

The Dystopian Vision of a Revolutionary Surge: A Study of Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*

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Received: April 30, 2015 Accepted: May 25, 2015 Online Published: August 31, 2015

doi:10.5539/ells.v5n3p12 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ells.v5n3p12>

Abstract

In Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*, an equivocal standpoint on the part of the central narrative consciousness towards a hypothesized revolution, that overturns the system of apartheid, brings about several perplexing questions many of which contest claims of any favorable repercussions of the upheaval. The narrative presentation of the revolution negates all the ethics according to which successful revolutions are undertaken. Instead of fulfilling on the level of the narrative a utopian vision of post-apartheid South Africa with a promise of liberation, *July's People* persists in foregrounding and underscoring a Manichean polarized realm within which blacks are stigmatized as tepid numbs who lack all potential and prowess and thus are unfit for self-rule. On the other hand, whites are depicted, in conformity with their commendatory image as industrious and inventive people who are caught in the dilemma of interregnum and thus arouse the sympathy of the readers. The paper investigates the puzzling issue of how the revolution and its devotees are extraneous to the parameters of the text. It also examines the ways in which *July's People* conveys the discrepancy in upholding the revolutionary ascendancy of blacks in post-apartheid South Africa while reinforcing in admirable ways white superiority and eminence represented by the Smales' family in their forced existence among the black community of July, their ex-servant.

Keywords: Nadine Gordimer, revolution, *July's People*, ambivalence, Manichean

Since the black uprisings of the mid-seventies... the past has begun rapidly to drop out of sight... Historical coordinates don't fit life any longer; new ones ...have couplings not to rulers, but to the ruled. It is not for nothing that I chose as an epigraph for my novel *July's People* a quotation from Gramsci: "Die old is dying, and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms". (Gordimer, 1988, p. 220)

1. Introduction

Revolutionary movements surpass, in their impact, ideologies of nationalism and socialism. The former, with freedom and autonomy as their anchorage points, play a crucial role in shaping the historical physiognomy of the countries in which they materialize, whereas the latter have lost touch with material realities.

In fact, revolutions, as Hannah Arendt (1965) speculates, bring about anew "course of history." With them, "a story never known or told before ... is about to unfold" (p. 28). In their excavations of the concepts of revolution, Raymond Tanter and Manus Midlarsky illustrate that "to the Hegelian, the revolutionary idea is equated with irresistible change—a manifestation of the world spirit in an unceasing quest for its own fulfillment." The Marxist conceives of revolution "as a product of irresistible historical forces, which culminate in a struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat" (p. 264). On another plane, Arendt (1965) identifies rebellious experience as a process of restoration of "an old order of things that had been disturbed and violated by the despotism of absolute monarchy or the abuses of colonial government (pp. 43-44). For the most part, such deliberations are pertinent insofar as national revolutions against colonial and despotic tyranny are concerned.

However, the course of the revolution is often uncontrollable that, as Arendt (1965) suggests, it may take "a direction which [has] little ... to do with the willful aims and purposes of the anonymous force of the revolution if they wanted to survive at all" (p. 29). She explains further that often none of the active participants in the

uprising would have “the slightest premonition” as to the ultimate outcome of “the plot of the new drama” (p. 29). Both triumph and defeat are possible scenarios. In any case, one major catalyst for any revolution is the search for an alternative course of history.

Literature fosters and augments revolutionary ideas against repressive regimes and colonial hegemony. In the African continent in general and the Arab world in particular, sub-literary genres like prison memoirs play an important role in disseminating and diffusing revolutionary ideas through the works of African writers like Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Wole Soyinka, Molefe Pheto, Lewis Nkosi, Dennis Brutus, and Kofi Awoonor and Arab writers such as Abdulrahman Munif, Sunallah Ibrahim and Haidar Haidar. Their prison writings have aroused their people to reject the culture of silence and the fear of dictatorial regimes prevailing in ‘flag’ independent countries.

The proper role for artists and intellectuals according to Frantz Fanon (1963) is at the center of the “fight” for revolution; to be “concerned with and completely at one with the people in the great battle of Africa and of suffering humanity” (p. 206). In his delineation of the phases of the development of national culture, Fanon (1963) situates revolutionary literature at a stage when the native intellectuals feel “the need to speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses the heart of the people, and to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action” (p. 224). This is clearly embodied in Latin American works of novelists like the Argentinean Julio Cortázar, Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, Colombian Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Chilean Isabel Allende and the Mexican Carlos Fuentes who portray in various modes their national experience with injustice and repression.

This study focuses on Nadine Gordimer’s ambivalent futuristic vision of post-apartheid “interregnum” as unfolded in *July’s People* (1981). Her narrative is a vivid depiction of an imagined South African revolution which brings about white ruler and black subordinates’ reversal of roles. Gordimer (1988) borrows the term “interregnum” from Antonio Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* to describe the ambiguous and contradictory conditions of life in South Africa when the years of apartheid come to an end. She describes this period as “a state of Hegel’s disintegrated consciousness, of contradictions” which produces an oscillation between two orders: the old one “discarded” as “hated and shameful” whereas the other is an “unknown and undetermined” (pp. 269-270) future one. Within such a transitory period, there is fear and uncertainty wherein life has no structure. She stipulates that “the black knows he will be at home, at last” while “the white does not know whether he will find his home at last” (p. 270).

Consequently, Gordimer’s trajectory of *July’s People* mirrors her own ambivalence and indeterminacy regarding two possible outcomes of the South African revolution. It reveals untold and hidden stories about the rise of the oppressed South African community seeking autonomy and liberation from the manacles of white Afrikaners, and reinforces the presence of the whites rather than their demise. Ambivalence and vacillation are central factors in the setting of *July’s People* where characters exist in an interregnal space in which one discourse is ending and another is in the process of emerging. Gordimer equivocates between the utopian and dystopian post-apartheid realms. A consistent prevarication on the part of the authorial consciousness brings about several indeterminate yet perplexing thoughts and double exposures that encumber the readers’ grasp of her real preoccupation.

The title *July’s People* intimates a narrative about the people of July, the black South African servant whose name, as Abdul R. JanMohamed (1983) points out, “derived from a calendar, is reminiscent of Defoe’s Friday” (p. 140). Conversely, the opening of the novel shows blatantly that July’s character is situated in the shadow of the white world’s characters, although the title locates it at the center of events. Moreover, July’s white employers, the Smales family -Bam Smales, his wife Maureen and their children Victor, Royce and Gina - emerge as his people. In addition, his fellow black villagers, intimated in the title as his people, appear as “creatures, like their cattle and pigs” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 96). In fact, *July’s People* does not reflect jubilant revolutionary black selves. It unfolds a world that is drenched in murky and questionable vision. Readers, in full identification with Maureen and her family, are, like them, submerged in uncertainty at loss in the black world. Thus, the title, *July’s People*, packed with ironical undertones, conveys the ambiguous position of its author.

Ostensibly, *July’s People* upholds the revolutionary ascendancy and the rise of blacks in post-apartheid South Africa in the struggle. Such a perspective gains resonance in Mongane Wally Serote’s statement that “blacks must lead and whites must follow, blacks must talk and whites must listen (as cited in Yelin, 1998, pp. 134-135). Nonetheless, the narrative unexpectedly privileges the consciousness of the white woman to dominate and control the text. Therefore, July after whom the novel is entitled is a participant rather than the controlling manipulator in the events. Gordimer fixes July and the blacks in an image and a space that are created for them

by the white protagonist to highlight her dominance. The identity of such a protagonist is revealed after a succession of pronoun references of “she” and “her” to introduce her gradually as Maureen.

Through an omniscient narrative voice “who has complete access to the minds of white characters and limited access to those of blacks” (JanMohamed, 1983, p.140), the reader gains an access into the consciousness of the white ideology of “Maureen and Bam Smales.” Such a way of introducing the main white female character of the story reveals indeterminacy and equivocation in relation to July’s name as the nucleus of the title of the novel. Besides, though July’s name is mentioned in the second sentence of the first chapter, the narrator discloses his role stating: “July bent at the doorway and began that day for them as his kind has always done for their kind” (Gordimer, 1981, p.1). He carries out the stereotypical role in relation to the white family after they fled the black rebellion.

Hypothetically, the narrative envisages the blacks implementing their long awaited scheme to achieve freedom and becoming the ruling power of their country. However, such a triumph is just a gilded façade beneath which lurks the deep-rooted prejudices and racial supremacy waiting to pounce on the black uprising. The imagined revolution does not transfer the South Africans into a state of autonomy and recognition; instead, they turn to be suspicious, dubious and even resistant to amendment and change. Hence, the imaginary revolution revives and underlines unexpectedly the rudiments of the age-old white supremacy instead of uprooting and eliminating them.

In her attempt to examine the political and revolutionary maneuvers as a representation of human life, Gordimer merges two narrative modes of discourse: the historical and the fictional. The imaginative vision of a rebellion derives its impetus from history. In a historical perspective, she (1988) infers the demise of nineteenth century colonialism that reached its ultimate demonstration in “mineral grabbing ... labour exploitation of indigenous peoples ... constitutionalised, institutionalized racism that was concealed ... by pious notions to uplift” (p. 262). Gordimer (1988) explicates further her perspective reinforcing it by evidential data:

An extraordinarily obdurate crossbreed of Dutch, German, English, French in the South African white settler population produced a bluntness that unveiled everyone's refined white racism: the flags of European civilisation dropped ... and they baptised the thing in the Dutch Reformed Church, called it apartheid, coining the ultimate term for every manifestation, over the ages, in many countries, of race prejudice. (p. 262)

The libertarian and humanitarian approach that condemns bigotry, eclipses a longing for a past though “hated and shameful” driven by a sense of fear of the mysterious future that lurks beyond the black upheaval. The past represents the apartheid discourse, the present imparts the black village discourse, and the future bears vague and questionable indications of the whites’ attempt of survival and re-appropriation in the new order. In such a manner, the reference to history materializes the fictive world to the reader in all its specificity. Robert Green’s (1988) observation is a case in point; he notes that “Gordimer ... attempt[s] to “enter” the world of black experience in South Africa while remaining, as she must, a member of the dominant white minority” (p. 545). It is such stance that fosters a narrative that “blurs the boundaries of history and fiction” (Baena Molina, 1995, p. 26)

In fact, Gordimer traces a highly symbolic historical comparison between apartheid and revolutionary South Africa. This comparison is initially emblemized in the way Bam Smales, an architect, Maureen, his wife and his three children flee the blaze of Johannesburg city that is drenched in the chaotic fright of “the gunned shopping malls and the blazing, unsold houses of a depressed market ... the burst mains washing round bodies in their Saturday-morning garb of safari suits, and the heat-guided missiles that struck Boeings carrying those trying to take off from Jan Smuts Airport” (Gordimer, 19981, p. 9). The spectacle conveys the uprising in *July’s People* in negative terms; it disintegrates into a vision of riots, anarchy, erupting violence and an interruption of a settled and comfortable lifestyle.

The juxtaposition of past affluence and the present scenes of pandemonium induces the reader’s compassion and support longing for the return of the structured and settled lifestyle. For both the blacks and whites, “the world is jolted out of chronology” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 4) and a state of unrest verges on unending disasters. Suspicious of Gordimer’s intentions, Stephen Clingman (1986) comments that it is the present “that falls apart in the revolutionary context the novel proposes” (p. 37) and violence is portrayed “in order to offer white guilt a form of catharsis” as Brendon Nicholls (2011) puts it (p. 39). He goes further and adds that the narrative is absorbed by “the pre-revolutionary uncertainty of the present” (p. 39).

2. Instability of the Authorial Tone

As a consequence of the blacks' hypothetical revolution, whites are left with no other choice but to flee from the suburbs of Johannesburg which so long had been their home seeking shelter and refuge in the black villages. They want to escape the gloomy consequences of dire decades of apartheid into a peaceful space. They "told each other and everyone else that this and nowhere else was home" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 8). The Smales found themselves helpless and have to surrender themselves to their trusted "frog prince, savior, July;" the "decently-paid and contended male servant" who turned be "the chosen one in whose hands their lives were to be held;" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 9). July is presented in a way that makes him ideologically loyal to the white masters and less supportive of South African black people. Furthermore, the nature of July's relation with the white family discloses his depiction as numb and lacking in insight and perception. Amidst the topsy-turvy, he demands his salary enjoining his employers: "You are not going to pay me this month" (Gordimer, 1981, p 71).

Such inconsistencies impede the reader's ability to identify and sympathize with a well-intended upheaval and arouse doubts concerning the authorial tone in which the imaginative revolution is presented. JanMohamed (1983) remarks that Gordimer's "ambivalence about the necessity of fighting apartheid and her repugnance at having to contend with such an intolerant system echoes the reader's mixed feelings" (p. 149). Precariousness is reinforced in Gordimer's elaboration on Maureen's reaction on the first day in July's mother's hut; the attitude is characterized by disgust at the nauseating conditions even though this hut epitomizes the only shelter and refuge of her family. It is presented through the eyes of Maureen as containing

a stiff rolled-up cowhide, a hoe on a nail, a small pile of rags and a part of a broken Primus stove, left against the wall. The hen and chickens were moving there; but the slight sound she heard did not come from them. There would be mice and rats. Flies wandered the air and found the eyes and mouths of her children, probably still smelling of vomit, dirty, sleeping, safe. (Gordimer, 1998, p. 4)

Though black huts are the only refuge away from the flames of the blazing Johannesburg, they are presented in a destitute manner that reinforces a stark incongruity with the 'Rondavels' adapted by Bam's ancestors on his Boer side: the stylish westernized well-structure diversion of the South African hut. The contrast emblemizes the forced industrialization and materialism imposed on July and his people. As a daughter of a white miner and a wife of a rich architect, Maureen is extremely impressed by the lack of material possessions in the black huts.

The disparity of black rural huts and white urban areas invokes Maureen's past affluence and emphasizes her present helplessness in a squalid space where the Smales are stripped of two important material tools of power: the gun and the bakkie. The former, as JanMohamed (1983) identifies it, is the "only means of self-protection and the emblem of mastership" (p. 142), and the latter "bought for fun turned out to be the vehicle: that which bore them away" (p. 9). It is painstakingly readjusted by July as the only means of storing their groceries from the distant Indian store.

In fact, details about the raw primitive life and the derelict state of the black huts are necessary to reveal the struggle undertaken by the Smales family in their attempt at inclusiveness and adjustment. The scope of such naturalistic muddy portrait is widened to comprise not only the huts but also everyday lifestyle. Gordimer (1981) presents a vivid description:

There was nothing ... You had to stay in the dark of the hut a long while to make out what was on the walls... there was the tail of an animal and a rodent skull, dried gut, dangling from the thatch. ... It was in the hut where the yokes and traces for the plough-oxen were. [Maureen] went inside again and discovered insignia, like war medals, nailed just to the left of the dark doorway. The enamel emblem's red cross was foxed and pitted with damp, bonded with dirt to the mud and dung plaster that was slowly incorporating it. (p. 29)

The sense of grubby and muddy huts with dung floor saturates all the aspects of the South African community; "rivers carried the risk of bilharzias infection" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 9). Dirt of the black red earth "didn't show nearly so badly on black children" (p. 42), yet it imprints "the joints and knuckle-lines of her little claws and toes and ash furred the invisible white fluff on her blond legs" (p. 42). More to the point, "The flying cockroaches that hit her face were creatures she was unfamiliar with. There were others like outside locusts (p. 48); her children forget "to bury the [toilet] paper with the turd [leaving] shit smeared scarps blowing about – and being relished by the pigs" (p. 35) who like the feral cats stalk Maureen. Also, in July's hut, a baby puts the soft membranes of chickens' droppings in its mouth.

In this naturalistic atmosphere, there is an omnipresence of foul filth and smut conveying the impression that such world is integral and intrinsic to black life; hence, the impossibility of improvement. Nicholls (2011) gives

a further insight into Gordimer's debased exposé of the locale: he states, "Her spatial perceptions are so much marked by the geography of Apartheid" (p. 137). The authorial consciousness fails to notice the slightest affirmative signs. Even though degraded by poverty, there could have been some intimations of a "cultural community" (Nicholls, 2011, p. 137).

In fact, Gordimer's displacement of the Smales from their familiar, comfortable civilized and powerful white family context and their introduction to July's hut leave the Smales apprehensive about the future prospects and widens the breach between white and black realms. Obviously, Maureen shares Gordimer's angle of vision about the black grimy and subhuman locale; it prevails as the paramount perspective in *July's People*. This confirms Judie Newman's (1988) declaration of "the charges against the white novelist in South Africa... (as one who) can produce only an art which articulates the dominating force of white imagination (p. 68).

3. Pliability in Interregnum

The story of the revolution of July's community remains inaccessible to the reader since Gordimer is mainly preoccupied with the relocation of the estranged white family, the sense of and agitation at the transfer of power to July and the strife to survive in the dingy and murky claustrophobic time and space during which the normal government is suspended. Textual emphasis falls on belittling and demeaning black potentiality in managing the affairs of the now 'free' South Africa. There is an apparent lack of interest in investigating the democratic shape and the alternative utopian lavish future of South Africa. On that account, the narrative, as Ali Erritouni (2006) ruminates, "dwells less on the pending demise of white South Africa ... and more on the difficulties that arise from the attempt to surpass the pitfalls of the old order in anticipation of a new one" (p. 68) and the transition from an all white regime to an order instituted by the native inhabitants of the land.

The shift to rural black deprivation is too stupendous for Maureen and Bam. In their reposition, Gordimer (1981) attempts to underscore the difficulties and adversities white families encounter in interregnum: "they might find they had lived out their whole lives as they were, born white pariah dogs in a black continent" (p. 8). The Smales, the liberal minded white South Africans who reject being fugitives, persist in staying put and managing their sojourn however dire the consequences.

Bam achieves a better adaptation to the villagers' condition of life. He finds his selfhood in building a tank to save the rainwater to be used by the villagers when needed. Likewise, in hunting warthogs, Bam feels some kind of self-esteem. Nicholls (2011) remarks that "Bam's masculinity ... is being expressed in his role as hunter and provider"(p. 12). He hunts the pigs to provide food for his family and the villagers.

In the same vein, Maureen resists her sense of parasitical dependency on July telling him that she does not want the other women to find food for her family and that she must do it herself. Her determination is manifested when she rolls up her jeans and works with black women in the field; "they worked along a donga like a team, unspokenly together, now side by side, now passing and repassing each other, closely"(Gordimer, 1981, p. 92). In this scene, there is an emphasis on the contrast between Maureen's white color and the blackness of the surrounding women especially July's wife "whose blackness was a closed quality acting upon it from within rather than a matter of pigment" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 92). André Brink (1994) notes that black women affirm their identity and realize self-fulfillment even from "a position of subservience performing menial tasks, "working in the fields, fetching and carrying, washing and cooking and cleaning (both for their own families and for the whites in their midst)" (p. 168). On the one hand, the assertion of such "association on gender basis overlooks the specific position of black women in political struggle" (Rich, 1984, p. 379). On the other hand, it signifies that equality between whites and blacks has a long way to go before it can be attained.

Apparently, Maureen tries hard to re-adjust in the South African community, even though she is doing that reluctantly. Among the villagers, Maureen feels alienated; "she was aware among them in the hut, of not knowing where she was, in time, in the order of a day as she had always known it" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 17). July's wife laughs at her because she knows that they have different roles. Despite her detachment from other blacks, Maureen goes on with her work to gather some green leaves to cook for her family.

When July refuses Maureen's request to work in the fields, she tells him "I like to be with other women sometimes" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 97). "Sometimes" is highly momentous since it unveils the whites' adamant belief in the temporal and transient nature of such "explosion of roles" and emphasizes the deeply rooted racist doctrines; albeit, the irreversible change true revolution may bring about. Maureen answers July's insistence without giving a plausible justification as follows: "why? D'you think someone might see me? But the local people know we're here, of course they know. Why? There's much more risk when Bam goes out and shoots. When you drive around in that yellow thing [the bakkie]..." (Gordimer, 1981, p. 97). The emphasis here is on

gender equality than the concern with race issues. Maureen conceives herself as capable as Bam and July with the same right to work in the fields to support and feed her family.

In all settings, racial more than gender ideology supersedes and formulates the basic rules of the demeaning thought pattern of July and his community. The fallacy of liberal uttering regarding the native population of South Africa is debunked: Maureen and her family regards July and his black community “their cattle and pigs” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 96) though they are fed, rescued and sheltered by them. More than that, she claims all rights to July’s property in both domains: “she was a white woman, someone who had employed him, theirs was a working relationship ... She had lived for more than two weeks within steps of (July’s) hut” (Gordimer, 1981, pp. 66-67).

Only the Smales' children adapt easily and spontaneously to their new environment. The children learn the vernacular and enjoy playing with July's children. The exposition of such acclimatization allows, as Kathrin Wagner (1994) postulates, “white South African[s] to share in the inheritance of the land... and rescue them from alienation and despair” (p. 230). However, the children’s orientation in the black ambiance bears an unpromising effect on Maureen who feels she is “not in possession of any part of her life” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 139). Her role as a mother becomes ineffectual as she fails to keep her children clean. She becomes increasingly unimportant to them. The narrator explicates,

The children had stood obstinately before her, squinting in to the sun through wild hair, when she forbade them to go swimming in the river, and she could hear their squeals as they jumped like frogs from boulder to boulder in the brown water with children who belonged here, whose bodies were immune to water-borne diseases whose names no one here knew. Maybe the three had become immune, too. They had survived in their own ability to ignore the precautions it was impossible for her to maintain for them. (Gordimer, 1981, p. 138)

The children slip into their new life until by the end of the narrative they are almost indistinguishable from what the author labels: ‘the grimy’ black African children; a phrase charged with negative connotations. Yet, it is as JanMohamed (1983) observes, a “terse demonstration of the child[ren’s] ability to accept alterity” (p. 88).

Whereas blacks accustomed themselves to white laws and customs, Bam and Maureen strive to locate a position in their new surroundings and struggle to maintain their identities. The black community is depicted as accepting as normal living in filth and the discrimination of apartheid and resisting the transformation of self-rule. On another plane, whites manifested in the Smales’ family, experience traumatic changes in the endeavor to acquiesce to the new order in post-apartheid South Africa. The situation is presented through the examination of the Smales’ family members caught in the histrionic reversal of roles. Carolyn K. Plummer (1990) suggests that Gordimer is “simply taking an ironic view of the reversal of fortunes for white South Africans who find themselves at the mercy of their black house-hold servants” (p. 71). Induced by changes in post-revolutionary South Africa, white-black relationships undergo irrevocable alterations involving an inversion of the stances of persecuted and the persecutor and the oppressed and the oppressor.

Ironically, for the first time in his life July is “the one to decide what [the Smales] should do” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 12). With the onset of the revolution, he starts to take control of every possible aspect of the life of the helpless Smales. Paul Rich (1984) remarks that the novel becomes “a study on the changing power relationship between the whites and blacks as the structural underpinnings of white rule are removed, leaving the former white employers very much at the behest of their servant July, who now has almost the power of life and death over the fugitive Smaleses” (p. 376). Besides, July does not want the Smales to act on their own: “If the children need eggs, I bring you more eggs ... He smiled at the pretensions of a child, hindering in its helpfulness – That’s not your work” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 96). In this way, the white Smales are completely acquiescent to July’s will.

Still quiescent beneath is the complexity of the relationship between July and the Smales with the new arrangement. With Maureen, July “stopped ... the blinking pantomime of derision. He might take her by the shoulders ... [yet they] never escape what each knows of the other. Her triumph dissembled in a face at once open, submissive, eyes emptied for a vision to come, for them both” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 72). Maureen attempts to establish some equity between them; however, she often reverts to authoritative manner entrenched in her nature. Predictably, July feels victorious due to his new powerful position; however, he insists on remaining within the codes of servitude.

In point of fact, Gordimer’s “explosion of roles” necessitates power transference to visualize how blacks will run and manage affairs if they lead South Africa to put an end to the apartheid regime. Nonetheless, Gordimer’s narrative foresees blacks’ leadership of South Africa as “wreck.” A case in point is July’s domination of the automobile that symbolizes “the technology that has allowed whites to control blacks in South Africa”

(JanMohamed, 1983, p. 141). It is also a major determining factor in the Smales' definition of themselves and a means of the whites' independence of their servant. So helpless and depressed is Maureen that she bursts out in a fit of fury to incriminate their "chosen" "savior" as a thief,

You'll profit by the other's fighting. Steal a bakkie. You want that, now... You want the bakkie to drive around in like a gangster, imagining yourself a *big man*, important until you don't have any money for petrol, there isn't any petrol to buy, and it'll lie there, July, under the trees, in this place among the old huts, and it'll fall to pieces while the children play in it. Unless. Another wreck like all the others. Another bit of rubbish. (Gordimer, 1981, p. 153)

In an angry tone, Maureen vents out her long suppressed perspective of July: she declares him a crook who acts like a gangster and emphasizes that he will never be "*a big man*" or a man of importance due to his lack of affluence and insight in spite of being the "savior." Such an idea of July is highly derogatory and echoes the whites' debased opinion about the blacks. Natasha Himmelman (2008) argues that "the 'native' could not lose its mystique through an absolute dichotomy. Rather, he or she must continue to be both noble and savage, so that an Other could be retained through the guise of a 'sympathetic' civilizing mission" (p. 9). Such notions reverberate in Homi Bhabha's (1994) concept of mimicry and "the desire for a reformed recognizable other, as a subject of a difference that is the same but not quite" (p. 122). Commenting on such paradox, JanMohamed (1983) remarks

By accusing [July] of being a traitor to the black cause, of profiting from the sacrifice of other blacks, and thus simultaneously denying his loyalty to his masters and their dependence on him, Maureen pretends to reject the very thing she ardently wants. A genuine acceptance of her desires would contradict her self-image as a liberal, while genuine rejection of them would contradict her fundamental nature as master. (pp. 140-141)

Maureen, like Gordimer, is caught between the "blacks' rejection" of [whites] and their own refusal to accept "white privileges" of their loyal servant, July (JanMohamed, 1983, p. 140). Now, July's ownership of the bakki empowers him. In order to conceal the arrival of the white family, he tells the black people that he is the master of the vehicle. However, Gordimer infers that the bakki as a symbol of power turns into a "wreck," "a bit of rubbish" under July's control. When Maureen stealthily goes to the truck to fetch things for her children, she finds it like "a deserted house reentered" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 12). She is startled and seems unfamiliar with the vehicle since it has been dilapidated and ruined by the new 'unfit' master. Maureen shares Gordimer's angle of vision towards the inevitability of spoiling everything if black South Africans would lead with the assumption that they are neither efficient nor well-prepared to rule constructively.

4. Revolution between Exuberant Heroism and Trepidness

Despite the fact that the revolution is one undertaken by only the black community against the apartheid racist regime, Gordimer portrays blacks in a way that does not invoke any sense of heroism or gallantry. On the contrary, the black revolutionaries are helpless and contemptible and their community suffers from appalling filth and squalor with no promise that it has the aptitude to develop and improve.

July's apparent dominion over the whole scene is unimpressive since the story is that of the misfortunes of the white family and its endeavor to familiarize itself with and readjust to the new role in July's world. Gordimer's attempt to penetrate the black African consciousness is overshadowed by her portrayal of "a terrified white consciousness in the midst of a mysterious and ominous sea of black humanity" (Geismar, 1975, pp. 24-25). In this apocalyptic setting, Gordimer scrutinizes the dilemma of liberal white South African in order to convey the logical development of Manichean associations. Nevertheless, "with a sure instinct she avoids ... the bitter life-death struggle that ties the opponents in a bond of antagonistic reciprocity and that, by totally negating the other, retains and reveals nothing but the unqualified desire for absolute mastery" (JanMohamed, 1983, p. 138). Accordingly, the Smales family's acclimatization occupies a center stage while July and his people hang on the periphery of the revolution. Ironically, they are ignorant of the turmoil of the blazing uprising that has erupted in the country. In a sense, the black cause of liberation does not enthuse the black villagers to rise and dictate their demands on whites. Gordimer's visualized revolution is not understood and conveyed as a designation of a fundamental change in mental, economic and power structures.

Martha, July's wife, and his mother remain unchangeable and apprehensive of the revolutionary outcomes. They do not believe that a revolution has swept the country and that the whites are stripped of their governance. They could not believe that the white family is amidst them. They exclaim, "White people here ... [they who had] a room to sleep in, another room to eat in, another room to sit in, a room with books" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 19), now have nowhere to go. July tries to explicate the dilemma of the whites: "[Black] People are burning their houses ... The whites are being killed in their houses ... They are chasing the whites out" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 19).

Furthermore, the two women are unable to understand why the whites do not use their guns. July's mother is shocked "Who Shoot? Black people? Our people? How could they do that?" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 20). When July tries to explain the concept of the revolution, it was unfamiliar. It is evident that South African predicament and revolution means nothing: it does not mobilize the entire community. This announcement is conducive to perturbation on the part of the mother, she is alarmed: "What will the white people do to us now, God must save us ... White people. They are very powerful, my son. They are very clever. You will never come to the end of the things they can do" (Gordimer, 1981, pp. 20-21). Thus, July resigns to accept the notions of racism and hierarchal categorization endorsing them as aphorisms.

Absurdly, July's wife and mother insist on clinging to the order instituted under the apartheid regime. It is bizarre that the whites attempt hard to change and the blacks are unable to embrace the change that the interregnum produced and support the new state of freedom and liberty. On being asked to live in the city 'when' the revolution is over, Martha adamantly insists, out of refusal to accept that what has happened is true or real, on living in the village. Additionally, Martha cannot conceive the fact that Maureen is garnering some leaves and undertaking agrarian work because she cannot believe that white supremacy can ever disintegrate.

Circumstances are unfeasible for blacks to change their mindset. This is underpinned with an emblematic depiction of the black children's toys in comparison with that of the whites: the former are "skeletal carts, home-made of twisted wire by the black children" whereas the latter are model cars from Victor's racing track" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 39). Given such a correlation, Gordimer stipulates that Black children are destructive and detrimental since they have segmented the cars into useless possessions regarding them, in this condition, as treasures.

The chief of July's village himself is another stark example; he is cynical of the revolution considering it a menace to his land and castles: he cannot grasp the idea that the white people are being banished by the black people. He declares that such a revolution will be complicated into more than a struggle for the rights of blacks. He explains, "Those people from Soweto. They come here with Russias, those other ones from Mocambique, they all want take this country of my nation. Eh? They not our nation. AmaZulu, amaXhosa, baSotho" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 119). Moreover, the chief cannot grasp what has happened, and is unaware of the nature of the uprising. He wants to know exactly "what is that's happening there... he wants to hear from an eye-witness-white- what it is that has taken place at last" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 116). Of course, it is ridiculous to ask for white eye-witnesses to inquire them about the black revolution. The chief is definitely in the dark. He does not even comprehend the capability of black Africans to rebel against the apartheid. He asks, "Who is it who is blowing up the government in Pretoria. It's those people from Soweto ... why the police does not arrest those people" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 116).

For the chief, the revolution is mere "fighting in all towns." This angle of vision coming from the people in whose name the upheaval is launched deforms the image of the liberation struggle and the cause of justice. The chief is unable to grasp the new structure South Africa can acquire after a revolution. In the same vein of July's mother and wife, the chief has an adamant belief in the invincibility of the whites; "Always the white men got those guns, those tanks, aero planes. Long time ... The white men can't run away. No. Why they run away?" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 117). Such a question makes Maureen ponder, "Us and them. Who is us, now, and who them? ... Us and them. What he's really asking about: an explosion of roles"(Gordimer, 1981, 117).

The authorial narrator insidiously creates a sense of satisfaction and familiarity with apartheid for both the white and the black characters. At the same time, they are both unfamiliar with and uneasy about the interregnum. Through Maureen, Gordimer unveils the entrenched prejudices and racism of the Whites that lie quiescent in the so-called liberal minds of the Smales and their anxiety about the reversal of roles: if power is stabilized permanently in the hands of black rebels, there will be no hope or recovery of white regime. The assumption is that it will be used unjustly and violently: "People in delirium rise and sink, rise and sink, in and out of lucidity. The swaying, shuddering, thudding, flinging stops, and the furniture of life falls into place" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 3). Such trepidation about the abusive implementation of power is accentuated in incongruous ways with the Chief's resort to Bam and his gun to help him defend his property against the 'rebellious' blacks. He addresses Bam: "You bring your gun and you teach how its shooting" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 119). Bam expresses his anxiety and unexpectedly preaches nationalism to the black Africans,

You're not going to shoot your own people. You wouldn't kill blacks. Mandela's people Sobukwe's people.-(Would they have forgotten Luthuli? Heard of Biko? Not of their 'nation' although he was famous in New York and Stockholm, Paris, London and Moscow) You're not going to take the guns and help the white government kill blacks, are you? Are you? For this-this village and this empty bush?

And they'll kill you. You mustn't let the government make you kill each other. The whole black nation is your nation. (Gordimer, 1981, p. 120)

Speciously, salvation comes through the white persecutor whose oration resembles that of a priest on a pulpit delivering a sermon to the congregation for their own good. Ironically, the persecutor lectures the persecuted exhorting him to think about national ethics.

In the discordant realm of the text, South Africans are completely detached on the emotional level towards their revolution. They do not rejoice in such feat of accomplishment of the liberation struggle. The struggle does not win a collective support and does not draw impetus from an all-inclusive black consciousness. Hence, there is no guarantee that the revolutionary movement could achieve any goals, but a configuration of anarchy. Gordimer's narrative stigmatizes the revolution from the outset. The epigraph of *July's People* (1981), extracted from Antonio Gramsci's, chronicles cynicism and skepticism, it upholds as an inscription the phrase: "The old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum there arises diversity of morbid symptoms." This epigraph spotlights the past of a dominantly white South Africa as a relic of bygone times, yet transcendence to a better future is curtailed by the interregnum.

5. Blemishing Black Man vs. Purifying White Man

In postmodern terms, Gordimer does not prescribe what the characters should do, but she describes their mutability in interregnum within which the blacks are still portrayed as lacking and in an urgent need to be uplifted and nurtured at the hands of the civilized whites. Thus, Manichean parameters of superiority to inferiority govern the relationship of the whites to the black community. JanMohamed (1983) writes, "The colonial mentality is dominated by a Manichean allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation and damnation, civilization and savagery, superiority and inferiority, intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object" (p. 4). In other words, to identify its space as good, the west locates a space of evil for the other; hence, the west depends upon the other to define itself. On his part, Stuart Hall (1992) explains, "Without the Rest...the West would not have been able to recognize and represent itself as the summit of human history. The figure of 'the Other,' banished to the edge of the conceptual world and constructed as the absolute opposite, the negation, of everything which the West stood for" (p. 314).

Impressed by the notions of superiority versus inferiority, Maureen tells July that she does not want other [black] women to feed her family, "I must do it myself" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 96). Maureen is firmly entangled to her discriminatory roots that are manifest in "the extra sense of whiteness, of having always been different, always favored always shielded from the vulnerability of poverty and powerlessness" (Gordimer, 2010, p. 426). Maureen embodies Gordimer's thoughts about whiteness. The latter writes, "I am white and fully aware that my consciousness inevitably has the same tint as my face" (Gordimer, 2010, p. 312). Consequently, avowed intentions to adopt an unbiased perspective and efface the Manichean strictures are dispersed. JanMohamed (1983) believes that "even a writer who is reluctant to acknowledge [Manichean allegory] and who may indeed be highly critical of imperialist exploitation is drawn into the vortex" (p. 82).

In spite of the vision of a revolution that is supposed to terminate apartheid with its dichotomous and polarized racist boundaries, there is still an emphasis on and aggrandizement of the white Self to locate the black other as minion. Thus, the success of the blacks in their revolution emerges as a sham since July still maintains his former servitude. He acquires his significance in the narrative in general and in the Smales' life in particular from the menial role he maintains as a servant.

With the opening of the novel, July brings the Smales "two pink glass cups of tea and a small tin of condensed milk, jaggedly-opened, specially for them, with a spoon in it" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 1). He appears to be both their "servant [and] their host" (1). It seems absurd that July obtained esteem and respectability among the blacks because of driving the Smales' vehicle. He brags "No one there can ask me where my license is. Even my pass, no one can ask anymore, It's finished" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 59). He does not undergo any change in his relationship with the whites since, as Albert Memmi (1965) argues in his postulations, "The ideology of the governing class is adopted in large measure by the governed class" (p. 88).

Maureen's bigotry and discrimination against July is accentuated in her assumption to speak for "fifteen years ... into very simple, concrete vocabulary" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 72). She doubts his understanding of abstract terms and concepts like dignity since they are beyond his grasp of the language. Furthermore, she speaks his lowly English dialect. The narrator notes, "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 reposes, not the exchange of ideas and feelings" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 96). Shockingly, Maureen's use of grammatically correct English is deemed humility and modesty on her part; she speaks in a

'respectable' manner to her servant: "Why didn't you tell us before; if the polite thing ... if it's nice to go to see the chief? (Gordimer, 1981, p. 100). Seemingly, roles have changed, yet racism and prejudice practiced during apartheid persist even after the revolution. The same language of submission to orders and responses is used. Undoubtedly, using such a kind of language in post-revolutionary South Africa dissipates hope of change and leaves no room for humane or empathetic bonds. There is no anticipation that change in the political circumstances would revolutionize inherited xenophobic ideology because Gordimer doubts the potentiality of blacks' leadership and regards them as morally, mentally and physically unfit and are mediocre in their ability to lead the country.

A moral instance stands out with Maureen's incrimination of July as a dishonest scoundrel. In spite of the Smales' helplessness and dependence on July as the "chosen savior," Gordimer does not give July the chance to react to such besmirching insult of being a thief. Maureen pronounces her judgment on the unscrupulous character of the black people when July turns out to have stolen small household articles. Maureen is shocked because "These things were once hers, back there. He must have filched them long ago. What also over the years? ... If she had not happened" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 36). Ownership is crucial to the whites, since they typify their power and domination over the land and its people. They believe that everything is theirs even the creatures whom they regard as objects. Additionally, the text does not "show the corresponding transformation of the slave-object into a fully independent subject" (JanMohamed, 1983, p. 143).

In a similar vein to Maureen's, Bam asks July in an accusatory tone about the disappearance of the vehicle. Maureen comes to the recognition that July is "a moody bastard" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 64). It is a ludicrous claim since, she has known him for fifteen years, yet it seems that trust is illusory between them. Deforming the black man's image as evil and dishonest infers that he is not fit for autonomy and legitimizes the white man's superiority and right to rule.

Mentally, July is reified and fetishized in the sense that he turns to be as vital as the vehicle which epitomize the survival of the White family. Ania Loomba (1965) regards the reduction of the colonized person into an object as "thingification" (p. 114). Maureen is "afraid to lose him ... [because of] the comfort he provided" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 64). Thus, for July "to be intelligent, honest, dignified for her was nothing... She was not his mother, his wife, his people" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 152). July's fetishization is palpable in Gordimer's (1981) words; "In various and different circumstances certain objects and individuals are turned out to be vital....the identity of the vital individual or objects are hidden by their humble or frivolous role in an habitual set of circumstances" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 6). Unquestionably, objectification of the blacks annihilates the possibility of a self-governing and solidifies the mythical portrait of the whites' image as potent leaders.

In fact, tarnishing the black man as fraudulent and crooked is countered by the process of recognizing and honoring the white man. A typical case of such vindication and purification is that of Victor, the Smales' son, who takes orange sacks that were "just lying around under a tree" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 86). When the owner calls for recompense, "Victor was angry with a white man's anger, too big for him. He mustn't say I *stole* [my emphasis], I just took stuff that gets thrown away, nobody wants." (Gordimer, 1981, p. 86). Therefore, Gordimer's presumed revolution fails to "transcend the superstructure of [bequeathed] consciousness" (Rich, 1984, p. 380) to unshackle the South Africans from the racist inequitable double standard notions that privileges whites Afrikaners.

Furthermore, while the authorial narrator dwells on the objectification and mortification of July, Gordimer endorses the positive qualities of the white race. She depicts the white man as industrious and inventive. Bam is able to function constructively in the black village; "He helps July melding his farming tools (Gordimer, 1981, p. 24). He takes the initiative to set up a tank to collect rainwater. None of the blacks care to do that. The sanctity of work to the white man is juxtaposed with the stereotypical image of the black man's dullness and indolence. In the delineation of this compartment, Gordimer strengthens the position of the oppressors, whereas she persistently deforms the image of the subjugated oppressed.

Reinforcing the whites' merits and positive qualities, Gordimer puts on view no commiseration towards July's black people subjugation, and sympathizes with the Smales' sense of loss. The Smales' search "from their whole life across the silent bush in which they had fallen from the fabric of that life as loose buttons drop and are lost" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 120). When they reach July's village the first thing that "fell into place was what was vanished, the past" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 3). She goes further to emphasize Bam's sense of powerlessness as a man who derives his self-esteem as a father and a husband from his work and loses "what was he here, an architect lying on a bed in a mud hut, a man without a vehicle" (Gordimer, 1981, p. 98).

By the same token, Gordimer identifies with Maureen who feels delirious about the cataclysmic transition as if she has been relocated to “another time, place and consciousness ... [and that] She was already not what she was. No fiction could compete with what she was finding she did not know, could not have imagined or discovered through imagination” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 29). She underscores Maureen’s physical deformation; “weather-beaten with blond streaks growing out,” and how she loses a coherent sense of self, “She was not in possession of any part of her life” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 139). She suffers from the consequences of such a filthy revolution: her role as a mother becomes ineffectual as she fails to keep her children clean. They “quickly appear to forget a nagging need for purchases of manufactured toys or films, and fit into the social life of the community” (Nicholls, 2011, p. 139). The children emerge as emblematic of the apocalyptic future of the whites who will never leave South Africa. Gordimer (1988) writes, “We must continue to be tormented by the ideal. Its possibility must be there for peoples to attempt to put into practice, to begin over and over again, wherever in the world it has never been tried, or has failed” (p. 284).

Gordimer’s empathy with Maureen’s crisis is accentuated with the gloomy closure of *July’s People* that is brimming with several ambivalent insinuations: “She runs. She can hear the 22abored muttering putter very clearly in the attentive silence of the bush around and ahead: the engine not switched off but idling, there” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 159). Equivocation prevails throughout the scene; words, such as “muttering,” “silence,” “around and ahead,” and “not switched off but idling” depict the failure of Maureen to adjust to the new space. Wagner’s (1994) exegesis offers a further insight, “We might read [Maureen’s run] as a ‘suicide run’ into the arms of an enemy, one which is ironically intended to ‘liberate’ her from the unbearable actual and emotional isolation which is the consequence of her alienation from family and society in the village” (pp. 111-112).

In despair, Maureen, who at the start of the narrative appear enabled and forceful, dwindles into a dilapidated and defeated figure after her failure to communicate with July trying to convince him that ‘he and she’ are ‘equal’ and that she has never been superior to him. She chases hypnotically an unidentified helicopter running “trusting herself with all the suppressed trust of a lifetime alert, like a solitary animal” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 160). She is unmindful of whether the helicopter “holds saviours or murdered” (Gordimer, 1981, p. 158). Obviously, she feels powerless and helpless; only hopelessness and futility are in sight, so she finds herself in “middle way” between fleeing the society completely... or staying and fighting it out” (Rich, 1984, p. 376). Flight is Maureen’s option: she abandons her family and sees in resignation to an unknowable and uncertain future regardless of the consequences a much more preferable destination than that of remaining as one of July’s people. Her desperate running indicates her defeat and failure to prove her capability to adjust herself to the post-apartheid era on both the physical and psychological levels.

Such open closure incites different interpretative responses. To Nancy Bailey (1984), “what Maureen runs to is a return to the illusion of identity created by a world of privilege and possession. What she runs from is her failure to find any creative source for re-birth” (p. 222). In the opinion of Rowland Smith (1984) the ending undertakes to “relegate to the past all the trappings of white invulnerability, to imagine them irretrievably destroyed, could be seen as the central intention of the novel” (p. 94). Erritouni (2006), on his part, believes the ending of *July’s People* “utopian, avoiding closure and adumbrating the possibility of a world beyond the interregnum, but it resists disclosing the meaning of this horizon because Gordimer refuses here to prescribe for South Africans, white and black, the shape that their country should or will take” (p. 74). On the contrary, for Clingman (1986), Maureen “is running from old structures and relationships . . . towards her revolutionary destiny” (p. 203).

Controversy over the closure underscores the sense that Gordimer does not divulge a clear-cut stance of the liberal minded white Smales towards the possibility of black revolution in South Africa. The author abstains from stating blatantly whether whites as such are incriminated or exonerated for their obnoxious discriminatory policies against the black South Africans. As a result, the reader’s judgment on the revolution remains fuzzy as Gordimer provokes sympathy less towards the wretchedness of the oppressed blacks and more towards the deteriorating condition of the white family and the combat it undergoes to acclimatize itself to the new derelict setting. Furthermore, focusing on the positive characteristics of whites, Gordimer “strip[s] away any romanticism that readers may attach to the subsistence existence of July’s extended family in the bush” (Nicholls, 2011, p. 138).

6. The Author’s White Skin Betrays Her

Seeming and being in *July’s People* are incongruous since Gordimer claims liberal, humanitarian and sentimental attitudes towards blacks, yet at the same time she is caught in a heritage of complicity: “The dilemma of the liberal consciousness that is trapped between its own humanistic values and the highly antagonistic manicheanism of apartheid”(JanMohamed, 1983, p. 9). Finally, this imparts “a particular ideological

reading of history rather than a representation of it” (Baena Molina, 1995, p. 26). The author’s whiteness is a reference point in determining her vision of the native South Africans. Her birth in South Africa has presented her with given facts of the race situation. She avers, “If you are born white, you begin from the premise of being white. Are they different because they are black? Or Are they black because they are different?” Living in interregnum, she goes further and adds, “In the official South African consciousness, the ego is white. It has always seen all South African as ordered around it” (Gordimer, 2010, p. 376). As a result, Wagner (1994) accuses Gordimer of providing a primarily inequitable and prejudiced vision of South Africa since her protagonists are identifiable within the range of stereotypes determined by “the submerged guilts, fears and repression of white consciousness [her] vision has been shaped by, and whose delusions and myths she has internalized and expressed in the subtexts in the novels” (p. 56). Thus, Gordimer is haunted with paradoxical feelings. In *July’s People*, at the surface of the text she envisages a revolution against the practices of the apartheid to change the course of injustice, whereas the subtext discloses her fears of the blacks’ revenge if they dominate the scene. Hence, a sense of opposition to change in South Africa looms large.

Correspondingly, Gordimer’s consciousness as white has a bearing on her perspective and bars an impartial standpoint and outlook towards the South African natives. She is unable to secure an interstitial space between racial polarities for a co-existence based on equality; blacks are allocated, as usual, to peripheral marginal zones. Commenting on Gordimer’s deference to the political realities of South Africa, JanMohamed (1983) illustrates that Gordimer “confines her protagonists, and therefore herself, to the difficult and painful space between their own commitment to the eradication of the distance between self and other and their realistic awareness that the antagonism between self and other is the entrenched foundation of apartheid ideology” (p. 92). As a result, separateness is the predominant textual structure and equal coexistence seems beyond attainment. Both Gordimer and her protagonist adopt a consistent perspective of July and the South Africans as “Other” permanently allocated to a marginal and peripheral space. Thus, the revolution appears thwarted since it has not shown the blacks as capable of handling the favorable results of the overturn of power, and does not show signs of any transformation in the racially entrenched prejudiced notions.

7. Conclusion

In fact, the appalling and repugnant visage of the black revolution that is hypothesized in *July’s People* results in the negation of the ethics according to which revolutions are undertaken. Thus, revolution and its devotees are extraneous to the strictures of the text. Gordimer is toiling to create a successful black revolution; however, it is subverted under the burden of contradictions. Consequently, instead of depicting the glorious rise of the black South Africans in a narrative of a hypothesized revolution, the narrative focuses on the whites’ failure to acclimatize themselves to the new derelict, flawed and failing reality. The narrative has no forthright finality or closure: it describes how the world is, rather than prescribing what the way black-white relations should be in the light of the change. Thus, the narrative framework is purely descriptive of the status quo; open ended with no prognostications on the future of the country under black rule.

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