



شبكة المعلومات الجامعية
التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكروفيلم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



MONA MAGHRABY



شبكة المعلومات الجامعية
التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكرو فيلم



شبكة المعلومات الجامعية التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكرو فيلم



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جامعة عين شمس

التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكروفيلم

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Interculturalism in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* (1981) and *My Son's Story* (1990)

A Dissertation

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MA in Teacher Preparation in literature (English Language)**

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Table of Contents

Subject	Page No.
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iii
<i>Abstract</i>	iv
<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Chapter one:</i> Interculturalism: A Theoretical Background	1-40
<i>Chapter Two:</i> Identity Crisis in Nadine Gordimer's <i>July's People</i>	42-74
<i>Chapter Three:</i> Interracial relations in Nadine Gordimer's <i>My Son's Story</i>	76-112
<i>Conclusion</i>	113-118
<i>Bibliography</i>	119-130
<i>English Summary</i>	133
<i>Arabic Summary</i>	
<i>Arabic Abstract</i>	

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to define and debate the concept of “interculturalism” and to investigate why it is a focal concern in Nadine Gordimer’s narrative thought. With reference to *July’s People* (1981) and *My Son’s Story* (1990), the researcher attempts to analyze the political, social and cultural milieu in the two novels of Nadine Gordimer to expose more awareness of the unfair political situation of her homeland and to explain the obstacles standing in the way of attaining “interculturalism” on both thematic and technical levels by tracing the thematic concerns and the technical narrative aspects in Gordimer’s works which have persisted throughout her career revealing her main concern with the South African context of apartheid, the forms of protest against the situation and her vision following post-apartheid South Africa.

The study is divided into three chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one is entitled “**Interculturalism: A Theoretical Background**”. It defines and debates the concept of “interculturalism” and investigates why it is a focal concern in Nadine Gordimer’s thought. Then, upon analyzing her

literary techniques, Nadine Gordimer introduces her own opinions of the role of a political writer and her distinction between her political efforts and literary work. Lastly, the chapter traces the tension between the White's opposition to apartheid and the Black's separatism and the conviction that if white South Africans are to have a place in a post-apartheid South Africa, then they have to join black South Africans in a hybrid culture.

Chapter two is entitled “**Identity Crisis in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People***”. It analyzes the crisis of identity embedded in the White/the Black relationship in apartheid society of South Africa during a transitional stage of violent political change. The chapter investigates how different power structures affect the point of view and identity process of the novel's main characters, in particular the issue of material possessions represented in the novel and how this relates to identity.

Chapter three is entitled “**Interracial relations in Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story***”. It examines the nature of interracial relation in *My Son's Story*. Gordimer's concern with the Other in her works extends to portraying the relation between the Self and the Other, particularly the nature of

interracial relation between the White and the Black. In Gordimer's novels, interracial relations assume special significance as a means of defying the laws of apartheid and achieving a union between the races. In addition to this, the correlation between politics and sex in her novels leads her to portray couples sharing the same political convictions, united in the struggle for the Black's cause.

The Conclusion is a synthesis of the findings the research arrived at and conducted in the previous chapters of the thesis.

Key Words:

Interculturalism - Multiculturalism - Identity Crisis
- Self/Other - Nadine Gordimer - *July's People*
- *My Son's Story* - White Hegemony - Split Consciousness
- Slave Mentality

Preface

This study investigates “interculturalism” firstly as a concept and then as a phenomenon in Nadine Gordimer’s fictional world. The study traces the thematic concerns and the technical narrative aspects in Gordimer’s works which have persisted throughout her career revealing her main concern with the South African context of apartheid, the forms of protest against the situation and her vision following post-apartheid South Africa.

Throughout decades of writing, Gordimer depicted her own culture and the societal changes that occurred during and after apartheid. Among her masterpieces, written in 1981 after Soweto Uprising and banned by the white regime, *July’s People* comes to the forefront. It is the story of a white family, the Smales, fleeing from Johannesburg to the small village of their black servant July during a civil war in South Africa. In this travel, the roles of the white family and July substitute. The black people become the protectors of the white family who have been the master of the Black in the city. However, the white family does not seem to be eager to leave their power, dominion and superiority even in rural area among black society. The crisis of identity emanating from this role

replacement through racial implications and references is aimed to be discussed. By analysing the Smales displacement and their sense of estrangement among *July's People* and through foregrounding July's dual identity, this study attempts to explain how the characters become the Other through the course of the story and why they cannot integrate into the new culture.

Gordimer's concern with the Other in her works extends to portraying the relation between the Self and the Other particularly the nature of interracial relations between the White and the Black. However, these relations are criminalized in South Africa as several acts are enforced to ensure the separation between the different races and to prevent any contact between them. These laws are intended to preserve the purity of the white race and have their roots not only in the Western notions of white superiority but also in the deep rooted fear of the black other who is viewed as being sexually evil and subhuman.

In Gordimer's novels, interracial relations assume a special significance as a means of defying the laws of apartheid and achieving a union between the races. In addition to this, the correlation between politics and sex leads her to

portray couples sharing the same political convictions, united in the struggle for the Black's cause. However, in *My Son's Story* interracial relation is a destructive one. This shift on Gordimer's part shows that she has moved on beyond her earlier utopian vision, and that she came to believe that the top priority is the revolution and that until it succeeds no success can be expected for such relations.

The study is divided into three chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one is entitled “**Inter-culturalism: A Theoretical Background**”. This chapter defines and debates the concept of “interculturalism” and investigates why it is a focal concern in Nadine Gordimer's thought. Then, upon analyzing her literary techniques, Nadine Gordimer introduces her own opinions of the role of a political writer and her distinction between her political efforts and literary work. Lastly, the chapter traces the tension between the White's opposition to apartheid and the Black's separatism and the conviction that if white South Africans are to have a place in a post-apartheid South Africa, then they have to join black South Africans in a hybrid culture.

Chapter two is entitled “**Identity Crisis in Nadine**

Gordimer's *July's People*". This chapter analyzes the crisis of identity embedded in the White/the Black relationship in apartheid society of South Africa during a transitional stage of violent political change. The chapter investigates how different power structures affect the point of view and identity process of the novel's main characters, in particular the issue of material possessions represented in the novel and how this relate to identity.

Chapter three is entitled "**Interracial relations in Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story***". This chapter examines the nature of interracial relation in *My Son's Story*. In Gordimer's novels, interracial relations assume a special significance as a means of defying the laws of apartheid and achieving a union between the races. In addition to this, the correlation between politics and sex in her novels leads her to portray couples sharing the same political convictions, united in the struggle for the Black's cause.

The Conclusion makes a panoramic view of the three chapters. It is a synthesis of the findings the research arrived at and conducted in the previous chapters of the thesis.

Chapter One

Chapter One

Interculturalism: A Theoretical Background

The aim of this chapter is to define and debate the concept of “interculturalism” and to investigate why it is a focal concern in Nadine Gordimer’s thought. Then, upon analyzing her literary techniques, Nadine Gordimer introduces her own opinions of the role of a political writer and her distinction between her political efforts and literary work. Lastly, the chapter traces the tension between the White’s opposition to apartheid and the Black’s separatism and the conviction that if the White is to have a place in a post-apartheid South Africa, then he has to join the Black in a hybrid culture.

The word intercultural is used in many ways based on the different ideological agenda or interests. The notion of “interculture” is used most exclusively to “designate the problem between the majority and the minorities” (Kalpana Das 14). The word itself contains two key roots: “inter” as prefix and “culture” as a root. The prefix inter-introduces the notion of the other and consequently an interaction between