014) postulates that Bray's position in the office of independence comes with great responsibility, as he is obliged to examine the poor conditions of the education system and schooling, and devise measures of improving the situation:

> "Anyway, that's another story. —I heard you were going to the Ministry of Education?" said Wentz.
> "Oh, did you?" he laughed. "Well, perhaps I am, then. I should think the bar of the Silver Rhino's as good a place as any to learn what's really going on."
> "If you want to hear how much ugliness there is—yes." Mrs. Wentz had the tone of voice that sounds as if the speaker is addressing no one but himself. "How people still think with their blood and enjoy to feel contempt… yes, the bar at the Silver Rhino."
> "Our son Steven is looking after it tonight. It's amazing how he deals with those fellows—better than I do, I can tell you. He keeps them in place."
> "We promised him a liberal education when we left South Africa, you see" (*A Guest of Honour*: 8).

Bray officially joins forces with the African leadership of independence that dethroned colonial powers. His discomfort and insecurities as a result of being a former colonialist and now a white man amongst the black elites were quickly squashed by his inner identity, which debarred racial patterns and ethnic-cultural factors. Bray's newly discovered identity fosters his sense of belonging in the African society and qualifies

him to find himself as an African than a European man. Thus, Gandhi (1998) states that the process of adulthood is a search for independent status in a particular setting and that status consists of an independent identity. Bray recounts:

> They were standing at the door of Mweta's taxi; there was a sudden uprush of feeling between the two men; the Englishman stood there, the small, quick black man took him by the biceps, hard, through his dark suit, as in his own country he would have linked fingers with a brother. Under the release of physical contact, he said to Mweta, "I don't know what we're talking about," and Mweta said, "You—I told you we expect you back, now. law and political tactics (a white man, an outsider offering impersonal service for whatever it was worth)—a strong consciousness of his own being flooded him as if a stimulant had been injected into his veins. "Whatever you like! It's all ours! We need you; whatever you like!"Mweta broke away and jumped into the taxi (*A Guest of Honour*: 9-10).

Mweta and Bray are a delineation of the common identity of humanity that people from diverse cultures, ethnicities, races and tribes can choose to subscribe to or renounce. Despite their racial and cultural diversity, Mweta and Bray see themselves in one another and their mission to institutionalise a democratic identity in Africa cements their union. Thus, Bray diligently works on the education system of the unnamed country and travels around it in an effort to ameliorate schooling in the entire country:

> It was education now— "the whole position of education is being urgently reviewed with the object not only of making a full ten years' schooling available to all children, but also of finding a new approach that will cut through the psychological barriers that colonial schools created in the education of our children by relating the learning process only to foreign cultures and putting the idea into their heads that they were being offered a smattering of something that didn't really belong to them" (*A Guest of Honour*: 301).

A variety of scholars such as Dimitriu (1997) postulate that the unspecified African state in Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* could be South Africa. Pawlicki (2014) asserts that the challenges presented in the novel such as the exclusion of black people from quality education, corruption and violence that besieged South Africa before and after colonial rule corroborate Dimitu's (1997) view. The incidents in Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* envisaged in the post-colonial African age, justify South Africa as the unspecified African country due to several factors. Comparatively, South Africa like the unnamed African state in Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* survived under colonial

conditions that were meted out by the apartheid regime from 1940 until 1994. In the novel, the African Independence Movement (AIM) could be a representation of the vigorous political organisation in the South African struggle against apartheid such as the African National Congress (ANC). Adamson Mweta and Nelson Mandela, the leaders of AIM and ANC respectively share common characteristics, which are unveiled in their response to the colonial system subsequent to independence. Both Mweta and Mandela, the first black presidents of their independent African societies ushered in a new era of reconciliation, unity and equality amongst the racially diversified citizens of their countries. In the novel, Mweta declares:

> We have learned the hardest way since our schooldays what unity demands from us—and how, without it, nothing, *nothing* that is any good to any of us, can be gained or kept. Small doubts and differences—we respect them in each other. They are family opinions. They don't touch the fact that we are one (*A Guest of Honour*: 180).

Similarly, Mandela like Mweta in most of his speeches emphasised peace, equality and unity. He envisioned a democratic South Africa where the diverse citizens would unite and embrace their oneness in spite of blatant racial undertones that were utilised by colonialists to segregate them. Specifically, in a speech, which he made during the struggle on April 20, 1964, Mandela states:

> During my lifetime, I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal, which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die (Fisher, 2013).

Bray portrays white advocates of liberty such as Joe Slovo who aided in the dethronement of apartheid. Thus, Saunders (2011) notes the injustices of colonial systems revolted and galvanised several brave white elites to support and join black Africans to resist the colonial conditions. Moreover, the colonial government was overthrown by Mweta and other African rebels perpetuated the separation of black and white people during its rule. In the novel, the contact between an African native and a White individual often exuded a silent message of abhorrence, awkwardness and abnormality:

> Mrs Mackintosh was talkative, one of those spirited colonial ladies— “It’d take more than this to throw me”: she was referring, of course, to her problems as a member of the ladies’ committee, but she gave him a game look that swept in present company. She did not know who he was; the curious fact was that people like him and her would not have met in colonial times, irrevocably separated by his view of the Africans as the owners of their own country, and her view of them as a race of servants with good masters. They were brought together now by the blacks themselves, the very source of the contention, his presence the natural result of long friendship, hers the equally natural result of that accommodating will to survive—economic survival, of course; her flesh and blood had never been endangered—that made her accept an African government as she had had to accept the presence of ants in the sugar and the obligation to take malaria prophylactics (*A Guest of Honour*: 180).

The quote above is a consequence of colonial rule on the African continent. The characters in the novel were enlightened to perceive racial patterns from theirs as alien and the black identity as trivial and white as superlative. This has also manifested in the South African society during the apartheid era where white and non-white peoples were separated and the former was empowered and granted favour over the former. The apartheid government propagated discriminatory messages, signs and symbols in both private and public facilities in the country and this sought to eternise the separation of white and non-white people. See some of the pictured signs and symbols below:

Figure 3.1 Toilets for whites only (Source: Sowetan.co.za)

The image above recalls some of the apartheid regime's discriminatory conditions. The woman in the picture points a tag on a door boldly written, "Whites only". The message declares that only white people are welcome and permitted to use those restrooms. The rest of the non-white population was forbidden to use the restrooms by virtue of their race.

Figure 3.2 Beach reserved for the white race only (Source: britannica.com)

The illustration above evinces the dominance of racist undertones during the apartheid era. The sign in the picture was placed at a South African beach in the city of Durban and conveys the message, "under section 37 of the Durban beach by-laws. This bathing area is reserved for the sole use of members of the white race group" (Figure 3.2). The apartheid government had legitimised the use of the aforementioned beach on the basis of skin colour and whites were favoured over non-whites. Goldberg (1993: 11) depicts the conquest of Durban beach by the white race as a conservation of settler colonialism:

> South Africa's apartheid laws – as a direct continuation of settler-colonial ideologies – were a blatant exercise in spatial control. The apartheid state created, and legislated, racially structured experiences of space: where one could live, work and spent one's leisure time was dependent on one's racial classification. This included the beach and the ocean. The coastline was divided up into white, Coloured, Indian

and Black beaches, with most of the shoreline and the best beaches reserved for whites.

Figure 3.3 Restrictions for non-white South Africans (Source: sahistory.org.za)

The image above recounts the hardships that “non-white” South Africans endured during the apartheid era. Non-white citizens of the country lived in fear for their lives and their interactions in the country were restricted. It is worthy to point out that black South Africans were the most perturbed group. The apartheid regime coerced its victims to carry passes every time they moved. Kiloh and Sibeko (2000) note that South Africa in 1896 introduced pass laws, which impelled black people to have a metal badge in their possession before they could enter labour districts and only had three days to remain there and only those under the employ of ‘white masters’ had permits to be in those districts. Moreover, the sign in the picture declares that non-“white” South Africans which are, Natives (Blacks), Coloureds and Indians should not be found in that particular place at night. They are promised to be killed should they be found at the place: “you will be listed as missing, armed guards shoot on sight, savage dogs devour the corpse, and you have been warned” (Figure 3.3). This singles out the white population and proves that favour is reserved for the aforementioned race.

Figure 3.4 Train station entrance during the apartheid era (Source: theconversation.com)

The picture above depicts some of the apartheid regime's tactics to maintain and institutionalise separation in South Africa. The government dismantled any practice that would end up promoting unity in the country. To a greater extent, the apartheid government prohibited whites (Europeans) and non-whites (non-Europeans) from sharing foot pathways. The image shows two lanes, one to be used by whites and the other by non-whites. This drastic step was taken to alleviate any thought or feeling of unity that might ensue amongst white and non-white South Africans. Thus, Treiman (2005: 1) asserts:

> The legacy of 350 years of apartheid practice and 50 years of concerted apartheid policy has been to create racial differences in socioeconomic position larger than in any other nation in the world. Whites, who constitute 11 percent of the population, enjoy levels of education, occupational status, and income similar to and in many respects superior to those of the industrially-developed nations of Europe and the British

diaspora. Within the White population, however, there is a sharp distinction between the one-third of English origin and the two-thirds of Afrikaner origin. Despite apartheid policies explicitly designed to improve the lot of Afrikaners at the expense of non-Whites, the historical difference between the two groups continues to be seen in socioeconomic differences at the end of the 20th century. Still, the disadvantages of Afrikaners are modest compared to those of non-Whites, particularly Coloureds and Blacks, who bear the brunt of apartheid policies.

Figure 3.5 Separation in health care (Source: juancole.com)

This image portrays the racial tension that escalated to health care. The picture recalls that South Africans were not at liberty to consult at any health facility of their choice. In the picture above, there are two signs, one has pointed to the right-hand side and it is written European hospital, and the other one, which has pointed to the left-hand side is penned non-European hospital. European in this context refers to white people in South Africa.

The apartheid government meted out harsh and discriminatory conditions to non-white South Africans as illustrated in the pictures above. The government officialised a set of laws that protected and justified segregation in different spheres. Thus, racist remarks and acts such as declaring death upon non-white South Africans for entering certain premises (see figure 3.5) could not be accounted for during those apartheid times. The apartheid laws that perpetuated separation are presented in the table below along with their declarations:

Table 3.1 Apartheid laws and declarations

Law	Declaration
▪ Amendment to The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) ▪ Amendment to The Immorality Act (1950)	This law declared it a criminal offence for a white person to have any sexual relations with a person of a different race.
▪ The Population Registration Act (1950)	This law required all citizens to be registered as black, white or coloured
▪ The Suppression of Communism Act (1950)	This law banned the South African Communist Party as well as any other party the government chose to label as 'communist'. It allowed the government to ban any “communist”' simply by naming them. It made membership in the SACP punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment. The South African minister of justice, R.F. Swart, drafted the law.
▪ The Group Areas Act (27 April 1950)	This law partitioned the country into different areas, with different areas being allocated to different racial groups. This law represented the very heart of apartheid because it was the basis upon which political and social separation was to be constructed.

▪ Bantu Authorities Act (1951)	This law created separate government structures for black people.
▪ Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act (1951)	This law allowed the government to demolish black shacks and slums.
▪ Native Building Workers Act and Native Services Levy (1951)	This law forced white employers to pay for the construction of proper housing for black workers recognized as legal residents in 'white' cities.
▪ The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953)	This law prohibited people of different races from using the same public amenities, such as drinking fountains, restrooms, and so on.
▪ The Bantu Education Act (1953)	This law brought all black schooling under government control, effectively ending mission-run schools.
▪ Bantu Urban Areas Act (1954)	This law curtailed black migration to the cities.
▪ The Mines and Work Act (1956)	This law formalised racial discrimination in employment.
▪ The Promotion of Black Self-Government Act (1958)	This law set up separate territorial governments in the 'homelands', designated lands for black people where they could have a vote. The aim was that these homelands or ' bantustans' would eventually become independent of South Africa. In practice, the South African government exercised a strong influence over these separate states even after some of them became 'independent'.
▪ Bantu Investment Corporation Act (1959)	This law set up a mechanism to transfer capital to the homelands in order to create jobs there.

▪ The Extension of University Education Act (1959)	This law created separate universities for Blacks, Coloureds and Indians
▪ Physical Planning and Utilization of Resources Act (1967)	This law allowed the government to stop industrial development in 'white' cites and redirect such development to homeland border areas. The aim was to speed up the relocation of blacks to the homelands by relocating jobs to homeland areas.
▪ Black Homeland Citizenship Act (1970)	This law changed the status of the inhabitants of the 'homelands' so that they were no longer citizens of South Africa. The aim was to ensure whites became the demographic majority within 'white' South Africa.
▪ The Afrikaans Medium Decree (1974)	This law required the use of Afrikaans and English on a fifty-fifty basis in high schools outside the homelands.

Source: African History: Apartheid Legislation in South Africa, About.Com

These similarities about the unnamed African country in Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* induce Clingman (1993) to declare the novel as a post-apartheid narration. Even though the novel was published in 1970, twenty-four years prior to democracy in South Africa, it is still justified as a reflection of post-apartheid South Africa as "social hypothesis because it anticipates a future course of events, and the possible socio-political situation in a postcolonial country" (Clingman, 1993: 114). In this manner, Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* has played a major role in preparing, warning and democratising South Africa. It has conscientised the citizens of the country about colonial ills and prospective merits and demerits of independence that they should brace themselves for:

> If we were a classless people, we are now creating a dispossessed peasant proletariat of our own. The lives of the people in the rural areas are stagnant. If PIP as a ruling party is to remain the people's party it was through the Independence struggle it must recognize what it has allowed to happen. Just now we heard members of Congress

> opposing a motion that asks for elementary rights for farm labourers as a working force. Can we believe our ears? Is this the voice that PIP speaks with, now?" (*A Guest of Honour*: 331-332).

3.2.1 Post-Independent African imagination

The peoples of Africa during the hardships of colonialism longed and fought resiliently for emancipation, change, and a new identity. Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* foresees the joy of independence in the African continent but also warns about the colonial demons that might remain to possess the newly liberated African people. The novel is believed to have sampled the South African society amongst the fifty-four countries in the African continent by virtue of Gordimer's acquaintance with South Africa (Dimitriu, 1997; Pawlicki, 2014). Moreover, the apartheid rule in the South African society has its roots in racial stereotypes in the country, which could be unveiled from the threshold of colonisation when the Dutch forces arrived in Cape Town in 1652 (Vinson, 2009). Thus, Head, Corbin and Goldman (1994: 31) affirm:

> Clearly, the heterotopias of urban South Africa return us to the micropolitics of the body: heterotopias are places created for individual bodies to resist the organised spaces of incarceration or surveillance and to establish their own spaces of consciousness and freedom.

The hardships that arise as a result of the political transition from imperialism to independence in Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* are presented through the fifty-four years old James Evelyn Bray. It is Bray who acknowledges that the acquisition of independence is not enough to exorcise colonial demons and to this note, the search for an identity of independence might occasion political loopholes, violence and killings:

> It was not that he had no doubts about what he was doing, going to do; it seemed to him he had come to understand that one could never hope to be free of doubt, of contradictions within, that this was the state in which one lived—the state of life itself—and no action could be free of it. There was no finality, while one lived, and when one died it would always be, in a sense, an interruption (*A Guest of Honour*: 448).

Bray had once served in the British colonial office and was one of the loyal servants until he began to grapple with identity-crisis. Bray, like other white anti-apartheid rebels in the South African context, refuted the oppression of black people. Saunders (2009)

asserts that white anti-colonialists such as Bray's hope for a liberated and united Africa subdued racial division as they joined forces with African elites such as Mweta in the novel and ANC in the South African context to dethrone the colonial governments:

> He had the feeling that the area of uncertainty that surrounded him visually when he took off his glasses was the real circumstance in which he had lived his life, and his glasses were more than a means of correcting a physical shortcoming, they were his chosen way of rearranging the unknowable into a few outlines he had gone by (*A Guest of Honour*: 415).

The acquisition of a new identity meant many changes for Bray such as new perceptions about life, new beliefs, rebirth and re-identification. Thus, the question of who an African is has kindled clashing views from different scholars. Montle (2020) notes that the colonialists moulded the aboriginal identity of the African continent to a degree that it is virtually impossible to undo or utterly de-westernise African societies. To this note, African identity through skin colour, birth, culture and language in the post-colonial age does not carry the same weight it did during the pre-colonial times (Montle, 2020). Furthermore, Sall (2018) asserts that for a new (South) African society, one would anticipate a transition from colonial and racist policies to democratisation. The same notion is held by Bray who decides to help Mweta and the African corps to rise to power in an effort to re-establish an African community of peace and devoid of the racist, and colonial depictions:

> All the hours of these nights, when he was in turmoil he was also in the greatest peace. He was aware of holding these two contradictions in balance. There was once a crony of his mother's who used to say gleefully of anyone who found himself suddenly subjected to extraordinary demands—Now he knows he's alive (*A Guest of Honour*: 285).

The unspecified independent African state in Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* experiences a surge of maladies that originate from the colonial past. The ills include a rapid rise in corruption, greed, betrayal, nepotism, inequality and poverty, and could be deemed as fruits of neo-colonialism which Dirlik (2000: 430) depicts as a situation "where a colony had already achieved formal political independence but still could not claim full autonomy due primarily to economic but also ideological reasons." Even though independence has been attained, colonialism seems to be still demonising the

African continent in a new manner, thus, dubbed neo-colonialism. In *A Guest of Honour*, the mandate of colonialism, which included a firm control over the socio-political and economic systems of Africa appears to manifest in a new fashion. The colonial powers that formerly colonised the Africans in the novel still influence post-independent proceedings:

> First, he pressed the P.M. to go ahead, he "regretted" that so little was being done to demonstrate the practical friendship and brotherhood and so on with neighbouring African territories. Then he suddenly changed his mind and put forward the claims of the lake for a scheme of our own—which wouldn't be a bad idea, if it weren't for the fact that we'd have to bear the whole cost alone, whereas the other scheme's a shared one and anyway the finance is already assured, America and West Germany and France are paying—" (*A Guest of Honour*: 151).

In the present-day South Africa, land possession has inspirited major debates. The ownership of the majority of the land by the minority population in the country is the focal point of the debates. This resulted in clarion calls for the expropriation of land without compensation as it is believed that the black majority in South Africa are the rightful owners of the land. The same postulation is held by black Africans in the novel:

> He proudly showed a single poster on the damp—mapped walls: OUR LAND—a smiling miner working down a gold mine; smiling fishermen hauling in a catch; a smiling woman picking some crop. Population statistics in green, revenue figures in red. "From the Education Department. Oh yes, we are beginning to get nice, nice things. I am filling in the forms. Now we will get them. I wish you were here when the children are in school, they would sing for you." Bray had been sung to so many times by black schoolchildren. This year we are sixty—five" he said, "our biggest year so far. And twenty—one are girls." (*A Guest of Honour*: 80).

The colonial history of Gordimer's selected South African state features a series of wars for the wealth of the country. Notably, the Anglo-Zulu war is one of the most famed wars in the history of South Africa. O'Connor (2009) confirms that the war is a well-renowned colonial campaign of the Victorian period. The war was between the British colonial forces and the South African Zulu nation in 1879. The war broke out because:

> The British wanted to strengthen their position in Southern Africa after the discovery of diamonds. Rich people in Britain wanted to invest their money in mining these minerals. To make it less risky for them, they put pressure on the British authorities in Southern Africa to take control of the

> areas where diamonds had been found and to take control of the areas from which people would be recruited to work on diamond mines. In order to strengthen their position, the British authorities would have to further dispossess the remaining African independent kingdoms of their land (Bertram et al., 2013: 144).

In the same fashion, Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* presents the treasures that existed in the African country as one of the reasons for Bray and the British colonial administration to invade the state. Bray, being an informed and keen observer of the political circumstance was quite swift to comprehend Mweta's emerging elitism even prior to his attempts to repress the nemesis to become transparent (Pawlicki, 2014). Bray relinquishes his task which was to aid and reinforce the territorial expansion of the European empire. He justifies his actions when confronted by fellow white men:

> Bray saw Margot Wentz put up her head with a quick grimace-smile, as if someone had told an old joke she couldn't raise a laugh for."Well, here you're mistaken," her husband said, rather grandly, "we lived under Mr. Hitler. And you must know all about that." "I'm not interested in Hitler." Timothy Odara's fine teeth were bared in impatient pleasantness. "My friend, white men have killed more people in Africa than Hitler ever did in Europe." "But you're crazy," said Wentz gently. "Europe's wars, white men's killings among themselves. What's that to me? You've just said one shouldn't burden oneself with suffering. I don't have any feelings about Hitler" (*A Guest of Honour*: 38).

Bray's abdication of the colonial mission confirms his identity-crisis; conforming to African identity over European one and re-defining himself. This initiative resulted in Bray developing a sense of disapproval and loathing for the colonial administration, which he formerly served with loyalty. Pawlicki (2014: 175) points out:

> [Bray's] sympathies with the black revolutionaries, who seek to overthrow colonial rule, show that he is not entirely a foreigner; on the contrary, he is considered a friend by both Adamson Mweta and Edward Shinza. Bray is then both an outsider and an ally to the newly emerged independent country.

Bray's appalling fondness for the opposition is akin to the commiseration that white anti-apartheid extremists had for black South Africans. Saunders (2011) notes that during the 1950s and 1960s, the white anti-apartheid group established foundations of socio-political action against the apartheid system and responded to the state of urgency and bans during the 1970s and 1980s in jail, exile or underground. The white

anti-apartheid radicals included Ruth First, Joe Slovo, Helen Joseph, Rusty Bernstein, Helen Bernstein, Bram Fischer, Denis Goldberg, Patrick Duncan, Trevor Huddleston and Helen Suzman. These rebels' paid with their lives for their involvement and advocacy for black activists. For instance, Ruth was murdered in Maputo in 1982 and the assassination was ordered by Craig Williamson. Notably, Slovo is considered a long "demonised figure in white South African society, widely misrepresented as a KGB colonel or Russian secret agent, and attracted a great deal of press after his return" (Rose, 1997: 134).

3.2.2 Manifestation of New African identity

Gordimer's *A Guest of honour* imagines the forthcoming identity in the post-colonial Africa subsequent to the democratic corps taking reigns from the colonialists. She employs South Africa as a case in point to portray Africa's expedition to independence and fictionalises the new life and its challenges. The shift of identity in the country is caused by the transition from political oppression to emancipation, which has established a new political and social landscape where South Africans aspire to the construction of a new identity and thought, hence, renouncing the old racist attitudes (Ibinga, 2007).

The colonised in Gordimer's *A Guest of honour* ultimately reclaim independence with the aid of James Bray. The new leader, Adamson Mweta solicits the services of Bray to reconstruct the African continent. Bray in the course of his duty to re-build the African country, discovers a set of political challenges amongst the leadership of independence that pose a threat to the pending national identity. Ibinga (2007: 1) notes that the democratised state endeavours to reinvent itself in contrast to the past dispensation by embracing national identity. The emerging challenge appears to be the battle for political power:

> "Needs a new engine, to start with." "It depends how far you want to go," Bray said. " 'Openly'—that mayn't take you there." "You heard me." Shinza meant at Congress. "That's where I'm going. To see this country given back to our people. You know me. I've never wanted anything else. Yes, I think I know what's good for us"—his fingers knocked a response from his own breastbone, angrily— "just as he's decided what's good enough for 'them.' That's the big difference between him and me. I hope I'm stinking in the ground before I come to what he's settled for. Stinking in the ground (*A Guest of Honour*: 387).

Mweta's leadership was brought to scrutiny and declared incompetent by Shinza who sought to succeed him as president of the African country. Mweta and Shinza instigated an unpleasant rift for political power. The duo battled for the leadership office when Shinza began to criticise Mweta's administration and mobilised other political activists to join forces with him to dethrone Mweta:

> opposition—especially political opposition—from trade unions can only be allowed when it's clear the governing class is working to consolidate its own benefits rather than for the development of a progressive economy … when it's only an attempt to discredit the government, the government has no choice except to break these people, ay?—even to use force, probably (*A Guest of Honour*: 373).

Bray was not pleased by Mweta and Shinza's battle for the presidency in the independent African country. He took into cognisance the reality that both Mweta and Shinza worked together effortlessly to ensure that independence is attained and their conflict compromises that established ally and would yield dire consequences. As a result, Bray attempted to intervene as a peacemaker and persisted "in the mediatory posture between two sets of contradictory alliances" (Cooke, 1985: 136). Bray notes:

> I read something the other day—every nation has its own private violence … after a while one can feel at home and sheltered between almost any borders—you grow accustomed to anything." And he thought, where did I get that from? Somewhere in Graham Greene? Why do I keep turning to other people's opinions, lately, leaving myself out (*A Guest of Honour*: 184).

Mweta and Shinza conspired against one another. Shinza mobilised revolutionaries to forcefully remove Mweta from the presidency. Gordimer's prophecy of leadership-crisis and coup d'état in the period of independence in Africa have manifested in the post-colonial times. Most African societies have resorted to ***coup d'état*** for a transition of power. This tradition has developed rapidly in Africa. In the novel, Shinza perceived the *coup* as an approach to defenestrate Mweta:

> D'you know of any *coup* in the last fifteen years or so where a police force has defended its political masters? It's inclined to be essentially bureaucratic … And in a country this size, with a population still mostly agricultural, living in villages, the biggest numbers of policemen are in the country areas—can you see Selufu's local men rushing off to the capital to protect a government they've never seen?" He listened but would not

> answer. “We’ve got other friends, too. In a good place. The Special Branch. It isn’t only a help to get information, it’s also important sometimes to be able to do something about what’s leaked. I mean, to have Tola Tola out of the way, that’s something, you know?” “So it’s all very professional,” Bray said. Shinza looked at him appraisingly a moment. “Yes! If it’s done properly, there should be no heads broken. Not a drop, not a scratch.” “What about Somshetsi?” (*A Guest of Honour*: 416).

The colonialists instigated the practice of seizing power through violence. This practice seems to have been passed to generations of independence despite the fall of colonialism, which meant the abolishment of colonial activities, identities and policies. According to Kposowa and Jenkins (1993), *coup d’état* in the post-colonial African period has, in consequence, become an institutionalised strategy for the transitioning governments:

> This has been the year of the coup in Africa…Goodlooking good boy of the Western nations, Adamson Mweta (40) is the latest of the continent's moderate leaders to find himself hanging on to the presidential seat-belt while riots rock his country. His prisons are full but even then he can't be sure, who, among those at large, Left or Right, is friend or foe (*A Guest of Honour*: 488).

The table below provides a record of some of the *coup d’états* in Africa since the dispensation of independence, particularly from 1946-2004 where leadership exchanged hands through violence:

Table 3.2 Coups in Africa

Country	Year	Leaders	Deaths
Angola	1974	Antonio Navarro (inter alia)	0
Benin	1995	Col. Dankoro, Mr. Chidiac	1
Burkina Faso	1987	Capt. Blaise Campaore	100
Burundi	1965	Unspecified	500
Cameroon	1984	Col. Ibrahim Saleh	750
Cen. African Rep.	1979	David Dacko	999
Chad	1975	Gen. Noel Odingar, Lt. Dimtoloum	999
Comoros	1987	Members of Presidential Guard	998
Congo-Brazzaville	1968	Unknown	998
DRCongo	2004	Unspecified	998
Equatorial Guinea	1979	Col. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo	250
Ethiopia	1974	Derg; Andom Banti	998

Gabon	1964	Jean-Hilaire Aubame	998
Gambia	1981	Kukli Samba Sanyang	650
Ghana	1966	Gen. Joseph Ankrah	27
Guinea	1968	National Liberation Front of Guinea	998
Guinea-Bissau	1980	Maj. Joao Bernardo Vieira	999
Ivory Coast	1999	Gen. Robert Guei	999
Ivory Coast	2002	1st Gen. Guei accused; then Ouattara was accused	1
Kenya	1982	Unspecified	159
Lesotho	1970	Chief Jonathan	999
Liberia	1985	Gen. Quiwonkpa	800
Madagascar	1990	Joma Ernest, Jean-Jacques Rafalimanana	35
Malawi	2001	Unspecified	0
Mali	1968	Lt. Moussa Traore	999
Mauritania	1980	Lt. Col. Mohamed Khouna Ould Heydalla	999
Somalia	1970	Gens. Korshel, Guled, Kedie and others	29
South Africa	1983	Gen. Charles Sebe	0
Sudan	1959	Dissident military	998
Swaziland	1984	Prince Sozisa	0
Tanzania	1964	Unknown	999
Togo	1970	Maj. Noe Kutuklui	2
Mauritania	2003	Ould Mini, Mohammed Ould Cheikhna,	15
Mozambique	1991	Col. Antonio, Gen. Mabote	0
Niger	1974	Lt. Col. Seymi Kountche	20
Nigeria	1966	Hausa army officers	998
Rwanda	1980	Maj. Theonaste Lizinde	0
Senegal	1962	PM M. Mamadou Dia	0
Sierra Leone	1967	NRC (army officers): Genda, Juxon-Smith	999
Somalia	1961	Hassan Kayd	998
Uganda	1975	Lt. Col. Gori	998
Zambia	1988	Gen. Christon Tembo	998
Zimbabwe	1995	Rev. Ndaboningi Sithole	0

Source: Conflict Trends in Africa 1946-2004 by Marshall (2005)

The table above also indicates the number of deaths that occurred as a result of the coups. In Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour*, the coup launched by Shinza to overthrow the government of Mweta has claimed the life of James Bray. The riots galvanised by Shinza killed Bray who was a middle between Mweta and Shinza. The riots were oblivious of the nature of Shinza and Bray's rapport, hence, they murdered him.

> Through Bray's death, she seemed to experience in her plump voluptuous little body all that she had feared for it. Rebecca sat with her in the garden and held her hand to comfort her; Vivien carried out tea. "Come and stay with me, Rebecca, come to my mother's place. It's a nice house. Oh how I hated that place, that Gala, don't show me

> that place again, never—and how you must hate us—I said to my mother, she will hate us and why shouldn' t she"(*A Guest of Honour*: 459-460).

Gordimer's prophetic novel, *A Guest of Honour* has expressed her fear, worry and concern regarding the future of the African continent when it will finally attain independence. Al-Mutlaq (2003) asserts that even though Gordimer has been an influential figure for European authors, she still feels a specific accord with Afrikaner, black and white African authors whom she has had tumultuous life with, in South Africa as a result of her consternation for the future of the society. This prophecy of Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* will be examined, whether it was fulfilled or not in *No time like the present*, which defines and reflect on the post-colonial identity of the democratic South Africa. The aforementioned novel is one of Gordimer's writings that "echo the poignant reality of South Africa and mark the sharp cleavage between white and black women socially, economically, intellectually and politically" (Al-Mutlaq, 2003: 38).

3.3 GORDIMER'S *NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT*

Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present* is a post-colonial chronicle, which identifies miscegenation as a new tradition that can normalise unity and possibly be a remedial action for racial segregation that marginalised Africa in the course of colonial rule. The interracial marriage of Jabulile and Steven epitomises an era of African renaissance, a new beginning and reconstruction of an African institution in which Africans across diverse racial ethnicities assume a democratic identity and celebrate their oneness:

> It seemed an Age was over. Surely nothing less than a New Age when the law is not promulgated on pigment, anyone may live and move and work anywhere in a country commonly theirs. Something with the conventional title 'Constitution' flung this open wide. Only a grandiose vocabulary can contain the meaning for the millions who had none recognised of the rights that go by the word freedom (*No Time Like The Present*: 9).

The novel was published in 2012, which is eighteen years after the dispensation of democracy in South Africa. It is a brilliant reflection of the identity that South Africa has adopted subsequent to the abolishment of colonial and apartheid policies. Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present* mainly fulfils the prophecy that *A Guest of Honour* made about multiracialism. The latter has envisaged post-independent identities in Africa,

which included interracial unions, mostly through the character of James Bray with the African natives.

Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present* is predominately premised on the obliteration of the apartheid law, The Prohibition of /mixed Marriages Act, Act No. 55 of 1949. This apartheid law had forbidden marital unions between white and non-South Africans and institutionalised that identity in the country. Thus, in the democratic period where white and non-white South Africans are granted approbation despite their diverse races, interracial couples receive backlash from the society that is grappling to come to terms with their unions. This is by virtue of the seed of segregation that apartheid planted in the minds of South Africa, hence, interracial marriages are sometimes perceived as taboo. Therefore, Gordimer's novel uses the interracial couple, Steven, a white chemistry professor and Jabulile, a black Zulu attorney to divulge the democratic identity of South Africa:

> She was black, he was white. That was all that mattered. All that was identity then. Simple as the black letters on this white page. It was in those two identities that they transgressed. And got away with it, more rather than less. They were not visible enough, politically well-known enough to be worth prosecution under the Immorality Act, better to be watched, followed if they might, on the one hand, make footprints which could lead to more important activists, or on the chance they might be candidates for recruitment to report back from whatever level, dissident to revolutionary, they were privy to (*No Time Like The Present*: 5).

The couple's love story began in the apartheid era where the laws, The Immorality Act, 1927 (Act No. 5 of 1927) and The Prohibition of /mixed Marriages Act, Act No. 55 of 1949 impeded sexual and marital relations between white and non-white South Africans. According to Kyle (2016), South Africans found to have engaged in interracial sexual relations, marriages were subject to arrest, and the officiators of mixed marriages were fined not more than 50 pounds. Subsequent to surviving the harsh conditions of apartheid, whose reign ended in 1994, Steven and Jabulile found themselves still conflicted by the stereotypes that they endured during the apartheid. Even though the couple had confronted many threatening challenges in the democratic dispensation by virtue of being circumventing racial borders and getting married, they still embraced each other:

> They were pleased to walk out and find shrubs beyond that half-hid the wall that was overhung with shade from a neighbour's tree Acacia. – But she was not interested in the identification. As a kid given every advantage he was taken to plant nurseries with his father and learnt to match botanical names to certain runks, leaves and bark. She had learnt on walks with her grandmother in the forests of Zululand what wild fruits were safe and good to eat (*No Time Like the Present*: 11).

The interracial couple in Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present* tussle for societal acceptance. Steven and Jabulile grapple to rip the rewards of their oneness and democratic identity in their community. The duo originating from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds are re-conscientised about this variety by their encounter with the tree that carries a certain degree of identity:

> Both characters are reminded, upon looking at the tree, of lessons handed down to them from a previous generation: the different agendas of these lessons reflect the different social climate in which they were brought up. They reflect multiple, varied heritages. Steve sees the modest representation of the setting of the house he grew up in as manifested in the rockery with aloes in flower, a jacaranda tree, a neat mat of lawn on either side of a path (Middleton, 2016: 10).

A democratic identity that both Steven and Jabulile sought to champion is the rationale for the couple's solid union notwithstanding a set of hurdles against them. Steven emerges from a privileged family. He is "white, but that's also not as definitive as coded in old files. Born in the same past era, a few years before her, he's a white mix- that was of no significance as long as the elements were white. […] actually, his mix is quite complicated in certain terms of identity not determined by colour. His father was a gentile, secular, nominally observant Christian, his mother Jewish" (*No Time Like the Present*: 2). On the other hand, Jabulile comes from a disadvantaged background from the village in KwaZulu Natal (KZN). She is "black, but there's a great deal more to that now than what was the beginning and end of existence as recorded in an outdated file of an outdated country, even though the name hasn't changed. She was born back in that time; her name is a signature to the past from which she comes" (*No Time Like the Present*: 8). As the couple reflected on their identities through the encounter with the acacia tree, Middleton (2016) postulates that Steven's upbringing unveils botanical recognition lessons from his father that distinguishes him from Jabulile who is in her first experience with KZN forests:

> You never know when you've rid yourself of the trappings of outdated life, come back subconsciously: it's some privileges of the white suburb where he grew up that come to her man now. He doesn't know—she does—lying in his mind it's the Reed home whose segregation from reality he has left behind for ever. How could she not understand: right there in the midst of enacting her freedom, when one of her brothers, the elder of course, dismisses her opinion of some family conduct directed by custom, she finds what her studies by correspondence would call an atavistic voice of submission replacing the one in her throat (*No Time Like the Present*: 12-13).

Steven and Jabulile's experiences in the democratic world appear to evince that eighteen years after political emancipation, South Africa has yet to rescind colonial perceptions and utterly discard racist and disuniting traditions. To this note, Gordimer remarks: "history's always ready to make a comeback" (*No Time Like the Present*: 327). Racial tensions that prevailed in the course of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa re-surfaced in the democratic period, which meant that peace and unity are the defining cords of the new society:

> Was a church, this is an old *ware* Boer suburb, no Kaffirs allowed to co-me to Jesus at the altar of apartheid, *blankes alleen*. Everyone laughing release from the past. Spread hands thrown up and head dropped in mock responsibility for the guilt of the generation of his mother and father, Pierre du Preez is the one who arrived on the caparisoned motorcycle parked outside, as elaborately accoutred as some royal carriage, flashing flanks, sculptured saddle, festooned with flasks and gauges. He's an Afrikaner who no more takes offence at the gibes than Mkize does at the outlawed word, Kaffir (*No Time Like the Present*: 15-16).

In the novel, discriminatory practices were sought to be eradicated such as the access to Kruger Park on the basis of skin colour: "used to be a luxury only white children had, the Kruger Park; while blacks were barred entry, except forwarders and camp servants" (*No Time Like the Present*, 384). The newly constructed democratic discourses came with the construction and reconstruction of an identity in South Africa that bears no colonial undertones (Bhana, 2016). In the apartheid period, the government repudiated identities that encapsulated unity in South Africa such as interracial marriages and the citizens of the country were forbidden to practice them. These identities were foreign in South Africa and defiance to the government's instruction to the people to refrain from racially uniting activities resulted in punitive measures applied:

> She was simply the added appendage 'Mrs'. They actually *were* married, although that was unlawful, too. In the neighbouring country where she had gone into exile just over the border to study, and he, a young white man whose political affiliations made it necessary for him to disappear from the university in the city for a time, they, imprudently ignoring the consequence inevitable back home, had fallen in love and got themselves married (*No Time Like the Present:* 6).

In the same fashion of apartheid times, Steven and Jabulile's marriage, which authenticates unity, is perceived as foreign in the democratic space as they endure societal rejection, intimidation and judgements: "He and she (Steven and Jabulile) are the foreigners here. Even she. Black skin isn't enough...white, but that's also not as definitive as coded in old files" (*No Time Like the Present*, 192). The couple re-defined their identity in a manner that neither their Black nor White racial traits were enough to serve as their identification criterion. Jabulile and Steven depicted themselves as foreigners in both black and white communities that expressed condemnation towards their interracial union. Moreover, when Jabulile was travelling, she came across a black bystander who opened his mouth to give her a non-verbal message that he is hungry and needs food. She responded to this ordeal as a national crisis without racial attachments:

> Jabu is caught in the traffic and she suddenly sees an open mouth, wide open , without a face. A finger points into the open hollowness asking for food. Jabu sees that the hand is like hers and black. But the similarity ends there. The black finger is not the same as Jabu's. It is the poverty stricken hand of South Africa that points into the emptiness of the mouth and the fullness of the upcoming new middle class in South Africa (Bandarage, 2019: 4).

Upon re-defining their identity, Steven and Jabulile found themselves in a tussle with a sense of belonging. The couple struggled to find acceptance in democratic communities. Dolby (2001) notes that race still influences the youth of South Africa but they vigorously negotiate and establish new definitions of race as their lives are progressively informed by multiracialism and globalisation. To navigate through hateful remarks and find a congenial community where they can settle in and raise their children. The couple decides to buy a house in an area formerly known as an Afrikaner town, which Jabulile perceives as:

> Not only the *ware* Boer suburb has transformed in accordance with political correctness as an expression of justice. The suburb of fine houses, many with fake features of the various Old Countries from which the owners came, that had been in well-off white ownership has also undergone invasion, if not transformation […] there is no longer any law to prevent any black who can afford such a stately home from acquiring it (*No Time Like the Present*, 132).

The rationale to find a home for their children and themselves in the suburb came dashing when Jabulile had to admit that racial tension is still a reality despite the reign of democracy. Moreover, Jabulile's feeling is spurred by her witnessing of a vexing treatment of black foreign nationals in the country, which mimics the colonial nuances of disunity, discrimination and lack of *Ubuntu*: "That's the cause of what's happening. Not 'an irrational fear or dislike of the Xenos, strange, foreign or different.' Familiar, African, black-like-me" (*No Time Like the Present*, 206). Furthermore, it is "too-dark-skinned people, undocumented people and/or people belonging to a linguistic minority who are South African being harassed and arrested as if they were foreigners, and even occasionally being deported" (Landau, 2011: 8).

Xenophobia became Steven and Jabulile's new nemesis that shattered their hope of finding a peaceful life in the democratic South Africa. The couple resorted to the idea of relocating to another continent, Australia, however, the decision was later reversed as a result of Steven's hope. The racially-motivated xenophobia that Jabulile observes is instantiated by the knowledge that the majority of those in positions of power have a foreign origin, which could mean that ostracism is not only meted out to foreigners but also to those that appear to be commensurate to tensions and stereotypes of the alien, particularly from Africa (Neocosmos, 2008). The period of independence in the African continent occasioned partnerships, unions and associations without racial, cultural, ethnic and tribal borders. As a result, the South African society experienced a massive influx of foreign nations, especially from the Southern African region. This advent of foreign nationals in South Africa received negative reactions from the citizens of the country as portrayed in Gordimer's novel:

> That rubbish, they must voetsak back to Mugabe [Zimbabwe], they are only here, come from that place to steal take our bags in the street, and shame, shame, look what they do to Mr Jake, they wanted to kill him to get his car, it's only God's will he's still alive to see his children grow up, he can't walk quite right I see him there in the road, eish! They tell lies

> why they come here, the young ones are just tsotsis, Wonke umuntu makahlale ezweni lakhe alilungise! (*No Time Like the Present*: 201).

South Africans' sudden abhorrence of foreign nationals is kindled by fears that they will replace their socio-economic status if not threaten their lives. In Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present,* the foreign nationals are accused of thievery. Solomon and Kosaka (2013) aver that non-citizens of South Africa are believed to be a threat to the citizens of the country's identities or their individual rights. Thus, the fear of foreign nationals in the country has kept on deteriorating:

> Everybody must stay at their own country to make it right, not run away, we never ran away, we stayed in KwaZulu even while the Boers the whites at the coal mine were paying our men nothing not even for the children at school, and getting sick, sick from down in the mines, we stayed we were strong for the country to come right- If those people don't get out, we must chase them (*No Time Like the Present*: 204).

According to Harris (2001), it was the apartheid government that inspired Xenophobia in the democratic period through the repression of black people in the past, which resulted in most of them being close-minded, mistrusted and suspected of ill. Soji (2019: i) notes that it is true that a black man is always a suspect until he is proven guilty:

> When you enter a shopping mall in a white-dominated area, the black security guard gives you that look – that suspicious look – and when you proceed inside, everyone who is sitting and eating at a fancy restaurant will give you ugly stares. It is worse if you have a dark complexion like me and you are not in a suit or in work uniform. After taking in all this humiliation you finally get to sit at a restaurant that a seemingly poor black man like me can't afford, but before you do that the waitresses and waiters also give you that suspicious look – when you are not a crook but just a hungry person who wants to have a meal like everyone else.

The manifestation of Xenophobia in the post-colonial era compromises *Ubuntu* which is a sense of oneness that was formerly dismissed by the colonial rule. Furthermore, Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present* also fulfils these prophecies that *A Guest of Honour* envisaged about a democratic South Africa through Steven and Jabulile:

3.3.1 Socio-economic isolation

South Africa's democratic mission and vision included harmonising and equating the citizens of the country from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. However, racial favour and inequality remain some of the remnants of colonial policies. Nadvi, Sayeed and Smit (2018) assert that the dispensation of democracy in South Africa, 1994 gave impulsion to the notion of the possibility of re-establishing a post-apartheid society that is premised on equality, respect for human's rights and economic prosperity. This is reflected in Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present* where the dawn of a new era of democracy has not alleviated socio-economic inequalities in the South African society.

Racial tension in the novel domineers the distribution of job opportunities, quality education and economic growth of the country: "How long are whites going to dominate the economy?" (*No Time Like the Present*: 20). Disappointments experienced in Gordimer's novel because of the failures of the democratic government are also felt in the present-day South Africa. Du Toit (2017) notes that socio-economic disparities, perpetual obsessions to racialise the country and the deteriorating structures of corruption are the reasons for South Africans' disappointment and loss of credibility in the ruling government that subdued apartheid. When the leadership of democracy took over from apartheid, it "aimed at reconstructing a South African society that cherishes peace, equality, oneness and human rights. This marks the establishment of the rainbow nation as an impulse to harmonise South Africans and validate reconciliation" (Montle, 2020: 7). However, the country appears to be still far from the ideal country that had been envisaged at the threshold of democracy and as some of the set goals have been fairly attained, there are numerous objectives that either are deserted or failed (Nadvi, Sayeed & Smit, 2018).

Today, one of the democratic projects that sought to promote and embrace equality in South Africa, the rainbow nation, is perceived and declared a failed project by many scholars and citizens of the country. Hains (2016) states that the saddening reality is that the rainbow nation in just 22 (now 27) years after democracy, transitioned from success to failure whereas Pearl Ncube on Opinion: News24 (25/05/2019) claims:

> the rainbow nation is dead. While the democratic system has delivered political freedom for black South Africans, the economic legacy of apartheid still endures. Poverty, inequality and joblessness amongst black South Africans, in particular, is pervasive.

The above-mentioned quote validates Gordimer's distress that South Africa has not completely broken away from the economic legacy of apartheid as the white minority is "still earning almost half of the entire national total income. This is just one example of how the intention of affirmative action gets lost. Since the inequalities and the poverty rates are still enormously one-sided, disappointment and anger towards the post-apartheid government are more and more flagrant" (Sall, 2018: 10). As a consequence, many people, especially, black South Africans are victimised by unemployment today. This has been envisaged in Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* (83-84):

> There was a curious kind of intimacy of insult in their chat. He said of the new powers the Minister of Labour had taken on himself, "The trouble is there's danger of unemployment rising, just at present." "Well, a lot of people are selling up—if you can find anyone to buy. When these pilots and other gentlemen come back hungry looking for their jobs they'll be in for a big surprise.

The prophecy of appalling unemployment to strike during the period of independence in Africa is confirmed in Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present* and South Africa today. Sall (2018) notes that inequality is still rife in the country with black people less privileged than white people, and this, drives a compelling argument that South Africa's socio-economic disparities persist in authenticating the vestige of apartheid and the question of precision and validity of equality in the country:

> "the goose that makes the country rich – blacks, they're the ones who continue to deliver the golden eggs, the whites, grace of Anglo-American and Co. make the profit on the stock exchange" (*No Time Like the Present*: 23).

The apartheid rule in South Africa reserved hard labour for black people. Most of them worked in mines, farms, kitchens and gardens, thus, producing "golden eggs" for whites who held managerial positions (*No Time Like the Present*: 23). Despite the ending of apartheid, the country has not experienced a considerable change regarding job distribution. Johnston (2014) notes that a progressive constitution did not manage to have an effect on the structural remains of apartheid and the pretexts of the

inequalities are ingrained in historical injustices. Thus, most of the black individuals that secure professional positions as teachers, lawyers, nurses and doctors are often victimised by 'black tax' unlike their white counterparts. This is because:

> The apartheid government socially engineered black poverty and loss of land for black people, for example, a black person may earn the same salary as their white counterparts, but they will have more financial responsibilities to their family, which is often still trapped in poverty due to the inequalities that were engineered by the apartheid system (Mhlongo, 2019: 1).

The central figures of the novel, Steven and Jabulile find themselves in a tug of war with socio-economic inequalities. These crises unsettle the interracial couple as they began to experience confusion regarding suitable employment, place to stay and school for their children: **"**Steve feels a breath of rejection lifting his lungs. What they did then, some of those present much braver and enduring hell beyond anything he risked, anything Jabu, herself black, inevitable victim, took on" (*No Time Like the Present*: 14). Steven and Jabulile had two children, Sindiswa and her little brother Gary. During the holidays, Jabu would have the children visit her father's homestead in the rural community where Steven often felt alienated. Providing a safe home for their children became a priority, as some communities in the democratic world are not pleased with their interracial union:

> —We should move. What d'you think. Have a house.— —Wha'd' you mean— He's smiling almost patronisingly.—What I say. House— —We don't have money.— —I'm not talking about buying. Renting a house somewhere.— She half-circled her head, trying to follow his thought. —One of the suburbs where whites have switched to town house enclosures. A few comrades have found places to rent.— —Who?— —Peter Mkize, I think. Isa and Jake.— —Have you been there?— —Of course not. But Jake was saying when we were at the Commission on Thursday, they're renting near a good school where their boys could go.— —Sindiswa doesn't need a school.—She laughed and as if in a derisive agreement the child hiccupped over the biscuit she was eating. —He says the streets are quiet.— So it is the motorbike that has ripped open the thought. —Old trees there.— (*No Time Like the Present*: 11-12).

The frequent relocation for Steven and Jabulile becomes a daunting task for the couple as it does not pay off. The couple struggle to circumvent societal rejection in the post-apartheid era as they find themselves moving to either predominately black or white

communities and both communities perceive their interracial union as peculiar, thus, Steven said that he and Jabulile are foreigners in South Africa despite being the citizens of the country (*No Time Like the Present*: 194). This engenders identity-crisis for the couple as they are to establish a home in the post-apartheid South Africa. Bandarage (2019) perceives this ordeal as a result of neo-colonial forces that are at work and the uneven terrain of class. Steven's newly reconstructed identity, an interracially married man, alienates him from fellow white compatriots:

> But it has been a place. It was somewhere they could live—together, when there wasn't anywhere to do so lawfully. The rent for the apartment was high, for them then, but it included a certain complicity on the part of the owner of the building and the caretaker, nothing comes for nothing when law-abiding people are taking some risk of breaking the law. As a tenant, he had the kind of English- or European- sounding name no different from others usual on the tenants' mailboxes beside the elevator in the entrance; a potted cactus decorative there, if there was no grove (*No Time Like the Present*: 194).

3.3.2 Corruption

Corruption is another malady that Gordimer prophesied to vex the independent Africa. Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* warned about corrupt activities that the new leadership of independence would likely engage in. This has manifested in the present-day African societies and Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present.* For instance, in *A Guest of Honour*, unions, municipalities and companies are overrun by corrupt activities such as bribes, money-laundering, fraud, nepotism and embezzlement:

> Shinza had, many times; for him it was irrelevant to waste time contemplating eventualities in which one would be out of action. "The basis for whatever happens is the corruption in the unions, eh—?" "Corruption?" "Government interference. Same thing. That's why I've been thinking, why not bring someone—some authority—who can show this up? Without taking sides in the political sense. Some opinion that no one can turn round and say … Well, I thought, while we're going ahead here, you could take a little trip, James, go and see the family"—he stretched himself, gestured 'something like that'— "you could go by way of Switzerland, say; lots of planes make a stop there, don't they?" (*A Guest of Honour*: 384)

The prophecy above from Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* is fulfilled in the post-independent African societies and the theme of corruption has featured prominently in

many African literary texts such as Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow,* Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present.* These novels have commonly portrayed corruption as a weakness that the post-independent leaders are suffering from. De Wet (2015) asserts that corruption is a vexing concern in the South African society and it urgently requires crucial and remedial attention.

Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present* unmasks the height of corruption in the democratic South Africa. Corruption hinders the citizens of the aforementioned country from the ripping benefits of democracy: "How's it possible to believe these same comrade leaders have forgotten what they were, what they fought through – in exchange for freedom as bribes, freedom as money?" (*No Time Like the Present*: 132). To this note, Murove (2010) postulates that it is the persistent existence of capitalism, which is under the control of hitherto beneficiaries of the racist regime that seeks to perpetuate neo-colonialism in the democratic South Africa. Those in power abuse their positions and enrich themselves through corrupt activities that affect their followers who remain socio-economically handicapped. Hence, "the dangers of corruption, along with the army of other perils that neo-colonialism is endowed with, have been identified by Pan Africanist thinkers like Fanon (1967) as threatening to post-independence black states" (Rafapa, 2005: 235). The consequences of corruption menace and attempt to invalidate the significance of the struggle of liberation:

> "Was this what it was for, what we did – The Struggle. Comrades- reborn clones of apartheid bosses. Our 'renaissance'. Arms corruption, whats the nice procedure in your courts, the never-never – the Methodist dump just one of the black cesspots of people nobody wants, nobody knows what to do with – 'Rights' to highfalutin' to apply to refugees – shacks where our people supposed now to have walls and a roof, still living in shit, I could go on and on as we do, the comrades" (*No Time Like the Present*: 223).

South Africa fought relentlessly against the system of apartheid and their greatest demand was liberation, which they ultimately acquired. Liberation after a great struggle like the one South Africans endured often leaves vents that others resorted to corrupt activities to foil. Ahrens (2011: 28) affirms, "in many African countries, those individuals or groups which have captured political power often use that power to generate

benefits and privileges for themselves and their supporters." This established tradition dashed the hopes of many people, especially those who relied on democracy for socio-economic empowerment, especially the black majority of the South African community who are victimised by high levels of unemployment as noted in Chapter 2 of this study. De Wet (2015: 3) points out the impulse of corruption:

> 'Continuists' claim that corrupt behaviour is endogenous in nature, deeply rooted in African culture while 'rapturists' claim the exteriority of corrupt behaviour, which they identify as definitely modern and coinciding with the introduction of the colonial way of doing things into Africa. In this polarising debate, culture is either seen as the ultimate cause of corruption, or it is seen as the victim of an external force by which it has been perverted.

Corrupt behaviour is a human element that emerges from traditionalised modes of interaction. It is prompted by selfishness, greed, discrimination and lack of *Ubuntu.* This is a cultural system that could be traced from the colonial and apartheid past in Africa where the white people were empowered at the expense of black people. Moreover, the apartheid government in South Africa institutionalised the tradition of greed and selfishness where only white people received favour without demonstration of concern against the appalling conditions that black people endured. Gordimer's novel confesses that certain places of comfort in South Africa were only reserved for white people unapologetically: "used to be a luxury only white children had, the Kruger Park: while blacks were barred entry, except for warders and camp servants" (*No Time Like the Present*: 384). Furthermore, in the novel, corruption is pointed out as the reason behind: poor service delivery, unemployment, poverty, impoverished public facilities and poverty: "I'm in the compound of transformation at a university, schools don't have qualified teachers – or toilets – children come to learn without food in their stomachs" (*No Time Like the Present*: 223).

Gordimer's concerns about poverty-stricken families, unqualified teachers and the absence of toilets in schools as a result of corruption in the novel are a reflection of the *status quo* of the democratic South African society where corruption has also seen the rise of jobs for sale through either monetary exchange or sexual favours, favouritism in the distribution of tenders. Several cases reported in *Daily Sun* newspaper are

presented below to corroborate Gordimer's depiction of corruption in the democratic South Africa:

Case 1: ANC Sedibeng to meet ELM leadership over 'sex scandal for jobs' (*Daily sun* news, 07/09/2019)

In this *Daily sun* newsletter, it is alleged that vacancies for internships in Efumuleni Local Municipality were commodified by the officials in charge. The officials are reported to have solicited sexual favours from female participants "whose stipends are also upped to about R27 000 from R7 000". In the article, ANC Sedibeng said, "The REC is waiting for Emfuleni to investigate these serious allegations and will seek guidance from the Regional Integrity Commission to determine any possible breach of the ANC constitution and ethical conduct expected from its members should any of the allegations be proven to be true."

Case 2: Official bust for missing R4m (*Daily sun* news, 06/02/2020)

This article reports on the arrest of an official from Abaqulusi Municipality for alleged stealing R4 million. This has left the community concerned and the entire South African society shocked. The Co-operative Governance MEC Sipho Hlomkula said, "We have a zero-tolerance policy on corruption in local government as it compromises the fiscal standing of municipalities and their ability to deliver services to communities." This came after the municipality got hold of a bank statement of the accused, which proved the R4 million was transferred from the municipal accounts into her personal bank account.

Case 3: Corruption rife in the water sector (*Daily sun* news, 14/03/2020)

According to this Daily sun newspaper, Corruption Watch and the Water Integrity Network's (WIN) launch of a report on water corruption, brought to limelight the profound involvement of the private sector in corruption. WIN executive director, Barabara Schreiner highlighted that many businesses benefited from corruption and demanded tenders. She said, "too often, the private business is seen as the victim of corruption. Bribes are paid and tender awards accepted with the excuse that such practices are necessary to get work."

The abovementioned cases of corruption substantiate the height of corruption in the democratic South Africa as Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* envisaged and *No Time Like the Present* confirms. It is the leaders who sometimes compromise the needs of their people in order to enrich themselves. For instance, this is corroborated by case 2, which is about an official who undoubtedly transferred R4 million into her personal account, the money which was meant to cater for the needs of the people of that municipality. Furthermore, cases 1 and 3 show a direct misuse of power by those in reigns. It is those in executive positions who demanded sexual favours from young women before they could grant them internships. Moreover, business officials engaged in corrupt activities for their own benefit. The perpetrators in these cases are those in leadership. Thus, Gordimer finds this shocking as she asks, "How's it possible to believe these same comrade leaders have forgotten what they were, what they fought through – in exchange for freedom as bribes, freedom as money?" (*No Time Like The Present*: 132).

3.4 CONCLUSION

Gordimer has expressed the challenges that persist in hindering the envisioned democratic (South) Africa from reaching its potential. The hurdles include stereotypes against interracial marriages, racial tensions, corruption, xenophobia and power hunger, which are crystallised in *A Guest of Honour* and *No Time Like the Present.* Furthermore, democratisation has been about, *inter alia*, reconstructing an identity of unity across diverse racial and cultural people in Africa. However, remnants of colonialism in the present day still pose a menace to social transformation. For instance, due to the negative reactions towards Steven and Jabulile's interracial marriage, "rather than interracial couples being a sign of the dissolution of racial borders, these relationships enable us to see how racial borders still exist" (Childs, 2005: 3).

CHAPTER FOUR

(GORDIMER'S *THE PICKUP* AND *THE HOUSE GUN*)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The dispensation of sovereignty inspirited Africans to decolonise the continent and reinstitute a new identity for themselves. This is evinced in Gordimer's *The Pickup* and *The House Gun*, which utilise South Africa as a lens to crystallise Africa's reconstruction of identities. South Africa, like other African states, upon dethroning apartheid set out to redefine the country as a united, equal and peaceful society. Caraivan (2014) asserts that the democratic South Africa has tasked herself with remoulding national identity in terms of global incidents that create universal history, allowing the citizens to circumvent the peripheries of their country and introduce or take out aspects that are significant when determining particular characteristics of a society. The democratic leadership embraced the freedom charter adopted at the Congress of the People at Kliptown, Johannesburg, on 25th and 26th June 1955 as the determiner of the characteristics of the post-apartheid South Africa:

- The people shall govern!
- All national groups shall have equal rights!
- The people shall share in the country's wealth!
- The land shall be shared among those who work it!
- All shall be equal before the law!
- All shall enjoy equal human rights!
- There shall be work and security!
- The doors of learning and of culture shall be opened!
- There shall be houses, security and comfort!
- There shall be peace and friendship!
- Let all who love their people and their country now say, as we say here: These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty.

Gordimer's *The Pickup* and *The House Gun* unveil the failures to uphold some of the above aspects of the freedom charter, which impacted South Africa's reassertion of a democratic identity. Compromising the freedom charter yielded a mountain of challenges for South Africa including racism, displacement, inequalities, gender and sexuality stereotypes, and violence. Most of these demeaning odds form part of the heritage of the apartheid South Africa. Therefore, this chapter aims to explore the aforementioned hurdles against South Africa's democratic identity through Gordimer's selected novels. These novels, *The Pickup* and *The House Gun* are perfect samples for the exploration of democratic identities in South Africa. They present a satisfactory reflection of issues that attempt to handicap the new South African society. The novels are closely related as they complement one another and substantiate the country's maladies through different pretexts. For instance, both novels depict South Africa as a country of racial disparities but provide different reasons for this ordeal.

4.2 GORDIMER'S *THE PICKUP*

Gordimer's *The Pickup* sought to unmask South Africa's new identity subsequent to the dethronement of apartheid. It unearths the maladies that attempt to invalidate the characteristics of the democratic South Africa outlined in the freedom charter. The novel delineates the country as crime-rated, racially stereotypical, divided and xenophobic. Caraivan (2014) avers that Gordimer in *The Pickup* provides an image of the post-apartheid South Africa and her challenges of bureaucracy, race and class that escalates from local to global levels. *The Pickup* focuses on the love story of Julie Summers, a white woman and Ibrahim Musa, a black man, the latter arrived and resided in South Africa illegally and assumed a fake identity where he was fallaciously known as Abdu. Unlike her partner Abdu, Jullie is a legal citizen of the country. Abdu's illegal settlement in South Africa with a fake identity is a contravention of the security that the freedom charter ordered the country to maintain in the post-apartheid age: 'There shall be work and security. Moreover, Abdu represents many foreign nationals who are often found guilty of being in South Africa without proper authorisation:

> You have placed yourself in the position where you have a criminal charge waiting against you, let alone an order to quit the country. That is the sticking point. That is what weighs against however many testimonies to your character, your desirability as a future citizen, your possibilities of financial guarantees, security etcetera you might submit. I regret very much to tell you these incontrovertible facts! You were told that your

> permit had expired and would not be renewed; you elected to stay on illegally, you shed your identity and took on an assumed name" (*The Pickup*: 79).

Gordimer points out illegal entry into South Africa as one of the vexing issues that the country is battling with, in the democratic period. Despite illegal participation, South Africa's reception of foreign nationals has kept on increasing as the geared towards fulfilling the clarion call for social transformation. This was brought to the limelight during the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 where the closure of borders on the spur of the moment delineated South Africa's enormous toll on foreign nationals, whereas, some of them were arrested for illegal entry into the country. See the image below, which substantiates the high levels of immigration in South Africa:

Figure 4.1 Beitbridge border post (Source: dailysun.co.za)

The image shows frustrated travellers at the Beitbridge border post who are said to have been stuck at the border for several days waiting to be cleared so that they can pass. In the novel, Abdu's successful stay in South Africa brings reservations to the security system in the country. Gordimer points out that these illegal activities are often facilitated by corrupt elements within jurisdiction systems. For instance, a trucker on News24 (01/08/2020) confesses: "We know for a fact that the loading of our trucks is correct but officials pull us over and sometimes demand as much as R5000. If you do not do it, your truck stays where it is for as long as three days while the client waits for their freights." Moreover, *The Pickup* emphasises that briberies are catalysts of crime in the democratic society:

> Money is always useful. Yes— (the deep note sounded, drawn out again). Ah-heh. These people take bribes. You know that. We all know that. It is the epidemic that attacks the freedom won for our country, sickening us from inside, one of the running sores of corruption. All right. With money no doubt—enough money—you could buy someone's hands to tear up that latest order to quit the country. You could keep your fake name some more months, find another one, disappear once again for-I don't know—maybe a year (*The Pickup*: 79-80).

The appalling illegal immigration in South Africa is sometimes due to the greed and corrupt behaviour of those in the employ of governmental sectors as Gordimer argues. Solomon and Kosaka (2013) find that it is the illegal immigrants that are mostly believed to pose a threat to the citizens of the country's local businesses. This negative perception is prompted by the immigrants' illegal entrance into South Africa, which qualifies them to be viewed and associated with crime all the time. The behaviour of corruption within South African systems is one of the ills exuded by emperors or those in positions of power. There are more maladies depicted in Gordimer's *The Pickup* perpetuated by officials, managers and leaders such as sexual harassment:

> Sexual harassment—boss putting his hand up the skirt of his secretary, the politician fumbling at his assistant's breasts—that's for the pages of the tabloids. He listened patiently—or perhaps his mind was elsewhere, she was too distrait to notice—while she continued to tell him again and again who this uncle was, what he was, not only to her but to others (*The Pickup*: 106).

4.2.1 Search for identity

Gordimer's *The Pickup* mirrors the issues of identity and displacement through an interracial relationship between Julie and Ibrahim. It presents the odds stacked against the dismantlement of racial confines and advocacy of peace, unity and equality. Julie is a white South African woman who met and fell in love with the immigrant, Ibrahim, a black man who originates from Arab. The couple confronts a series of challenges, starting with the acquisition of identity as an interracial couple in the democratic South Africa. Interracial marriages and their challenges have been characterised in most of Gordimer's novels including *No Time Like the Present*, which examined post-colonial issues through the love story of Steven, a white and Jabulile, a black woman (See Chapter 3). Even though the two novels commonly use interracial couples to assert and reassert, they emit different perspectives. For instance, in *No Time Like the Present* both Steven and Jabulile had many things in common despite racial descriptions such as South African citizens, involvement in the struggle against apartheid and subscription to the same religious identity. The same does not apply to Julie and Abdu who originate from different countries, cultures, religions and principles. Thus, they are explored in different chapters with novels that complement better than they would to each other.

The apartheid system had forged an identity of disunity and racial division amongst diversified racial groups in South Africa and officialised this when it passed The Prohibition of /mixed Marriages Act, Act No. 55 of 1949 which hindered South Africans of different races from getting married. Therefore, the ending of apartheid saw the abolishment of apartheid laws such as the one mentioned above. Today, the democratic society witnesses interracial unions; white and non-white South Africans getting married. However, this newly formed identity of the democratic era is haunted by the heritage of the past. Gordimer's *The Pickup* examines the extremities and effects of the enduring legacies of apartheid in the present times of democracy. This novel has perpetuated the "search for identity, but against a new and interesting perspective, a perspective that is in line with the political transformation of post-apartheid South Africa after 1994" (Kumar, 2014: 1). When Julie and Abdu met for the first time, stereotypical hesitations emerged:

> The legs and lower body wriggled down at the sound of her apologetic voice and the man emerged. He was young, in his greasy work-clothes, long hands oil-slicked at the dangle from long arms; he wasn't one of them—the white man speaking Afrikaans to the black man at the machine—but glossy dark-haired with black eyes blueish-shadowed. He listened to her without any reassuring attention or remark. She waited a moment in his silence (*The Pickup*: 7).

Julie fell in love with Abdu at first sight but had minor reservations about him mainly because of his "non-white" identity. This is a mind-set institutionalised by the apartheid system that reduced black people to impotence. It is a stigma that is found to delay social transformation in the post-apartheid South Africa. There are several cases in the present times where comments and acts are committed to reminding black people about apartheid's dehumanisation of them. For instance, Penny Sparrow, a white South African woman in 2016 received criticism from South Africans due to her comments on social media where she referred to black people as monkeys and she was found guilty of hate speech and fined R150 000 (News24/04/07/2019). Thus, during the State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa said, "Let us work with even greater purpose to unite our people - African, Coloured, Indian and White - to build a new nation in which all have equal rights and opportunities." It is the normalised tradition of the apartheid government that inspired Sparrow's thought to humiliate and reduce a black person to a monkey. *The Pickup* also exposes this thought through the inception of Julie and Abdu's romantic relationship. The two clashed in terms of class, lifestyle, privilege and societal perception. Despite these varieties, Gordimer presents love as a conquering and unifying element between the couple:

> 'Love'—I don't say. That is something different. It's just it's beautiful (his long had rose towards his face and opened, to the car). Many things can be beautiful. And mine is certainly isn't. What else's wrong apart from the whatever-it-is you have to get from the agent? Sounds as if it's going two be major overhaul (*The Pickup*: 9).

It is love that conquers Julie's fears and reservations about Abdu. She ultimately succumbs to her feelings for him and the two become romantically involved: "Yet he must be equally experienced; they made love beautifully; she so roused and fulfilled that tears came with all flooded her and she hoped he did not see them magnifying her open eyes" (*The Pickup*: 27). However, this was the genesis of problems in Julie's

life as she has anticipated due to Abdu and her varieties. Her identity-worries have shifted from individual concern to family and societal interrogation. Julie, being a white woman and hailing from a privileged and wealthy lineage while Abdu is just an illegal immigrant, being black and working as a mechanic garnered criticism for her from her people. In Gordimer's fictionalisation of the issues against the couple of Julie and Abdu, her main concern "is the devastating effects of apartheid on the lives of South Africans – the constant tension between personal isolation and the commitment to social justice, the numbness caused by the unwillingness to accept apartheid, the inability to change it" (Kumar, 2018: 4).

Julie and Abdu, subsequent to falling in love, discover a hurdle in their love nest. The couple faces societal rejection by virtue of their diverse racial patterns. This is an attestation of remnants of apartheid identities. The apartheid system normalised racial separation and officialised laws to enforce it. The idea of racial separation defined South Africa for many decades and could be traced from the colonisation of Africa and it was perpetuated by apartheid in South Africa from 1948 when the apartheid National Party (NP) governed the country until the democratic African National Congress (ANC) took over in 1994. In the Big debate on racism (2016), Sisonke Langa concurs that apartheid had associated black people with inferiority, backwardness and unsophistication and this makes it difficult for the white counter to accept it when a black person demonstrates sophistication and success because of the culture of the apartheid government. In addition, Sall (2018) states that it could be argued that it is too soon to anticipate a non-racial nation and to stabilise inequalities after 24 years. This is confirmed in Gordimer's *The Pickup* where social stereotypes are still predominant in the post-apartheid South African community:

> Someone shouted something…like *idikaza…mlungu…*what's that, 'white bitch', isn't it?--Her question to the black friend—Well, just about as bad. This city, man!---But it was black men who helped me, of course.-Oh come on---for hand—out! (*The Pickup*: 6).

Gordimer's assertion above is a demonstration of stereotypes that often cloud people's judgement and delay their democratic progress. When Julie heard the uttered Zulu words, "*idikaza…mlungu"* (*The Pickup*: 6), she did not precisely know what they meant but she just assumed that she was being insulted, "What's that white bitch', isn't it?" (*The Pickup*: 6). Sall (2018) asserts that there is still tension especially amongst the

born-free South Africans although the apartheid's system has been disarmed, its ideology still permeates into the present day today's society. Gordimer highlights the stereotypes held by Julie and Abdu's friends about their relationship:

> And the friends, who were ready to laugh at anything, in their mood, did so clownishly—O-HO-HOHOHO!—assuring him—Julie has a strong head, not to worry!—But she refused a second glass.—The cops are out with their breathalysers, it's the week-end (*The Pickup*: 16).

Julie and Abdu's relationship challenges could be corroborated by Mojapelo-Batka's (2008: 15) study about interracial marriages: "the reaction from our families and society made me aware of how a private issue like loving someone could turn into a public and socio-political concern." Likewise, in the novel, the society did not find it usual to see a black man, Abdu and a white woman, Julie in a romantic relationship. Societal rejection gestures would often include the couple being left by friends, laughed at, given funny looks, isolated and made to feel unwelcome in public spaces. The problem aggravated when Julie took the initiative to introduce Abdu to her family. She thought, "if a man chooses a man for this, or a man chooses a woman, it is time for parents to know. To see the man. It is usual" (*The Pickup*: 38). Julie deemed it right to introduce Abdu to her father:

> When her father was introduced to her Someone there was across his face a fleeting moment of incomprehension of the name, quickly dismissed by good manners and a handshake. What was the immediate register? Black—or some sort of black. But what she read into this was quickly confused by what she had not noticed—there already was a black couple among the guests—amazing: the innovation showed how long it must have been since she came to one of the Sunday lunch parties in that house Nigel Ackroyd Summers had built for his Danielle (*The Pickup*: 41).

The reaction of Julie's father towards her and her black lover, Abdu, unravelled the racial tension that is still prevailing in the post-apartheid South Africa. In the Big debate on racism (2016), a white man was asked how he would feel if her daughter decides to marry a black man and he said, "I cannot see that happen, [if she does] then it is her choice, she can go on with her choice and live with it. I don't see you as a lesser to me, I just see you as a different person to my culture and I love my own." A white woman amongst the panellists on the show who said, "I can't imagine some [black] dude coming into my house and bringing me six cows for my daughter," advocated this. Moreover, it is racism that discourages interracial unions and has led to mixed

relationships and marriages in the democratic era still regarded as immoral and socially disapproved in South Africa (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008). This pattern could affect the future generations and structures of the country. South Africans such as Julie in the novel are often pushed to the point of having to choose between their families and their partners in such circumstances. The excerpt below could motivate this:

> Relocate they're saving. It's the current euphemism for pulling up anchor and going somewhere else, either perforce or because of the constrictions of poverty or politics, or by choice of ambition and belief that there's even more privileged life, safe from the pitchforks and Ak047s of the rebellious poor and the handguns of the criminals. It's not matter unpacking furniture in new premises, some of the dictionary definitions of the root word 'locate' give away the inexpressible yearning that cannot be explained by ambition, privilege, or even fear of others (*The Pickup*: 48).

Julie and Abdu facing discomfort in the post-apartheid South Africa, decide to migrate to another country in search of a new identity. This comes after Julie chooses love over her country of birth, friends and family. It is the sacrifice that Julie made and was deemed odd and foolish by her dynasty as Mr Motsamayi, the Summers' lawyer, resentfully muttered, "he's not for you" (*The Pickup*: 80), arguing that Julie shouldn't be with Abdu. Julie's father also further extended the same words of disappointment at Julie's departure from South Africa for man:

> I've never thought the people you mix with worthy of you—don't smile, that's not to do with money or class—but I've always thought as you grew older you'd find that out for yourself. Make something of your life and all advantages you've had—including your freedom. You are nearly thirty. And now you come here without any warning and simply tell us you are leaving in a week's time for one of the worst, poorest and most backward of Third World countries, following a man who's been living here illegally, getting yourself deported—yes—from your own country; thrown out along with him, someone no-one knows anything at all about, someone from God knows what kind of background (*The Pickup*: 98).

4.2.2 Displacement

Julie and Abdu's desperation to find and acquire a new identity impels them to leave South Africa and seek a new beginning in another country. They are willing to adapt and be acquainted with new identities than endure the stereotypes in South Africa. Julie left South Africa for her partner Abdu's Arab village. This is a great transition for Julie; a woman from the city seeking a life in the village. Gordimer uses this change to

unveil identity-crises that emerge from displacement. Caraivan (2014) postulates that *The Pickup*'s change of scenery, from the South African city; Johannesburg to the village of the Arab country and its deserts, and Muslim believers is uncommon for Gordimer who would usually devout her focus on the precision of South African. The couple's reasons to relocate exclude Abdu's illegal stay in South Africa but include the desire for societal acceptance, comfort, love and a sense of belonging. However, issues that come to grips with identity threaten the couple's desire for a new beginning. Julie tussled to subscribe to the new identity that she witnessed in the Arab village. Abdu anticipated this clash of identities and tried to prevent them from leaving South Africa for the Arab village. Hence, he states:

> Who asked you to buy two tickets. You said nothing to me. Don't you think you must discuss? No, you are used to making all decisions, you do what you like, no father, no mother, nobody must ever tell you. And me—what am I, don't speak to me, don't ask me—you cannot live in my country, it's not for you, you can't understand what it is to live there, you can wish you were dead if you live there (*The Pickup*: 95).

Abdu observes the gap between him and Julie's familial background. Julie originates from an upper-class family in South Africa. Julie was privileged and could be independent, as she believed, "Nobody has to be responsible for me. I am responsible for myself" (*The Pickup*: 95). These notions appeared to be a hurdle for her successful acquisition of a new identity in the Arab village. It is in this village where she was introduced to the roles of women that she has never performed before. Abdu predicted Julie's identity-crises in the Arab, especially because she is a woman.

> As he knew they were coming close to the village where, there was the image of the family waiting, he looked at her. up and down, in a way that made her turn, smiling enquiry. Have you got something else to put on. In one of the bags. Put on? What? He touched at his breast-bone in the open neck of his shirt. Here. To cover up. But it's so hot. Don't I look all right? She hitched at the shoulders of the indeterminate sort of garment she wore as a comfortable travelling out of it with her jeans, the movement of muscle lifting for a moment into view the soft cupping of her breasts. A scarf or something. I don't see how I can get at things—in our stuff—among all these people, I'll be tramping over them. Wait. Wait—I've got a safety pin somewhere (*The Pickup*: 121).

In most villages such as the one in the novel, women's roles are underpinned by cultural perceptions. To this note, Julie had to adapt to village culture and the Muslim religion that domineered in the Arab village. Kalu (2001) states that the societal roles

of women have been consistently interrogated in societies as women have, for many years, struggled to own their territory in patriarchal dimensions. It is blatant that the identities in the Arab village flabbergasted Julie as they were "all new to her" (*The Pickup*: 114). Moreover, Skea (2004) postulates that Gordimer has pragmatically fictionalised the manner in which Julie and Abdu manage to live with the changes that include cultural adjustments. Julie's identity-crises begins when Abdu asks her:

> Have you got something else to put on. In one of the bags
> Julie: Put on? What?
> Abdu: He touched at his breast-bone in the open neck of his shirt. To cover up.
> Julie: But it's so hot. Don't I look all right? …
> Abdu: A scarf or something (*The Pickup*: 115).

Gordimer unravels the village's depiction of women. Abdu could not let her meet with his people wearing a top that revealed sensitive flesh: "He touched at his breast-bone in the open neck of his shirt. To cover up" (*The Pickup*: 115). Abdu's suggestion for Julie to cover up her revealing part with a top was to circumvent unpleasant remarks that the village would pass at Julie. According to Caslin (2014), the harsh comments that Julie was likely to receive because of the manner in which dressed include "whore", "savage" and "heathen". Julie's identity-crises heightens when she discovers her anticipated comfort in the village could be thwarted:

> What I need now is a long, hot bath. Where is the bathroom? There was no bathroom. Had she thought of that, when she decided to come with him. This place is buried in desert … Had she any idea of what a burden she would be. So there it is. Madness. Madness to think she could stick it out, here. He was angry – with this house, this village, these his people – to have to tell her other unacceptable things, tell her once and for all what her ignorant obstinacy of coming with him to this place means, when she failed, with all her privilege, at getting him accepted in hers (*The Pickup*: 122).

The quest for identity coerces Julie to make compromises. She acknowledges the fact that she did not expect to find another challenge of identity in the Arab village subsequent to eluding one in South Africa. Gordimer integrates the "themes of identity and place through a focus on the impact of physical and mental barriers (typical of South African society) in the characters' lives" (Tecucianu, 2014: 13). This is substantiated by Julie's challenges in her husband's world. The Arab society along with her husband's family subject Julie to stereotypical rejection. They do not

understand her lifestyle, thinking and behaviour. This is Gordimer's presentation of intricacies revolving around the acquisition of a new identity. Dimitriu (2006) asserts that the novel depicts a dimension of fragmented and unfixed identities. Patriarchal and cultural stereotypes against women are some of the unfixed identities that Gordimer portrays in the novel. The Musa family thinks Jullie is "accustomed to living, pleasing herself" (*The Pickup*: 122). This is unacceptable according to their culture and to them, it is "impossible here" (*The Pickup*: 123). Thus, Sarup (1996) avers that identity could be observed as a multi-dimensional space with different forces that unite and at times collide. The Musa family complain about Julie's self-conduct in the village:

> It's not usual for women to sit down to eat with men, today was a special exception for the occasion—does she understand. It's enough, for these people, that she goes about with an uncovered head—that they can tolerate with a white face, maybe. He has sharply resisted his mother's taking him side to insist that his wife put a scarf over her head when leaving the house or in the company if men who were not family; resisted with pain, because this is his mother, whom he wanted to bring away to a better life (*The Pickup*: 122-123).

4.3.3 Gender and identity

Gordimer also presents the issues of gender and identity-crisis through the struggles of Julie in the world of her partner Abdu. Patriarchy and its gatekeepers that include women in the Arab village also disturb Julie's acquisition of a new identity. Shermatova (2017) states that Abdu had the gender privilege of being a man, which has contributed to his survival when he was still an immigrant in South Africa. Hence, Julie's gender in the Arab world is depicted as weaker vessels, helpers and second to its male counterpart. Moreover, women in the novel, especially Julie acknowledge men as some kind of crowned heads: "there is some evidence in the novel of the kind of fetishist orientalism that has Julie see Ibrahim as an 'oriental prince' while her Johannesburg friends describe him less romantically as a 'grease-monkey' who works as a mechanic in the local garage" (Kossew, 2003: 23). By virtue of being a woman, Julie is anticipated to be submissive to Abdu and obedient to all other cultural underpinnings that the Musa family lived by. From its inception, the guide of their relationship has been:

> Whoever embraces a woman is Adam. The woman is Eve. Everything happens for the first time… Praise be the love wherein there is no possessor and no possessed, but both surrender. …Everything happens for the first time but in a way that is eternal (*The Pickup*: 34).

The perception above took a turn when the couple's relocation to the homeland of Abdu where Julie struggled to reconstruct a new identity and was compelled to sacrifice her principles, lifestyle and aboriginal culture. These compromises prompted Julie to develop a belief about the meaning of love and relationships that materialise in the Arab village:

> A Muslim doesn't fall in love with a woman, but only with Allah (*The Pickup:* 183).

> Everybody—poor Khadija is nobody—was animated in congratulatory exclamations, murmurs, a happy confusion of interruption with admiration for the Uncle's generosity and the transformation he has the power to bring close to their lives (*The Pickup*: 189).

Traditional African society regarded women as persistent dependents on men and these men are expected to protect and guide the women and this, in most cases, has resulted in women often being objectified and commodified (Bauer, 2009). Julie discovers the Ramadan, the Koran and she even orders the translation of the Koran via mail from California, however, Abdu who holds a notion that Julie deserves better than what his village could offer disturbs her efforts and desire to tolerate the local culture:

> He was angry—with this house, this village, these his people—to have to tell her other unacceptable things, tell her once and for all what her ignorant obstinacy of coming with him to this place means, when she failed, with all her privilege, at getting him accepted in hers. Tomorrow. The other days ahead (*The Pickup*: 128).

4.3 *THE HOUSE GUN*

Gordimer's search for identity in the democratic world could be further portrayed in her novel, *The House Gun.* This is Gordimer's second post-apartheid reflection that explores a set of challenges through the couple, Claudia and Harald Lingard who are confronted by their son's execution of one of his housemates. Like *The Pickup*, *The House Gun* tries to find a democratic identity through a couple that finds itself impelled

to compromise and make hefty sacrifices in an effort to adopt an identity. The novel mirrors issues that stem from the quest for identity in the post-colonial period such as violence. The title of the novel, *The House Gun* appears to be "an allegory of domestic and political violence, so ingrained in South African culture, but also of anti-normative human relationships" (Diala, 2018: 115). Gordimer acknowledges:

> … in a region of the country where the political ambition of a leader had led to killings that had become vendettas, fomented by him, a daily tally of deaths was routine as a weather report; elsewhere, taxi drivers shot one another in rivalry over who would choose to ride with them, quarrels in discothèques were settled by the final curse-word of guns. State violence under the old, past regime had habituated its victims to it. People had forgotten there was another way (*The House* Gun: 49-50).

In the novel, maladies including racism, violence and homophobia are depicted as enduring legacies of the apartheid government as they perpetuate colonial stereotypes. These remnants of apartheid have proven to be destructors to the acquisition of a democratic identity through the Lingard family in Gordimer's *The House Gun.* These are some of the issues that the leadership of democracy in South Africa set out to address upon taking reins in the country from 1994 presented in Gordimer's *The House Gun.* To this note, this narration is "more than other novels of the transition, gives an image, honed to perfection, of the legacy of apartheid" (Diallo, 2018: 115).

4.3.1 Sexual Identity and Democratisation

The couple, Claudia and Harald Lingard had faith in their son, Duncan and brought him up to be a responsible adult. However, Duncan's series of short-comings have profusely disappointed and shocked his parents. This includes the discovery of their son's sexual identity. The couple found themselves obligated to disregard their cultural notions, which forbid Duncan's bisexual orientation. The disclosure of the sexual identity of Duncan to Claudi and Harald is the reality that propels them to reflect on their son's past, to determine his childhood life and reaction to sexual phenomena in an effort to comprehend his confession that he is bisexual (Diallo, 2018):

> something very strong between them … even devastating, the way I suppose it can be if… That business with a man, before her. Wasn't it a matter of being fascinated by the set in that house? Fashion's that's been around for his generation, the idea that homosexuality is the real liberation, to suggest this as superiority beyond the ordinary humdrum.

> Why did he choose to live with those men? It turns out he didn't take the cottage because of the girl. Moved in with them on the property because their freedom claims to go beyond all the old trappings between men and women, marriages and divorces and crying babies. He didn't suffer any example of divorces and crying babies with us. Wanted to be one of the boys. Those boys. Emancipated. Superior. Free (*The House Gun*: 120).

The colonial and apartheid experiences of the Lingards have moulded and aggravated their lamentation towards the discovery of their son's bisexuality. Bucheler (2015) notes that the sexual identity of Duncan could be linked with a complete hysteria and intrapersonal conflict that is evocative of colonial and patriarchal notions. Homosexuality in the post-apartheid period has not gone uncriticised. This sexual identity has garnered sluggish progress in terms of its acceptance by the society due to stereotypes that date back to the apartheid rule as reflected in Gordimer's *The House Gun*: "If the apartheid social and legal system criminalised homosexuality by designating same-sex conduct as a crime, an offence Ijnked to punishment, the post-apartheid context may be interpreted as a project of decriminalisation that foregrounds the legal recognition and development of queer identity" (Reddy, 2005: 140). This decriminalisation, qualified by the democratic dispensation has not satisfactorily established a comfortable space for the Lesbians Gays Bisexuals Transgender (LGBT). For instance, Reddy (2006) claims that the legitimisation of sodomy reinstalls it as a necessity that also needs to be depathologised. This brings the democratic world of Duncan's parents to criticism in a society where liberation has not permeated racial and sexual questions (Bucheler, 2015). Gordimer unveils the animosity towards bisexuality through the excerpt below:

> The resentment is shameful. What is shameful cannot be shared. What is shameful separates. But the way to deal with the resentment will come, must come, individually to both. The resentment is shameful: because what is it that they do to him? Is that where the answer – Why? Why? – is to be found? Harald is prompted by Jesuits, Claudia by Freud (*The House Gun*: 63).

The dehumanising comments towards Duncan's sexual identity are a delineation of attitudes and thoughts about LGBTs in the democratic society. This is also an invalidation of the democratic declaration, which made a clarion call for the respect of human rights. It is then that the LGBT community rose to confess and publicise their sexual identities. Reddy (2006) postulates that in the South African society the legal

recognition of marriage is an ultimate hindrance in triumphing over discriminatory reactions towards gays and lesbians. Many families in the present day are divided over the recognition of the LGBT community. Some, especially those that fervent believers in culture and religion condemn this sexual identity whereas others embrace it. Asokan (2012) asserts that the LGBT community is often accused of witchcraft and sorcery and to a greater extent, they are assaulted and some families, churches and schools are homophobic and transphobic as they advocate for the propagation of the belief that homosexuality is "un-African", hence, lesbians are raped to cure them of homosexuality, which is believed to be some kind of a disease caused by unsatisfaction they experienced in the heterosexual intercourse they might have engaged in. The nature of societal division over the presence of the LGBT community is portrayed in Gordimer's *The House Gun* where:

> the shameful act of killing and revealing to his parents as a bisexual is a rift that separates the couple, who are agitated and even traumatized by the events. Face to such a tragic experience, face to uncertainty, doubts born from the inability to no longer believe in the cultural and social principles they took for granted (Diala, 2018: 121).

Duncan's sexuality drives his parents, Claudia and Harald Lingard to resort to conflicts, hesitations and heated debates in order to decide Duncan's fate in their lives. Harald seeks solace and resolution in religion and tells Claudia that divinity "is a heightened means of communicating with one's own resources in solution of guidance through fears, failures and sorrows." (*The House Gun*: 27). On the other hand, Claudia hinges on scientific and psychological analysis of Duncan's revelation that he is bisexual:

> All their lives they must have believed – defined – morality as the master of passions. The controller. Whether this unconscious acceptance came from the teachings of God's word or from the principle of self-imposed restraint in rationalists. And it can continue unquestioned in any way until something happens at the extreme of transgression, rebellion: the catastrophe that lies at the crashed limit of all morality, the unspeakable passion that takes life. . . But what is trivial at one, harmless, end of the scale – where does it stop. No need to think about that, all their lives, either of them, because the mastery has never needed to be tested any further. My God (his God) no! Where do the taboos really begin? Where did their son follow on from their limits beyond anything they could never have envisaged him – their own – following. Oh they feel they own him now, as if he were again the small child they were forming by precept and example: by what they themselves were. Parents. . .separately, they have lost all interest in and concentration on their activities and are

> shackled together, each solitary, in their inescapable proximity that chafes them (*The House Gun*: 162).

Like Duncan, many LGBTs in South Africa have and still fear for their lives by virtue of their sexual identity. Awareness campaigns, talk shows and social media made efforts to educate, normalise and promote respect for the LGBTs. Similar cases of LGBT struggles in the present-day South Africa that complement Duncan's experiences in Gordimer's *The House Gun* are mirrored on many platforms. For instance, the South African telenovela, *Skeem Saam* (2020) that airs on SABC 1, has characterised some of the challenges that LGBTs in Duncan's age group endure. The storyline from *Skeem Saam* undergirds Gordimer's *The House Gun* regarding the hardships of LGBTs. In the telenovela, a grade 12 pupil, Clement Letsoalo during a disciplinary hearing divulges that he is homosexual. His confession shocked everyone in the meeting, mostly his family. Ever since Clement confessed about his sexual identity his life changed. Family and friends almost turned their backs on him including the entire fictional community of Turfloop.

Clement's case evinces that homosexual stereotyping is a reality in the post-apartheid South Africa. Many assumptions attempt to depict colonial and patriarchal values as catalysts of homosexual discrimination but there are also stereotypes within African communities where the LGBTs are considered un-African. According to Asokan (2012), homosexuality is still at its prime with injustice, queerphobia and violence on social levels. Like Duncan in *The House Gun,* psychoanalysis and religious interventions were recommended for Clement. Firstly, he is kicked out of his home but later brought back and detained. He was also advised to be in a relationship with the opposite sex and would remedy his sexuality. Lastly, a pastor was requested to intervene and for Clement. His grandmother believed that he was possessed by a demon of homosexuality and it needed to be exorcised. The issues vexing both Clement in *Skeem Saam* and Duncan in *The House Gun* sets into motion a sense of urgency on LGBT matters. Gqola (2006) states that the LGBTs often deprive themselves of agency when it comes to their sexual identities in an effort to evade abasement and violence, which is a result of society's denouncement of homosexuality. Moreover, there are appalling cases of LGBT violence in South Africa such as the ones listed below:

> In 2006, a woman named Zoliswa Nkonyana was raped and then murdered with a golf club in Khayelitsha, Cape Town It took two weeks for the story to break in mainstream media (Tham, 2006: 1).
>
> In 2007, lesbian couple Sizakele Sigasa and Salome Massooa were gang raped and shot near their homes in Meadowlands, Soweto, which led to the formation of the 07-07-07 campaign: a coalition of human rights and equality groups calling for justice for women targeted in such attacks However, little change has occurred in terms of minimising such cases (Kelly, 2009: 1). (Kelly, 2009: 1).
>
> In 2008, female soccer player Eudy Simalane, a player for the South African National Women's Football team, and an openly LGBT-rights activist, was abducted, beaten, gang raped, and stabbed 25 times in the face, legs, and chest in her hometown of KwaThema, Springs (Kelly, 2009: 1).
>
> In 2011, 24-year old lesbian activist, Noxolo Nogwaza, was stoned, stabbed, and raped because of her sexual orientation (*South Africa: No Arrests in Murder Case,* 2011: 1).

In the novel, Duncan's situation has deteriorated when his sexual identity links him to violence and murder. *The House Gun* also firmly depict violence as an identity of the apartheid South Africa. In the opening of the novel, the couple, Claudia and Harald Lingard swallow a bitter pill when they come to terms with the worst disappointment in their son who has just murdered a housemate:

> A kind of… Not Duncan, no, no! Someone's been shot. He's arrested. Duncan.
> They both stand up.
> For God's sake – what are you talking about – what is all this – how arrested, arrested for what –
> The messenger is attacked, he becomes almost sullen, unable to bear what he has to tell. The obscene word comes ashamedly from him. Murder. . .
> He/she. He strides over and switches off the television. And expels a violent breath. So long as nobody moved, nobody uttered, the word and the act within the word could not enter here. Now with the touch of a switch and the gush of a breath a new calendar is opened. The old Gregorian cannot register this day. It does not exist in that means of measure. . . .
> He/she. She has marked the date on patients' prescriptions a dozen times since morning but she turns to find a question that will bring some kind of answer to that word pronounced by messenger. She cries out.
> *What day is it today*?
> Friday.
> It was on Friday (*The House Gun*: 5-6).

The sad news of Duncan's murderous acts is broken to the Lingards that their son has shot dead his friend and ex-lover, Carl Jespersen with a gun that belongs to the household. Hence, the title of the book is *The House Gun.* Diallo (2018: 118) notes, "the unorthodox inscription of dialogues in this part of the story, which is a blurred expression of the reactions of both parents to the fatal news of their son's arrest, not only suggests the shock they felt but also the difficulty to realise that their son is a murderer." The story builds on the consequences of having a gun "just lying around in the living room, like a house cat" (*The House Gun*: 227). Duncan caught Natalie, his girlfriend having sex with Carl Jespersen whom he was also in a homosexual relationship with. He caught them red-handed in the living room where Carl exacerbated the problem by calling Duncan 'bra'. who picked up the gun that was just lying around and shot him in the head:

> Harald and Claudia have, each, within them, now a malignant resentment against their son that would seem impossible to exist in them as an ability to kill could exist in him. The resentment is shameful. What is shameful cannot be shared. What is shameful separates. But the way to deal with the resentment will come, must come, individually to both (*The House Gun*: 63).

The Lingards made efforts to provide Duncan with the best of life; education, money and a safe environment. With all that Duncan had, his parents struggle to make sense of Duncan's disappointing actions one after another. This does raise a colossal curiosity about Duncan's characteristics. Gunne (2017) avers that the Lingards cannot comprehend the murder case as they do not associate with the criminal classes-this situation does not apply to them but with the intervention of violence, the inequality between the rich and poor fostered by neo-colonial forces plays no role in determining who must experience misfortune. In addition, Zulli (2005: 134) states:

> confusion and turmoil characterize society and consequently affect moral values, and interpersonal relationships… In particular, the traditional concept of the family gives way to episodes which are not set in ethically reassuring situations.

4.3.2 Gender and Racial stereotypes

The arrest of Duncan impelled the Lingards to seek legal services for their son and this landed them in the office of a black lawyer, Hamilton Motsamai. The Lingards'

choice of Motsamai as their lawyer is Gordimer's attempt to break racial boundaries that apartheid established during its time:

> the tragi-comic is to be found in the fact that [Gordimer] creates white characters, afflicted by drama and despair, who had now no other choice but to rely on the ability and skills of a Black lawyer, Hamilton Motsamai, one of the oppressed community, who were forced to exile from fatal beatings, mortal interrogations, . . . hanging taking place in Pretoria, state crime (Diallo, 2018: 131).

South Africa confronted extreme racial tensions during the apartheid time. It was difficult if not impossible for white people such as the Lingards to work with black people such as Motsamai with mutual respect. This tradition still exists in some parts of the democratic country. In the novel, the Lingards who epitomise democratisation through their rapport with Motsamai are:

> …not racist, if racist means having revulsion against skin of a different colour, believing or wanting to believe that anyone who is not your own colour or religion or nationality is intellectually and morally inferior. .. yet neither had joined movements, protested, marched in open display, spoken out in defences of these convictions (*The House Gun*: 86).

In course of Duncan's trial, his lawyer, Motsamai goes to extreme efforts to defend him and consistently builds momentum based on the presence of the house gun in the living room. With violence being at its worst in the post-apartheid period, both the defence and prosecution justify the availability of the gun in the living room:

> The narrator: A house gun. If it hadn't been there how could you defend yourself, in this city, against losing your hi-fi equipment, your television set and computer, your watch and rings, against being gagged, raped, knifed. If it hadn't been there the man on the sofa would not be under the ground of the city (*The House Gun*: 157).
>
> The prosecution: Yes, the gun was there; the crime of vengeful jealousy with which it was committed is by no means *excused by*, but belongs along with the hijacks, rapes, robberies that arise out of the misuse of freedom by making your own rules (*The House Gun*: 270).

In her evaluation above, Gordimer compares the democratic South Africa with the apartheid South Africa due to their common characteristic of violence. Gunne (2017) confirms that the present-day South Africa as portrayed in Gordimer's *The House Gun* repeats the violent history of apartheid. The height of violence in the democratic period qualifies Motsamai to defend Duncan:

> Duncan cannot be brought to account for encouragement of robberies, hijackings and rape so regrettably common in this time of transition from long eras of repression during which state brutality taught violence to our people…. 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 the living-room, like a house cat; on a table, like an ashtray. But the accused bears no responsibility whatever for the *prevalence* of violence (*The House Gun*: 271).

Motsamai tries to convince the court to shift the blame to the gun that was there as well as Natalie's promiscuity, which he postulates that it is the cause of the tragedy: "She could not have been the one to die. Why not? She doesn't even consider it? Why not?" (*The House Gun*: 74). Gordimer points out that defending Duncan at the expense of Natalie has "opened her up and exposed her, dissected her womb with a baby in it, held out for all to see her mind and motives and body whose force and contradictions a lover knew only too well" (*The House Gun*: 243). It is Motsamai's tactic to place Natalie on trial and not Duncan, and this is a depiction of gender stereotypes in the democratic society. Thomik (2014) notes that although feminist matters have been widely recognised and theorised upon over the last years, there are still extreme loopholes in gender equality in South Africa. The blame shifts from the gun to the woman, Natalie. The judge seemed to concur with most of Motsamai's arguments:

> The gun happened to be there, on the table. If it had not been there, the accused might have abused the deceased verbally, perhaps even punched him in the usual revenge of dishonoured lovers of one kind…. But that is the tragedy of our present time, a tragedy repeated daily, nightly, in this city, in our country. Part of the furnishings in homes, carried in pockets along with car keys, even in the school-bags of children, constantly ready to hand in situations which lead to tragedy, the guns happen to be there (*The House Gun:* 267).

The attempt to shift the blame to Natalie is a representation of the unfair circumstances that women in the post-colonial age are subjected to. Similar cases to complement Natalie's situation, although some worse than what Natalie has experienced could be drawn from the realities of women in North Africa:

> Case 1: A woman was stoned to death for adultery on Monday in an Islamist-controlled region of Somalia. Somali human rights officials said the woman, 23, had been raped, but the Islamist authorities determined that she was guilty of adultery. She was buried up to her neck and stoned after a crowd of thousands gathered at a soccer field in the town of

> Kismayu, which is controlled by the Shabab, a radical Islamist group (Gettleman, 2008: 1).
>
> Case 2: Despite being abducted and raped by seven men, a court in Saudi Arabia sentenced her to 90 lashes because she was in a car with an unrelated man before she was abducted. Saudi Arabia's ultra-orthodox interpretation of Islamic law preaches a strict segregation of the sexes. The young woman had the temerity to appeal - and publicize her story in the media. And so, earlier this month, the court increased her punishment to 200 lashes and six months in jail. Her lawyer, a prominent human rights defender, was suspended and faces a disciplinary hearing (Eltahawy, 2007: 1).
>
> Case 3: Isak lived with her legal husband and children in Hagar village in Jubba, but cheated on her husband after she told him she was traveling to Mogadishu to visit her relatives. Her legal husband, Ali Ibrahim, subsequently found out his wife did not go to Mogadishu but instead had married again and was living with another husband in Sakow. Her legal husband brought the case to the court. She admitted she illegally married a second husband. According to the Islamic sharia she was publicly stoned to death this afternoon (Omar, 2017: 1).

The women in cases 1, 2 and 3 have received harsh punishments and some of them lost (case 1 & 2) lost their lives. The woman in the case had been raped yet she was found guilty of adultery. Like Natalie, whom Motsamai attempts to scapegoat, the woman in case 1 becomes the scapegoat of the difficult experience of rape. Moreover, religious and cultural stereotypes marginalise and objectify women, and limit their voices in cases such as the above-mentioned ones and Natalie's in which she was:

> brutally treated by Motsami in his defence of Duncan. Motsami's strategy is to attribute blame to Natalie—her promiscuous behaviour pushed Duncan beyond the edge of reason to a state of mind where he cannot be held fully accountable for his actions. Although the narrative holds back Natalie's point of view, other characters, including Motsami and Claudia, depict her as a wily and manipulative sexual predator (Gunne, 2017: 12).

The scapegoating of Natalie escalated to an extent of invoking racial tensions. In his strategy to inculpate Natalie, Hamilton is resonated by Harald's indignant remark: "Man, she provoked him beyond endurance, drove him beyond reason, not only that night, with her exhibition, but for over a year or so preceding that night" (*The House Gun*: 58). These remarks kindled reservations in Motsamai who starts to wonder why Duncan's father, Harald is so determined and supportive of the idea of incriminating Natalie so that Duncan can go free: "many compromises with stereotype attitudes

easily rejected in their old safe life were coming about now that the other values of that time had been broken with. Once there has been killing, what else matters?' …. Hamilton responded with zest to the new attitude he sensed in them. As if he had been coaxing it all along, ah-hêh, ah-hêh, nice decent white couple from their unworld" (*The House Gun*: 145). Hence, "the Lingards' privilege—their professions, their townhouse, their comfortable lifestyle—Natalie's perceived culpability for Duncan's action and the thinly veiled racism that circulates around Motsamai are all indicative of the same critique" (Gunne, 2017: 12). This is what transpired when Duncan first met Natalie:

> Received by a father's eyes as she came in she matched the young woman Duncan had brought to the townhouse once or twice. This was she, all right… Perhaps, there was a place in memory, a cheap photo album of Duncan's girls that existed though never opened. That was the impression of her: yellow-streaked dark eyes (colours of the Tiger's Eye paperweight on Motsamai's desk) . . . And these outer corners of the eyes turned down slightly, . . . the eyes were a statement to be read, depending on who was receiving it: lazily, vulnerably appealing, or calculating, in warning (*The House Gun*: 56).

According to Gunne (2017), the Lingards create uncomfortable sympathies that expose shallow-buried prejudices towards race, class, sexuality and gender. The stereotypes that unfold in the presence of Motsamai reveal the upper hand that the privileged hold over the socially and economically disadvantaged people in the democratic space regardless of race. Motsamai represents the previously disadvantaged group that has managed to climb the ladder of success and economic expansion. However, Motsamai did not turn a blind to the notion: "A murder trial, out of the common criminal class, with a privileged son in the professions accused of murder has provided the Sunday papers with a story of a "love triangle" calling up not only readers' concupiscence but also some shallow-buried prejudices" (*The House Gun:* 182).

Ultimately, Motsamai left the employ of the Lingards. Diallo (2018) asserts that the isolated and mockery voice subsequence to the breaking of the bad news that the black lawyer, Motsamai has departed slips away to afford space to the thoughts of Harald. The departure of Motsamai in the services of the Lingards demonstrates identity-crisis. Motsamai finds himself with two choices, to choose his work over

democratic justice or contrariwise. His work principles at times threaten and compromise the truth:

> Hamilton Motsamai has left them. Door closed behind him, footsteps became inaudible, car must have driven away through the security gates of the townhouse complex. He was all there was between them and the Death Penalty. Not only had he come from the Other Side; everything had come to them from the Other Side, the nakedness to the final disaster: powerlessness, helplessness, before the law. The queer sense Harald had had while he waited for Claudia in the secular cathedral of the courts' foyer, of being one among the fathers of thieves and murderers was now confirmed. The instinct to go and worship in the cathedral among people from the streets, which had seemed a way of avoiding the sympathy of his suburban peers, had been the taking of his rightful place with those most bowed to misfortune. The truth of all this was that he and his wife belonged, now, to the other side of privilege. Neither whiteness, nor observance of the teachings of Father and Son, nor the pious respectability of liberalism, nor money, that had kept them in safety—that other form of segregation—could change their status. In its way, that status was definitive as the forced removals of the old regime; no chance of remaining where they had been, surviving in themselves *as they were* (*The House Gun*: 111).

4.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter has unveiled the hefty prices that come with the acquisition of a new identity. Julie in Gordimer's *The Pickup* sought a new identity in an Arab village, which impelled her to compromise her aboriginal attitudes, reactions and perceptions about life. She even converted to Muslim, which imposed major changes upon her life such as no longer wearing revealing clothes like she used to. Likewise, *in The House Gun,* the Lingards seek a new identity upon making shocking discoveries about their son, Duncan such as his sexual identity, promiscuity and the assassination of his ex-lover.

CHAPTER 5

(*NONE TO ACCOMPANY ME* AND *JULY'S PEOPLE*)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa in the present day is challenged with exorcising the demon of apartheid past as "the danger of continuing, even beyond 1994, to be spectacular and boil everything down to the effects of apartheid is for real" (Rafapa & Mahori, 2011: 156). The country is still reeling from the flaws of the leadership that preceded democracy. Gordimer's novels have mirrored some of the remnants of apartheid that hinder democratic progress in South Africa. Her eleventh and ninth novels, *None to Accompany* Me and *July's People* respectively, explore the issues of racial tensions, political struggles, land questions, gender and power. Therefore, this chapter aims to examine the aforementioned issues that plague South Africa through Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* and *July's People.*

5.2 *NONE TO ACCOMPANY ME*

Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* is an enthralling tale that reflects on the culminating moments of apartheid in South Africa. It portrays the odds stacked against radical transformation in the newly democratic South Africa through the lives of two powerful women, Vera Stark and Sibongile Maqoma. Gordimer's characterisation of Vera and Sibongile as leading forces is a demonstration of "both black and white women's empowerment within South Africa's national transformation during the period of dramatic change in political power from white dominance to the first democratically elected government" (Sakamoto, 2007:1). Vera is a white political activist who uses her legal expertise to help black people to reclaim their land while Sibongile, also known as Sally, is a black revolutionary that came back from exile subsequent to the dispensation of democracy. Both Vera and Sibongile have upheld employment positions that surpass their husbands' and are friends. Vera is presented as a successful lawyer while her husband, Ben appears as a failed artist. Sibongile on the other hand is the deputy director of the redeployment programme and her husband Didymus is striving to attain a position of power and is dependent on his wife.

5.2.1 Femininity Vs Masculinity

Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* has fictionalised the clash of femininities and masculinities with an attempt to indicate that the democratic dispensation paved a rhetorical platform for the thought of women's feminism and liberation (Manicom, 1999). It has sought to debunk the myths and stereotypes about gender roles. Moreover, Kalu (2001) notes that women's role has been questioned for many years as they strived to assert their identities in male-driven worlds. In the novel, the characters of Sibongile and Vera explore the clash of femininity and masculinity in search of their identities in the democratic dispensation. Thus, Dimitriu (2003: 18) depicts *None to Accompany Me* as a:

> …response to the vexed question of the value Gordimer's fiction has as the society seeks to extend its concerns beyond those of overtly political struggle. As all of the actions are set in the climate of civilian as opposed to revolutionary times, the novels [Gordimer's first three after-1994] help clarify Gordimer's interest in matters that have emerged from the socio-political imperative. In the last decade racial issues, for example, have not disappeared, but have become more entangled in the wider functioning of the society.

5.2.2 Sibongile's identiy-crisis

Sibongile and her husband, Didymus are confronted by cultural underpinnings that often defines wives and husbands' roles. Phillip and Suri (2004) assert that there is even a theoretical and biblical perception that women's roles and contributions in communities need men's approval if they are not on behalf of them. However, Sibongile held a powerful position in the society that Didymus and she was an influential political activist than her husband:

> Didymus kept in himself a slight tartness, the tug of a string in the gut ready to tighten in defence of Sibongile-he was troubled that her frankness would be interpreted as aggression; her manner, sceptical, questioning, iconoclastic, would be taken as disrespectful of the traditional style of political intercourse that had been established in the higher ranks of the movement through many years of exile, and would count against her advancement at the level to which she had, for the first time, gained access (*None to Accompany Me*: 77-78).

Didymus admires Sibongile's abilities but also has fears about her influence, identity and fact that she is above him in terms of money, power and status in society. Didymus's perception of Sibongile, according to Hryniewicz and Vianna (2018), is an inherent notion that women should not assume some employment positions. In most cases, women who somehow manage to occupy these positions will be under intense pressure as any mistake they make would be not only be used against them but also against any woman who would, in future, desire to hold positions of great influence and power. Moreover, Didymus' reservations seem to validate that culture tends to inspire the comprehension of femininity and leadership roles, and the self-depictions of men and women in terms of leadership traits (Sczesny, Bosak, Neff & Schyns, 2004). In the novel, Sibongile's role as a director impelled her to make compromises in her marriage. Her devotion shifted from her marital duties to the demands of her job:

> Although Sibongile spoke of her job as it were quite humble-it was the democratic vocabulary, hangover from exile with its brave denial of hierarchy- she was one who could not be reached except through a secretary these days. She had her offices and battery of command-computers, fax, assistants whose poor education and lack of skills she was attempting to tolerate while disciplining and training them. When there were complaints about her she said to her comrades in high positions what they themselves thought it better not express (*None to Accompany Me*: 74).

Sibongile's demanding job, which, she is so dedicated to, instigated changes in the Maqoma's household; alterations which are direct opposition to cultural depictions which often reduce a woman's role to domestic work, motherhood and submission to her husband. Thus, Heilman (2001) states that one of the platforms where gender stereotypes unfold is the recognition of abilities. Furthermore, Sibongile, a black African woman has become to be a validation that there are fallacies against women's roles such as that they cannot be successful leaders. Hadjithedorou (1999) postulates that the underpinnings of womanhood and marital roles defined the lives and identities of African women and it was anticipated of women to get married and give birth to children where they would have their families and rip the rewards of motherhood:

> Home was set up; but she did not have time to do the daily tasks that would maintain it; it was Didymus who took the shopping lists she scribbled in bed at night, who drove Mpho (their daughter) to and from her modern dance class, to the dentist, to the urgent obligations that school girls have to be here or he who called the plumber and reported the telephone out of order. His working day was less crowded than hers. She would be snatching up files, briefcase and keys in the morning while he was dipping bread fast in coffee, changing back and forth from local news to BBC. Their working life was housed in the same building; sometimes he came to look in on her office: she was talking fast on the telephone, held up a hand not to be interrupted; she was in the middle of briefing the fieldworkers through whom she had initiated research into the reintegration of returned exiles (*None to Accompany Me*: 74-75).

From the situation above, Lazar (1993) opines that Gordimer appears to be developing resistance against the traditional norm for female success such as marriage and motherhood but she is actually constructing empathy for the employed woman who finds herself fulfilment outside domestic identities but within intellectual and public concerns. In this case, Gordimer has used the character of Sibongile to redefine women's identities within culturally orientated spaces. Sibongile has thrived in a previously male-dominated world and set a different identity in her home where her husband Didymus had to perform domestic duties of the house since his wife's demanding job has her busy almost all the time. For many years, women in different societies were obligated to perform domestic duties and secondary roles whereas positions in the public space were usually reserved for men (Ibinga, 2007). However, Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* presents a turn of events. It is the husband, Didymus who performs domestic duties, which are culturally assumed to be women's roles. To this note, Rowbotham (1992: 6) notes:

> Feminism is sometimes confined to women's struggles against oppressive gender relationships. In fact, however, women's actions, both now and in the past, often have been against interconnecting relations of inequality and have involved many aspects of resistance around daily life and culture that are not simply about gender.

5.2.2.1 Money and power

Didymus's dependency on Sibongile financially seems to be the cause of the shift of roles in their matrimonial affair where he is responsible for domestic work-a duty that is culturally associated with femininity. This brings the relationship between money

and power in marital or intimate relationships to evaluation. Unemployed men, who do not have money are disempowered, afforded little or no respect and are not regarded as real men (Radebe, 2012). Didymus's disempowerment manifests in his inability to sexually satisfy Sibongile who confides in her friend Vera about her problem. Radebe (2012) states that money is one of the tools that men use to exercise authority. Given the role that money plays in men's lives, it becomes anticipated that lack of it can cause devastating effects such as loss of interest and a sense of authority.

It is Sibongile's position, which she has used to draw power from. It is because of her busy schedule that impelled Didymus to do house chores. Kroliczek (2012) postulates that when women overcome hurdles to assume leadership responsibilities, they become victims of prejudiced evaluations that emerge from nonconformity to the cultural notions of femininity. Similarly, a participant in Radebe's (2012: 12) study exclaimed: "I tell him to clean the house: he is not working, and I provide, so he must do house chores." The case of the participant above and Didymus's both attest to how financial stability becomes a determiner of power in a relationship. In both cases, the men are disqualified from exercising authority as a result of depending on their partners financially. Rosaldo (1995) argues that men's power depends on their reign over women in domestic concerns. However, it is Sibongile who seems to have dominion over Didymus in domestic space and this qualifies Sibongile to have power in the relationships. Thus, Ibinga (2007: 199) notes that Gordimer's novel provides:

> a painting of a starkly new domestic power structure within the family unit, more precisely the household. Two couples exemplify the reformation of the traditional relationship between a woman and her husband. Gordimer through the couple Sibongile and Didymus Maqoma takes the reader into the transformation process taking process taking place in black families...After facing some difficulties in order to settle in their formerly only dreamed-of homeland, the Maqomas quickly find economic stability thanks to Sally's achieved status in the political arena.

5.2.2.2 Religion and culture

Gordimer's female empowerment in *None to Accompany Me* and the re-defining of gender roles through the Maqomas is a rejection of the fundamental assumptions of religion and culture about married women. Cultural educational aspects such as proverbs and idioms demonstrate resistance to female leadership. For instance,

African cultural proverbs specifically from the Northern Sotho tribe reinforce the reduction of a woman's role under the authority of a man. Some of these proverbs are:

- *Tša etwa pele ke ya tshadi di wela ka leopeng* [A herd that is led by a cow (female) will fall into a pit].
- *Mosadi ke tšhwene, o lewa mabogo* [A woman is a baboon, her hands are eaten].
- *Monna ke peu, ga a swarwe manenolo.* [A woman should honour her husband].

The proverbs above point out the patriarchal notions that are upheld in Northern Sotho cultural societies. The proverb, *Tša etwa pele ke ya tshadi di wela ka leopeng* warns against appointing a female as a leader. It states that female leadership will only result in chaos. Gordimer's presentation of the character of Sibongile appears to declare the message behind this proverb a fallacy. Sibongile thrives as an influential political figure in her community and scholars such as Sakamoto (2006: 231) view her as:

> a new agent of post-apartheid politics who goes beyond her husband's experiences. She has her own expectations and ambitions to be realised. Given her new power within the changing political scene, Gordimer seems to suggest that it is only in politics that women can experience liberation and empowerment.

The second proverb, *Mosadi ke tšhwene, o lewa mabogo* defines a real wife as the one that conforms to her domestic duties. Masenya (2004) avers that a woman's value, beauty and respect depends on her diligence in performing domestic duties and taking care of her children and husband. Correspondingly, the proverb, *Monna ke peu, ga a swarwe manenolo* encourages women to honour and submit to their husbands. It recognises the man as the possessor of authority and head of the household. This could be complemented by religious underpinnings:

- **Women in Christianity**

> Many leadership roles in the organised church have been prohibited to women, but the majority of churches now hold an egalitarian (men and women's roles equal) view regarding women's roles in the church. In the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, only men may serve as priests, elders, or decons; only males serve in senior leadership positions such as pope, patriarch, and bishop. Women may serve as abbesses.

Most mainstream Protestant denominations are beginning to relax their longstanding constraints on ordaining women to be ministers, though some large groups, most notably the Southern Baptist Convention are tightening their constraints in reaction. Most of all Charismatic and Pentecostal churches were pioneers in this matter and have embraced the ordination of women since their founding (Southern Baptist Convention > SBC Search (www.sbc.net Retrieved October 2020).

- **Women in Judaism**

Marriage and family law in biblical times favoured men over women. For example, a husband could divorce a wife if he chose to, but a wife could not divorce a husband without his consent. The practice of levirate marriage applied to widows of childless deceased husbands, not to widowers of childless deceased wives; though, if either he or she did not consent to the marriage, a different ceremony called *chalitza* is done instead, which basically involves the widow's removing her brother-in-law's shoe, spitting in front of him, and proclaiming, "This is what happens to someone who will not build his brother's house!" Laws concerning the loss of female virginity have no male equivalent. Many of these laws, such as levirate marriage, are no longer practiced in Judaism (chalitzah is practised in lieu of levirate marriage). These and other gender differences found in the Torah suggest that biblical society viewed continuity, property, and family unity as paramount; however, they also suggest that women were subordinate to men during biblical times (Hauptman, 2001: 1356-1359).

- **Women in Islam**

I was hoping that perhaps you could help me understand why a menstruating woman is not allowed to touch a Qur'an, or I suppose more so why a menstruating woman is deemed "impure". Somehow it has been bothering me that all women would be considered impure for so many days and months, such that they are too impure to touch Allah's book. Even the verse that talks about nobody touching the Qur'an except the pure ones make one feel so dirty to have no way at times of becoming part of the pure ones. I suppose it reminds too much of the Hindu and Christian concept wherein a menstruating woman is dirty. Is there wisdom that you have that would provide some comfort? (Yilmaz, 2010: i).

- **Women in Mormonism**

Nineteenth and early 20th-century accounts of Mormon history often neglected women's role in founding the religion. The 1872 history The Rise, Progress, and Travels of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not name any women. B.H. Roberts's famous seven-volume

history, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints only mentions a few women (Brekus, 2016). A notable exception to this was 19th century historian Edward Tullidge, who Claudia Bushman said "stood alone as a Mormon feminist historian before the revitalization of the women's movement in the 1970s. However, a number of women had significant supporting roles; for example, Joseph Smith's wife, Emma Hale Smith, served as a scribe during translation of the Book of Mormon and was the subject of one of the church's early revelations, which included direction to compile the church's first hymnal (Smith, 1830). Emma Smith also served as head of the Relief Society, originally a self-governing women's organization within the church, which is one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the world (Müller, 1889:6)

- **Women in Buddhism**

According to Diana Paul, the traditional view of women in Early Buddhism was that they were inferior (Paul & Wilson, 1985). A misogynist strain is found in early Indian Buddhism. But the presence of some clearly misogynist doctrines does not mean that the whole of ancient Indian Buddhism was a misogynist (Gross, 1992: 43). There are statements in Buddhist scripture that appear to be misogynists, such as depicting women as obstructers of men's spiritual progress or the notion that being born female leaves one with less opportunity for spiritual progress. However, in societies where men have always been the authorities and the ones given wider choices, a negative view of women might be seen as simply reflecting the empirical political reality. Furthermore, the religious literature is more likely to be addressed to men. Hence we find the Buddhist emphasis on renunciation of sensual desires expressed in terms of the male's attachment to women more frequently than we find the reverse (Sablin, 2016). The mix of positive attitudes to femininity with blatantly negative sentiment has led many writers to characterise early Buddhism's attitude to women as deeply ambivalent (Cabezón, 1992:3).

The voices from a variety of religions have a common depiction of the role of women. Men seem to be favoured more than women and regarded as stronger than women. However, Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* points out "the possible interchangeable structure of power between genders. The female person is often referred to as being the weaker sex in terms of the patriarchal mindset, and becomes in this particular text the stronger sex. Gordimer assigns lofty roles to her female characters while men occupy subservient positions in the plot" (Ibinga, 2007: 213). Furthermore, in Roman Catholic, a woman is not permitted to serve as an elder and priest while in Judaism a woman needed a husband's consent to divorce but a man did not. Likewise, in

Mormonism and Buddhism, men were given favour over women in terms of roles in the church and society while in Islam women's faults are treated with greater strictness than men. Nomani (2003) states that in the Islam religion, women are the ones who are often made targets of these punitive sex decrees, whereas, men are sometimes excused. Hence, De Beauvoir (1953) avers that religious faiths encouraged women to be meek, to put up with inequality, exploitation and suffering and doing so will bring rewards in the afterlife. This researcher further pointed out several ways in which religious scriptures and teachings promote patriarchy:

- In several religions, women are presented as temptresses who distract men from the serious business of worship. In the bible, it is the first woman, Eve, who disobeys God and then goes on to tempt Adam and bring about his downfall too.
- In many religious teachings across a wide range of religions, women are given the role of nurturing, caring and giving birth. While these roles are presented positively and as essential, they reinforce the gender norms in society and the patriarchal power structures. If women choose not to conform to gender stereotypes, they are not only deviating from gender norms and family expectations but deviating from God's will too.
- Religious texts are full of male Gods, male prophets, male saints and male heroes. The books are written by men and interpreted by men.
- The rules of religious organisations – which are often more about culture and custom than scriptures – include a lot of rules that restrict the freedom of women. Rules on abortion, contraception, etc. alongside unequal rules relating to marriage and divorce, all put significant restrictions on fundamental life choices for women that are not placed on men.
- The purdah in Islam, where religious women are secluded from society, including the wearing of veils, etc. is seen by some feminists as exemplifying and entrenching patriarchy (De Beauvoir, 1953: 111).

5.2.3 Vera's identity-crisis

Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* presents another powerful female character, Vera Stark, that aims to redefine women's identity in the democratic society. Vera is a white lawyer who uses her skills to contribute to rebuilding the newly democratic South African society. As a result, she becomes an influential public figure alongside Sibongile. Vera is almost in the same position as her friend, Sibongile as she becomes more successful than her husband Ben who fails as an artist. Her intervention in resolving societal challenges also affects her domestic duties as a wife, thus, giving her an authoritative role both in public and in her household. Ibinga (2007) states that

the portrayal of domestic duties in the Starks' household unveils that Vera is the one who wields power, unlike her husband, Ben who appears to be weak as it is the wife who gives authority in the house and on family matters. Like Didymus who submitted to Sibongile's call for him to assume domestic work, Vera was like a goddess to Ben:

> Ben had created Vera for himself as a body, a torso without a head. As such it was (indeed, connoisseur Lou had observed) exceptionally explicit of the power of the body. It had no identity beyond, and so the body that was Vera, Ben could not live without, was transformed into the expression of desire between woman and woman. In Annies's house the headless torsos became household gods (*None to Accompany Me*: 228).

Vera portrays characteristics, which most societies have institutionalised, as men's territory such as resistance, leadership, power and political success. She becomes aware that Ben is worshipping her. Hence, she states, "when someone gives you so much power over himself, he makes you a tyrant (*None to Accompany Me*: 310). Today, there are many debates regarding why many countries in the world have not or produced few female presidents over the years of democracy. Hryniewicz and Vianna (2018) state that women are usually deemed communal, showing traits such as kindness and empathy while men are thought to be aggressive, confident and autonomous. However, the character of Vera seeks to falsify the above perception as Gordimer presents her as:

> a strange woman because in some ways she is unconventional. She attacks her daily work; even though it is unconventional work she goes about it in this rather strict, direct way, rather authoritarian. She doesn't seem to belong to any women's movement. She's a woman's movement in herself, I think. And she bluntly asserts her sexuality. She even quotes Renoir at one point-"I paint with prick". But she has her fill of sexuality, she works her way through it. She's had a very active kind of sensual life; she hasn't cared too much about the morality of it (*None to Accompany Me*: 436).

Vera's identity reconstruction and freedom in the democratic society manifest in her sex life. She confronts sexual behaviours and taboos in her search for identity in the post-colonial world. Vera is presented as a very sexually active woman who justified her promiscuity as an identity of sexual freedom to an extent that despite being married, she continued having sexual relations with her former lover. Gordimer presents Vera's sexual behaviour to unmask stereotypes against women in the negotiations of sex, thus, the novel brings several aspects such as the relationship

between money, power and sex as well as cultural notions on matters of sex to examination. There seems to be a compelling validation that rich and powerful men tend to be more promiscuous than powerless men despite being married. Radebe (2012) confirms that men who do not have money are often disempowered. Sibongile's husband Didymus whom his wife held a powerful position in society and money while he did not, as a result, he could not sexually satisfy Sibongile who ultimately confessed to her friend, Vera that she no longer enjoys sex with Didymus, substantiates this. Furthermore, the South African community and the world at large saw the trending phenomenon christened 'blessers' and 'blesses'. Mampane (2018: 1) defines this 'blessership' as a "transactional sex in which older rich men ('blessers') tend to entice young women ('blessees') with money and expensive gifts in exchange for sexual favours. In most cases, these older men are married men who secretly engage in extramarital affairs with these young women." Therefore, it becomes convincing that money and power can influence an individual's sexual behaviour. With tables turned, money and power favouring women than men in Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me,* Vera elucidates:

> Yes, I love me. I mean exactly what I'm saying: how can there be love-making without the penis. I don't care what subtleties of feeling you achieve with all those caresses— and when you caress the other partner you're really caressing yourself, aren't you, because you're producing in her, you say, exactly what you yourself experience—after all that, you end up without that marvellous entry, that astonishing phenomenon of a man's body that transforms itself and you can take in. You can't tell me there's anything like it! There's nothing like it, no closeness like it. The pleasure, the orgasms—yes, you may produce them just as well, you'll say, between two women. But with the penis inside you, it's not just the pleasure (*None to Accompany Me*: 158).

Gordimer highlights the height of Vera's obsession with sex. It is her money and power that activate her sexual freedom in the democratic world. Thus, Wagner (1994: 90) perceives sexuality as a "primary signifier—both a powerfully recurrent motif and a centrally determining metaphor." In the times of political oppression in the novel, Vera said, "sex only meant getting marriage…between the end of necessity to get married" (*None to Accompany Me*: 272). This substantiates the decline of marriages and the rise of *vat-en-sit* (Cohabitation) in the world today. Baloyi (2016) postulates that *vat-en-sit* poses a threat to marriages. A participant in the aforementioned researcher's study said, "Many men wanted to have sex with me, but I told them that a man who

wants to sleep with me should pay Lobola first" (Baloyi, 2016: 7). In Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me*, sexual liberation ends up comprising marital value. Vera had divorced her first husband before marrying Ben whom she later decided to leave for Zeph Rapulana. Gordimer presents an institution where women in power make choices and define their sex lives outside social norms and standards. Vera asserts:

> Yes. And of course, who can say? People's sexuality dies down at different ages. Some people seem to be finished with sex in their mid-forties, or fifties. Terrible! Others take on lovers, both male and female, at seventy (*None to Accompany Me*: 436).

Vera's case can be complemented by stories of independent women who are proven to have money and sometimes reported to have been motivated by their money to be sexually active. On Daily Sun (09/09/2016), a man has claimed that women, particularly those who hold professional positions such as nurses, teachers and executives request and pay him handsomely for sexual services: "It started when I was approached by a single woman who asked if I could help her. I have been servicing her since then. And she has also told other women about me."

Another man in Daily Sun (31/08/ 2020), also noted that women including those aged 45-50+ also pay him for sexual services. So one of the women, aged 53, claims that she has been married for about 30 years but her husband could go on for five months without sleeping with her and as a result, she pays for sexual services without any strings attached. Similarly, Vera who reaches the stage of menopause chooses to maintain a sexually active lifestyle despite social notions that "some people seem to be finished with sex in their mid-forties, or fifties" (*None to Accompany Me*: 436). She acknowledges that she leads a promiscuous life: "I've only loved men" (*None to Accompany Me*: 436). Thus, Ibinga (2007) notes that Vera is a representative of heterosexual women whose sexual delight is dependent on the penis.

Cultural notions define a woman as a weaker vessel and a man as stronger but in Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me,* a man is portrayed as weak and the woman strong. Thus, in matters of sex, cultural depictions such as Northern Sotho proverbs appear to accept and institutionalise men's extreme sexual activeness, whereas, women who are intensely sexually active like Vera in Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* would be rejected by the society and be viewed as loose, whores and just sex

objects. For instance, the Northern Sotho proverbs below seem to embrace promiscuity among men:

- *Monna ke thaka wa naba* [A man is pumpkin; he stretches]
- *Monna ke selepe re a adimišana* [A man is an axe; we lend each other]
- *Monna ke kobo re apolelana* [A man is robe; we exchange amongst each other]

The proverbs above seem to perpetuate male promiscuity. It is through some of these proverbs that men often justify their actions of having many sexual partners. A man is compared with a pumpkin that stretches beyond boundaries, an axe and robe that different people share and use. Scholars such as Masenya (2004), Serudu (1991) and Makgamatha (1991) aver that these proverbs assert that it is acceptable for a man to have multiple sexual partners. However, it is not the same women, whereas, women like Gordimer's character of Vera who chooses to seize power through their sexual freedom are often victimised by cultural stereotypes. In cultural-dominated societies, the non-virgin woman before marriage is exposed to 'slut-shaming'. In a news24 article (05/05/2017), it is stated that "have sex and you're labelled a whore…slut-shaming is still a problem many face on a daily-basis especially in more traditional environments-it is becoming more and more frowned upon to judge people for being sexually inexperienced." Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* opposes these cultural structures by reasserting women's sexual liberation and breaking the taboos:

> The extent to which sexuality is a primary signifier-both powerfully recurrent motif and centrally determining metaphor-in Gordimer's narratives of personal and political transformation deserves closer analysis to illuminate the complexity of her vision. To begin with, the willingness to transgress certain sexual taboos, in particular those which are centred on religious and racial distinctions, becomes an indicator throughout ten novels of the white protagonist's potential of political redemption (Wagner, 1994: 90-91).

5.2.3.1 Sexual orientation and identity

The early years of the 1980s saw a feminist movement rechristened sex-positive feminism. This course was meant to assert sexual freedom for women. This involves conscientising societies about the importance of women's rights to negotiate sex, pornography, prostitution and lesbianism. Bell (2009: 11) notes:

> sex work can be very profitable for women, and many women may enjoy work that allows them to creatively express their sexuality. Sex work can allow human beings a way to safely explore their sexual desires in ways they cannot through the current social norm of heterosexual, monogamous relationships.

Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* is a brilliant reflection of the activation of women's sexual freedom. The female characters in the novel redefine the perception of women and sex held in many societies, starting with Vera who is unapologetically leading a promiscuous life. It is when she feels that her promiscuity has affected her daughter, Annie upon discovering that she is homosexual: "I suppose we believe we're responsible for what we think has gone wrong with our children and in their judgement hasn't gone wrong at all" (*None to Accompany Me*: 177). Despite bearing the fault, Vera condemns Annie's sexual orientation:

> Sometimes I think I know, but of course it's nonsense. Maybe the 'cause'-can you call it that, gays themselves are furious if you suggest it's an abnormality-maybe it's physical. Maybe psychological. There are many theories. But Annie would say: choice. Free choice (*None to Accompany Me*: 273).

Gordimer challenges sexual taboos through Annie's sexual orientation. It is Vera who renounces her daughter's sexual orientation and demonstrates ignorance of homosexuality through her utterance: "how can there be love-making without the penis" (*None to Accompany Me*: 158). Moreover, "Annie tries to change women's mind-sets regarding their satisfaction by challenging Vera's metaphorical representation of the penis as the fundamental source of women's sexual fulfilment" (Ibinga, 2007: 204). People like Vera in different societies view lesbianism as nonsensical and taboo considering that a woman's sexual satisfaction depends on a phallus. However, Annie's proves that phallocentricity does not determine her sexual fulfilment when it does hinder her from reaching orgasm with her partner Lou. Dimitriu (2000: 113) affirms:

> Just as Vera's lesbian daughter, Annie, finds an identity in a transgression of bourgeois codes, so in her own way does [by moving to live in her black lover's household]. The fact that what really troubles her about Annie is not so much the 'unconventionality of lesbianism but her belief that penetration by the penis is an essential satisfaction.

Most African societies and the world at large are confronting stereotypes against the LGBT community. These stereotypes are shaped by ignorance and misunderstandings that Vera demonstrated about her daughter in the novel. Thus, lesbians have been victims of the so-called corrective rape and many other ills. Asokan (2012: 24) notes:

> In addition to being accused of witchcraft and sorcery, lesbians in SA are assaulted for their sexual identity. Families, churches and schools are described as being homophobic and transphobic, openly promoting the belief that being gay is 'un-African'. Some men believe that homosexuality is an issue that can be remedied and that lesbians have yet to be satisfied during heterosexual intercourse. When a lesbian presents her preferred orientation to community leaders, she may be correctively raped by members of the same tribe or township. Instead of being punished for the act, the rapist is exalted and venerated. Lesbians victimised by rape endure social persecution and report feelings of self-hate following the incident.

Lesbianism is one of the key strategies of feminists' power and redefinition of women and sexual identity. Hoagland and Julia (1988) aver that lesbianism qualifies women to invest in and support one another, reconstructing a new platform and discourse about women's relationships and curbing their interactions with men. This is something that Vera in Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* accepted with reservation. When Sibongile and Didymous were saddened by their pregnancy at an early age, Vera perceived their circumstance as worthy to accept compared to Annie's homosexuality which he used to comfort the Maqomas. This points out Vera's hypocritical characteristics as she assumed her right to explore her sexual freedom outside social norms but denounces Annie's homosexuality and views it as a phenomenon outside social norms, hence, it cannot be accepted. Lazar (1993: 216) states:

> Gordimer has never set herself up as a systematic foe to feminism. There are occasions when she displays a high degree of sympathy for women and indignation against their social position. In summary, Gordimer's approach to gender questions is highly variable, and her fluctuating sympathy with or hostility to follow no neat chronological patterns. Her public statements on feminism are not reproduced in any simple, one-to-

> one fashion in her fiction, but some complex near-correlations are noticeable. Her variation in approach to sexual questions makes it difficult to read her stories either as 'feminist' or 'anti-feminist representations, and this ambiguity of interpretation is heightened by her frequent usage of the ironical voice.

5.2.3.2 Racial stereotypes

Gordimer supplements her exploration of sexual taboos with interraciality and racial tension. The apartheid government in South Africa forbade marital/sexual relations between White and "non-White" persons in the country. The apartheid government prior to 1994 passed a law, The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and The Immorality Act of 1950 which tabooed marital and sexual relations between White and non-White people.

Most of Gordimer's novels focus on the democratic dispensation and interraciality which is an act of liberation and transformation. Therefore, interraciality has featured prominently in Gordimer's novels such as *None to Accompany Me, A Guest of Honour, The Pickup, No Time Like the Present and The House Gun.* These novels reject not only "determinisms of apartheid, but also the determinisms of those systems which, in addition to racism, were implicated in and supported the ideological machinery of apartheid: patriarchy, sexism, homophobia, class and language bias, ethnic nationalism, and so on" (Wicomb, Attridge & Jolly, 1998: 2).

Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* presents the character of Vera, a white woman who in her redefinition of women and sex finds sexual satisfaction in a black man, Zeph Rapulana. Vera had an affair with Zeph Rapulana while she was still married to Ben whom she ultimately decides to leave for Zeph. Vera's choice of a black partner is a demonstration of democratic identity and opposition to sexual taboos formerly institutionalised by colonial assumptions under the apartheid government. The revelation of Annie's homosexuality has shocked Vera to an extent that she blamed herself despite proving that she is an advocate of sexual freedom for women. This has exposed Vera's hypocritical and stereotypical characteristics. Gordimer adds another revelation about Vera's grandson, Adam which brings the authenticity of her non-racist side that she portrays to the people surrounding her to question. Langa (1987: 15) affirms:

> We have to get rid of racism first before we can hold hands in a clasp of brotherhood. But even before all that we have to take ourselves seriously. Because there's no way we're going to get anywhere if we don't take that leap, if we still depend on these white liberals to dictate to us how to respond to oppression.

Notwithstanding her close friendship with the Maqomas, a black couple, Vera gets appalled when Adam informs her about his undying love for Mpho, a black daughter of Sibongile and Didymous Maqoma. Vera tries to persuade Adam to reconsider being in a relationship with Mpho. Adam perceives Vera's discouragement as racially-motivated but she reasons that she does not want trouble with Maqoma and race has no interference: "You know I'd never have done this if it had been any other girl you want to sleep with. It's not that which matters. It's the Maqomas" (*None to Accompany Me*: 271). Equally important, Gordimer portrays interraciality as a new norm in the democratic space as Annie adopts a black Xhosa girl. This is a representation of a new identity where racial division is overpowered by unity. Thus, Pineau (1991: vi) notes:

> The apartheid is both violent and exploitative. There is plentiful evidence for this. However, the most peculiar feature of the apartheid state is its racial character – the ruling class is a racial oligarchy that has vast privileges of education, skills, and expertise that are generally denied to the black majority.

5.3 *JULY'S PEOPLE*

Gordimer's *July's People* is an imagination of identity and liberation in the democratic period. It envisages South Africa in a world of democracy where colonial undertones are finally eradicated. Like *None to Accompany Me,* Gordimer's *July's People* imagines the role of women in a society led by a democratic government. It redefines the space of an African woman in the period of emancipation. This novel sought to portray the interface between black and white identities and debunk the myths, and stereotypes about African identity through the reconstruction of the role of a white woman in the democratic space. This makes African identity a complicated thought that draws from different personal traits, ethnicities, cultures, beliefs and self-definitions (Montle, 2020). The novel presents the character of Maureen, a white woman who seeks a new identity in a black community. Furthermore, *July's People* garnered a lot of criticism during the years of apartheid. Notably, it was banned from

Gauteng province schools in 2001 but the ban was lifted in no time. One of the reasons for the ban include:

> the subject matter is questionable ... the language that is used is not acceptable, as it does not encourage good grammatical practices ... the reader is bombarded with nuances that do not achieve much ... any condemnation of racism is difficult to discover - so the story comes across as being deeply racist, superior and patronising (Cartwright, 2001: i).

July's People was published in 1981 before South Africa transitioned from apartheid to democracy, which materialised in 1994. South Africa only saw democracy in the year mentioned after a prolonged struggle where many citizens of the country lost their lives while fighting for freedom. However, it prophesies democracy in the aforementioned country like Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour* did and it imagines a series of events that will lead to the acquisition of a democratic identity. It defines the new life for both black and white people in the new South African society. Al-Mutlaq (2003: 206) asserts:

> Gordimer maintains her impartiality throughout; rather than attempting to vindicate the white South Africans and the Apartheid system, she criticises her own people by continually clarifying the fine line between ignorance and racism over which many of her white protagonists cross. She also sheds light on the people's general disposition: the black shift from submission to antagonism and the white shift from ignorance to anxiety, evident in Maureen's hysterical outbursts.

A female character, Maureen who appears as a major character alongside July, like Sibongile and Vera in Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* is also more influential than her husband, Bam who constantly assumes a passive role in their resistance to the apartheid's oppression of black people. Most of Gordimer's novels present white liberals who reject apartheid's underpinnings. This is reflected in the character of Bray in *A Guest of Honour,* Steven in *No Time Like the Present,* Julie in *The Pickup,* Herald and Claudia in *The House Gun,* and The Stark family in *None to Accompany Me.* Powell (2019: 227) notes:

> Gordimer had long been convinced that majority rule in South Africa was inevitable, no matter how long, arduous, and costly the struggle to achieve that future would prove to be. As such, she also firmly believed that any prospect of the country's ruling white minority finding a place in that future depended on them building a "common culture" with their

> black compatriots, a culture that would bring the two together, as opposed to their enforced separation under apartheid.

Maureen and Bam Smales appear as a white liberal family residing in Johannesburg and have hired a black man, July to be their servant. This is one of the colonial identities as many black people during the apartheid era subscribed to domestic jobs and worked for white people whom they referred to as masters. They were referred to as 'garden boys', 'kitchen girls' while their employers were dubbed 'master' and 'madam'. Al-Mutlaq (2003) argues that Gordimer's *July's People* is deeply embedded in racist undertones. Furthermore, Ginsburg (2000: 84) avers:

> African men and women had worked in white people's homes-as paid employees, indentured servants, or slaves-since the earliest days of European colonization. The attraction of higher paying mine jobs and other considerations gradually pulled men away from such employment, until by the mid-twentieth century domestic service was almost entirely a female-only occupation.

July performs domestic duties in the Smales' household and adopts some of their white identities such as language. However, he renounces unjust treatment from his employers. This attitude often inspired him to attempt to redefine and give status to his job as a servant, hence, he responded harshly to disrespect towards him by virtue of work as a servant. Moreover, during the hardships of apartheid in Gordimer's *July's People*, July's occupation in the Smales affords him a portion of glory amongst his people and which is why unfriendly treatment at times gives him thoughts that he deserves better:

> The master he think for me. But you, you don't think about me,I'm a big man, I know for myself what I must do. I'm not thinking all the time for your things, your dog, your cat. — *The master*. Bam's not your master Why do you pretend? Nobody's ever thought of you as anything but a grown man. My god, I can't believe you can talk about me like that … Bam's had damn all to do with you, in fifteen years. That's it. You played around with things together in the tool shed. You worked for me every day. I got on your nerves. So what. You got on mine. That's how people are (*July's People*: 57).

The Smales and July had one nemesis, which is apartheid. White liberals such as the Smales during the apartheid times were regarded as "sell-outs" and this saw death threats posed upon the Smales family. As a result, the Smales sought assistance from

their servant July who took them to his village. The Smales sought a new beginning in the village where they confronted tremendous odds that come with the acquisition of a new identity.

5.3.1 Search for a new identity

The Smales' migration from the city to the village ushers an identity-crisis for Maureen. She struggles to adapt to the norms and standards the village has set for a woman: "Beyond the clearing — the settlements of huts, livestock kraals, and the stumped and burned-off patches which were the lands —the buttock-fold in the trees indicated the river and that was the end of measured distance" (*July's People*: 26). The arrival of the Smales, a white family in the villages startles the community: Why do they come here? Why to us?" (*July's People*: 18). This perception is a consequence of apartheid's stereotypes where laws such as The Population Registration Act, 1950 and The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, 1953 were passed to maintain separation amongst diversified racial groups in South Africa. It is these apartheid principles that tabooed the union of black and white people as portrayed in *July's People*:

> At first the women in the fields ignored her, or greeted her with the squinting unfocused smile of those who have their attention fixed on the ground. One or two—the younger ones—perhaps remarked on her to each other as they would of someone come to remark upon them—a photographer, an overseer (*July's People*: 91).

Gordimer presents the interface between the black and white cultures through Maureen and the women in the village. The village women struggled to make sense of Maureen's identity despite that she used to send them gifts whilst July was still working for them in the city and they would also send her woven bags. However, Maureen and the village women's eventual physical contact demonstrated ignorance about one another's identities. It is because of July's degree of authority in the village that Smales found a place of survival there: "If I say go, they must go. If I say they can stay...so they stay" (*July's People*: 82). It is the hardships of apartheid that impelled white people (The Smales) and black peoples (Villagers) to unite as July's people and forge a new identity. Theolin (2015) notes that Africanity emerges from a land of complicacy and it is to survive with the hardships of the past, present, and future, and also welcome the joy of the uncertain future. Furthermore, When Martha, the village woman first saw Maureen, she averred:

> — The face — I don't know... not a nice, pretty face. I always thought they had beautiful dresses. And the hair, it's so funny and ugly. What do they do to make it like that, dark bits and light bits. Like the tail of a dirty sheep. No. I didn't think she'd be like that, a rich white woman (*July's People*: 22).

July could discern the extremity of the conflict between Maureen and the village women, thus, he became sceptical about her working with the woman but this negativity is also influenced by July's fear that Maureen might reveal his secret of an affair with Ellen, a cleaner who July had an affair with, in the city. "What you can tell?— His anger struck him in the eyes.— That I'm work for you fifteen years. That you satisfy with me.—" (*July's People*: 98). Furthermore, the clash of identities is portrayed when Maureen attempts to work in the field with other women where she becomes a victim of laughter when she exposes her legs:

> July's unsmiling wife was laughing; looking straight at those white legs: she did not turn away when Maureen caught her at it. Laughing: why shouldn't she? July's wife with those great hams outbalancing the trest of her—Maureen laughed back at her, at her small pretty tight-drawn face whose blackness was a closed quality acting upon it from within rather than a matter of pigment. Why should the white woman be ashamed to be seen in her weakness, blemishes, as she saw the other womans?" (*July's People*: 92).

The segregation between Maureen and the other women in the family came as a lesson to her. She perceived this division that compromised sisterhood as a direct consequence of errors in the foundation of white culture. It is the colonial and apartheid assertions that sought to declare the white culture as sophisticated and black culture as backward (Montle, 2020). Therefore, Maureen as a representation of the white community attempted to make amends when she decided to go to work with other black women in the field and form a healthy relationship with Martha:

> She went to his hut [...] Martha was bathing the baby boy in a basin set on a box. Flashing tears of pure anger he appealed to the one—anyone—who had arrived to rescue him from soap and water [..,] There was a moment when Maureen could have got on her hunkers beside Martha and helped hold the baby's head while it's hair was washed" (*July's People*: 146).

Maureen strives to accept the loss of authority and power that she and her husband had held while they were still in the city, especially over their servant July who is now seemingly their master. The change makes her view Bam as now "a man without a vehicle that "she had gone on a long trip and left him behind in the master bedroom" (*July's People*: 98). She is reminded of the authority she lost each time she quarrels with July:

> What you going to say? Hay? What you can say? You tell everybody you trust your good boy. You are a good madam, you got a good boy. — Myself, I'm not say you're not a good madam— but you don't say you trust for me.— It was a command.— You walk behind. You looking. You asking me I must take all you books out and clean while you are away. You frightened I'm not working enough for you?" (*July's People*: 70).

The shift of power in Gordimer's *July's People* has come to shape the characters' identities. July had formerly institutionalised submission under the Smales and portrayed them as superior and him as an inferior. The Smales's decision to seek refuge in July's territory disempowered them while it empowered July: "He leaned his back against the wheel of the bakkie. Pride, the comfort of possession was making him forget by whose losses possession had come about (*July's People*: 91). On the other hand, July felt defeated and marginalised in the village:

> I've got nothing to do, to pass the time. — But they could assume comprehension between them only if she kept away from even the most commonplace of abstractions; his was the English learned in kitchens, factories and mines. It was based on orders and responses, not the exchange of ideas and feelings. — I've got no work (*July's People:* 80).

Maureen's identity-crisis resonates with July who experiences the same reception that Maureen got from the villagers. As Maureen's problem is perpetuated by apartheid undertones, July's is engendered by cultural underpinnings. Bozzoli (1983: 139) states that "for those women left behind in the rural areas, the departure of men in increasingly large numbers could, depending on the region and the circumstances, lead to the strengthening of the female position within the domestic sphere [...] out of this is emerging the concept of a more self-sufficient female world." Thus, in the novel:

> July's wife spoke to July of what she was thinking. She was not used to having him present to communicate with directly; there was always the long wait for his answering letter, a time during which she said to herself in different ways what it was she had wanted and tried to tell him in her letters [...] now her man was in her hut, she was giving him his food, he was there to look at her when she said something [...] he came home every two years and each time, after he had gone, she gave birth to another child [...] but now he had brought his white people, he had come to her after less than two years and already she had not bled this month (*July's People*:132).

Culturally-driven communities like July's firmly uphold notions such as *Lebitla la Mosadi ke bogadi* (A woman's grave is at her in-laws) and *Lebitla la monna le ka thoko ga tsela* (A man's grave is beside the road). These proverbs assert that a woman should conform to domestic duties in the household and endure the hardships of marriage until she dies, whereas, a man is depicted outside the house but "*ka thoko ga tsela*" (beside the road). The proverb affirms that the man should die on the road while fending for his family. This is reflected through July in Gordimer's *July's People.* Furthermore, the search for identity came to reveal common identities between Maureen and July. Bam gets startled at the revelation of both Maureen and July's thievery. He discovers that Maureen had stolen pills from a pharmacy.

> How many packets have we got left?—
> — Six I think.—
> — Good god. Such a lot of pills!— His voice became low, murmuring, elliptical. This was the form of intimacy that had taken place of love-talk between them,— Mmh?.. .did you expect we'd be staying a long time?—
> — Well, will we?—
> —Where'd you get such a supply? Surely we didn't have them in the bathroom cupboard?—
> —I looted. From the pharmacy. After they attacked the shops.— (*July's People*: 82).

A similar discovery is made about July when the Smales find July's home in the village swamped with items that used to belong to them. Maureen recognised some of her gadgets and kitchen utensils in July's house. This element of thievery is something that the Smales have never suspected from July when he was working as their servant in the city and Maureen remembers how July would pick up coins on the floor and place them on Bam's bedside table and not in his pockets. She got shocked when:

> There were other gadgets noticed in use about the settlement, she privately recognised as belonging to her: a small knife-grinder that had been in the mine house kitchen before her own, a pair of scissors in the form of a stork [...] these things were once hers, back there; he must have filched them long ago (*July's People*: 82).

Despite their racial indifference, July and Maureen have common characteristics. Al-Mutlaq (2003) notes that this suggests that July is not different to white South Africans in terms of identity through asserts as he finds fulfilment in stealing objects from Smales household (new world) and taking them to the village (old world). The constant squabbles between July and Maureen escalated to the point where they are perceived as:

> The incredible tenderness of the evening surrounded them as if mistaken them for lovers. She lurched over and posed herself, a grotesque, against the vehicle's hood [...] The death's harpy image she made of herself meant nothing to him, who had never been to motor show complete with provocative girls [...] she laughed and slapped the mudguard vulgarly, as he had done to frighten a beast out of the way (*July's People*: 153).

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined Gordimer's depiction of women's identities in the post-colonial period. The dispensation of independence as portrayed in Gordimer's novels has meant that women should redefine their identities and break away from repressive structures including patriarchy. Sibongile, Vera and Maureen in *None to Accompany Me* and *July's People* hold leading and executive positions. The women defied cultural notions which often subject women to inferiority. In the novels, a shift of identity as a result of independence is portrayed when the women were authoritative figures and reserved domestic chores for their husbands, which are culturally believed to be for women.

CHAPTER SIX

(CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has predicated on Nadine Gordimer's novels to repurpose identity in African literature. Gordimer's novels have splendidly crystallised the shift of identities in the African context and unmasked some of the hidden remnants of colonialism that perpetuate colonial traditions, which still plague Africa in the present day. These colonial vestiges include anti-democratic forces (see *A Guest of Honour*), stereotypes against miscegenation (see *No Time Like The Present*), misogyny (see *The Pickup*), sexual identity-crisis (see *None to Accompany Me*), violence (see *The House Gun*) and racial tension (see *July's People*). Given her efforts, Gordimer has proved to be one of the most seasoned specialists in identity. This chapter aims to provide a conclusion, summary and recommendations for future studies on African identity through Gordimer or other authors' literary work. Moreover, Gordimer has earned several accolades at both national and international levels, which include laureate and booker prizes. Thus, Bizos (2017: 1) states:

> Gordimer has undoubtedly become one of the World's Great Writers …Her rootedness in a political time, place and faith has never dimmed her complex gifts as an artist; her partisanship has not compromised her artistic distance. Great writers can retain political faith; they can believe and create. This is an important message for all aspirant writers of the next century.

6.2 THE THEME OF IDENTITY IN GORDIMER'S NOVELS

According to Kehinde (2010), African novels take a middle-ground position in the criticism of colonial depiction of Africa and her people, and unfolded, in part, from a historical reflection of agile rebellion to colonial encounter. This noted, the tradition of combating and finding solutions for African problems such as identity-crises through the barrel of a pen ensued. The expression, barrel of a pen in colonial and post-colonial criticism has come to mean resistance to colonial conditions, and this connotation was solidified by the content of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Barrel of a Pen: Resistance to Repression in Neo-Colonial Kenya* (1983). Hence, Asma (2015) affirms that it has become common that post-colonial literature addresses the notion of identity at length

since post-colonial writers endured and eye-witnessed the course of colonialism and have been acutely affected by it. Gordimer's fictional work has attempted to redress the issues that plague Africa as a result of its search for identity in the post-colonial period. Kumar (2014: 1) asserts that Gordimer's novels tend to "focus on her characters' struggle to attain political or racial rather than personal freedom." Her novels have reflected on liberation struggles and the status quo in Africa subsequent to the continent's emancipation and dispensation of measures that sought to pave the acquisition to a new identity. Thus, Gordimer's novels are reckoned to be agents of social transformation in the African continent as their profound acumen into the historical discourse aid to mould the process of democratisation (Nobel Prize for Literature committee, 1991). She is amongst the African literary writers who have a renowned history of using their writings dubbed 'barrel of a pen to fight against oppressive systems.

The question of identity has featured prevalently in Gordimer's novels and sought to unearth the post-colonial identity of Africa. She has many novels, which include *The Lying Days* (1953), *A World of Strangers* (1958), *Occasion for Loving* (1963), *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966), *A Guest of Honour* (1970), *The Conservationist* (1974), *Burger's Daughter* (1979), *July's People* (1981), *A Sport of Nature* (1987), *My Son's Story* (1990), *None to Accompany Me* (1994), *The House Gun* (1998), *The Pickup* (2001), *Get a Life* (2005), *No Time Like the Present* (2012). However, it is only six of these novels that are used for this study. *A Guest of Honour*, *No Time Like the Present*, *The Pickup* (2001), *The House Gun* (1998), *None to Accompany Me* (1994) and *July's People* (1981). Most of the above-mentioned novels employ South Africa as a case in point to comprehend and search for identity in the post-colonial period. South Africa qualifies as a lens because:

> With the end of apartheid in South Africa, emancipatory expectations are justifiably high for the long-oppressed Black population of that country. Apartheid (or apartness) was a system of racial segregation that had its roots in 19th century South Africa. The term's conceptual origins are traceable to an English daily columnist, Edmund Garrett, who, in 1895, had this to say about race relations in South Africa 'Say not that we are superior and they are inferior, but simply that we are different, and that the difference involves, as a matter of practical comfort and convenience for both races, a certain amount of keeping to themselves. Of course, we should go on thinking of ourselves as the superior race' (Morris-Hale, 1996: 240).

It is the post-apartheid status quo that Gordimer uses to assert and re-assert identity through her writing. This makes Gordimer to be perceived as “the voice of reason and conscience against a tyrannical dispensation” (Dimitriu, 2011: 7). According to Caraivan (2014), South Africa has been remoulding its national identity commensurate with world-wide events that pen universal history, affording the citizens the opportunity to circumvent the confines of their societies and bring in or take out aspects that are significant when determining particular characteristics of a community in the course of globalisation. Specifically, her novels *No Time Like the Present* and *A Guest of Honour* reflect on the search for identity in South Africa from the colonial background into the democratic era which “is a key issue facing mankind in its striving after significance and meaning. However, the African understanding of self is in crisis having been assailed from a number of directions” (Kochalumchuvattil, 2010: 109). South Africa, being Gordimer’s case in point for the portrayal of the impacts of colonialism on the post-colonial Africa, has been haunted and re-haunted by colonial undertones despite its democratic dispensation as portrayed in the sampled novels:

6.2.1 *A Guest of Honour* and *No Time Like the Present*

Gordimer’s *A Guest of Honour* has imagined post-colonial issues that would vex the African continent after it has attained independence. These issues include anti-democratic agents such as greed for political power, disunity and racial stereotypes. The novel has served as both an encouragement and discouragement during the struggle for independence in Africa. It gives hope and prophecies that Africa would defeat colonial forces and reclaim its independence but it also dashes hopes of benefitting from independence. It is through the character of Bray that the novel indicated that racial stereotypes and disunity would still exist. To a greater extent, disunity did only menace black and white groups but also black elites amongst themselves, particularly those that joined forces and fought for independence. This is demonstrated through Mweta and Shinza who battled for political power, which saw the latter organising a coup that resulted in the demise of Bray. Furthermore, Gordimer’s *No Time Like the Present,* which is Gordimer’s most recent novel sought to authenticate *A Guest of Honour*’s prophecy about the post-independence period of Africa. *No Time Like the Present* has validated most of the prophecies outlined in *A Guest of Honour.* Gordimer’s *A Guest of Honour* predicted democracy in Africa and this is confirmed in *No Time Like the Present,* which presents Africa as a democratic

continent that has embarked on a quest to reinforce oneness and equality. Just like Bray's relationships with black elites in *A Guest of Honour*, interracial relationships emerge in *No Time Like the Present* and have resulted in marriages. Steven and Jabulile's marriage in the latter novel embraces the democratic identity of oneness. However, several maladies that resist democratisation are also confirmed in Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present.* In this novel, Steven and Jabulile endure criticisms, rejection and stereotypes from both black and white communities. This fulfils the prophecy of disunity in the democratic period. Moreover, colonial remnants prophesied in *A Guest of Honour* such as racism are also fulfilled in Gordimer's *No Time Like the Present.*

6.2.2 *The Pickup* and *The House Gun*

The Pickup has also unveiled demeaning odds that threaten democratic identities in Africa. It has unearthed these challenges through the couple, Julie and Abdu. The novel has reflected on Africans' desire for a new identity in the democratic dispensation. Abdu is an illegal immigrant in South Africa and attempts to find a new identity in the country. His illegal stay in South Africa is another ill that the country is confronting in the democratic period. Foreign nationals from neighbouring countries arrived in South Africa massively legally whereas others such as Abdu in Gordimer's novel gained entry into the country illegally. This enormous advent enthused xenophobic attacks in the South African society. Furthermore, Abdu meets and falls in love with a white woman named Julie who has achieved success more than Abdu has. The couple confronts challenges together such as racist remarks from Julie's family, and friends and power-crisis in South Africa. These problems impel the couple to migrate to Abdu's Arab country to seek an identity.

It is in the Arab village that the couple finds another mountain of challenges up their sleeves. Julie struggles to adapt to the culture in the Arab village. For instance, she could wear revealing dresses in South Africa without distress but in the Arab village, this was unacceptable. A clash of identities ensued between Julie and Arab villagers culminating in the former succumbing to the Arab culture. Likewise, *The House Gun* has also presented a set of challenges in the democratic period such as racism and gender issues. A white couple, Herald and Claudia Lingards are haunted by the horrors of their son, Duncan. The Lingards assumed an identity as a peaceful, non-

racist and religious family. However, upon discovering many ills about Duncan, their attitudes and perceptions changed. The Lingards discovered that their son is bisexual, which was something that clashed with their religious depictions. Thus, accepting their son's sexuality occasioned a shift of identity in their lives, as they had to compromise their belief. Moreover, the Lingards also stumbled upon an appalling discovery about their son that he has murdered someone. Duncan caught his ex-boyfriend Carl with his girlfriend Natalie having sex and shot Carl with the house gun. The Lingards solicited legal services from a black lawyer, Hamilton Motsamai. Duncan's trial divulged a new identity of the Lingards as they appear to have transitioned from being a peace-loving family to an unjust and sexist family. Lingards wanted Motsamai to save Duncan at the expense of Natalie. Motsamai almost shifted the blame from Duncan to Natalie until he resented the initiative and left the employ of the Lingards. Therefore, both Gordimer's *The Pickup* and *The House Gun* corroborate identity-crisis in the democratic period.

6.2.3. *None to Accompany Me* and *July's People*

Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me The* and *July's People* have focused on women's liberation due to the democratic dispensation. These novels questioned what independence meant for women. In the novels, Gordimer breaks patriarchal structures that appear to have entrapped women in the web of oppression despite independence. *None to Accompany Me* sought to empower and galvanise women to own their independence. The democratic achievement in the novel opened doors of success for the women, Vera Stark and Sibongile Maqoma. The two women become powerful and influential figures in their communities and earn more than their husbands. The women's success clashes with their cultural underpinnings. As a woman, Sibongile is culturally expected to submit to his husband who is the provider and perform domestic duties and other motherly responsibilities. However, she does the opposite in her household. Sibongile takes responsibility as the provider and reserves domestic duties to her husband Didymus. The same also applies in the Stark household where Vera is more successful than her husband and leaves domestic chores for the husband whilst she deals with urgent matters of the household. Vera's democratic identity propels her to promiscuity. She defies cultural perceptions of a woman and excuses her promiscuity with democratic rights to her body. In most cases, women endure stereotypes such as "whore", "slut" and "bitch" and if assumed to be promiscuous

unlike, men who do not receive condemnation to this degree. Hence, *None to Accompany Me* attempts to debunk cultural notions against women such as them not being good leaders or being unable to thrive in certain positions. Furthermore, this is also demonstrated through the character of Maureen in *July's People.* Maureen is a flexible white woman who is more vocal and influential in her community than her husband, Bam Smales. The Smales' disapproval of apartheid conditions upon black people resulted in their lives being threatened. In this manner, the Smales sought safety from their black servant, July who took them to the village. In the village, Maureen took the lead in negotiating a new identity for her family. She struggled to fit in, learned the culture of the village and befriended some of the village women as well July. The character of Maureen in *July's People* and both Vera and Sibongile in *None to Accompany Me* is Gordimer's portrayal of the democratic empowerment of women.

6.3 CONCLUSION

Gordimer's novels have satisfactorily explored the theme of identity as reiterated in the summary of the findings above from her novels, *A Guest of Honour, No Time Like the Present, The Pickup*, *The House Gun*, *None to Accompany Me* and *July's people.* It has been discussed with reference to the aforementioned novels that African societies have undergone a tremendous shift of identities. From the (pre) colonial to post-colonial identities. These transitions carried some remnants of the old (colonial) period into the new one (post-colonial). Hence, this study is a post-colonial analysis of Gordimer's selected novels, which have unveiled identity-crises and colonial vestiges besieging Africans in the post-colonial period such as racial tensions, gender stereotypes, socio-economic isolation, the battle for power, inequalities and disunity.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the issues that come to grips with identity in the post-colonial African context, the study recommends that:

- Future studies on identity should attempt to define who an African is, with consideration to the colonial past and the seemingly perpetual colonial identities such as cultures, languages, styles and fashions, which possess Western roots.

- Initiatives that enthuse Africans from diverse racial and cultural identities to unite and embrace oneness should be encouraged. This includes projects such as the rainbow nation, which could create a comfortable space for people in the same situation as the characters in Gordimer's novels who received condemnation as a result of their interracial marriages in the democratic space.

- African societies should afford both men and women's identities equal recognition. This would dismantle the stereotypes that define these identities. Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me*, *July's People* disregarded cultural underpinnings and portrayed women as political, influential and successful leaders like the men in *A Guest of Honour* and *No Time Like the Present*.

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