

The Significance of Space and Setting: A Critical Analysis of Selected South African Fiction

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ABSTRACT

*The Significance of Space and Setting:
A Critical Analysis of Selected South African Fiction*

The object of this thesis is to explore space and setting as used by South African fiction writers within the ideological framework of apartheid. Apartheid became the regime's preoccupation since 1948 and its ensuing social divisions impacted negatively on the Africans and the country's literature. The thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One explores issues that inspired apartheid ideology especially the historical factors --- from the micro-apartheid of Dr D. F. Malan to the macro-apartheid of Dr H. F. Verwoerd; the negative influences brought about by the Land Act of 1913; the opposing statement of the African National Congress; the effects that followed the uprooting of Africans from one location to another and give way for the building of European setting such as Triomf that replaced Sophiatown; the unilaterally decided toponymy of South African towns and cities with the belated African-inspired toponymy that came along with Bantustans; the ninety-nine year leasehold introduced when the four-roomed houses started being sold to Africans; the hardships brought about by the pass laws especially the introduction of the 'book of life' by Dr Verwoerd. Chapter Two concentrates on Nadine Gordimer's novella *Something Out There* that points to European people's fear and anxiety originating from the inner self. The characters' pursuit of sabotage of the sensitive power stations whose failure would bring vital works to a halt and revolution shall have been ushered in. Chapter Three explores three short stories written by Can Themba. They are interlaced

with journalistic articles on space and setting in South Africa. Chapter Four is the conclusion. It compares and contrasts, where possible, the views of the two authors on space and setting and examines the future of space and setting in the new South Africa.

DEDICATION

To my deceased parents: Sello Ephraim Mphanya

And

Mmatau Flory Mphanya

Who taught me to sing our clan poetry:

Ke le Mokwena wa Monaheng wa Nkopane a Mathunya

Ke le modidimanyane ngwana Ramakatsa

Morapelaputswa, a e rapela a sa e bone

Petsana ke ya lehowahowa Makgetha

E howa e komakomisa ditjhaba tsa heso tsa Monaheng

Makgetha ke Tau, ngwana Ramakatsa.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is intended to establish the aims of my interest in South African spatial and social representations that came into existence because of the instrument of apartheid ideology. Whereas apartheid was a political innovation of the nationalist government, it had British colonialism as its predecessor which had similar social inequalities between the different racial groups of South Africa. The historical background of apartheid together with toponymy as determinants of space and setting will be investigated so that one can determine the extent to which apartheid ideology influenced the consciousness of the writers of fiction with respect to space and setting.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the significance of setting as a critique of apartheid ideology in the writing of Nadine Gordimer and Can Themba, with special reference to the novella *Something Out There* and some of Themba's short stories and journalistic articles. This amounts ultimately to a critique of apartheid. It is important to realize how the physical landscape in South Africa became a powerful, if often tragic, political statement by the white rulers. The fiction of the two writers will be explored with the aim of finding out how space is employed in their fiction. Consideration will also be given to the relationships between the black and white communities as a result of apartheid. These works fall within the period when the apartheid policy was in full force, employed by the government to manipulate space for the benefit of Whites and

deprivation of the subject races. We need to appreciate the immensity of the white government's arrangement of the boundaries that came to define farming and arid land; urban townships for Africans and white suburbia; mine compounds; black labourers shanties on white farms; the programming of black mobility between work place in towns and cities and home.

What it has meant to own the land in the apartheid context has been notoriously difficult to interpret. While whites have had legal ownership of land, dispossessed blacks have challenged the legitimacy of such 'ownership'. (Nuttall, 1996, p. 220)

The above passage, taken from Nuttall's essay "Flatness and Fantasy" can be seen as sufficient reason why the freedom fighters in *Something Out There* are incited into organizing the sabotage of an electrical power station as a way of making a political statement in a country governed without the involvement of the majority of its citizens. Their energy is channelled towards the regaining of South Africa through armed struggle. The freedom fighters come from black communities disinherited of their land rights, disenfranchised in their land of birth and Whites who have rejected the privilege accorded to them by apartheid. That Whites have given themselves the legal status of land ownership rights against the plight of the withdrawal of same land rights in as far as Africans are concerned, is the height of irony

Nationalist rule, by legitimizing discrimination, made a mockery of parliament's legislative power. The law of a country should, everything being equal, be

able to redress the imbalances of land ownership, yet this is not the case in South Africa that Gordimer and Themba write about. The law is reduced to a vehicle of corruption, legitimizing oppression throughout the country and in the process, poisoning Black-White relations.

Galgut's text raises the questions too, of what it means to 'belong' to the land, and how far a sense of belonging relates to a sense of being 'owned' by the land.

Afrikaners, who took South African land by conquest, and practiced an illegitimate form of ownership in the view of the majority, nevertheless have asserted a sense of belonging in the land; more than an instrumentalist view of the land, they have asserted a relationship to the land for its sake. (Nuttall, 1996, p. 220)

As a matter of priority, the passage advances the argument of belonging. The Afrikaners have always preferred peace with Africans on their own terms, not the black man's. Land appropriation became an end in itself. It hardly occurred to them that they were, in the process, alienating themselves not only from the dark-skinned but also from humanity. By ignoring the presence of the indigenous inhabitants of the land, except as a source of cheap labour, a machinery of inter-racial hostility was set in motion. The relationship of white people to land is a relationship of domination and the exploitation of its resources. The African's traditional reverence for land is a two-way interaction. It derives from a sacred trust from the ancestors to bless the person's ownership of it. The greed of land by the white people could only lead to a bitter conflict in future. The

presence of Blacks on land would be welcome only in relation to work contracts with white people. The one-to-one relationship of Whites to land, means that they are owners; the relationship of Blacks to land, since they cannot own land, is therefore indirect. The primary texts by Themba and Gordimer, in many ways, deal with conflicts over the use of land. The cross-cultural attitudes cultivated across the racial divide were henceforth bound to crystallize into bitter hostilities.

The bantustans, in the despicable form they came about into existence, had the Blacks given to them a measure of determining their place names. This naming of places happened around the 1960s when the bantustans and their theoretical self-rule came into being. These surrogate homelands were given the following names. The capitals are in parentheses: Lebowa (Seshego), Gazankulu (Giyani), Venda (Thohoyandou), Qwaqwa (Phuthaditjhaba), and so on. It is unfortunate that while this was a correct approach to Africanizing South Africa's toponymy, the driving philosophy was horrible; that is the territorial apartheid of Dr Verwoerd. (More about this later.) Taking into consideration the 13%-87 % ratio of black-white land apportionment when the homelands were designed, there was no sense of proportion in the Nationalist scales. The conquering spirit of Europe at the turn of the 19th century went as far as duplicating European place names and on the face of South Africa or even assigning personal names to places as a matter of individual self-glorification: Hanover, Dodrecht, Harrismith, Ladysmith, Colenso, Alice Butterworth, Durban, Stellenbosch, Pietermaritzburg, Heidelberg, Pretoria, Grahamstown and many others.

The selfishness of white people is clearly shown when one considers place names like Johannesburg, Sandton, Pretoria, Pietersburg, and many others throughout the

country. African place names that were assigned to them earlier were ignored. These are typical examples of space representations showing that the whites have entrenched themselves on land without even consulting Blacks and discussing why they named the places as they (Blacks) have done. If whites had initiated discussions with Blacks, some compromise might have been reached. To say then that they have a relationship to the land for its own sake works against the principles of good neighbourliness that would be expected between Africans and whites in a common country.

Another article, *Rewriting the land or, How (Not) to Own*, has been written by Stephen Crehan (1998) about South African fiction reflecting on land. It concentrates on literature predominantly written in Afrikaans and English. In commenting on the how representations of land in some South African writing by writers such as De Kock, reflects a critique of apartheid, Crehan has the following to say:

South Africa's social space has been clearly demarcated and subdivided by apartheid social engineering, yet when a writer condemns its concentrated nature grids, its "underlined and defined" spaces (De Kock 92), the hegemonic function of landscape may still be recuperated when it is we ... who share the experience.

(p. 1)

Crehan makes mention of the "squares and grids" from De Kock's work. These "squares and grids" point to bantustans that were created by the nationalist government to accommodate Africans and in the process of retribalizing them. The placing of Africans into these "squares and grids" also means that they should be available when wanted for

work in the white areas. These squares and grids functioned as prisons for the de-urbanized Blacks who were channelled to and from the urban areas as tools of labour or chattels of the apartheid hegemony. This quote further points to the fact that this study and Crehan's share similar perspectives where space has been engineered so as to control the movement and activities of Blacks. Setting and space in literature can serve to reinforce or question those subtleties.

1.3 Space and Apartheid Ideology

In literature setting refers to any description of or attitude toward land, domestic surroundings, land as immovable property, farms and farming, mines and mining, the city and suburbs, especially as they are found in the primary texts already mentioned above. The South African policy of apartheid was engaged in the manipulation of Africans vis-à-vis space from the time the nationalist government came into power in 1948. This was a watershed year. From then onwards, the government embarked on policies of racial segregation through parliamentary legislation and this policy resulted in the division of setting between different racial and ethnic groups. However, it should not be construed that before 1948 the Africans and the whites lived together. The law, then, in spite of different races' residential localities did not emphasize disparate places of abode.

In the following passage, Edward Said, looks at how the British colonialism system functions. When one looks at the way apartheid ideology functions, one finds similarities between the two ideologies. Imperialism, according to Edward Said, relates to "the practice, the theory and the attitude of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling distant territory (as quoted in Wittenberg, 1997, p. 130).

Imperialism always refers to a relationship, fundamentally unequal and coercive, between two spaces at a remove from each other. Underlying the idea of an imperial spatiality is thus the paradoxical notion that its space is unitary and global, but also at the same time divided and fragmented. Imperialism brings together cultures and regions on a global scale but integrates them in a fundamentally unequal way. Under imperialism, there is a hierarchical ordering of relations between colonial periphery and the metropolitan centre, a structure of dispersed power which produces dominant and subordinated spaces. When we deal with globalizations of culture, such as effected by imperialism or late capitalism, we thus have to think about spaces in relation to each other. The function and meaning of spaces lie not so much in themselves but in the way they are connected and linked to each other, even when they are radically different and distant from each other. (Wittenberg, 1997, p. 130)

The passage quoted above comes from Herman Wittenberg's article: *Imperial Space and the Discourse of the Novel*. It is intended to identify the workings of the British Empire, space and some features that have been replicated in the workings of apartheid's ideological design.

Firstly, Wittenberg points out that space is "unitary and global" and it is "divided and fragmented". With regard to its fragmentation, the British, for instance, brought to South Africa South Asian subjects from India, which was also one of her colonies, to come and advance the planting of sugar and rice in Natal province. This exercise was devoid of human sympathy as it only promoted the interests of the Empire, without

caring how it impacted on the Indian subjects. India was fragmented and weakened in the process.

Secondly, the Empire “integrated cultures and regions”. The example of India in South Africa points to the fact that Indians were exposed to new cultures to which they were foreign. The quote suggests that the problem was that they were brought together on an unequal basis ---that is, placed in a hierarchy with each other. Their regional movement from India to South Africa is also indicative of the insensitivity of the Empire towards the Indian people. The bonded labour system was not a decision voluntarily taken by Indians, meaning that some form of coercion was applied. Thirdly, the “hierarchical ordering of relations between colonial periphery and the metropolitan centre” means that a central functioning mechanism was created indicative of, say, London as the seat of power in England and South Africa as subjugated “colonial periphery” was on the receiving end and this holds for all other countries colonized by Britain. Wittenberg further points out that:

Foe (in Coetzee’s novel) aims to expose arrangements of space which reduce the complex heterogeneity and difference of the world to only one set of possible binary cultural arrangements: a dichotomy between centre and periphery, first and third world, powerful and powerless, male and female, white and black, the authors of stories and the objects of their pen. (Wittenberg, 1997, pp. 130-131)

With reference to J. M. Coetzee’s novel, *Foe*, Wittenberg points out that colonialism, imperialism as well as apartheid have “binary cultural arrangements” in common that are

“fundamentally unequal and coercive”. The mental set-up of the Afrikaner and English people in South Africa has always been dominated by the fact that, although they live in South Africa, in fact, they belong to the “First World”. This is another factor that contributed to racial incompatibility across the divide. It is this spirit that dominated the exclusion of Africans in parliamentary decision-making about land and space. This was the case, in spite of the fact that the subject of discussion was to determine the destiny of Africans.

Pursuing Wittenberg’s passage further as explicated above, the South African apartheid ‘imperialism’ also fragmented the country into bantustans which were meant to accommodate Africans according to their ethnic groups. In this sense, “imperialism always refers to relationships”. An overarching link was maintained between the centre, which was white South Africa, and the periphery, which was all the bantustans put together. Surprisingly, there are no Afrikaans-stan, English-stan, Portuguese-stan, Greek-stan or Coloured-stan. It is only after 1994, when democratic order had taken root that the Afrikaners have been pleading for a homeland isolated from greater South Africa. In other words, pleading for segregationist ways that would perpetuate apartheid. Again, the apartheid “imperialism” played the dominant role to ensure that the subordinate spaces or bantustans were under the “unitary and global” cohesion orchestrated by the central ruling power.

The Nationalist policy of apartheid can be seen as a tool that was in use to prescribe different residences to Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Whites, not as a matter of choice but as legal enforcement. These earlier practices can be seen in the policies of Dr D. F. Malan who became the first Nationalist government prime minister in 1948. He

introduced petty apartheid. It prescribed the use of different amenities for Africans and whites: different entrances in shops, railway stations, trains, cafes, butcheries, sporting fields and even different gates at white homes. According to apartheid practices, it was even taboo for a White and a Black to share the same breathing space when travelling in a car. When bound to use the same vehicle, a Africans or woman would be expected to occupy the rear seat of a sedan. If the vehicle was a van or an open truck the African person would be seated in the back and exposed to the dust and whatever kind of weather prevailed. This kind of micro-apartheid persisted until Dr Verwoerd's macro-apartheid was introduced in the 1950s.

Dr Verwoerd's version of apartheid was one with a territorial bent, since it emphasized the accommodation of each ethnic group into its "own" partitioned land. It tampered with space and setting. It aimed at dividing the Africans into ethnic groups with a sense of the maintenance of ethnic purity. The following ethnic groups were each made to occupy separate land: Ama-Tsonga, Ama-Ndebele, Ama-Swati, Ama-Zulu, Ama-Xhosa (living in Ciskei and Transkei). The following Sotho groups were also ethnically divided and settled according to the dictates of the policy: Ba-Sotho, Ba-Pedi, and Ba-Tswana. Dr. Verwoerd's version of apartheid was more elaborate as compared to that of Dr Malan. In order to implement macro-apartheid, the Nationalists reincarnated the reserves promulgated under the Native Land Act of 1913. at that time, South Africa was under the rule of the United Party, that was more British than the Nationalists, whose membership was largely Afrikaans-speaking.

Seen in historical terms, the Union of South Africa was established in 1910 and the African National Congress in 1912. In response to this formation of the unification of

provinces and the resultant manipulation of space and related issues, the ANC aimed to give Blacks a voice. It would vent their frustrations and address their grievances and in a way fight for gaining a foothold to represent Blacks in parliament. As if the exclusion from the 1910 union event was not enough, the Native Land Act of 1913 was promulgated. The problem of land, space and setting would from then onwards become an emotionally and socio-culturally loaded one, and was to engage the minds of Blacks in working out strategies towards winning South Africa back from European rule.

The African National Congress was founded in 1912. its formation was response of the Africans to the formation of the Union of South Africa. The four provinces, namely, Free State, Natal, Transvaal and the Cape were the signatories to the unification of South Africa. The union would facilitate the joint and consistent solution of common problems to these provinces such as the 'Native Problem', inter-provincial 'Railway Difficulties', 'Customs Duties', and 'Labour Problems'. Africans were excluded in the formation of this remarkable historical and political landmark. The unified provincial structure was intended to subjugate them as they were thought to be a threat to Europeans. The act also intensified the pass and labour laws, and the African people's inter-provincial movement in search of work was curtailed. It is to this organization of black people's consciousness that Gordimer became a card-carrying member, where land is at the centre of the struggle. The Native Land Act of 1913

... was primarily intended to prevent Africans from moving from owning more land... for occupation by the Africans, both the 'native reserves' and the urban areas. The native reserves were scheduled from African ownership under the

Native Land Act of 1913 as amended by Acts 28 of 1925, 34 of 1927, 36 of 1931 and 27 of 1935. (Khunyeli, 1994, p. 41).

The founding of the African National Congress was triggered by the land issue as a result of government policy. Africans suffered severe land deprivation. They were left landless. The upshot of having given land to Africans would be later be regretted, especially if this happened with a European farmer's acquiescence. Blacks would subsequently not avail themselves for cheap labour required by white farmers.

Khunyeli (1994, p. 43) points out that the shortage of land in the reserves which the Land Act of 1913 failed to address as initially planned, saw Africans drifting from the reserves in large numbers to live in urban areas. However, this exercise also proved futile because nowhere could Africans purchase land in the country. The imperial government then provided freehold rights in some locations. The colonial government came to regret the granting of freehold rights as this exercise in equitable land administration was only applied in few areas. The few locations in which freehold rights – that is, unconditional ownership of land for unlimited time – had been given were 'Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare situated in the western areas of Johannesburg as well as Evaton, north-east of Vereeniging... (Khunyeli, 1994, p. 43). This is one setting that Themba writes about, namely, the removal of Sophiatown, and the subsequent withdrawal of freehold rights as Blacks were resettled in Meadowlands.

The ramifications of setting can further be observed when the apartheid ideology was reified. In 1954, a township known as Sophiatown was demolished and its residents were removed and resettled at Meadowlands. Sophiatown would not be remodelled or

restructured for Africans. According to white standards and spatial aesthetics, Sophiatown was an icon of shame as it interfered with the white people's housing plans. For this reason, Sophiatown was to be razed down. Its demolition served as foreshadowing the tough destiny that lay ahead for Africans in the urban areas. There was a change of gears on how they would be settled under the new policy. Blacks were resettled with greater gusto. During colonial days Africans resided nearer towns and cities and going to work was within walking distance. The distance of new settlements, at the maximum of forty to fifty kilometres away, rendered daily commuting by bus or taxi costly as well as inevitable. These daily journeys from town and city and vice versa became financially unbearable on the needy commuters. Regardless, the Group Areas Act (1952) that prescribed different places to different places of abode for the various racial groups in South Africa, was promulgated by the apartheid parliament.

Crehan (1998, p. 18), writing about the removal of Africans that was enforced by the nationalist government from 1960 to 1983, gives a staggering figure of three and half million people who were resettled under the barrel of the gun. He goes on to say that apartheid or separate development left vast expanses of empty land in its trails. This was the intensification of the imbalances that were set in motion by the Land Act of 1913. Crehan further reflects on this act as the one that drove Africans from the South African land and made them roamers and seekers of work in the white people's conquered territory. Along with the loss of land is the corollary that the African became the white man's chattel. The white man could do whatever pleased him with Africans living on his/her land.

Since 1948, numerous parliamentary laws were passed to ascertain and intensify separation between Europeans and Africans, and later on between black and black. Both Dr Malan and Dr Verwoerd focused their attention on the control of space in both its micro and macro apportionment to advance the balkanization of South Africa.

The literal exclusion of Africans from the landscape in South Africa is paralleled by their symbolic exclusion from both the colonial and apartheid flags that exclusively represented white views of the landscape. Transition from the Union Jack to the Verwoerdian republic flag in 1967, was in no way calculated to recognize the African community in South Africa. Like literature, the country's flag is a symbolic representation of space and setting in South Africa. Similarly, the black people's versions of the national anthem, namely, *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* or *Morena Boloka Tjhaba sa heso* would not be sung next to *God Save the Queen* or *Die Stem*. In an inclusive and representative society, the national anthem would be seen as incorporating the sentiments of all its peoples taken together. The following passage shows how Africans have been excluded in the symbolic image of the South African flag and the ensuing perceptions:

Thus, the flag was a symbolic erasure of the indigenous inhabitants of the subcontinent from the landscape of both history and myth... South African history is an inscription of a series of myths on the landscape of memory. (Maake, 1996, p. 146)

The exclusion of Blacks in parliament in 1910 implied that they were not regarded as important except that they were seen as objects that should be legislated for.

Maake, implies that the flag of a country is so important as to reflect both the “history and myth” of a nation. However, this is not the case in South Africa that Gordimer and Themba focus on. In both the colonial and apartheid flags, the Africans were not reflected or implied in anyway. It is in this sense that I understand the above quotation from Maake as saying that the Blacks were symbolically erased from their country’s history. The British and the Boers ignored their presence and turned them into nothingness. The pathological greed for land by the Whites, is revealed in the unilateral naming of the South African landscape which points to the chicanery that has been going on for centuries.

In the network of apartheid laws governing black people’s lives and their relationship to space, nothing was as complicated and confusing as what was known as the Ninety-nine Years Leasehold. It was introduced when the government had erected the four-roomed ‘match-box’ houses made available to Africans for sale. Under these strange laws it was maintained that in an incident where Africans wanted to know what 99-year leasehold was, Lin Menge (1983) of the *Rand Daily Mail* has the following to say:

Leasehold is not freehold, so the title-holder does not own the land. He has the right to the use of the land for 99 years and the right to leasehold is registered in a deeds registry office of the Chief Commissioner in the Department of Co-operation and Development... the building societies treat 99-year leasehold exactly as they do freehold and will grant mortgage loans to people who own this leasehold right. They will not grant mortgage loans to people who have bought

their houses under the “Home Ownership” scheme of the administration boards because that only gives the right of occupation of the house. (p. 6)

As the quote suggests, Africans were required to pay the equivalent of mortgage on homes that they would never own outright because it was on leased land. In addition, few people, especially Africans reach the ripe age of hundred years. This makes it even more complicated when we take into regard the fact that this could not be passed over for inheritance. There was a sting of mockery in the whole set of apartheid laws. Moreover, the building societies were given leeway by the government to successfully exploit the Africans for purposes of capitalistic avarice and gains. Taking the movement of Africans into account, the building societies made a roaring business here as the government had just allowed Africans buy the match-box four-roomed houses. The provision of freehold rights by the colonial government in certain locations to Africans, failed to engender a sense of equity by leaving them as they were when they took up the reins in 1948. Instead, the nationalists wanted to undo the equitable historical landmarks left by the colonial regime. Even freehold areas were not immune to the inhuman hand of the apartheid government as the following quote will show:

... There is no guarantee of course that the Government will not decide to use the land on which people have acquired leasehold for something else. But this applies equally in freehold areas, where homes are sometimes expropriated because of road building or other developments. (Menge, 1983, p. 9)

As the quote by Lin Menge suggests, anything could happen to the life of an African in the hands of the nationalist government. They could change their minds midstream as long as they could achieve their chief goal, namely, making the life of the Blackman uncomfortable. If this could happen in freehold areas, this could also happen to the leasehold. But freehold has a history and ethics that control it unlike the leasehold as stated here. In the following quote from the same article, Lin Menge, shows how Section 10 rights that allow one to stay legitimately in urban area, are likely to terminate if one ever gets arrested and serves a term in jail.

But if a person loses his Section 10 rights [that is, freedom of movement accorded to him with a pass] (if he has Section 10(1)(b) rights and he is convicted of a crime and sentenced to a fine of more than R500 or six month's jail) he may lose his right to occupy --- that is, his ownership. Under 99-year leasehold, even if he lost his right of occupation, he would still own his home. (p. 9)

It must be appreciated that Section 10 rights were associated with the pass laws and were interpreted together. The loss of Section 10 rights means that one would be sent to a distant homeland as he has squandered his chances of living in the urban areas. Living in urban areas was turned into "privilege" in as far as Blacks are concerned. It is in this light that I have made an attempt to bring the pass laws as near as possible in the interpretation of setting as regards the life of Blacks. Lin Menge goes on to say the following:

He can, under 99-year leasehold, build, alter or demolish, whatever is on the site, subject only to the law and the township building and town-planning regulations, and he can dispose of the property as he wishes, provided that he sells or bequeaths it to a person who, like himself, must have Section 10 (1)(a) or (b) rights. If the person does not have those rights, the leasehold can be sold and the proceeds given to that unqualified person. (p. 9)

As the details of the land tenure agreement suggest, the African in the apartheid South Africa had no security. This planned confusion must be seen in contrast with the serene life that Europeans enjoy on the other side of the city, in suburbia. The Kloppers in Gordimer's *Something Out There* cannot be accorded such despicable treatment as they have land property which belongs to them and they fully enjoy these rights without any disturbances and ideological interpretation. Instead, the vestiges of Roman-Dutch law would be retrieved to justify a legal wrangle on land matters.

The hatred and vitriol that the Europeans directed towards the Africans is extraordinary and can be understood when one looks back at the way the land issue between Europeans and Africans was handled since 1948. The black people, with least resources were driven away from the towns and cities to remote areas to start new life there. On the other hand, the opulent Europeans should continue occupying the developed areas of the country. Despite the disparities prevailing between the types of land available, the Africans would be expected to eke out a living in the sparsely arable land some of which is situated in mountainous, arid and semi-desert areas. Europeans farmers had access to financial assistance from the government and the land bank -- during

drought and attack by natural catastrophes like hail, floods, storms and other disasters. Just as the hatred and vitriol harboured by whites was unjustifiable, the same can be said of the bitterness it generated amongst the Africans, Indians and Coloureds as directed to Europeans.

The African National Congress, for a long time, upheld the principle of 'passive resistance'. One can think that to the ANC the non-violent stance would positively influence Whites and make Africans acceptable to Europeans. This was not to be! Passive resistance implies that the movement would not use force or violence to accelerate the liberation of the masses. Stated differently, the movement vowed, over decades, that they would not spill a drop of blood to liberate South African Blacks. However, a change of heart occurred after the Pan Africanist Congress broke away from the ANC in 1959 and vowed that South Africa could only be liberated by the use of force. It appeared to be the only language that the nationalist government would understand as passive resistance and negotiations had failed to have the anticipated impact on the regime. In 1962, the ANC also changed direction and embraced the revolutionary path towards the liberation of South Africa. The ANC, with their high membership of wealthy Whites established a military wing known as Umkhonto weSiwe (Spear of the Nation). It operated from Rivonia, Johannesburg as a high command base. This is where Nelson Mandela, who served part of the twenty-seven year sentence as a political prisoner on Robben Island, was arrested in 1962.

In a normal society, a domiciled family head holds the title deed of the land allocated to him by land authorities such as the municipality. As a contrast, Lin Menge shows us how the nationalist government deliberately deviated from this norm. the

leasehold was not meant to be a permanent arrangement as Africans were seen as a people in transit to the homelands. It was a mechanism that distorted the facts of black people's land ownership. The Verwoerdian pass laws also worked against black urban permanence since 1955. A propertied individual in an apartheid individual is an asset to society as he/she becomes more stable and responsible citizen. On the other hand, the revised pass laws of the nationalist government were designed to create a nomadic society out of the black communities. The pass document should therefore be seen as a qualification for the African to be in possession of no land in areas. He would be perpetual sojourner. It is through this document that the police would instantly determine whether an African is legally entitled to be at a certain point in time. If ever he qualifies to be there, it should be on temporary basis and also in correspondence with the time frames of his work contract. The passbook further served as an instant reference helping the police to determine the offence of the African spatial occupation. The most recent signature of the employer would be endorsed in the book failing which one could be instantly arrested and locked up in jail.

In a case where the individual pass carrier has been arrested for being illegally in a municipal area, or failing to produce his pass on demand by police, or not having his employer's signature appended in the book, he was liable to arrest, imprisonment and a fine. In the case where the individual is unable to pay a fine, he would be sent to prison. The pass offence sentence often did not exceed six months. In a case where the sentence does not exceed six months, the individual would be 'sold' to the white farmers to reinforce their black labour force. Most farmers handled prisoners with the worst asperity and in some cases attempted to run away from such farms. Such a prisoner would be severely

punished when caught. For the following week or so, he would not be in a position to do any work but confined to the farm “hospital”.

The pass document is associated with many bitter memories for the African community. If one comes from the rural areas, being discovered with unendorsed passbook in an urban area, one would be sent back to that area under police escort. I am therefore indicating that space and setting go beyond the physical plane of an African’s mind and impinge as bitter experiences on his psyche. Being imprisoned and landing in jail during one’s life; the experience of being sent to rural areas under police guard; the experience of being discharged from work and send to the homeland’s tribal authority for the renewal of working documents, all these impacted negatively on an individual black person. Themba portrays the life of the black person in a way that highlights him undergoing these painful experiences during the passbook era.

Selepe (1993) has the following to say in this regard on the question of land and the creation of homelands:

In order to avoid the land question the state devised an ideology of ethnicism, and granted wholesale autonomy and semi-autonomy to homelands. Like its counterpart, the racist ideology which denied blacks their right to land, it also produced a contradictory (black) ideology on the subject. (p. 180)

This further evinces to what extent the nationalists would go to ascertain that Africans are disinherited of their South African birth right. It is also under these circumstances that the majority of Africans do not yield to the idea of being relegated to

the artificial homelands in terms of the Land Act of 1913 that allows Europeans to take 87% of the country and Africans only 13%. Accepting this lopsided logic of the nationalists would be equivalent to Africans accepting the terms of the Native Land Act of 1913. The amount of money spent by the nationalist in the construction of apartheid homelands as well as the time wasted in planning them makes one to question the wisdom of the nationalists and their choice of priorities. Although *Something Out There* attacks the apartheid ideology and its ramifications, it also brings to light the theme of freedom fighters and their focus on the control of land. The impending war of liberation and peril are likely to be directed to the apartheid architects who have amassed all rights conceivable on themselves.

Again, Africans were not allowed to have any freehold rights in urban areas and would neither be comfortable with even on the farm where they entered into service contract with the farmers.

...pass laws were originally introduced in the days of the Cape Colony to prevent thefts and raids by Africans...the pass laws were necessary in those days because; there was no peace between white and black'. (Khunyeli, 1994, p. 45)

The Khoi and Xhosa people, who are indigenous citizens of the Cape Colony, were the first Africans whose movement was restricted by the pass laws after the Europeans asserted their authority in South Africa. With the words '...to prevent thefts and raids' the Europeans justified their stifling grip on the free movement of Africans in the Cape Province. The pass documents, therefore, should be seen as having a

relationship with the African people's land dispossession and disinheritance. It is with this plight of Africans in mind that these sad memories on the loss of land and movement in South Africa are being considered. However, to say that the pass laws, as the quote further indicates, were necessary for the sake of Black-White peace in the country is indefensible. The whole European approach to the conquest and colonization of Africans and their lands was short-sighted. The expectation of 'peace' in a set-up that promoted exclusive white land ownership at the expense of Africans, was bound to be counterproductive and short-lived solution and would ultimately have bitter results for both the oppressor and the oppressed.

...Under Section 28(1) of the Native Administration Amendment Act of 1929, the Governor-General could by proclamation declare pass areas where Africans had to carry passes, and also make rules to control the movement of Africans into and from these proclaimed areas. In 1930, African women were also made subject to pass control through Native urban Areas Amendment Act, which authorized local authorities to prohibit any African women from entering municipal areas without a certificate of service contracts and passes, and for the first time the onus fell on the employer to check that the work seeker was legally in town. In 1932 the Native Service Contract was passed in order to prevent desertion of black farm labourers to the urban centres. (Khunyeli, 1994, p. 46)

Khunyeli points out that Africans generally interpreted legislation intended for Africans as an instrument of 'perpetual bondage'. There was a clause that empowered

magistrates to sentence Africans who failed to report for work according to their work contracts. We can see in the foregoing lines how the pass laws enslaved black people and made their lives a mockery. It is obvious that, when ever the colonial and apartheid powers embarked on the conquest of land or movement was introduced. Setting does not only point to inferior housing in concrete form designed for Africans, but also to documents that Africans were to carry. Thus he was deprived of mobility and domicile and the documents made for easier control designating living space according to race.

Thema's [one of the founder members of the NC] concern about unemployment amongst Africans was in part a response to the intensification of influx controls in the 1930s. The government tightened influx controls during this period because the Urban Areas Act 1923, which aimed at 'controlling the pace of African urbanization and the growth of unemployment in the towns', had proved ineffective. Consequently, this Act was amended in 1930 in order to widen its scope and to increase the effectiveness of all African men and women 'from entering urban areas to seek work and residing without the permission of municipal authorities... the passage of Native Service Contract Act further intensified influx control in the urban areas. Unemployment among Africans being discriminated against in matters of unemployment. This policy was condemned by educated and politically conscious Africans as 'epitomizing the government's refusal to accept the complete dependence of a growing number of Africans on the urban areas. (Khunyeli, 1994, p. 53)

The above quote from Khunyeli ties with Fordimer's writing in general as it centres on some of the epoch's crucial parliamentary acts such as the Urban Areas Act of 1923 as amended as well as Native Service Contract Act. Unemployment in the towns was due to the fact that Blacks were taken off the land and thus could not generate ways of self-employment. The colonial regime intensified the influx control laws as the numbers of unemployed Africans was on the increase in urban areas. On the other hand, the native Service Contract hooked Africans working on farms and heightened the impact of black worker's negative emotions of dissatisfaction. And the black people knew quite well that they were being conquered into enslavement.

Mary Louise Pratt (in Crehan, 1998, p. 8) points out that the colonial regime disinherited Africans of their history and culture and by so doing, turned them into perpetual workers or slaves (p. 5). The period that ushered the Verwoerdian territorial apartheid intensified the oppression on the Africans when the black people of South Africa were forcibly removed from towns, cities and farms only to be channelled into the homelands. The apartheid homelands were patterned along the dimensions of the reserves and comprised of 13% of the land surface for the majority of Africans in the country. As the land Act drove Africans away from land, Crehan makes a serious observation that the Karoo started to depopulate as Africans were scattered with the four winds by the apartheid instrument. They submitted themselves to the woes of employment and also residents in locations.

While the land was conquered, Africans paradoxically became the ones whose labour was needed most to cultivate the expropriated land. While observing the major role the African played on the European's property, Crehan sees the African as the least

represented character in the plaasroman --- that is, South Africa novels depicting the farm space and setting. Coetzee writes about this sub-genre as better handled by Afrikaans novelists than their English counterparts. Olive Schreiner and Pauline Smith, as pioneer South African English novelists, also underplayed the presence of Africans in the farming industry. The under-representation of Africans on European farms, points to the skewed picking of African characters in the rural landscape. (Crehan, 1998 p. 3)

1.4 Primary Sources

The study explores the extent to which the two South African writers of fiction use setting in their writing to critique apartheid writing. Two primary sources from South African fiction have been identified as suitable to use in exploring themes of space and setting. The first one used in the discussion, which is dealt with in Chapter Two, is Nadine Gordimer's *Something Out There* which was published in 1985. In this novella, Gordimer uses space extensively in her critique of apartheid ideology. The novella is based in the white northern suburbs of Johannesburg where the wealthy Klopper family lives in opulent style, beauty and splendour in their home. Mr Klopper is an estate agent and has grown rich from selling houses and property. This stable life of the Kloppers can be contrasted to that of Blacks who have very limited living space in Soweto and other townships. The yards are so small in Soweto and if ever one has to extend the house in future, it would fill the whole space and nothing would remain if one has need to lay a garden. If a garage is added in the set-up, a shapeless mess would fill the area mainly for human accommodation.

The inhuman practices of the apartheid system primarily triggered insubordination from Africans in general. This has a direct bearing on the generation of freedom fighters portrayed in Gordimer's novella. In collaboration with white liberals, the freedom fighters mount sabotage of the power station. The explosion serves as reminder of the black cloud of war that is hanging over South Africa. The Whites, although living in luxury and pomp, have long entered into a psychological conflict that made them paranoid and highly anxious that Africans are penetrating white suburbia to inflict harm on them. Although living in grand style, Europeans have to lock themselves indoors, haunted by the appearance of the unknown enemy in the form of an ape, gorilla, monkey or guerilla.

In their errand to blow the power station, the freedom fighters discover an ancient mine whose origins date as far back as the Middle Ages. This shows that Africans knew about gold mining from as far as Mapungubwe and Thulamela, ancient African villages together with the Zimbabwe civilization. The site of the mine in Gordimer's *Something Out There* is reminiscent of the time when ancient Southern Africa could refine gold in contrast to Europe which was in the grip of intellectual stagnation in the Middle Ages. These representation of these ancient spaces are monuments of African civilization that stood in opposition to views held by architects of apartheid that Blacks are incapable of achieving anything substantial and have an empty historical past.

Similarly, I am also exploring the fiction of Can Themba in two fronts. The literary works of Themba are predominantly short stories. In addition I will also appreciate his journalistic articles that I find relevant in the exploration of space representations in the terms stated above. He worked as a journalist. Some of his articles

that address the use of space in conjunction with South Africa's apartheid policy are used to supplement the short stories. The following publications *The World of Can Themba* (1985) and *The Will to Die* (1972) are volumes posthumously compiled by Essop Patel as well as Donald Stuart and Roy Holland. The short stories in the books overlap but have dissimilar journalistic articles. It is these articles that have caused me to use the two books to compensate in one what is lacking in the other.

Themba's short stories abound with first hand experiences from apartheid's handling of Africans. The stories carry evidence of apartheid ideology in application as experienced by Blacks in their daily life. In "Mob Passion" a situation is portrayed where the young man with distant Xhosa forebears has fallen in love with a Sotho girl and is killed by the 'Russians', a group of Basotho blanketed fighters who regard themselves as custodians of Basotho ethnic purity. These people appear to have been indoctrinated by apartheid ideology and go to great lengths to maintain the ethnic boundaries.

Nothing exceeds the cruelty of Themba's journalistic article bearing the title: "Political Offender Banned to the Bush". Themba ventures to visit these remote places in rural Transvaal to find out what really happens to the banished people.. These people are labelled troublemakers in the areas they come from. They will be left in remote areas of the country to die. The incidents reflect the cruel manner in which the government uses space to torture Africans who have inquiring minds and ask some questions about the state of affairs in their villages and environments. The set-up in banishment is also reminiscent of the inhuman ways to which Blacks are exposed in the hands of white farmers. The conditions are such that, if ever a Blackman leaves the farm and joins the ranks of those living in townships, he is unlikely to associate himself with farming

anymore arising from the treatment he got while working for the white farmers.

Comparing the situation in locations to the one they have been exposed to in the farms, they soon discover how the farmers have reduced their lives to nothing. This becomes more glaring when standards of living are compared as well as the wages earned by township dwellers working in towns and cities. Some of the Africans who left the farms frustrated in this manner, would sometimes later come back to the same farm to kill or steal from the persecutor as a way of redressing the past.

The question of land, which is intrinsic to the political ISA (Ideological State Apparatus), has been one of the issues that dominated the political scene. This is so because central to the issue of land is the question of political rights, a kind of 'no land no political rights' equation. The ideology that was propagated by the ruling class and hence reproduced in the functions of this ISA was that blacks do not own land and they cannot, as a result, participate in government. Therefore, some of the earlier, and some of the recently, have been inspired by the issue.

While they approach this question from different positions, the common denominator in their views is that they all value, with unmistakeable nostalgia, the manner in which land was distributed among people in traditional African communities. The contradictions that exist as a results of the present land issue is an aspect that has been exploited by authors to direct the course of the black liberation struggle. (Slepe, 1993, pp 177-178)

In the above quotation, Selepe derives an equation whose two parameters are political rights and land property. Since in this study I am interested in space and setting, I find Selepe's work quite relevant as source of reference. Selepe emphasizes the point that Blacks had their land taken from them and were consequently herded into locations, townships and reserves. It was then easy for the ruling class to indicate that, since Blacks do not own land, they would be automatically disenfranchised and be driven away from their lands and settled elsewhere. Selepe is therefore conscious of the fact that black authors are exploiting themes on landlessness. This study is equally in search of these historical parameters as embodied in the fiction of Gordimer's *Something Out There* and the works of Themba. Selepe is aware of the contradictions loaded in apartheid policy that emphasizes black people's disinheritance of land.

T. B. Khunyeli's (1993) MA dissertation is another study which has a strong impact on this discussion. His study explores the influence of African writers in the South African black newspaper, namely, *Bantu World*, from 1932-1936. Unlike Selepe's work which explores landlessness from the literary perspective, Khunyeli's concentrates on historical issues. His work influences this study on the evolution of the pass document by past white South African governments and the passbook as an instrument of stifling the movement of Blacks. The pass directly determines the presence or absence of Blacks on the South African landscape. This document not only created negative impact on individuals, but heightened the national catastrophe on Blacks as well. The imperial government reneged on the promise of allocating more land to Blacks. White farmers refused to sell land to the government for this purpose.

The refusal of white farmers to sell land on the periphery of reserves to the government for the lot of Blacks created fear amongst white farmers. Blacks would be competing with white farmers for the scarce labour resource and Whites were aware that on their own they would not cope up. Again, Blacks would not avail themselves for work in white farms. This logic also holds for the country's larger labour picture as regards heavy industries and mines. In these industries and farms, Blacks were not paid well, but mere pittance. It is this exploitation that the Whites were generally aiming at. Seen in this light, the aspect of setting unleashes a variety of meanings whose origin is directly attached to land and space. Unfortunately, white attitudes would not change for the better. Molesting, injuring, spurning and denigrating Blacks appeared to be next to their hearts. Khunyeli's work has been extensively quoted here to throw some light on the pass document as the instrument used to control the movement of Blacks in space and setting.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Chapter One serves as the introduction to this discussion. It thus embraces aims of the study, space and the apartheid ideology as well as primary sources used in this study. The scope of the study has also been mapped out so as to leave no doubt in the reader's mind. This Introduction chapter is therefore, broadly patterned with the incorporation of some ideas from secondary sources such dissertations by I. J. Selepe and T. B. Khunyeli. The Land Act of 1913 is touched upon to support the argument that claims to embrace the phenomenon of space and setting in the South African context. The removal of Sophiatown to Meadowlands in 1952 is also explored in the study.

Chapter Two is my attempt to investigate the relationship between spatial representations and apartheid ideology in Gordimer's *Something Out There*. These are traced in labour relations, land as the white man's monopoly, land as the setting on which revolutionary trends are set, land as a means of achieving racial and ethnic classification, land as the black people's inalienable right that cannot be taken away from them

The emotions of fear and anxiety are also explored as they reflect the white South African's growing awareness that their hold over the land is threatened by the activities of "terrorists" or "saboteurs". These emotions suggest that the armed struggle pivots around land matters and the Whites would be the likely victims. This is the subtle way in which Gordimer imports the ape, baboon, gorilla or guerilla motif as reflective of the South African order of race relations. The war psychosis also sends waves of shock amongst Whites as they become aware that the international moral high ground is against apartheid. The likelihood is that many countries are going to be on the side of the oppressed Blacks.

Chapter Three focuses on the appreciation of three short stories and three journalistic articles written by Can Themba. The short stories and articles identified from Themba's *The World of Can Themba* and *The Will To Die* are as follows: "Mob Passion", "Brothers in Christ", "Ten-to-Ten", "Political Offender Banned to the Bush" as well as "A Requiem for Sophiatown".

Chapter Four compares the two authors in their handling of space and setting and argues that their styles are influenced by their social backgrounds. They also have two things in common. Both of them are fighting directly or indirectly for social justice through their writings on the South African landscape. Chapter Four also looks into the

future of space inheritance. This is crucial because the democratic brotherhood defeated the nationalists at the polls in 1994. For the first time in three hundred years of European social and spatial intervention in South Africa, a representative government is in place elected by the people for the people.

The Significance of Space and Setting in Selected South African Fiction is a significant study in several fronts. Firstly, it is a comparative search at representations of space and seeks to investigate human attitudes that came about as a result of the influence of nationalists ideology from both sides of the divide – black and white. Some of the attitudes have left indelible scars in the minds and on the bodies of the victims of apartheid.

The ideology of apartheid has appropriated all characteristics of colonialism and its rudeness. It is proper to view apartheid as a neo-colonial corruption that never aimed at improving the lot of Africans. Instead, apartheid ruined the social psyche of Africans in South Africa. In its attempt to turn back the hands of time, apartheid dehumanized Africans by rendering their institutions inferior to those of Whites. The pathologies that apartheid unleashed amongst the Blacks are legion and would last for generations before they can be successfully eliminated.

The study attempts to unravel these themes incorporated in the fiction it has identified to explore. For instance, Themba's short story entitled "Ten-to-Ten" depicts the few minutes before the clock strikes ten at night. The character and policeman that Ten-to-Ten is, differs remarkably from the typical square peg African policeman who has been abused by his white counterparts. Ten-to-Ten's style of policing the city of Pretoria at night significantly brought light to nights that were otherwise hopeless in the life of

black people walking home through the city. The study views at Pretoria as a setting that Themba has chosen to present this policeman as a counter-ideological character representing the sanity of Blacks. Themba is writing for an abnormal society maddened by apartheid.

Something Out There has complicated themes made even more compound by the network of apartheid laws. Gordimer writes about Africans from different walks of life and has entwined her destiny with theirs in time. We understand her as a person who has profound love for the African people and their sympathy for how their lives have been affected apartheid laws.

In order to earn herself a place amongst the oppressed Blacks of South Africa, Gordimer penetrates the sufferings of Africans and writes about them. Her literary works concentrate on liberation themes that appear to form the centre of her world. She is irritated by the fact that apartheid '...is about the body, the skin and hair' which things weigh very little on the scales of human worth. When individuals with the political consciousness of Nadine Gordimer submitted themselves to becoming members of the ANC, they made the commitment well aware of the implications around the South African land issue. The conflict over land between Blacks and Whites in South Africa was going to be a long and painful one. Given this ideological context, the theme of land in Gordimer's *The Conservationist* further places emphasis on her consciousness of the country's land issues. The novel sounds a prophetic note about the perils awaiting the Whites for exploiting the country's resources only amongst themselves. Seeds of inter-racial conflict were sown, and only time would determine the harvest.

The pass laws limited the movement of Blacks primarily seeking work to establish themselves afresh in cities and towns. Then there was the Native Service Contract Act (1932 as amended in 1935) further compounded the life of Blacks. This Act made it a punishable offence for a Blackman to stay away from work without a 'valid' reason. Reporting any sickness in advance made it even more appalling as the 'baas' or missus would interpret that as shamming or playing hypochondriac. When these Acts were coupled with the provisions of the Land Act of 1913, the laws themselves should be seen as a mesh of oppressive instruments which made it difficult for a Blackman to avoid being on the wrong side of the law. Blacks regarded as in excess would not be accommodated in the reserves because of the government's failure to increase the reserves or grant permission to Blacks to purchase land in locations and townships.

Again, Blacks were not be permitted to have any freehold rights in urban areas and would neither be comfortable even on the farm where they entered into service contracts with the farmers.

...pass laws were originally introduced in the days of the Cape Colony to prevent thefts and raids by Africans...the pass laws were necessary in those days because 'there was no peace between white and black'. (Khunyeli, 1994, p. 45)

Writers are generally the conscience of their countries. White writers like Gordimer attract readers throughout the world and represent how supporters of apartheid as members of privileged society made life hell for the majority of their subjects. She stands out as a pillar of hope in the midst of Whites who have no remorse for the

brutalities that apartheid inflicted on black lives. In her career as a writer, she has captured the hearts of Blacks with the message from her pen as it reflects their daily plight under apartheid laws. Her pen has given voice to the injustices perpetrated on the disinherited Blacks. Amongst her achievements, one of her novels, *The Conservationist* (1974) concentrates on Black-White conflict for land. This novel made her a part winner of the Booker Prize. Judith Thurman says that Gordimer writes evocatively about land and landscape and avoids writing didactically. The memories evoked could be unpleasant and reminiscent of Black-White conflict over land rights.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 *Something Out There*

What follows is an introductory account of events and activities intended to give perspective on what the study entitled *Treatment of Space Setting in Selected South African Fiction* based on Nadine Gordimer's (1984) fiction in the novella *Something Out There*, especially with matters relating to space. The novella portrays a struggle mobilized by political activists and freedom fighters against apartheid South Africa. Many themes relating to South Africa can be threaded out of this novella and most outstanding, amongst others, is the struggle for Blacks to regain control over space in South Africa, with the help of liberals, who jointly resort to violence as a means of liberation after seventy years of futile persuasion of Whites to peaceful negotiations.

The novella based on the northern suburbs of Johannesburg where Steven Dobrow, while swimming with friends at his home, sees a strange creature and tells his parents about it who in turn publish the story in the daily newspapers. The narrative depicts many levels of society who claim to have seen the creature: doctors playing golf, the activists themselves, the policeman's wife, a maid-servant and so on. Charles Rosser, Joy playing the role of Rosser's wife, Eddie and Vusi, are planning a sabotage of the power station further north with explosives. En route, Charles and Joy, masquerading as husband and wife, hire out a mansion in the outskirts of the northern suburbs. But Eddie and Vusi, being Blacks, play roles of servants working for the Rossers. Since the place is isolated, they amass explosives while keeping low profile while living in the house let to them by Naas Klopper. They proceed with caution to the power station and succeed in

blowing it up thus bringing darkness to the entire Reef metropolis. When South African Police and military intelligence become aware that they failed to ferret out the explosion mission, propaganda is broadcast that the police succeeded to kill the activists after trading fire with them. The scrupulous South African intelligence succeeds to trace the perpetrators and the name of Eddie comes up as a Coloured activist and Vusi as an exile who left the country in 1976 during the Soweto Uprising.

2.2 The Klopper's Mansion

This study intends to explore space and setting representations in Nadine Gordimer's novella especially representations that seem to comment on apartheid ideology. In what follows, I will draw attention to representations of space and setting that suggest a critique of this ideology.

During the nationalist apartheid rule, Blacks were given unwholesome places to live in while Whites were given the best. This allocation of space according to ethnic grouping has influence of inter-racial attitudes across the divide. For example, Blacks are given inferior amenities and consequently, develop inferior attitudes in many social platforms where they meet with Whites. On the other hand, arising from superior amenities and understandably higher values assigned to Whites, the majority of them tend to wear superior attitudes mixed with arrogance and would always look down upon Blacks. The following passage from Gordimer's (1984) *Something Out There* depicts how these attitudes are internalized and projected to Blacks by the average Afrikaner family such as the Kloppers in terms of their general behaviour not only towards Blacks but also towards the manipulation of space.

Mrs Klopper (she always called herself, although her name was Hester) read in the Transvaler about the creature in the Johannesburg suburbs while awaiting for the rice to boil in time for lunch. She sat in the split-level lounge of what she was always quietly aware of as her 'lovely home' Naas had built according to her artistic ideas when he began to make money out of his agency for the sale of farmland and agricultural plots, fifteen years ago. Set on several acres outside a satellite country town where Klopper's Eiendoms Beperk flourished, the house had all features of prosperous suburban houses in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The rice was boiling in an all-electric kitchen with eye-level microwave oven and cabinet deep-freezer. The bedrooms were en suite, with pot-plants in the respectively 'pink and green bathrooms'. The living room in which she sat on a nylon velvet drapes, and twelve chairs in the dining area were covered with needlepoint worked in a design of shepherdesses and courtiers by Naas Klopper herself, the dried-flower --- and shell pictures were also her work, she had crocheted the tasselled slings by which plants were suspended above the cane furniture on the glassed sun-porch, and it was on a trip to the Victoria Falls, when Rhodesia was still Rhodesia, that she had bought the hammered copper plaques. The TV set was behind a carved console door. Stools set around the mini bar again bore the original touch --- they were covered not exactly with modish zebra skin, but with the skins of Impala which Naas himself has shot. Outside, there was a palette-shaped swimming pool like the one in which Stanley and friends, forty kilometres away in Johannesburg, had seen the face. (p. 120)

South African Blacks consider white suburbs as characterized by affluence and high-powered living styles that often insulate the rich residents from the poor. The atmosphere inside and around the Kloppers house subscribes to this sense of opulence. The sophisticated 'split-level lounge' has a way of intensifying the decorations in the house and corresponds to Mrs Klopper's satisfaction over the hard work they have put up over the years and presently qualify as rich people with immovable property. She appears rather oblivious to the way people around her are living. Her home is a cocoon of pastoral fancy protecting her from the conditions outside --- hence her "embroidered seat covers", "dried flowers", "plaques" that seem to deny even the end of colonialism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

The narrative emphasizes the Afrikaner people's control and domination of space that can be felt as Mrs Klopper reflects over the long time that her husband has been struggling to establish himself in the estate business. The business transaction in which Mr Klopper is presently engaged would be carried out in the spirit of: 'for the sale of farmland and agricultural plots' (p. 20). In fact, the Klopper's home and attitudes towards space points to the way the Afrikaners came to entrench themselves over the South African space. They removed Blacks from the very land that Mr Klopper is selling today. A picture of an increasing number of white occupants emerges with Mr Klopper's sale of property and its conveyance to buyers is a very significant tool in Gordimer's critique of how apartheid ideology informs attitudes toward land in *Something Out There*. Like the Kloppers, the Afrikaner people intensified their hold on land by occupying large expanses of land and dividing it amongst themselves.

The Kloppers are living on the outskirts of Johannesburg and are seemingly longing for a profound peace of mind. Their opulence serves as a tool of severance between them and the poor Whites living on the southern part of the city.

On the other hand their opulence has brought them nearer their rich counterparts living further north in Pretoria. The following phrase points in that direction 'features of prosperous suburban houses in Johannesburg and Pretoria'. In other words, the affluent living styles of the Dobrows, the Kloppers, the Kleynhans's tends to influence each other. An impression is created here that the two cities, Johannesburg and Pretoria, maintain standards of living envied by many people countrywide. The material wealth of the Kloppers can be discerned by the details spelled out in the passage above: 'split-level lounge', 'make money out of his agency for the sale of farmland and agricultural plots', 'Klopper's Eiendoms Beperk', 'all-electric kitchen with eye-level microwave oven and cabinet deep-freezer', 'pink and green bathrooms', 'nylon covered velvet sofa had pastel plastic Venetian blinds as well as curtains and matching nylon velvet drapes', 'twelve chairs in the dining area', 'dried-flower shell pictures', 'cane furniture on glassed sun-porch', 'hammered copper plaques', 'TV set was behind a carved console door', 'mini bar', 'palette-shaped swimming pool'.

The tradition of hunting is not foreign to the wealthy and propertied magnates of South Africans, especially the farmers. It is a highly relished pastime. Gordimer retrieves such memories from the past and points out that the animal skins that the Kloppers ostentatiously display in their huge lounge are the direct result of these hunting ventures: 'skins of Impala he had shot'. This point is brought to our realization to witness the broad spectrum of activities that the wealthy people engage in. It is equally significant that these

cultural practices are suggestive of the ways the Afrikaans and English communities commonly engage in the domination of land, landscape and space in South Africa.

The 'palette-shaped swimming pool' is another object that carries a powerful metaphor of opulence. The narrator further writes that forty kilometres south there is a similar swimming pool owned by the Jewish Dobrows. And it is a treasured object in exclusive ownership by the opulent. It further suggests the colourful life so pertinent in the lives of the Kloppers. Meanwhile, the Blacks hardly dream of such luxurious items. Swimming pools can hardly be afforded by Blacks as they are too costly and also items of luxury. Even if some Blacks can afford to add swimming pools on their sites, generally, the sites allocated would hardly accommodate such structures.

---Some people about the Kleynhans place. They're in the car, so long. A young couple. Unlock the front door. --- (p. 121)

The sentence "Unlock the front door" points to the sensitivity of the Kloppers towards security in and around the space under their influence. The key factors that influence the Kloppers sense of security can be reasoned out as the 'ape', 'gorilla', 'baboon' and 'guerrilla' that fill the void of the 'something out there' continuum. Even by midday as it is, the front door is still locked. On the other hand, the sense of insecurity and anxiety is further heightened by the fact that Mrs Klopper does not trust Blacks in her house and thinks of them as thieves who would steal her sugar. She would rather keep a black servant outside in the laundry or in the wash bay:

...She kept no servant in the house---had the gardener's wife in to clean three times a week, and the washwoman worked outside in the laundry---and could always feel at once, even if no sound were made, when the pine aerosol-fresh space in her lovely home was displaced by any body other than her own. (pp. 121-122)

Mrs Klopper does not entertain the presence of a "servant in the house". Even the washwoman should have known relationships as she is the wife of the gardener and this is why she has "the washwoman (who) worked outside in the laundry". It is also interesting to note that Mrs Klopper's sense of smell is highly sensitive to foreign odours that are likely to penetrate the 'in-house' air inside the house without her recognition. The very 'pine aerosol-fresh' aroma has been sprayed in the interior so that the house retains the pine flavour that is next to her heart. The verb 'displaced' indicates the very fact that the pine aroma also serves as a catch-all of foreign bodies who may accidentally come into the house in her absence. These tendencies point towards her selfishness and conceit that is unjustifiable except by one as haughty as herself. She treats her servants in a similar way that she treats her sleepy bitch Ounooi (translated Old Lady). Mrs Klopper lacks the spirit of delegating and sharing work in a similar manner as does the group of Charles, Vusi, Joy and Eddie---the saboteurs. The latter group functions perfectly well without emphasizing pigmentation of the skin and operate in harmonious rapport with the feeling of oneness. For instance, gloom prevails when Eddie goes to Johannesburg without informing the group about his intention to do so. Although Eddie knew that he

was breaching the unwritten contract of their dynamics, he took it upon himself to overcome the nostalgia.

---Oh only a pleasure. I know when I go to town to shop---I can tell you, I come home and I'm finished! That's why we built out here, you know; I said to my husband, its going to be nothing but more cars, cars, and more motor-bikes---
---And she's talking of fifteen years ago! Now it's a madhouse, Friday and Saturday, all the Bantu buses coming into town from the location, the papers and beer cans thrown everywhere---... that's why you're wise to look for somewhere a bit out---not far out, mind you, the wife needs to be able to come in to go to the supermarket and that, you don't want to feel *cut off*--- (pp. 122-123).

When Mrs Klopper says "Oh only a pleasure. I know when I go to town to shop--- I can tell you, I come home and I'm finished!" she is actually pointing out to the Rossers that she can go to town and only come back to get a peace of mind and serenity. From the point of view of their choice to stay at the city outskirts, they have avoided living in the city that has become a "madhouse" especially on "Friday and Saturday". By way of meaning extension, she is saying that Blacks have been paid on those days and spend their money on canned beer whose "cans" they throw all over. For the Rossers to have chosen to come and stay on the city outskirts, they have chosen sanity because they are "somewhere a bit out---not far out". The convenience is there that Mr Rossers' wife "needs to be able to come in to go to the supermarket and that, you don't want t feel cut off". The outskirts of the city will make Mrs Rosser to feel that she is part of the city and

at the same time not. It is always important for a person to feel part of the city, not to be “cut off”.

2.3 Attitudes Toward Space in the Suburbs

In the following passage, we have evidence that reflects on the prevailing attitudes and the practically concrete measures that the residents have taken recourse to in the suburbs. It affects the complexion of the city as well as the structural makeup of the houses. The paraphernalia of additional structuring have not been legally approved. On the other hand, the availability of resources makes it easy for the opulent people to engage in implementing measures calculated to keep Blacks out of their neighbourhood. At the same time, poverty also affects space negatively as the passage presents ‘squalor’, ‘irregularity’, ‘clutter’, ‘leaking sewer pipes’, ‘leering corrugated walls’ etc as contributing factors towards unguided structural appearances.

A new city is emerging, in which certain of apartheid’s social and spatial divisions are being deepened, at the same time as other, largely illicit ways of controlling, managing and using urban space challenge its rules. A new security aesthetic dominates: walls, wire, barbs, locks, gates, intercoms, shacks, fortifications... fading into fantasy and pastiche. Combine this with the signs of poverty, with squalor, irregularity, clutter, leaking sewer pipes, leering corrugated walls, broken windows, and you have the image of the emerging South African city. (Wittenberg, 1997, p. 12)

The passage reflects the concretized fear that engulfs people of the Northern Suburbs in particular and the white residents of Johannesburg in general. The fear has crystallized into concrete forms where the doors have to be kept under lock and key. The concretization of fear shows that the people have reached a stage where they similarly assume that the marauding creature will surely harm them and they have to ascertain that their doors remain locked. In similar manner, Sergeant Chapman strongly warns his wife Mariella not to venture going out in the dark lest she comes across tsotsis who could fatally stab her.

You shouldn't do that when I'm not there, they'll knife you if try to catch them.

I've told you. Mariella, stay in the house at night, don't open to anyone.

(Gordimer, 1984, p. 158)

Mariella has a different understanding of the situation. Like a child, her fear is mounted on the appearance of the real baboon. Yet, Sergeant Chapman, her husband instead of a baboon, he reads an African hoodlum as the appropriate thing to fill the gap in his ignorance. "... There must be blacks hanging around the neighbourhood who know I'm often away late---" Mariella sees it as: "... It must have been that baboon, that monkey thing, no dog could catch so high! You'll see, only a bone is left---". The environment has become very hostile and insecure, space at night spells death as Sergeant Chapman expresses this deep-felt sentiment. The two emotions of fear from the Sergeant and his wife Mariella compliment each other. The insecurity is heightened by the fact that

its next spatial target is unknown and it appears to be ubiquitous and rampant as the fear of the baboon itself. Lazar has the following to say about the territoriality of fear:

The “something out there” topos serves many functions in the story. Most immediately it represents the projected fears of a dying political order with a strong sense of its own besiegement. (Lazar, 1992, p. 54)

It turns out that the “something out there” is the inner fear that emanates from the outside in the shape of a creature. Yet the reference of ‘baboon’ or ‘monkey’ is an indirect reference to the black person or terrorist. Lazar sees the Whites in *Something Out There* as working on a form of ‘self-enclosure’. This makeshift enclosure has a direct link with the survival history of the Boers when Blacks waged wars of resistance against the infiltration of Whites in Southern Africa. The Boers used the laager as the space they retreat into to repel black siege by shooting at them while shielding behind the ox-wagons. The laager has isolation and fortification origins. The laager mentality has given birth to the ideology of apartheid. The Afrikaner people used the same idiom of fortification when they unfairly divided the country and marginalized Blacks in the process. Space would be used as a determining factor in Black-White relations.

Lazar (1992, p. 56) sees “houses as sites of containment” and “fortresses against fear” hence the use of lock and key by night and day. Blacks in their superior numbers are seen by Whites as a potential and perpetual threat likely to engulf and swallow them up with the passage of time. Walls created by apartheid ideology between Blacks and Whites are designed to stem the tide of the Whites being absorbed by Blacks. The house of the

Kloppers has been turned into a fortress and it is kept under lock and key. The “walls, wire, barbs, locks, gates, intercoms, fortifications...” that have been added to the yards and house structures are a case in point. On the other hand, the foursome freedom fighters do not suffer a sense of insecurity despite the fact that they are working on a very sensitive project. It is therefore logical to infer that the Kloppers are inventing their enemies with the help of the ruling ideology.

2.4 Joy's Status and Domestic Space

Joy is the only woman in the company of three men. She is responsible for taking care of the food and provisioning department and provides a cover story for the operation. Since the freedom fighters must eat and drink, in a sense, she looks after their table needs and consumables from the stores. However, Joy is a liberated woman and will not submit to the dictates of men expecting a woman to do cooking for them. As the freedom fighters are fighting to liberate Blacks from the chauvinistic oppression of apartheid regime, Joy is equally fighting for the liberation of women from being exclusively confined to carry out all domestic chores. For instance, the fact that her presence in the liberation struggle fooled many and presented acceptable perceptions about the group cannot be ignored.

She seemed to expect everyone in the house to prepare his own meals when he might feel hungry. The white man, Charles did so, or cooked with her, this must be a special arrangement decided between them, a black woman would always cook every night for her lover, indeed for all the men in the house. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 144)

The passage points to Joy's sense of liberation in fulfilling household chores as traditionally assigned to the female figure. Charles understands this line of thought and gives her some help "The white man, Charles did so, or cooked with her". The narrator seems to understand South African men's attitudes towards domestic space across the racial and social divide. Amongst the blacks, it is "a black woman would always cook every night for her lover" and "indeed for all the men in the house". Yet, from the patriarchal point of view, it is disrespectful if men should engage in chores normally carried out by women. However, Joy's actions demonstrate how this attitude parallels apartheid thinking as it relates to the segregation of space. The group's harmonious relations emanate from the group's effective division of labour around the Kleynhans mansion with due regard to each individual. Engaging men in cooking does not mean that Joy upholds becoming hostile towards her men colleagues. Harmonious relations that are so important for the group in this set-up remain intact in spite of what Joy has encouraged the men to do.

Yet she was one who came out bluntly with things that detached the four of them from their separate, unknown existences behind them from their separate existences that would be taken up ahead, and made a life of their own together, in this house and yard. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 144)

The narrator refers to setting as assigned to the various South African racial groups separated correspondingly with the country's apartheid laws. The criteria used to

determine “separate, unknown existences” is individual skin, colour, hair, and body features backed by the letter of the law. Vusi, is Xhosa and his name denotes joy. He could be from Gugulethu township in the Western Cape; Eddie is Coloured and could be from Rustter-Vaal. Yet Charles and Joy, as white persons could be from any town or city: Sandton or Duncaville. Her intuition of making choices for the different members of the group when shopping is plausible. She considers the background factors that have given shape to their personalities. But Joy can also make wrong choices on behalf of the group members. By deviating from what experience has taught her to do things for the group, she would cause uneasiness. This is followed by a brief description of Vusi’s background:

He had watched, too young to understand, the tin and board that had been the shanty he was born in, carted away by government demolishers. His bare feet had been shod in shoes to the shape of a white child’s feet. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 146)

This is the abnormal scenario that obtains amongst the Blacks living in shantytowns when the law throws its fist. In the process, the municipality never cares to think that these sad developments affect children negatively. The shanties “carted away by government demolishers” so that the Blacks are not sure about where to sleep that night. He reminisces about this and the fact that even the designing of “... shoes had been shod in shoes to the shape of a white child’s feet.” is never tailored to accommodate a black child’s foot. At the same time, these experiences, when a flashback is made in a grown up individual, sufficient ammunition for hatred has been given to the child. The

freedom fighting, therefore, does not spring out of the nowhere. Its seeds have been lying fallow as the child grows up. Now it seems to be the right time to avenge the scandals.

2.5 Kleynhan's House / Plot 185 Koppiedrif

The Kleynhans mansion is a very significant setting on which 75% of the story revolves. It is the centre of activity in as far as the freedom fighters are concerned. This house stands as a vantage point from which the fighters can clearly see in the distance and see their way to fulfillment of their mission. We start with the passage from the book in which Mr Klopper is busy showing Joy the inside of the house and Charles the outhouses.

Same thing outside, with the husband. He was interested in the outhouses, of course. Nice double shed, could garage two cars---full of junk, when a place's been empty, only boy in charge---Kleynhans's old boy, and his hundred-an-one hangers-on, wife, children, whatnot...---But we'll get that cleaned up for you, no problem, whatnot...---Naas shouted out for the boy, but padlock on the door---he's gone off somewhere. Never here whenever I come, that's how he looks after the place. Well---I wanted to show you the room but I suppose it doesn't matter, the usual boy's room... p'raps you won't want to have anybody, like Mrs Klopper, you'll rather do for yourselves? Specially as you from overseas, ay --- (Gordimer, 1984, p. 127)

In this passage, Charles is portrayed as "...interested in the outhouses. " A "Nice double shed, could garage two cars" The outhouses are filled with a variety of junk. The

outhouses subsequently remind Mr Klopper of the African servant who stays there and is scheduled to take care of the place. As these outhouses are part of the sale, he is anxious to show them to Charles. However, "I wanted to show you the room but I suppose it doesn't matter, the usual boy's room...". The convenience of the place for the storage of explosives cannot be discounted as Charles seems to be so fascinated. Mr Klopper is talking his breath out trying to convince Charles who is not responding intermittently. Mr Klopper also relished in the independent habits of people from overseas who seem not to rely on a maid's or boy's work: "...p'raps you won't want to have anybody, like Mrs Klopper, you'll rather do for yourselves? Specially as you from overseas, ay..."

---Oh, like I said, just a usual boy's room, not very small, no. But you can easily brick in the shed if you want, I can send you good boys for building, it won't cost a lot. And there's those houses for pigs, at one time Kleynhans was keeping pigs. Clean them up---no problem... Australian, that's good. A good country. A lot like ours. Only without our problems, ay--- (Gordimer, 1984, p. 128)

Mr Klopper continues making a sales talk to Charles. As if he is reading Charles's mind, Mr Klopper talks about "...But you can easily brick in the shed if you want" additional walls would be erected next to the garage and the African servant's room. We know that Charles is going to make those spatial improvements so that the explosives they are going to handle are worked with as covertly as possible. He further points to more space that Charles can use to rear pigs "And there's those houses to pigs, at one time Kleynhans was keeping pigs". On the other hand, Mr Klopper is capitalizing on the

couple as from overseas and that makes it easier for them to work for themselves like his wife does. Without going into details, Mr Klopper appreciates the fact that Australia is much like South Africa. The South African problems mentioned in passing imply Blacks as a people that the Afrikaners would like to wish away in their land of birth "Only without our problems, ay".

In the house, neither husband nor wife remarked that the porcelain lid of the lavatory cistern was broken, and Naas generously drew their attention to it himself. ---I'll get you a new one cheap. Jewish chappies I know who run plumbing supplies, they'll always do me a favour. Anything you want in that line, you just tell me--- (Gordimer, 1984, p. 129)

Mr Klopper concentrates on his sales talk and continues to show the couple the broken "lavatory cistern". He is still baffled by their passive responses as he does not seem to waver talking about the good qualities of the place. He also tells them about problems they can see for which he seems to have solutions all the way "Jewish chappies I know who run plumbing supplies, they'll always do me a favour". Charles also wants to know how far the neighbours are from Kleynhans's place and the cute salesman replies:

Apart from the koppie behind the house, just bare veld with black, burned patches, now, before the rains. Old Kleynhans liked to live isolated on this dreary bit of land, the last years he hadn't even let out the hundred acres of his plot to the Portuguese vegetable farmers, as he used to. As for the garden---nothing left, the

blacks had broken the fruit trees for firewood, a plaster Snow White had fallen into the dry fishpond. It was difficult to find some feature of interest or beauty to comment on as he stood beside the couple after their round of the house, looking across the veld. He pointed---Those things over there, way over there. That's the cooling towers of the power station.---they followed his arm politely. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 129)

Mr Klopper shows the couple the broader environment around the house. He indicates that on his last days, "Old Kleynhans liked to live isolated on this dreary bit of land" and was so exhausted as not to "...let out the hundred acres of his plot to the Portuguese vegetable farmers," In bid to engage the couple's attention all the time, Mr Klopper points to the place of interest in which Charles and his colleagues are profoundly interested. "That's the cooling towers of the power station" and this is really the crux of matter. Mr Klopper did not know just how important that spatial representations are to Charles and his wife. He is now possibly winding down his sales talk and would like to hear what the couple decides about the place.

The Kleynhans place has been on Klopper's *Eidndoms Beperk's* books for nearly three years. And it seemed true what the husband said, they had money. They paid six month's rent in advance. So there is nothing to lose, so far as Mathilda Beukes, nee Kleynhans, who had inherited the place, was concerned... They didn't even want the place cleaned up before the moved in; energetic youngsters, they'd do it themselves. He gave them one last piece of advice, along with the keys. ---

Don't keep Kleynhans's old boy, he'll come to you with a long story, but I've told him before, he'll have to get off the place when someone moves in. he's not good.
--- (Gordimer, 1984, p. 130)

It has not been easy for Mr Klopper to sell Koppiesdrif in the past three years since Kleynhans died. Even as it is, the house is only rented for the next six months "They paid six month's rent in advance." It is only after then that Charles will make up his mind to decide whether to buy. Mr Klopper is impressed that they are going to move in as soon as possible; he appreciates the "... energetic youngsters, they'd do it themselves." and their obvious sense of independence that they will clean the place on their own. However, he has an advice for them ---"Don't keep Kleynhans's old boy, he'll come to you with a long story,". He clings to his words that the African boy is not good. The precaution for the Kleynhans boy to stay away emanates directly from the policy of how space is indivisible between Blacks and Whites. Mr Klopper feels that if the African servant stays longer there it would appear as if he owns the place and therefore have much say. He must qualify in no way to appear to can inherit the place.

A black man came round the yard, as the lady of the house had, but he didn't come nearer, only stood a moment, hammer in hand; wanting some further instructions from the missus, probably, and then seeing she was with another white person, knowing he mustn't interrupt. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 134)

Charles and his associates have now settled on the plot. They have brought along both Vusi and Eddie and things appear to be taking shape because they are seen as nothing else but servants. The African servant "... came round the yard" seems to know his place because he had "hammer in hand" he would not interfere when it was obvious he wanted to be given "further instructions" but would not interfere since the missus "was with another white person, knowing he mustn't interrupt":

---Well there's plenty to keep him busy in his garden. Shame... the pergola was so pretty. But the grapes will climb again, you'll see, if you get all the rubbish cleared away. But don't you start digging and that... be careful... Mrs Naas saw the girl, expecting in a strange country, must be comforted to have a talk a talk with a motherly woman. Mrs Naas's body, which had housed Dawie, Andries, Aletta and Klein Dolfie, expanded against the tight clothes from which it would never tell you something. This's the best of your life. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 134)

The saga of the narrative opens further vistas as Mrs Klopper sympathises with Joy. She finds Joy to be too lonesome and worthy of being given a motherly comfort. She warns Joy "don't you start digging and that... be careful" this exercise would be too strenuous for her at this time of her pregnancy. The representation of space is extended so far as to view the body of Mrs Klopper as a house. It accommodated her sons before they were born and further indicates that Joy is at the prime of her life. A woman's body can thus be seen as a house and therefore as implicated amongst representations of space.

It took Charles, Vusi and Eddie to hang an articulate metal garage door in the entrance of the converted shed. It thundered smoothly down and was secured by a heavy padlock to a ring embedded in Joy's cement. There was the pleasure to be expected of any structure of brick and mortar successfully completed; a satisfaction in itself, no matter what mere stage means to an end might represent. They stood about, looking at it. Charles put an arm on the girl's shoulder, and she put out an arm on Vusi's. (Gordimer, 1984, pp. 144-145)

With the mounting of "... articulate metal garage door in the entrance of the converted shed" to the garage by Charles, Vusi and Eddie there prevails "a satisfaction in itself, no matter what mere stage means to an end might represent" and accomplishment in the group. This in itself is a significant step in the totality of activities that are to follow linked together by the movement of time as a day to another and likewise the night. When the task is completed it is for Eddie and Vusi to sleep inside behind explosives boxes.

That afternoon a black man did appear in the yard. He was not a prowler, although he probably had been watching them, the Kleynhans place, since they'd moved in. He would have known from where this could be managed delicately, without disturbing them or being seen ... he found two men who worked there at Baas Kleynhans's place now, as he had done, farm boys. He had come to see how his mealies were getting along. Yes. Yes... there was a long pause, in which corollary to that remark would have time to be around this moment, to come to the point--- an agreement whereby he could claim his mealie crop when it was ready for

harvest. ... Gazing round his old home yard, the man admired the new garage with the nice door that had been made out of the shed and asked why his new white man hadn't ploughed? (Gordimer, 1984, pp. 167-168)

The death of Kleynhans has brought misery to this poor Blackman. Since Kleynhans died he has had no stable place of abode. "He was not a prowler, although he had been probably watching them..." but is wanted only to keep an eye on Kleynhans's mansion until the property is bought. Immediately after that, he should vacate the premises and look for another place to stay. Apparently, he has not been presenting himself physically on the plot, but he has been keeping a low profile while holding the place under surveillance "he would have known from where this could be managed delicately, without disturbing them or being seen". The man has no particular name, except that he is known as Kleynhans's 'old boy'. Even at his age, he is not seen for a man but for a boy. On arrival at Kleynhans's place he found Vusi and Eddie at the outhouses. He would continue to be part of the new establishment if given that opportunity now that his baas is deceased.

Kleynhans's servant has come to see his patch of mealie field that he has been looking after since he put the seed into the soil. He wants to clinch an agreement with Eddie and Vusi whether he can come around for harvest when the mealie crops are ripe "---an agreement whereby he could claim his mealie crop when it was ready for harvest". He seems impressed to see new developments on the plot and cherishes the hope that he should be called back to work on the farm with the Vusi and Eddie. This African man displays a pathological hunger for possession of the soil, working with it, and harvesting

its crops "...and asked why his new white man hadn't ploughed?". Although this message is not explicit, it is buried in his talk. The African servant is also worried what the new tenants at the plot are going to plough and plant. These are his questions as he believes that his skills can be accommodated in resurrecting the farm. However, both Charles and Joy are secretly watching through the window the movement of the African servant. Unfortunately, they are not conversant in Africa languages and should have registered every word of the conversation. This would lead to a situation where they would ask their African counterparts about the implications of conversing with him at length:

---Kleynhans paid him fifteen rands per month. He worked for him for twelve years. When Kleynhans had died, the daughter told the agent Klopper he could stay on without pay in that room in the yard until the place was sold. His son works at the brick-field and lives with his wife and kids with those other squatters near there. They've been chased off twice but they built their shack again. Since we came, the old man's living with them. No job. no permission to work in town.
--- (Gordimer, 1984, p. 170)

This passage has a variety of implications. Firstly, the man's son lives close by in a shack and has since been accommodating his nameless father who used to work for the deceased Kleynhans: "His son works at the brick-field and lives with his wife and kids with those other squatters". It further implies that a nameless man gave birth to a nameless son. Secondly, the old man has a son who has no fixed abode and has had his shack bulldozed: "They've been chased off twice but they built their shack again."

Bulldozing, by semantic extension, means the homeless are removed from the sites that they 'illegally' assigned themselves without proper authority sanctioning. The passbook can either nail a Blackman to a specific place or mobilize him to prison or to any place where opportunities of employment are present: "No job. No permission to work in town ---." The poor old man comes from apartheid's macro-space (homeland). He thinks of a place where he could profitably sell his labour. As he has nowhere to stay, he resorts to building a shack. The construction is labelled illegal and demolished. He sees himself as unfortunate as his problems multiply and become more compounded. Even if he would have gone to the authorities to be granted permission, he would not get one as he would have gone to the authorities to be granted permission, it would be said that it is not in compliance with the laws of the land and local government.

And then the man came on his bicycle to see how his mealies were doing. Charles and Joy were helping themselves to bread and coffee, in the kitchen, at seven in the morning; even Charles had not slept well. They saw him cautiously wheel the bicycle behind the shed, and then appear, sticking his neck out, withdrawing it, sticking it out, like a nervous rooster. He went to the door of his old room and called softly, in his language. They watched him. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 184)

Once more, the nameless man comes to visit the Kleynhans plot where he used to stay and work: "And the man came on his bicycle to see how the mealies were doing". The urge inside him pushes him to come and inspect his mealie crop how it is growing. This time around, it was not Eddie and Vusi who will talk to him. As he cautiously goes

to the back door, Joy is readily awaiting him. In the dialogue that obtains between them, the African servant points out that he wants to talk to the two boys working for the madam. On hearing that they are no more working there, he introduces himself as the old Kleynhans's servant and would like to be given work if there is any. He also indicates that when he visited the plot last time, he told Eddie and Vusi that he is the one who planted the patch of mealies and would happily allow the baas and missus to help themselves to it. More than anything else, the man has a profound love of working with the soil and it is in this direction that he wants to be given work by the newly arrived couple. However, in the line of operation that Charles and Joy were engaged, there is no way that the man could be given any work. So he left with a cloud of suspicion hanging on him that he might be coming to spy around. Joy adopted the attitude and manner of Whites when talking to black people.

2.6 Trip to the Supermarket

The trip that Eddie takes to Johannesburg and to the supermarket in particular perplexes the group intensely. Very early in the morning, when Eddie thinks that probably everyone is still asleep, he escapes to town. It seems that Eddie is suffering nostalgia. He since left Johannesburg in 1976 during the Soweto Uprising and appears to be longing to see himself walking the streets of the city.

Eddie had nothing to leave at the entrance of a supermarket where you were asked to deposit your briefcase or carrier bag in return for a numbered disc... No trolley uncoupled, no plastic bag, arsenals of canned fruit passed,

pickles in jars, oval and flat cans of pilchards, sardines, anchovies, mussels in brine, tuna in cottonseed oil, bottles of sauces, aerosol cans of chocolate topping... bins of coffee beans, packets of rice and lentils, sacks of mealie-meal and sugar... (Gordimer, 1984, pp. 172-173)

It appears that Eddie is on a trip to see everything that his eye falls upon. The narrator shows us the details of the items and articles: "pickles in jars", "oval and flat cans of pilchards", "sardines", "anchovies", "mussels in brine", "tuna in cotton seed oil", "bottles of sauces", "aerosol cans and chocolate topping", "bins of coffee beans", "packets of rice and lentils", and "sacks of mealie-meal and sugar" that Eddie saw but none of these things would he pick up with the intention of buying. He is "not pushing a trolley" in which he would be loading the articles he buys. The various categories of articles in the supermarket are merely for sight-seeing and inspecting. It is as if he wanted to establish that these things are still there as he knew them before he left Johannesburg. He appears also to be detecting where changes have been effected.

In the streets he sees Coloured people like himself. He meets the young ones, the "unemployed", the pupils from "classes", "messengers" from various business houses. He also finds that there appears to be "more black people" than before he left the city. Some of the things that he knew have not changed. For instance, there are still long queues of people waiting for buses 'Down the west end of Jeppe and Bree Streets' (174). The taxi drivers in Diagonal Street are still there "where they groomed their vehicles like proud racehorse owners". Yet the other part of the city appears serene especially where one finds banks and insurance houses. As if he is looking for himself in the mirror, he sees

more Coloured people who are much lighter in complexion and resemble “the Afrikaners who grandfathered them” (Gordimer, 1984, p. 174).

Eddie also lamentably reasons that black people are only there as visitors. They will have to leave as soon as they have finished their business especially leaving money in the shops. They can only be there while they have some money to spend. “All would have to go back to the places of blacks, when they had spent their money; but there was no white centre to the city” (Gordimer, 1984, p. 174). The Westgate centre forms the egress out of the city to Soweto, yet there is no centre where Whites are seen in such large numbers as one sees Blacks. He enters the outfitter’s shop “... was shown a range of casual trousers by an Indian employed there”. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 175) He also visits a fancy shop selling “... video equipment, cameras and the latest in walkabout tape players... marvellous precision of workmanship demonstrated to him by a young Portuguese who had probably fled from Mozambique...” (Gordimer, 1984, p. 175). Nobody recognizes him that he is from exile. It is only when he leaves the city that he meets a prostitute who appears to recognize him somehow, but he just has no time for such. When his nostalgia has diminished and he is raring to board a bus that would take him nearer to Plot 185 Koppiedrif, it was already afternoon.

2.7 John Vorster Square

It is not each one of the freedom fighters who is as lucky as the foursome who live at Plot 185 Koppiesdrif. Those who lose their luck end up at John Vorster Square to undergo the most horrendous treatment from the police ever. The following passage should give us a better reflection of this fearful place:

At police headquarters Sergeant Chapman (an English stoker in the 1880s jumped ship, married an Afrikaner girl and left the name scratched on a Boer family tree) took over the 7 a.m. shift of interrogation of one of the people held in detention there. It was a nice-enough-looking place to be stationed, right in town. The blue spandrel panels and glimpse of potted plants in the façade it presented to the passing city freeway could have been those of an apartment block; the cells in which these people were kept were within the core of the building. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 154)

John Vorster Square is a frightful place where a freedom fighter could never wish to be. Freedom fighters who are caught undergo intensive interrogation under a battery of questions from experienced and inexperienced interrogators. They are asked where they have been overseas or in other African countries. They must also divulge the type of training they are equipped with to fight against apartheid. The freedom fighters, communists or terrorists are kept 'within the core of the building'. Perhaps that is because the place is highly visible and makes it difficult for a detainee to attempt making an escape.

Sergeant Chapman points out that it is a "tiring work" as one has to concentrate on the 'politicals' and elicit information from them. They are questioned twenty-four hours around the clock. Obviously, a variety of emotions impinge on the Sergeant as he sees these people in their different appearances as "The Major said it didn't even matter if you got to feel sorry for them---the Major knew about this, although you always hid it; 'a

bond of sympathy' was the first real step on the way to extracting a confession" (Gordimer, 1984, p. 155). Some are to be pitied, others not. With the impact of such gruelling interrogation being endlessly directed to individual detainees, some end up revealing the secrets of exile and freedom fighting. In doing his work, Sergeant Chapman works with the Major who is a senior officer. The interrogation is continual as different officers in the panel follow one another in asking him questions. Some gifts from the officers to the detainees, such as cigarette, would be given to break the resistance of those who wont answer questions as expected. But as the Sergeant takes over, the tough African detainee who would not speak appears terribly indisposed and dies later on. It is only then that the Major feels free to go home and report the following morning at 6 a.m.

In his brainwashed way, Sergeant Chapman maintains that "... there's something wrong with these people who become enemies of their own country ". He has been made to believe that Africans want to enjoy life the way Europeans do. It does not occur to the Sergeant how the history of the country under apartheid domination has had a damaging impact on Blacks in particular. Apartheid alienated a Blackman to Blackman, a Blackman to a European and worst of all, a stranger in his land of birth.

Within John Vorster Square is the restaurant of a Chinese man and his wife. It specializes in entertaining policemen with drinks and meals when they are on break. These policemen are also served liquor depending on whether they howled for the stuff or not. The children of the police together with their grand-parents also enjoy treats of sorts at subsidized and irresistible prices.

... Their restaurant had a few ethnic pretensions of the usual kind... the policemen were not expected to buy a meal, and for the price of a packet of chips and a cold drink could relax from their duties, so nearby... beer was silently produced for those who, the couple knew without having to be asked aloud, wanted it... diners who had nothing to say to one another felt at least part of some animation. Family treats for children and grandmothers were popular there, because the food was cheap; children always fascinated by the thrill and fear sensed anything military or otherwise authoritarian, ate their grey chicken soup while watching the policemen. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 157)

The Chinaman's restaurant has become a place where policemen on duty can repose while being entertained to cheap meals. Special table and chairs are exclusively arranged for the use of policemen "... they kept an area clear of tables and had ranged a dozen chairs for the use of policemen". They were being feted at a nominal price indeed as the "... Policemen were not expected to buy a meal, and for the price of a packet of chips and a cold drink could relax from their duties, so nearby". The drinking of liquor is such an irresistible indulgence. Even policemen on duty fall in that tender trap as "... beer was silently produced for those who, the couple knew without having to be asked aloud, wanted it." The other policemen who buy nothing become part of an apparently satisfied concourse sitting around and otherwise looking at the TV - a "created a friendly enclave". It is a pleasant place, where policemen also bring their children, wives, grannies to enjoy "Family treats... because the food was cheap.",

It is obvious that John Vorster Square like any other space and setting, is capable of influencing the thinking of individuals in a way that could change their attitudes. The manner in which Sergeant Chapman thinks as regards what motivates the Africans to become freedom fighters, can only emanate from an abnormal person. The same can be said of the Chinaman who seems to be totally unconscious of the happenings at John Vorster Square much as he and his wife seem oblivious of even the world outside the police station. Together with his wife, they seem to be satisfied with everything that is happening at John Vorster Square. It could only be thought that the Chinaman was conniving with the state in mysterious ways especially as a businessman whose business activities are motivated by profit. It is also true that the general behaviour of the police points to a general insufficiency of some kind or another. They also seem to have reached their tether and their minds have become blunt. One only can deduce from these observations that the apartheid government of the nationalists is out and out to destroy some people at the expense of others.

2.8 The Cave in the Veld / The Cooling Towers of the Power Station

After leaving Koppiesdrif, the Charles, Joy, Vusi and Eddie want to reach their destination that is the power station itself. Time has to be used sparingly since they do not know how long it would take the Kloppers and the police to discover the type of persons he allowed room and shelter at Koppiesdrif. It is therefore important that, before they attack the power station, arrangements of accommodation very close to the power station nearby would be advantageous. Charles seems to have the mental map of the power station in the outlying veld. He conducts a thorough search and discovers the cave in

which himself, Eddie and Vusi could in the interim, hide themselves from whoever could see them wandering about the power station vicinity.

Charles has found the cave. He has searched the veld within three or four kilometres of the power station, carrying a mining geologist's hammer and bags as the perfectly ordinary answer to anyone who might wonder what he was doing. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 190)

It is understandable that Charles and associates must reach the 'cooling towers' if the mission is to be successfully concluded. The passage above is a significant milestone in the journey to the power station that supplies the entire Reef with electricity. The carrying of the geologist's tools --- that is, "the mining geologist's hammer and bag" --- create appropriate gesture and impression, misleading whoever would like to stand in his way and question his activities. Thinking of the success of the project and also of anyone who might harbour suspicions about Charles's wanderings there. However, Charles and colleagues have more to do to ascertain that they are going to filter their way into the power station.

Now that so much progress has been made on their way to the 'cooling towers', Vusi and Eddie were to execute the explosion part of it. They were supposed to hide nearby by day and only move at night. The cave was just the appropriate thing to come to their discovery at this hour.

... Then they found a narrow cleft where, one at a time, they could lie hidden and get some air through the overhang of coarse dusty leaves. Impossible for anyone straying past to see a human figure in there. If cows had used the shallow dug-out to rest in, herdsmen, the boy children or old men who couldn't earn money in the cities, must have rested here, too. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 192)

Inside the cave they find "narrow cleft" in which they could repose without "... anyone straying past to see a human figure in there". This cave that rendered them invisible to passers-by, could only be where their hope lies to that they are near fulfilling their mission. The cleft could only have been useful to people who were not exposed to city dwelling and working, that is, people who were at home around there: "old men who couldn't earn money in the cities, must have rested here, too" or alternatively herd boys who, during hunting rounds in the day, would use the place and hide from the scorching heat of the sun.

And he had found it. They called it 'the cave', right from the first night he took them there to see if it would do, but it wasn't a cave at all. It was the end of a rocky outcrop that sloped away underground into the grassland of the Highveld, sticking up unobtrusively from it like part of the steep deck of a wreck that is all that remains visible of a huge submerged liner in the past... Another muscular rope of a tree with dark thick leaves had split a great rock vertically but held together; the rock fig. All this tough foliage, exposed to heat and frost without the protective interventions of cultivation, more natural than any garden growth,

looked exactly like its antithesis---the indestructible synthetic leaves of artificial plants under neon lights... but when, those nights between midnight and dawn, he and Vusi and Eddie had used their picks to dig a pit, they had fallen into what was (Charles saw) unmistakably an old stope. There were rough dressed eucalyptus planks holding up the earth that sifted down on their heads as they tunnelled on a bit. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 190)

After leaving Koppiesdrif, the idea of another hideout dominates the minds of the freedom fighters. But more than being a cave, it is the “end of a rocky outcrop that sloped away underground into the grassland of the Highveld,...”. The idea of a structure that can accommodate human beings plays a significant role here. The representations of space are further extended here where a cave has to accommodate the two freedom fighters as they lay in wait to strike. The concluding part of this simile also becomes very important because “...sticking unobtrusively from it like part of the steep deck of a wreck that is all that remains visible of a huge submerged liner of the past.” Quite so, the “liner” is a huge ship that sails in the ocean. It sometimes comes across storms in the turbulent seas or even hits rocks. For instance, only the mast is firstly seen if a liner has hit a rock and has sunk. The narrator draws this image of a submerged vessel when both Eddie and Vusi have to enter into the cavernous earth to be accommodated for a while while further plans to move forward to the towers are made. However, the liner most importantly carries people.

Eddie and Vusi have to go into the lap of the earth for a moment before they can advance to “the cooling towers”. In the process, they see vegetation that takes advantage

of the moisture next to the cave. The appearance of “leathery, rigid, black-green leaves, with a rusty sheen vertically but held it together, the rock fig” shows that nature directs the growth of vegetation without any human interference for quite a very long time. Therefore, not surprisingly, “Another muscular rope of a tree” by which the narrator refers to the strong, thick roots of the “rock fig”. Nature is undisturbed here as we see “...this tough foliage...without the protective interventions of cultivation, more natural than any garden growth..” We are told that it resembles its opposite, namely the “indestructible synthetic leaves of artificial plants that change colour in electric lights”. A “stope”, which is a kind of stoep or pedestal has been hit when Charles, Eddie and Vusi were busy doing some digging at night. They find in the pit “rough-dressed eucalyptus planks holding up the earth that sifted down on their heads as they tunnelled on a bit.” These discoveries made by the threesome show that a mine existed there long ago. Apparently, the mine has been there before the discovery of gold in the Reef in 1886. In the light of this observation, Charles is heard saying: “---Man, I never thought this thing would end up landing me working in the mines --- (Gordimer, 1984, p. 191).

As their brothers had for generations carried coal and sacks of potatoes, they unloaded and stowed in the pit they had dug the AKM assault rifles and bayonets, the grey limpet mines with detonators and timing devices, the defensive and the offensive hand-grenades. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 191)

The narrator retrieves from South African daily experience that black labourers carry heavy coal sacks on their backs. The cargo being unloaded here in this fashion is

miscellany of weaponry in the form of rifles, bayonets, grey limpet mines, detonators, timing devices, hand-grenades. These are all going to be stored in the pit. In order to conceal the baggage, the threesome cover the weapons with "some plastic sheeting and covered with earth, grasses and small shrubs uprooted in the dark". The space allocated to Eddie and Vusi is very little as they sacrifice for the glory of defeating the enemy. Besides, the weaponry in the arsenal (pit), food provisions are also stored in the pit and branches cut from the "Transvaal elm or white stinkwood".

...He knew from experience that nothing ever goes quite according to any plan. The wire that should be cut like a hair by an AKM bayonet turns out to be a brick wall, the watchtower that should be vacant for two minutes between the departure of one security guard after that arrival of the next is not vacant because the first guard has lingered to blow his nose in his fingers. Vusi's concentration matched the peace... (Gordimer, 1984, p. 192)

Vusi's, as an experienced freedom fighter, understands that "... nothing ever goes quite according to any plan". He thinks that the "... wire that should be cut like a hair by an AKM bayonet " could prove inadequate. The envisaged wire could sometimes be a "brick wall". However, in reality, the AKM has been tested on walls and has succeeded to penetrate through the wall. As if that is not enough, it has gone further to do more damage inside the chamber. It is in this sense that Vusi's mind moves from the wire to the wall and he apparently knows what to do then. Moreover, the intersection between time and space becomes very crucial here. Vusi estimates trivial actions that eat into time

during the interval as the outgoing security police and the one engaging anew change shifts.

The mine-working where Eddie and Vusi hid, that Charles identified as belonging to the turn of the 19th century, is in fact far, far older. It goes back further than anything in conventional or alternative history, or even oral tradition, back to human presences who people anthropology and archaeology, to the hands that shaped the objects or fired the charcoal which may be subjected to carbon tests. No one knows that the brief occupations of Vusi and Eddie, and the terrible tools that were all they had to work with, a circle was closed; because before the gold-rush prospectors of the 1890s, centuries before time was measured, here, in such units, there was an ancient mine working out there, and metals precious to men were discovered, dug and smelted, for themselves, by black men. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 203)

The people who are the subject of study in “anthropology and archaeology” are always associated with time in antiquity when civilization began. There “was an ancient mine” that was worked out then. The “metals precious to men were discovered, dug and smelted, for themselves, by black men.” Possibly the “metals precious” implied and not elaborated on here could include gold, silver and iron which archaeologists have found when digging ancient graves, especially graves of monarchs. This hypothesis is with reference to ancient African cities such as Mapungubye and Thulamela where the graves of kings and queens were excavated and gold found with their bones.

2.9 The Northern Suburbs

The significance of the suburbs in the unfolding drama of *Something Out There* is laced with the response of fear and anxiety. The suburbs are in the space where the baboon-cum-ape-cum-gorilla-cum-guerilla strikes terror in the hearts of women, youth and men. Mariella (baboon) tells her husband, Sergeant Chapman, that their venison has been gnawed to the bone by the creature; Mrs Scholtz (monkey) is bitten by the baboon on one of her shoulders while she is concentrating on contents of the dustbin; Ms Lamb (ape) punishes Blacks when she influences the local municipality to refrain from building toilets for the Blacks and for the sake of their children something must be done about the escaped creature from the zoo; black women, refrain from calling the creature tikoloshe or sethotsela, and would rather resort to spook, Afrikaans name for the invisible haunting spirit. Besides being attacked by fear at all spatial settings, the women conceive the creature differently.

...Mrs Scholtz heard the dustbin lid clang and thought her cat, named after a TV series Mrs Scholtz hadn't missed an episode of, some years back, was in there again. The dustbin kept between the garage and the maid's room where Bokkie Scholtz does carpentry---his hobby; Patience Ngulungu doesn't live in, but comes to work from Naledi Township weekdays only. Mrs Scholtz found the lid off the bin but no sign of Dallas. As she bent to replace the lid, something landed on her back and bit her just below the right shoulder. Out of nowhere---as she was to relate many times. First thing she knew, there was this terrible pain, as if her arm

were torn off---but it wasn't; without even realizing that she did it, she had swung back with the same arm, holding the metal lid, at what had bitten her, just as you swat wildly at a bee. She did not hit anything; when she turned round there it was--she saw a big grey monkey already up on her roof of the garage. It was gibbering and she was screaming, Bokkie, Bokkie. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 194)

The general emotion built into this passage is one of fear and anxiety. Mrs Scholtz is looking for her cat Dallas, not suspecting that anything could go wrong. She is mysteriously attacked by the grey monkey that bites her "below the right shoulder". The searing pain she feels is as if her arm is "torn off---but it wasn't". Her response to hit back is futile. The thing jumps up and sit on the roof. She starts screaming at her husband. When Mr Scholtz comes, he struck by fear as "his blood ran cold". He makes a generalization that Johannesburg has turned out for the worst as "They are everywhere, loafers, illegals, robbers, murderers, the pass laws are a joke, you can't keep them out of white areas." Just like Mariella, Mrs Scholtz speaks about something tangible in the form of a "grey monkey". It is physical as she can see it on the roof of the house. And Mr Scholtz's attempt to shoot it is successful but the shooting cannot bring the monkey down. However, the view held by Mr Scholtz centres on the ubiquity of Blacks. He maintains that "...the pass laws are a joke, you can't keep them out of white areas". The fear that holds Mr Scholtz is that of the black tide engulfing Whites and white areas. He is convinced that the pass laws are a dismal failure if at all they were meant to keep Blacks out of the suburban space and setting.

... Howard C. Butterfield III had 'enjoyed your lovely country' until he and his wife were mugged only ten yards from Moulin Rouge Hotel in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. He'd like to avail himself of the hospitality of 'your fine paper' to tell the black man who slapped his wife before snatching her purse that he had broken her dental bridgework, causing pain and inconvenience on what was to have been the holiday of a lifetime, and that he was no better than any of the uncivilized ape at large. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 12)

The above passage shows that, although Butterfield III enjoyed being in the sunny South Africa, he equates the criminal who mugged him and his wife with the "uncivilized ape at large". Butterfield read about the creature in South African newspapers that generally haunts the suburbs. But the attack on his wife by a black man enrages him. One can deduce that he was as helpless as Mr Scholtz after the monkey had attacked his wife. The image of the ape-cum-baboon-cum-gorilla-cum-guerilla and the Blackman seems to be in many white people's minds. Butterfield makes the naïve conclusion that the black man who "snatched" his wife's purse and slapped her is as "uncivilized (as) the ape at large" that haunts the suburbs.

Other servants round about reported signs of something out there. It was common talk where they gathered, to hear from the Chinese runner what symbol had come up in their daily gamble on the numbers' game, in a lane between two of 'their' house---after ten or twenty years, living just across the yard from the big house, there develops such a thing as a deferred sense of property, just as there

can be deferred pain felt in a part of the human body other than that of its source. Since no one actually saw whoever or whatever was watching them---timid or threatening?---rumour began to round that it was what (to reduce any power of malediction it might possess) they called---not in their own language with its rich vocabulary recognizing the supernatural, but adopting the childish Afrikaans word---a spook. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 148)

The black servants decided to call the creature the spook. That is an Afrikaans equivalence for *tikoloshe* or *Sethotsela*. In their conversations at their working places in the suburbs, the African women think that if they should call the creature *tikoloshe*, which is a general word used for such mysterious creatures, they could lay themselves open to mysterious attacks at night. The carrier who announces a number that came out at the *fah-fee* gambling would also make a gesture that points to the creature.

Another inference about the creature is the spirit of the dead person haunting a typical place where he or she died. The story around the spirit of the dead person (*sethotsela*, Sotho equivalent) is also told. It is surmised to be the spirit of a labourer from the Transkei who died two years ago. After he had died he was not led to go back home so that he should not turn into an invisible attacker of people at places. The creature, in black people's cultural context, is interpreted in that manner. In that vein then, that black man was a migratory worker, who lost his way as he returns from drinking sprees and accidentally falls into the cliff to his death. The story of the creature is surely incomplete if it is told out of setting or space. The human mind can always invent setting out of nothing.

Ms Dot Lamb, chairperson of the Residents' Association of the suburb where, if an outlaw can be said to have taken up residence, this one seemed to have a base, since it kept returning there, requested an interview with the town councillor whom residents had voted into office to protect their property and interests... Ms Lamb called a meeting of the Association. She was a woman who got things done; the residents were people who wanted things done for them, without having to take trouble themselves... She had won (for them) the battle to stop toilets for blacks being built at the blacks' suburban bus terminus, making a strong case that this convenience, far from promoting public decency, would merely encourage the number of blacks who gathered to drink among the natural flora of the koppies that was such a treasured feature of the suburb. Now these koppies were being used by an escape ape as well... (Gordimer, 1984, p. 171)

The Residents' Association is a body composed of people who claim space or land in a typical suburban municipality setting. Ms Lamb happens to be the chairperson of such a body. Amongst the most stupid things she has ever fought for, is to "...stop toilets being built at the black's suburban bus terminus". The naivety of the campaign against the erection of lavatories for Blacks at the bus terminus--- and it succeeds---can be viewed against the backdrop of the local government that has a pathological hatred for Blacks. This stupid proposal that deprives Blacks of such an essential health amenity makes sense to members of Residents' Association. She laments that Africans drink beer amongst the "natural flora of the koppies" and in the process interfere with the "treasured

feature of the suburb". The creature is an added menace to the "treasured feature of the suburb". Ms Lamb finds justification that the black people must be punished with a deprivation of vital importance. Once more, we are able to find a black man coupled to the menace of the "escaped ape as well" in the suburbs. The "ape" has become a trade mark with which a black man is associated and vice versa. The ape and the black man are contesting for space in the mind of the white man.

...The creature was no snob; or no respecter of persons, whichever way you cared to look at it. The policeman's venison in a lower-income-group housing estate, a pedigreed ShihTzu carried away when let out for its late-night leg-lift in an Inanda rose garden---each served equally as means of survival. And the creature never went beyond the bounds of Johannesburg. Like the contract labourers, who had to leave their families to find work where work was, like the unemployed who were endorsed out to where there was no work and somehow kept getting back in through the barbed strands of Influx Control; like those who are the uncoun ted doubling of census figures for Soweto and Tembisa and Natalspruit and Alexandra townships, it was canny about where it was possible somehow to exist off the pickings of plenty. And if charity does not move those who have everything to spare, fear will. All the residents of the suburbs wanted was for the animal to be confined in its appropriate place, that's all, zoo or even circus. They were prepared to pay for this to be done. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 181)

It is a point of intrigue that the creature is attracted to white space and white suburbs. It is in this sense that the narrator tells us that “the creature was no snob; or no respecter of persons...”. If it chooses not to respect, it attacks the Dobrows, the Kloppers, the Kleynhanses, the Scholtzs, the Chapamans as long as they live in the suburbs and are white. The author likens this selective phenomenon with the migratory worker (the contract worker) who is from the homelands and can be selectively isolated from his ethnic and urban brother only to be channelled back to the homelands.

On the other hand, the unemployed are also selected through the passbook mechanism and send back to the homelands (the equivalent of Russian Siberia where it is so cold and the chances of returning alive are almost nil). However, the lucky ones were able to fool Influx laws by penetrating through the blind spots of the matrix. By assuming a place next to the black man, the creature generates “fear” in white people who implement such a cruel system of territorial apartheid. The creature seems to find a home as soon as the black man finds a homeland to be confined to. It is the affluent people of South Africa who put the mechanism of apartheid in place and will pay for the ape-cum-monkey-cum-gorilla-cum-guerilla to be confined to the zoo (homeland).

The Bokkie Scholtzs’ house is burglar-proofed, has fine wires on windows and doors which activate an alarm that goes hysterical, with noises like those science fiction films have taught come from outer space, whenever Dallas tries to get to get in through a fanlight. They have a half-breed Rottweiler who was asleep, apparently, on the front stoep, when the attack came. It just shows you--- whatever you do, you can’t call yourself safe. (Gordimer, 1984, p. 195)

This is another scene in which we find houses fortified from burglary. The exercise, although it has proved inadequate in certain instances, residents of the Northern Suburbs continue to intensify in a bid to frustrate the creature. These steel “burglar-proofed” fortifications at the Scholtzs could not keep the creature out from attacking Mrs Scholtz. There is also an “alarm” that is very sensitive to movement. The alarm blasts loudly when the Scholtzs’ cat makes an attempt of going through the cooling fan. The “Rottweiler” dog is known for its cruelty. It has meticulous check on time and attempts at feeding on the owner who fails to keep time when coming to feed him or her. In spite of its strictness on the use of time, the Scholtzs’ Rottweiler failed to detect the presence of the mysterious creature at the back. Mrs Scholtz’s scream was heard even at the neighbours but the Rottweiler could not sense the presence of trouble in the backyard. That is why Mr Scholtz himself came rushing from the neighbours when he heard his wife screaming. What Mr Scholtz said then still makes us wonder how he comes to the conclusion of making the attack on his wife a collective action because earlier on he said: “They are everywhere, loafers, illegals, robbers, murderers, the pass laws are a joke, you can’t keep them out of the white areas.” (Gordimer, 1984, p. 194)

2.10 Conclusion

In the foregoing analyses, I have tried to show how the mysterious creature has terrorized white people in the various categories of life. The Kloppers, the Kleynhanses, the suburbs, the golf-playing medical specialists, John Vorster Square and others. It baffles residents even more to find that the creature is ubiquitous. They do not know

when it is going strike. It kills their pets especially the cats. Wherever the creature appears, an association of the creature with Blacks is made by various people. Some say it is an ape, a monkey, a baboon, a gorilla or even a guerrilla for that matter. These varieties of the simian family, are nothing else but the search for names that apartheid-sick people append to the Africans.

CHAPTER THREE

CRITIQUE ON CAN THEMBA'S FICTION

3.1 Introduction

As I have argued in Chapter One, in South Africa, space is used to determine human relationships through the apartheid instrument as invented by the Nationalist government. Apartheid dictated to different ethnic groups where they will reside; where they will worship; who will board which train, bus or taxi; where should a black man be at what time and so on. In the meantime, Africans had no say to influence the course of legislation that directly affected them and consequently they used to be treated despicably. Africans have been forced to stay by themselves away from Whites and the Whites away from the Africans.

Can Themba was interested in the drama of life in black townships, often culminating in death. He worked for the *Drum* magazine as a journalist and also as an assistant editor for the *Golden City Post*. He has written about the drama surrounding the pass document, the police, and thousands of arrests of those who could not produce them on demand were subjected to. On scrutinizing the pass document, the police could easily determine whether one is working or not. In this sense, the pass document made serious impact on the movement of Africans in South Africa. The black man would be assigned abode in the homelands or in the urban areas, and if he should leave that place, an appropriate endorsement was to be made. Themba also wrote about Blacks who appeared at the pass office only to be interviewed by a 'doctor' whose 'diagnosis' would determine if the condition of his pass allowed him to work in the urban areas. Therefore, for some of the Blacks, setting implied that the pass laws were designed to promote or frustrate the

efforts of Blacks to be employed. Themba's (1985) article bearing the title "Nude Pass Parade" clearly points to this humiliating experience of the Blacks who were looking for work in and around Johannesburg.

Themba writes:

Naked! Humiliated! Hoping to God time's going to go quickly. Trying to pass off awkwardness with a shrug and wry jokes, big-shot businessmen, professional men, ordinary guys just come for a 'pass' stand around stripped in the waiting-room of the Non-European Affairs Department in Johannesburg each work-day of the week. Hundreds of them, each day. (p. 144)

Similarly, the humiliation of Blacks applies in the following passage:

You may be a dignified businessman, a top-class lawyer, a jeweller, a wood merchant, or anybody. You will find yourself naked. Well, you wanted to work in Johannesburg, didn't you? The official world is not finicky about your embarrassed modesty. (p. 145)

Next to the pass document came the prison that also obviously influenced African people's freedom of movement. The type of offences that were connected to the pass document, amongst others, ranged from criminal offences such as murder, rape, sedition to petty offences arising from the carrying of the pass book. Failure to produce it on demand often resulted in imprisonment. The converse to this practice was that jails were

always full to capacity as this offence was so easy to commit. The prison inmates, irrespective of all being black and male Africans, were never kind to each other. Gangs were formed inside prisons and 'gang wars' took place especially over smuggled money, tobacco and dagga. With meat, it happens that a member of the rival gang 'appointed' to help in dishing out food, gives little meat to the rivals. The apartheid prison warders were not strict when prisoners fought amongst themselves. The winners in the battles aligned themselves with the warders and were treated with some measure of sympathy. Prisoners sentenced to anything less than six months had the alternative of serving their sentences either inside or outside prison. The latter means that prisoners were hired out to farmers to supplement their manpower.

In this regard, Mr Nxumalo who was the editor of *Drum* was once arrested for the pass offence and hired out to the farmer known to be the cruellest. This gave him the opportunity to collect fresh information about the 'barbaric' working conditions under which African prisoners served their terms in these extended farm prisons. Nxumalo would be armed with a secret camera that he used to take photos that would be published in the *Drum* magazine. From the strain and extraordinary toil that took place in these farms, some prisoners attempted to escape and once they were caught, they would be severely punished. Sometimes they die from the beatings. The redeployment of prisoners in farms, intensifies the incident of assault on prisoners by farmers. The assaults become crystallized in the African people's minds as perceptions associated to setting. The assaults were malicious and intended to inflict grievous physical injuries.

In fact, E'skia Mphahlele (1986) writes passionately about prisoners sold to farmers in his novel *The Wanderers*. He was Themba's colleague while working for

Drum magazine and the two journalists were similarly exposed to these weird experiences in their investigative reports. Mphahlele captures the working climate to which the prisoners at the farms were treated:

When I estimated I had done four miles, there the signboard stood, ahead of me, showing GLENDALE FARM. All the time I walked, I listened intently for any sounds of dogs. I always disliked ordinary dogs, hated and feared the fierce breeds. Pictures of runaway farm prisoners being mauled by dogs in a chase never left my mind whenever I thought of entering any of these farms. (p. 90)

The passage introduces us to the eerie atmosphere at Glendale where the character Timi in the novel took the adventure of visiting this farm with the aim of taking photographs that would be published in *Drum*. Further revelation is made by Mphahlele how the runaway prisoners would be hunted by the farmers with dogs that bit them with all the sense of malice that made up their programmes of training. Having adjusted himself on the farm and accommodated by the Dzivanes, Timi secretly continues to take photographs of prisoners in their working rounds. Mphahlele continues to portray the life of prisoners as follows:

I waited for them to return at dusk; this time in the fowl-run itself as there was little space at the eastern corner when I could squat. They turned out to be good shots. The twilight heightened the grimness on their faces, their sack garments, and the formation of their lines in twos. The two African guards, one on

either side, armed with a spear and a big-headed club, came out no less effectively. They wore dirty black uniforms, fatty hats flapped up on one side and had motor-tire sandals. Both guards looked the very personification of junk-shop material. (p. 101)

The asperity of the sacks as they contact the human body throughout the working day, suggests how the system of redeploying prisoners to farms dehumanized and desensitized them of passionate human feelings. The apartheid government would not intervene to make the working conditions suitable for humans. The farmers, who make up the core of the ruling class by being as close to the soil as can be, would go so far as making human manure out of some of the dear prisoners' bodies. There is nothing as inhuman as these bizarre and macabre killings of defenceless prisoners

In the early sixties, Robben Island, which has a long colonial history of being used as a place suitable for incarcerating convicts from England and Holland, was used to incarcerate political prisoners. As such, Africans looked at Robben Island with fear and trepidation.

Townships and locations that were to be removed had Sophiatown as the forerunner. The government demolished Sophiatown in 1955 and transported the residents to take up new residence in Meadowlands. Themba who was addicted to writing about dramatic events, mournfully wrote about the removals. The journalistic article with the title: "Requiem for Sophiatown" was his immediate response to the tragedy that befell Africans. His passionate sentiments and the deep liking for Sophiatown are discernible in his fiction. The use of personification is rife in this report on the demolition and this is

evidence enough that Themba relished and elevated Sophiatown to the level of a human being very close to his heart. The merciless demolition of Sophiatown by the Nationalist government served as harbinger of what the regime was bent to do about the residence of Africans in future.

The demolition of Sophiatown was the significant event that benchmarked the new housing policy ushered in by the nationalists. The imperial government introduced the 'four-roomed match-box' houses circa 1937 as seen in townships like Orlando. The unique feature about the nationalist's approach to black housing was the proliferation of these houses at a scale never seen before. Themba was deeply disturbed by the government's removal of residents to Meadowlands and the razing down of the houses using the bulldozer to intensify the government's iron hand on the life of Africans. Meadowlands was not regarded a suitable substitute for Sophiatown as it lacked people's 'institutions' like drinking dens. The relationship of Themba to the demolished Sophiatown stands out in memory as bitter. When the government started to persecute him, Themba fled to Swaziland where he died prematurely, possibly, from frustration. For a man whose pen was so loquacious about the perpetration of ill-treatment of Blacks in South Africa, shows how painfully he was muzzled. He exiled himself from his fatherland as his writing and voice were equally silenced. He was banned and so was the output of his pen.

Themba also wrote about railway stations and varieties of trains that carry passengers to and from the city as an additional dimension to black people's restless lives. The rails that link the stations between Soweto and the city and the complicated railway network culminating to Park Station in the heart of Johannesburg, are other

factors that influence the African people's relationship to space in the city. The railways have developed a culture of their own policing such that, the South African Police force would seldom be summoned to subdue riotous behaviour in trains. The ticket inspectors carried handcuffs with them so that whenever the opportunity presented itself to arrest a 'misbehaving' Africans, the arrest would be made as soonest. These are the realistic metaphors of life that Themba presents to the reader to untangle in his short stories such as *The Dube Train*, "Mob Passion" and others.

Themba's interest in the significance of the control of space in apartheid South Africa even extended to the churches. In his article "Brothers in Christ" (Themba, 1972), there is a clear indication that Whites have a pathological dislike for Blacks and would not entertain the idea of sharing space with them even at church level. While Themba was well aware of these repelling attitudes, he conducted 'experiments' by visiting the white churches to personally find out how they would react to the presence of a black worshipper in their midst.

Firstly, he visited the Central Methodist Church in Kruis Street, Johannesburg where he was admitted to the gallery. It surprised him why he was placed in the gallery that was full when there were still some empty chairs downstairs. This was followed by a visit to the Nederduitse Gereformeerde of Herformde Kerk or the Dutch Reformed Church in Bezuidenhout Valley. Somebody "...yanked me to my feet and led me out of the church. Outside, their Christian calm returned to them, and they explained to me that I should go to 'my own church'" (Themba, 1972, p.24).

The Presbyterian Church in Noord Street allowed me in, yet the one in Orange Grove refused me admittance. They explained that the hall was rented

from some boys' club whose policy did not allow Non-Whites into the hall. They also said something about the laws of the country. (p. 74)

This is the church that would not abide by the Christian principles but would rather obey the rules set to it by the boys from whom they are renting the premises. As they pronounce something about the law of the country, it is difficult to know what their true stance is in this regard. At the church setting, God and the brotherhood of man should take the front seat.

In the following quote Themba's visiting of the churches goes on:

At the Fairview Gemeente of the Assemblies of God the welcome party at the door invited me in but offered me a seat at the back. Everybody was polite, very Christian, and wanted to know where I came from... The previous day, at the Claim Street Adventist Church, I had been stopped at the church door and told I could not go in. Then a church official thought that perhaps I could be placed somewhere at the back, but another was definitely against it. So I turned away. A week or two later I went again and was asked to sit at the back. Later I was asked to leave. 'We object to your presence', said a large white man. (pp. 75-77)

When an attendant member of the church tells Themba that "We object to your presence", it becomes immediately clear that the church is governed by the laws of apartheid, not Christ's.

Themba would further elaborate as follows:

On yet another Sunday, I went to the D.R.C. Church in Langlaagte, Johannesburg, in the company of the photographer. I walked up the pathway to the door of the church where I was stopped by a young European usher. I explained to him that I wanted to attend the service.

‘But this church is a church of whites only. Why don’t you go to one of your own churches?’ The usher said. He hesitated for a while, then took me round the side of the church, and made me wait for him outside while he consulted someone inside. After a while he returned and said: ‘I’m sorry, but the baas says that you cannot come into the church.’ Just as I reached the gate on my way out I heard someone hurrying after me. It was the deacon and he was calling me. ‘What is it you want, my boy?’ he asked. (p.75)

The emphasis is still there that the church belong to the white worshippers irrespective whether it is doing this in the interests of the crucified Christ. The hypocritical needs of the worshippers seem to be of great importance. Christ is not the priority in this church even what the church should be proclaiming in the name of God. It is the height of folly to still maintain that one must ask for permission from the ‘baas’ (master) for an individual to enter into the house of God. The climax of the saga is that, Colonel Spengler from Marshall Square (presently known as John Vorster Square) was called in by the deacon and arrested Themba.

In what follows I will analyze three short stories in terms of their representations of space and setting. The first story is "Mob Passion" in which the division of ethnic

groups in locations is effected and Themba writes about these social anomalies. A Sotho girl is not supposed to be in love with a Xhosa man. The second story is "The Urchin" that also portrays juvenile delinquency in the dying days of Sophiatown which, in turn, culminates to unnecessary spilling of blood between the gangs. And thirdly, Ten-to-Ten who is a police predominantly working night shifts and in the process becomes a personification of the curfew regulations as he has to see to it that Africans keep indoors when and after the clock has struck ten o'clock.

3.2 "Mob Passion".

3.2.1 Introduction

There are several spaces that convey the effects of apartheid ideology on the black community in Can Themba's short story, "Mob Passion". The first space representation which towers above others, although not more important than them, is, inter alia, the city of Johannesburg around which pivots the daily Black-White, master-servant relationships. The second is the trains and railway stations where Africans from Soweto travel daily to and from the city. It is in this sprawling township where Africans are ethnically grouped according to the dictates of apartheid into Nguni people who speak IsiZulu, IsiTsonga, IsiXhosa languages and on the other hand, the Sotho people who speak Sesotho, Setswana, SeVenda and Sepedi languages. Much as emotions of incertitude, ethnic hatred, jealousy over common spatial boundaries prevail between Africans and Whites in South African cities and towns, the same uncertainty, the same sense of hostility, the same jealousy about common dividing borders between ethnic groups can be observed. Whites have learned to direct their hatred to Africans and the

Nguni people have also learned to direct their hatred towards the Sotho people, vice versa. In short, ethnic hatred finds its object in the other human being classified differently from oneself as a result of apartheid ideology. Louw and Kendall (1987) have the following to say about apartheid:

The Group Areas Act (No 41 of 1950) provided areas to be proclaimed as belonging to a particular racial group, in which case no other racial group could live, trade or own land there, and any members of the other racial groups living there already were moved out. (p. 41)

This quote shows how the ethnic differences were emphasized. There would be no cross-border trading, for example, for Nguni tradesman to aspire extending his prosperous business to the Sotho-speaking areas. This can be coupled to the cross-border land ownership. An individual Sotho would similarly not entertain the idea to stay amongst the Nguni people. The relationships have been poisoned by the apartheid ideology and to this end Louw and Kendall write as follows:

This was supplemented by the native Resettlement Act (No 19 of 1954) which was intended to eliminate 'black spots' (i.e. black townships) from white areas. Blacks were moved from white areas and no longer permitted to own their homes. Since the Act, over three million blacks have been forcibly relocated in an extreme exercise in social engineering. (p. 41)

The Resettlement Act of 1954 aimed at the implementation of macro-apartheid where the homelands were under consideration. Locations and townships around the cities and towns would be eliminated with the aim of 'purifying' the environment for use by the white people. This consequently nullified the birthrights of Blacks born in 'white urban areas'. Mass relocation or, simply, location of Blacks to the homelands ensued. If anything, the presence of an African in the urban areas would only be tolerated on contractual basis and annually renewable in the homelands. The black person would have to travel physically to his homeland and accordingly have his documents endorsed by the homeland commissioner before he could return to work in urban areas.

Louw and Kendall write as follows to this end:

The Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Act (No 16 of 1955) aimed at moving blacks out of servant's accommodation in apartment blocks by stipulating that no more than five non-white servants could be accommodated in a block of flats. Subsequent amendments further restricted the movement of urban blacks; these are known collectively as 'influx control'. (p. 41)

The Act aimed at eliminating any soft spot that some Whites might be having towards their black servants whereupon the landlord could employ as many as he was capable of maintaining in his backyard. If several wealthy Whites could employ a sizeable number of Africans, it is obvious that, this could disturb the lily-white dream entertained by the powers that be.

3.2.2 Identifying space and setting in "Mob Passion".

The following extract comes from the short story "Mob Passion" (Themba, 1985). The story makes an impact calculated to give the first impression of what life is like amongst Africans and also in the trains departing to Soweto. The extract builds an atmosphere of tension and the high sense of insecurity experienced by passengers in the trains and eventually, the two lovers who must hide their relationship from those around them. It also presents a foretaste of the contempt that Africans have for one another as well as the lack of dignity assigned to Africans by the apartheid governance. It is as if the law is dead and has failed to come to the rescue of the innocent.

The story opens as follows:

There was a thick crowd on Platform Two, rushing for the 'All Stations' Randfontein train. Men, women and children were pushing madly aboard the train. They were heaving and pressing, elbows in faces, bundles bursting, weak ones kneaded. Even at the opposite side people were balancing precariously to escape being shoved off the platform. Here and there deft fingers were exploring unwary pockets. Somewhere an outraged dignity was shrieking stridently, vilely cursing someone's parentage. The carriages became fuller and fuller. With a jerk the electric train moved out of the station. (p. 9)

This passage, taken from "Mob Passion", enacts a daily scene when Africans depart from the city to Soweto. The scene is indicative of several aberrant social behaviour dynamics taking place at Platform Two. But most importantly, the enactment

depicts the social dysfunction that can be brought under control if only apartheid, designed to unleash destructive forces on Africans, was not in force. The government lacks the goodwill of seeing Africans prosper in the right direction. There is shortage of space for the Africans to manoeuvre at the platform leading to shortage of space for the passengers as well within the coaches of the train itself. There is just no space for the comfort of Africans.

The disorder and pandemonium at the platform can be attributed to apartheid social engineering along with the provision of inadequate amenities and infrastructures. The department of railways and transport makes exorbitant profits with as scanty resources as possible. While this would be a plausible action as it rakes in profits from the gullible, it impacts negatively on the health of the commuters. Breaking a limb in such a stampede cannot be ruled out. The loss of money through pick-pocketing is also common sight as tsotsis successfully ply their trade in dense crowds. Passengers are also bound to have their grocery parcels crushed in the stampede. While space is inadequate for commuters to freely move on the platform, accommodation inside the coaches is be worse as hostilities heighten when commuters scuffle for seats in overloaded coaches. The passage suggests that the commuters have lost a sense of humanity and humility and are exposed to near-animal conditions of life.

The journey to Soweto is not only financially expensive, but it also taxes the emotional and physical health of the commuters; it puts their lives in the hands of thugs. The picture of stampede that Themba paints here also implies that, in the city, there is no place for Africans as the apartheid laws make sure that no African would sleep in the city overnight unless arrangements to that end are made. It is not only in these trips that the

rough hand of apartheid can be felt, also the unfriendly space of the city which only welcomes Africans only for purposes of work. They are expected to arrive from as early as four o'clock in the morning and leave by the last train of the day. The insensitive human attitudes that can be read from the setting point to the culture of harshness and intolerance that Africans have allowed to proliferate amongst themselves. The institution of apartheid succeeds in generating inter-ethnic attitudes attached to place and to the individual in society alike. Apartheid succeeds at promoting hatred and hostility amongst the African people. This evaluation is made with the purpose of throwing light on some of these unfortunate happenings.

It is into this setting that Themba introduces the character of Linga. Introducing Linga as an individual, the narrator goes on to say:

Linga was a tall, slender fellow, more than boy. He was not particularly handsome; but he had those tense eyes of the young student who was ever inwardly protesting against some wrong or other. In fact at that moment he was not a student at all. He was working for a firm of lawyers in Market Street. He hoped to save enough money in a year or two to return to university to complete an arts degree which he had been forced by 'circumstances' to abandon. (pp. 9-10)

Attached to a firm of lawyers in Market Street as a clerk, Linga is identified as a young man with ambition. We are told that Linga is on his way to meet his lover, Mapula: "he was thinking of Mapula now. She has promised that she would be in time

for this train” (p. 10). This suggestive of his position to build a home and a family. While this would seem normal, we soon discover that the ethnic differences instituted under apartheid between Linda and Mapula make their love affair into something they must hide.

Mapula’s collective and individual identity is Sotho and so be it. By urgently taking a flight across space and conquering the distance, Thabo is making a claim to Mapula’s identity. He is making an effort to guard against the disintegration of this identity by Linga’s infiltration. This collective identity is a common thing in a community of people such these who are repelling inter-ethnic penetration. Uncle Alpheus is also rallying around this image of integrity. That is why, when he is delivering his speech that is full of pathos, he is able to influence his audience of like-minded fellows. The injury of Ra-Thabo comes as a misfortune because Linga’s love advances to Mapula, his daughter, come as such a terrible family pain. The eroding forces that are finding their way on the family have coincidentally come and are running in parallel.

Meanwhile, Linga and Mapula are in one another’s arms. They claim the earth-bed by adhering to their sworn declarations of love one to the other. They want to be admitted to the future home and family makers. Having made these rituals, they seem prepared to ask for a bigger space that they would call their own, possibly a home. In short, the unification of identities rejects the divisions established between their two communities under apartheid.

Love is quite a healthy expression of emotions for both lad and lady. Yet, the environment in which Linda and Mapula find themselves in their endeavour to practice their love is poisoned by the apartheid ideology. Firstly, it is contaminated by the inter-

ethnic conflict and strife that obtain between the Nguni-speaking peoples as against the Sotho speaking peoples. On the other hand and still most importantly, the environment is contaminated by the overarching ideology. The apartheid ideology categorically states that, through the might of law, Africans are obliged to desist from inter-ethnic mingling. Each ethnic group will be accommodated in its prescribed area. The exercise initially starts with townships like Soweto and ends in the far-flung homelands or bantustans.

The theme of the story picks on the impact of these allocations of space on individuals and people sharing similar cultural features and fate. Linga and Mapula have infringed the inter-ethnic boundaries that must otherwise remain intact between the Sotho and the Nguni peoples. They must therefore suffer in the hands of those who claim to uphold cultural rights to sanction such relationships. Therefore, Linga and Mapula are going to suffer consequences of disobedience.

Meanwhile, while the lovers are meeting we are told that news of their affair has reached family members. We have an account of Mapula's brother, Thabo who is described as rushing to his father in great urgency in bid to display his sense of faithfulness to his community. Thabo imagines himself as 'hero' of the moment to his father and others. 'Somehow great news always brings glory of prestige on the head of the bringer. Thabo felt himself a hero now; for these two men were diehard stalwarts in the Russian cause.'

Once Thabo arrived, he wants to talk to his father and asks Uncle Alpheus who goes about in a roundabout way in answering the question:

'Father, where is he?' hissed Thabo, breathing hard. The excitement in his voice aroused everyone.

'Holy Shepherd! What's the matter, boy?'," cried Uncle Alpheus.

'Mapula, mapula. She loves with a Letebele.'

'What!' exploded Uncle Alpheus. 'Where is she?' then more calmly:

'Come'n, boy. Tell us everything more quietly; your father is out there?'

'J-J-Jonas t-t-tells me --- J-Jonas is a boy who works with me --- Jonas tells me that Mapula loves a Letebele. They always meet at the hospital; but never in the sitting room. He hopes to marry her.'

'Never!' barked Alpheus...

'What now?' Alpheus asked Frans.

'Of course, we must revenge. You will talk to the people --- the women. Talk fire into them. Connect it with the Mapula business; that'll warm them. Suggest drugs --- a Letebele must use drugs, mustn't he? I'll be in the house. Just when they begin to get excited I'll arrange to carry Ra-Thabo out --- to the hospital, you know. See if we can't get them bad!' he smiled cheerlessly. (p. 14)

When Uncle Alpheus says: 'Connect it with the Mapula business; that'll warm them. Suggest drugs --- a Letebele must use drugs, mustn't he?' He is talking common knowledge as regards Nguni expertise in the chemistry of roots and herbs. Uncle Alpheus and his group, think that for Mapula to go against the grain of being anti-Nguni, and fall in love with a Letebele, witchcraft must have been brought to bear on the matter. When Thabo informs them that Linga intends to marry Mapula, it is only Uncle Alpheus who

categorically denies that such a marriage would ever take place. His denial is so emphatic that it leaves no room for negotiations and it is based on the sour relationships between the Nguni and Sotho peoples. However, one cannot deny the fact that love works miracles when there is true affection between the couple. It can, however, tower above ethnic differences and establish itself incontestably.

It is therefore obvious that Thabo's errand succeeds to ignite the elements of hatred between the ethnic groups coupled to the ideology of apartheid. As the two uncles mobilize the people to the battlefield, Linga and Mapula depart from their tryst. The above dialogue emphasises the supposed differences between the two lovers in the eyes of the community. Uncle Alpheus uses the story of the inter-ethnic romance to inspire everyone of the listening audience to charge and march to war:

... Are they going to brook it! He cracked. No! all throats roared. Are they ready for vengeance! Now! Thundered the mob. Someone in the crowd shouted 'Mule!' Then the women took up the famous war-cry, chilling to a stranger, but driving the last doubting spirit there to frenzy and fury. (p. 16)

While Linga and Mapula were trying to find their way to the tryst after alighting at Witpoortjie, a serious set-up is building up at Westbury station and Themba writes as follows about the intervening development:

At Westbury the atmosphere was tense. Everybody crowded at the windows to see. Everywhere there were white policemen, heavily armed. The situation was

'under control', but everyone knew that in the soul of almost every being in the area raved a seething madness, wild and a passionate, with the causes lying deep. No cursory measures could remedy; no superficial explanation could illuminate. These jovial faces that could change into masks of bloodlust and destruction without warning, with the smallest provocation! There is a vicious technique faithfully applied in these riots. (p. 10)

Themba portrays the volatility of the situation as passengers' tempers flare when the prevailing myths of racial purity are violated. The white policemen are armed to keep exploding tempers under control at Westbury. This is in reference to the imminent clash of the ethnic groups and the lethargic policemen's intervention to quell the situation. However, as soon as the police leave, the attacks across ethnic boundaries ensue. The use of the phrase 'with the causes lying deep', Themba is vicariously pointing to the various factors that are emphasized to intensify hatred and the circle of erupting riots amongst the Africans. He observes that the prevailing calm and peace could turn to a vicious bloodbath with a 'little fault' likely to be committed across ethnic crossfire. Themba is also making a foregrounding of the tragic love of Mapula and Linga which is going to end with the unnecessary death of Linga.

... Oh, what a clash it was! The Matabele were pushed beyond Westbury station. There the heroes met a rested, reinforced enemy. For a moment all that could be seen was the head of Ra-Thabo going down among them. The clang of the battle could be heard; the furious charge could be seen, in the words of this man who

was not there. The Basothos fought desperately and won so much ground that their all but lost leader could be rescued and carried back home. And what finds he there? Alpheus's voice went down softer and heavier, touching strings of pathos, rousing tragic emotions which the hearts present had never experienced before. There was an automatic movement in the crowd as everybody strained forward to hear. In awful, horror-filled whispers he told of Ra-Thabo's daughter giving herself to a Letebele. (p. 15)

Uncle Alpheus is delivering his speech touching on two aspects of concern. Ra-Thabo the hero of the day has been injured in the battle at Westbury. He presents his talk to the audience in a touching manner such that the crowd becomes really warmed up by his deliberation. In his speech he illustrates how dedicated is their leader Ra-Thabo who fought his way fiercely amongst the Matabele only to fall down seriously injured. He further points out that Mapula has given herself to a Letebele and asks for a retort from the audience whether they are going to tolerate it. This is the crowd that vehemently cherish to tolerate this mishap and for that reason they would rather go to battle again. It should be clear that war is fought for the physical territory and at the same time, Mapula's body as another territory for which the war has been declared between the two communities. This does not matter whether Mapula and Linga know this; the battle is on for their love.

Michael Chapman, (1989, p. 22) on observing the amount of human passion that is invested in these worthless exercises of cross-ethnic killings speaks as follows: 'The overall effect of "Mob Passion" is to depict the 'human condition' of African urban life

with a force of emotion and compassion that had not been felt in fiction". The situation is further intensified as detectable in the following quote:

At Newclare, too, from the train all seemed quiet. But Linga and Mapula knew the deceptive quiet meant the same even here. The train rushed on, emptier. Only when they had passed Maraisburg did these two venture to speak to each other. Linga was Xhosa and Mapula Sotho. A Letebele and a Russian. They had to be very careful! Love in its mysterious, often ill-starred ways had flung them together. (p. 11)

The Xhosa-speaking people are Nguni. These people form about half the population of the Africans in South Africa. The other half comprise of the Sotho-speaking people. By emphasizing ethnic differences, the apartheid regime had set the various tribes against each other. In their living space and setting, these people are, in most cases only divided by a street. It is under these conditions that fear rules the love relationships of Linga and Mapula. In the prime of their youth, when the two are in search of social values and the formation of individual identities that would reinforce their lives in future, the environment they find themselves living in is one of contaminated human and ethnic relations.

'Ehe! So you are a Letebele after all. You lie so sleekly that I can understand why my daughter thinks she loves you.' The he swung round, his blanket trailing in an arc. 'Friends, we need go no further. This is the dog that

bewitched my brother's child. Let's waste no time with him. Tear him to pieces!' the mob rushed upon Linga: 'Mmate! Mmate!' (p. 11)

The Zulu people living in Natal are famous for their superior chemistry skills in the use of roots and herbs that used to cure illnesses and maladies or to create a problematic situation that cannot be easily solved. In this context, we are awakened to the alleged implications of powerful potion used by Linga to entice Mapula to the Letebele's love advances. The successive use of the words: "Mmate! Mmate!" literally "Hit him! Hit him!". It is a violent expression not used under normal circumstances. In this instance, Themba introduces space and setting as responsible for the fomenting of violence with the use of herbs and roots dug from the soil.

Despite the hostilities inspired by the government's apartheid policy between the Sotho and Nguni and the Blacks and Whites in South Africa generally, what Linga and Mapula individually observe probably in similar fashion as does Michael Chapman elsewhere above points to something very genuine that has yet to occur:

'They do not see! They do not see!' he continued vehemently. 'They butcher one another, and they seem to like it where there should be brotherhood and love, there are bitter animosities. Where there should be cooperation in common adversity, there are barriers of hostility, steeling a brother's heart against a brother's misery. Sometimes, 'Pule, I understand it. We have so many dishonest leaders and we have so often had out true leaders left in the lurch, be weak-kneed colleagues and lukewarm followers, that no one wishes to stick his neck out too

far. Where is the courage to weld the suicidal factions into a nation? The trouble is, very few of us have a vision comprehensive enough of our destiny! ...our very oppression is the flower of opportunity. (pp. 12-13)

The statement “they seem to like it” seems to flow from what Linga cannot fathom in the apartheid system. Apartheid is an ideology that has been designed to favour the ruling class and it has been entrenched to such an extent that a common eye fails to detect its devastating influences. Apartheid fails to be designated a philosophy that suits the life of all South Africans. Yes, they seem to like it because it is an ideology that has been implemented by the ruling class without the consultation of Africans. In the light of this statement, Linga shows that these things occur because of dishonest leadership currently prevailing. The “dishonest leaders” are predominantly of the nationalist hegemony. In contrast, Linga points to “our true leaders have been left in the lurch”. Linga refers to leaders who are in prison. The reference of “weak-kneed colleagues and lukewarm followers” refers to the leaders that the nationalist government has imposed on the Africans. The homeland leaders are reluctantly in agreement with apartheid’s establishment. These leaders are awarded pseudo governments operated at their second best. Cooperation is unlikely here as apartheid and its constituent dimensions are elevated by the government to the pedestal of venerability.

Partly then, the statement that says: ‘our true leaders have been left in the lurch’ means that the regime has deliberately excluded these leaders when redrawing the ideology boundaries of the country. For sure, Linga refers to leaders incarcerated in Robben Island. And Robben Island forms the most powerful setting in South African

politics. It should also be remembered that Themba would not directly mention the Island because of the government's censorship and the expectation that authors, journalists and editors would apply self-censorship if they would not be looking for trouble from the government. The government had sentenced Mandela for life around 1962 and also came short of sentencing him to death for high treason. Robert Sobukwe and Nelson Mandela are sure not the 'weak-kneed' leaders under consideration here. The Island becomes a high-ranking piece of land in South Africa, especially after the 1994 democratic elections. The democratic government has redefined the Island after the 1994 elections when Nelson Mandela was elected the first black president of South Africa.

Linga eventually meets the Russians but is at first able to convince them that he is one of them. Unfortunately Mapula emerges and the truth is discovered and Linga is 'butchered' on being discovered that he is a 'Letebele'. The violent blow delivered by Uncle Alpheus opens a gashing wound with blood flowing from Linga's newly-struck wound. Mapula is enraged beyond telling. She immediately pays back by 'butchering' her uncle with an axe in turn. Spattered profusely with the blood of her uncle, Mapula appears as personified evil, a gory spectacle. The scene points to the spilled blood of Linga and the blood of the brutal Uncle Alpheus as the highpoint of the story. Death equally catches up with both hostile camps. The bravado being gone, there remains the soliloquizing inner voice of each individual Russian as they discover that theirs has been a futile cause. Love should ultimately triumph.

Someone came and lifted her up. Someone else was dragging Alpheus's bleeding corpse by the collar so that his shoes were out one after the other. (p. 20)

3.3 "The Urchin"

3.3.1 Introduction

"The Urchin" (Thembo, 1985) is a story based on juvenile violence and their general delinquency in the dying days of Sophiatown. Sophiatown was already partly broken down by the apartheid government. Some families had already been transported to Meadowlands whereas others were still left behind and were to be transported later.

"The Urchin" will be explored and in the process scenes that have anything to do with space and setting will be analyzed. It will be argued that the youngsters portrayed in the story are delinquents and that delinquency is precipitated by social conditions of, inter alia, negligence and carelessness of the government about the youngsters of Sophiatown. The colonial and apartheid ideologies are held responsible for these negative developments. Greater emphasis will be laid on the apartheid ideology as pursued by the nationalist government. "Requiem for Sophiatown" was written by Themba (1985) after the bulldozers had flattened the walls of Sophiatown. Some brief analysis of it is integrated in the introduction of Chapter Three.

3.3.2 Identifying space and setting in "The Urchin".

Looking at The Urchin, one is struck by a number of colonial space representations in the Sophiatown setting. Most streets that appear in the text have British colonial origins: "Victoria Road" (pp. 97, 103, 104, 105), "Millar Street" (p. 97), "Gibson Street" (p. 102), "Edith Street" (p. 104), Meyer Street" (p. 104), "Gerty", "Berth" and "Toby Streets" (p. 109), "Maccauvlei" (p. 109). In the story, Victoria Road appears with higher frequency than any other street, road or avenue. Perhaps, this is bound to be the

case as Victoria is centrally placed space representation and also the hub of activity in the ruined Sophiatown. It recalls to memory the reign of Queen Victoria (1837 – 1901) when English colonial boundaries were relentlessly extended throughout Africa. The stamping of British colonial representations on Sophiatown setting indicates the glorification of the Queen. However, other places in South Africa where Europeans are resident deserve the opportunity to celebrate the Queen's name with befitting pomp than is the case with Sophiatown --- a mere ghetto.

The theme of youth violence and lack of learning culture embedded in gangsterism forms the crux of the problem in "The Urchin". The fighting of the gangs for territorial dominance in Sophiatown firstly point to the failure of the colonial government to implement effective learning programmes for the African child. This unfortunate state of affairs is later followed by the apartheid government whose policy of apartheid was explicitly stating that they are not going to nurse Africans as the colonial English did. It is true that the boys imitate the Wild West stories of the cowboys, but paradoxically this is a reflection of reality in South Africa indicating how their fatherland was conquered from their grandfathers by Europeans.

Then suddenly came the shrill warning cry, 'Arrara! Arraarayii!' the action stopped almost abruptly as those ancient films which froze in mid-motion and transfixed the movement into a photograph. And just as suddenly afterwards, they all scattered pell-mell. When the police van came round the corner, it was impossible to decide who to pursue. For now, everybody was running up and down and off the streets. The scores of small boys, ordinary pedestrians who had just arrived upon the scene, fah-fee runners with full blown cheeks a-chumping

the incriminating tickets of their illicit lottery; everybody was running. In Sophiatown you do not stop to explain to the police that you had nothing to do with it; that you knew some of the culprits and could help the police. (Themba 1985, pp. 105-106)

The cry of 'Arrara!' Is the boys' way of indicating that some authority figure is breaking into their delinquent territory. What follows is a drawn simile, "as abruptly as those ancient films which froze in mid-motion and transfixed the movement into a photograph". The simile brings to mind change that fails to penetrate the ranks of the unruly and wayward youth towards betterment of their self-identities through education. In other words, they are transfixed in their evil ways and performance. And in terms of the apartheid policy, the youngsters seem to fit into the pattern of ethnic zoning of Africans that the government is busy implementing in the name of the policy, like it is the case in "Mob Passion". No wonder that the scene ends with the statement "The mobile squad were satisfied with merely clearing the street". (p. 106) The police are not making follow-ups on the mini-war of the youngsters so that the erring youth be given the scruffy treatment from the rough hand of the law.

On the other hand, "When the police van came round the corner" and the police land themselves on the ground, it is equal to the apartheid laws becoming reasserted over space and setting. This can be compared to the forces of apartheid that shall demolish every house remaining here and in the process relocate the Africans from Sophiatown to Meadowlands. As the apartheid government is removing black people from Sophiatown without any consultations, they are like the very gangsters who are prepared to infiltrate

the Berliners' territory without warning and inflict injuries on them in a fight that has no valid reasons.

Macala and his ilk are characterized by gang culture and norms of anomie that are common in the youth of Sophiatown. He can well kick at the wares sold by the anonymous Ndebele woman and also upset the fruits and vegetables packed on the horse-drawn trolley, his boundless energy frustrates the commercial ambitions of the vendors in Victoria Street. Sweeping mischievously past all the vendors in the street lands him in the company of his colleagues. Members of the Sophiatown gang of which Macala holds a commanding position, hatch the conspiracy to attack the Berliners gang also resident in Sophiatown way beyond the hill. But before they realize their dangerous plan, they start discussing about a thug called Bra Mpedi who uses his firearm the way the American movies portray cowboy violence on the celluloid screen and this appears to excite them. In fact, Mpedi is feared by many and is simultaneously hero-worshipped and modelled by the likes of Boy-Boy and others without any question.

'Heit, Macacix!' called Boy-Boy. 'It's how there?'

Macala suddenly felt in the mood for the jargon of the townships, the near-animal amorphous, quick-shifting lingo that alarms farm-boys and drives corps to all branches of suspicion; but which marks the city slicker who can cope with all its vagaries.

'Naw, ' Macala feinted, 'dis town, Softown's too small for me. I'll take Western and Corrie and Maclera and London, and smash them into a mash potato.'

Boy-Boy fell for it. 'Whew!' he whistled, 'don't say you'll crowd me out!'

Macala took him by the throat and went for a kill. 'Didn't I tell you, buster to keep off my country, or else...'

He proceeded to carry out the menacing 'or else' by choking Boy-Boy and slowly tripping him over a leg he had slipped behind him until they rolled over as Boy-Boy fell and tumbled into the gutter.

Boy-Boy gasped. 'Ah give up, boss, da country's yours.' (p. 102)

In this setting, reference to 'territory' indicates how apartheid ideology influences youngsters' perceptions of space in their community. The apartheid ideology lays down that the Sothos should live in their area and not infiltrate the Nguni territory. Failure to do is likely to end in bitter factions with the owners of the particular territory. The marauding boys are caught in the spirit of territorial frenzy. This can also be traced back to the movies. Macala's fantasy feeds on his imaginations as he enters into a mock fray with Boy-Boy and warns the latter not to interfere in his territory or else it will be chaos. He alludes to the conquest of gangland by bringing Western native Township, Newclare and Alexandra under his rule as he would pulverize whoever challenges his claims and authority in these imaginary fiefdoms.

With superior gift of speech that Macala hardly can match, Boy-Boy relates the story how Brother Mpedi shot his way out of trouble when the police were sent to arrest him:

... You should have seen Bura Mpedi when dey sent dour lean cops to come and take him. Payroll robbery, Booyens...one thousand pound! Assault with GBH,

Newlands... three men down and out! Housebreaking 'n Thatha... Lower Houghton! (p. 102)

In this passage, the display of might in the Wild West style is adopted. It is practiced as seen in films and with such impressionable minds as seen here, the die is cast. Brother Mpedi is idolized and continues to impose his thug authority in she-beens. In as far as the law wants to re-assert itself in situations where control has gone out of hand, these youngsters submit themselves to these lessons. Although exaggerations are present in Boy-Boy's rhetoric, the unfolding setting takes place in the theatre of the youngsters' minds and they fully subscribe to its sways. After exhausting this topic, Jungle, in particular, hatches the conspiracy that they should go and attack the Berliners, the rival gang beyond the hill they are facing.

Themba picks on the various streets as setting on which the story is unfolding. In Meyer Street, the Macala group mobilizes a variety of youngsters who reinforce their gang to a considerable size of the urchin mobsters:

On the corner of Meyer Street they broke up a ring of young dicers and forced them to join them. Along the way they collected non-schoolgoing loafers who lounged against shop walls; blue jeaned youngsters who twisted the arms of schoolgirls in rough love; odd-job boys who ran errands for shopkeepers; truants, pickpockets, little thugs within their age limit---the lot. (p. 104)

Most of the youngsters mobilized by Macala are of school-going age who, for one reason or another, are “non-schoolgoing loafers who lounged against shop walls...”. With some Sophiatown houses already demolished under the harsh hand of apartheid laws and some people already transported to meadowlands by government lorries, it is possible that the remaining youngsters have no schools to go to. It is also true that schools are being re-established in Meadowlands. This makes Meadowlands more attractive place to go to because of available social facilities and amenities. School shapes children’s attitudes for the better and its absence in their life breeds negative outcomes. In the following passage the size of the urchins is growing:

By the time they turned into Edith Street, they were a miniature army of hell-bent ruffians. Macala led them and felt the strange thrill of the fore behind him. He chose Edith Street because it rose into a rocky hill with plenty of stones for ammunition, and dropped suddenly into that part of Sophiatown they called Berlin where the walls were smeared with crude swastikas. (p. 104)

We are brought to another setting that is influenced by the German people known for their wisdom in wars and also their savage attacks on other nations. Many World War II films are played at the cinemas and youngsters readily learn from such films how to conduct themselves in situations. Hitler’s atrocities are upheld in “that part of Sophiatown called Berlin where the walls are smeared with crude swastikas”. It is a symbol that shows that the Berliners have taken after the Germans in their war attitudes. Edith Street is chosen by Macala as point of entrance “because it rose into a rocky hill

with plenty of stones for ammunition”. These stones are the very missiles that Macala intends firing the Berliners with.

Breathless and bruised, Macala found himself at the open commonage called Maccauvlei, adjacent to Wateval Hospital which served as the waste dumps to the city, and ‘golf course’ to those Africans who went in for the sport of leisure. Macala knew that most of his gang would sooner or later find their way there. He sat on a mound of ash, gasping heavily. (p. 106)

The setting, namely, Maccauvlei is the spot where Macala’s gang is going to meet and analyze the outcomes of the savage battle. The captain himself resorts to reposing at this setting and knows “...that most of his gang would sooner or later find their way there”. The various phases of the event are going to be evaluated and Jungle himself has reason to display a sadistic smile as he has been ordered to use his jungle knife by the leader himself. He has done so to the best of his ability: ...Jungle came, for once, apparently, in his seventh heaven”.

The following quote has the army and captains critically looking into their conflict with the law:

Despite all their bravado, all their big-shot stances and their blistering contempt for cops and the law, there is one thing that this knighthood really fears, and it was expressed by a crackling of interjections from each to his own lights: ‘Six lashes and reformatory!’ (pp. 106-107)

On assessment of the damage that has been done, the Macala gang is dead-scared for the hand of the law, especially the 'six lashes and reformatory!' the lashes will probably be inflicted by the police at the police station. The "reformatory" is a step further ahead. The pathological institutions such as jail and reformatory come forward as some space and setting to which they will be taken to. The individual urchin is likely going to be lashed by the police and policemen who are bad teachers. They represent the rough hand of the law that in turn aims to make corrections in wayward behaviour. I have been arguing that space and setting influence attitudes and this is still the case here where the ideology of apartheid extends its hand. The youngsters further elaborate about what awaits them:

'De cane and off to a farm!'

'Cuts with light cane and no fine!' (p. 107)

The youngsters are reflecting on the situation if they are to go to jail and get punishment. The above quote can be clarified as saying: One is likely going to be caned at the police station and this will be followed by being sent to a farm setting. The cruelty of farmers has leaked to the youngsters and they now see themselves as likely victims in the farm setting.

In the foregoing quote, the youngsters express themselves in the wrong idiom of the language. This can be associated with the abnormal situation in Sophiatown where the culture of gangs reigns supreme. Their expression lacks in desired culture in much the

same way as do their personalities. It is obvious that Sophiatown is a school of evil and the youngsters are students of this evil education.

The following passage shows us how Macala's bravado and antics have now left him in the lurch:

By the time Macala decided to leave Maccauvlei it was getting dark. But he knew where he was going. Rather, unnecessarily, he skulked along the fences of the street, looking this way and that. Now and then, he would be petrified by the zoom of a passing car or duck into an alley when headlights bored golden shafts through the dark of the street. But ultimately he reached the open space where Gerty, Bertha and Toby Streets used to be. He saw the dark building for which he was headed. He ran forward and stopped in front of it, but this side of the street. Slowly now. Somewhere here there is a night watchman, a Zulu with a thick black beard and barbed moustache, black uniform and black face that rubbed him out of sight in the dark, and a gnarled knobkerrie known to have split skulls. (p. 109)

The setting at which Macala will rest for the night is queer indeed. His aim is to hide himself firstly under the cloak of darkness. "He saw the dark building for which he was headed..." This is possibly the place where he must have hidden on days that he had misbehaved. The place is a timber yard under security and the little mistake he could do could send signals to the watchman. The night watchman has fearsome features that, just on thinking about them, Macala becomes panicky. Everything that he recalls about the

watchman is black: "Somewhere here there's the night watchman, a Zulu with a thick black beard and barbed moustache, black uniform and black face that rubbed him out of sight in the dark, and a gnarled knobkerrie known to have split skulls". Put differently, the night watchman is camouflaged by the night and is like the night itself. Macala thinks that since the likelihood to be seen is very high, he must just be careful. That is how Macala walked into the night of his life and the night that has no moon nor stars whose light he could capitalize on in future. As he proceeds deeper into his escapade, the narrator tells us that:

But Macala knew where the corrugated iron fence had snarled out a lip of entrance for him. He went on his hands and knees, and crawled away from the immense double gate towards this entrance. He found it and coiled himself inside. He knew there were stacks of corrugated iron in this timber yard, and if he touched them, the racket would alert the night watchman. So he did not go far, just nestled himself near his exit. (p. 109).

Macala finds himself alone in the night without having had supper. He just has to make do with nothing. He can only enter the timber yard "...on his hands and knees, and crawl away from the immense double gate towards the entrance. The next thing he could do is to "...coil himself inside...just nestled himself near the exit". This is the difficult and sad path that he has decided to take. He is learning the hard way.

3.4 "Ten-to-Ten"

3.4.1 Introduction

The story of Ten-to-Ten (Themba. 1985) portrays an African character with a large physical appearance serving in the South African Police force. He concentrates working night shifts starting at ten o'clock and knocking off in the morning probably at seven o'clock. The first curfew bell rings at ten minutes to ten as a warning to the Africans that they should clear themselves from the streets of Marabastad and Pretoria city. This man has a "...magnificent torso like pillars under some granite superstructure..." and he is almost seven feet tall and by far exceeds the normal six feet height used as a norm in admitting policemen in the force. He "...towered over his fellow men like sheer mountain above the mites in the valley" and his "...shoulders were like boulders..." whereas the "...arms are like trunks of elephants". The shoe size is fifteen and regarded as having "...the largest foot in Pretoria..." His complexion is "...coal-lack, with the shiny blackness of ebony..." punctuated by "...large, rolling eyes and thick bluish lips". He is the character whose policing we are going to look into in the context of the city at night.

3.4.2 Identifying space and setting in "Ten-to-Ten".

The following quotation is part of the opening paragraph that opens the "Ten-to-Ten" short story written about curfew regulations in Marabastad and the city of Pretoria. According to regulations that governed the movement of Africans, it was a punishable offence for an African to be found in a setting proclaimed white at a particular time of the night, for instance, from 10 pm to 4 am in the morning. The regulations emanate from the Group Areas Act that also prescribed the setting where a particular ethnic group was

entitled to live in exclusion of the other. Although, on the part of Africans, it is difficult to draw a distinction between the various ethnic groups as they inevitably look alike. But with Whites it is easy as one has to determine skin pigmentation. An African person is an illegal presence in town or city after ten o'clock has struck:

The curfew proper for all Africans in Marabastad, Pretoria, was 10 pm. By that hour every African: man, woman, and child, had to be indoors, preferably in bed; if the police caught you abroad without a 'special permit' you were hauled to the battleship-grey little police station in First Avenue, near the Aapies River, and clapped in jail. The following morning you found yourself trembling before a magistrate in one of those out-rooms that serve as a court, and after a scathing lecture, you were fined ten bob. So it behoved everyone, every black mother's son to heed that bell and be off the streets at ten... (p. 61)

In this opening paragraph of the short story "Ten-to-Ten", the aspects of space and setting are shown in the following four spatial presences, (1) "...in Marabastad, Pretoria...", (2) "...every African: man, woman and child, has to be indoors, preferably in bed...", (3) "...hauled to the battleship-grey little police station in First Avenue, near Aapies River, and clapped in jail". And also (4) "...before a magistrate in one of those out-rooms that serve as court...". In reconstructing the paragraph, more or less the following would be the case: In Marabastad, Pretoria, if you are an African, it is advisable to be indoors or in bed at 10 pm failing which you would be arrested and possibly spend the night in the police station cells and appear the following day in court

before the magistrate and be fined ten shillings. In other words, that possibility of spending the night under arrest hangs on the possibility of an African personality being found loitering in the streets of Marabastad. All these temporal and spatial conditions depend on the following hypothesis "...if the police caught you abroad without a 'special pass'. This is a discriminatory law of the nationalist government that only affects people of African descent.

In the context of the South African apartheid operations, the personality of the African is viewed contemptuously. The possibility exists that one can be slapped on the face by a policeman and be expected to make nothing about it. If an African makes an attempt to lay charge against such a policeman, he is seen as stubborn and thinks that he is 'smart' or 'white'. Therefore, the concept of being "clapped" brings two meanings to mind here. The first meaning is as just explained as regards being "slapped". The second one emanates from the weight of the cell door that practically "claps" behind you as they push you inside the cell. The latter meaning of "clasp" is metaphoric and onomatopoeic.

Again, the opening statement of the paragraph directly points to the manner in which space influences the relationships between different ethnic groups living in and around Pretoria. The "curfew proper" refers to ten o'clock when there should not be Africans in the city; they should leave the city to Whites, Indians and Coloureds. The openness of space outside provides free movement to an individual African and also one who is a potential prisoner. Yet, his contravention of the curfew laws would be confined to a small space in the cells so that as occupant of such space he would be painfully cramped in an overpopulated cell.

Apartheid power is manifested by the inhibition of free movement for the Africans at a particular time of day, namely, 10 pm and the buildings of the prison stand as reality to the African caught trespassing or found loitering in white suburbs. The African person's physical body is subjected to treatment of sorts as particular architectural space is designed to contain him. No sooner has the letter of law been pronounced in the word "curfew", than the policeman, in this case, Ten-to-Ten appears on the setting.

He reasoned that as long as they were scampering home, it was a form of respect for the Law. Unlike some of the policemen who ferreted out Africans and delighted in chasing them down the streets at night, it was enough for him to say, 'You there, home!' As they fled before him he felt duty to have been done.

(p. 67)

In this setting, it is shown that Ten-to-Ten is reluctant to carry out his duties. According to the practice of policing in apartheid South Africa, he is supposed to be harsh and violent. The other policemen delight to "...ferret out Africans and...in chasing them down the street at night". The omniscient narrator understands that Ten-to-Ten does not want to perform his duties to the extent that he becomes comical or outright brute as other policemen are used to doing.

He penetrates even the dark alleys of Marabastad as the following quote rings:

Then he turned into the dark of Second Avenue of the location, away from where their eyes were guided by the blinking neons, into the murky streets where only their feet found the familiar way...in fact he heard their women, as he entered the street, calling down along it, '*Ten-to-Ten! Ten-to-Ten!*' (p. 67)

In the days of Ten-to-Ten, a location such as Marabasstad was divided from the city by just one broad street. This setting is reminiscent of the colonial way of accommodating Africans next to Whites. The apartheid ideology and government ended this practice and resettled Africans in new locations the nearest being twenty to thirty kilometres and the farthest being between fifty to sixty between homeland states and the nearest white town. Pietersburg in the Northern Province which was intended by the regime to serve Lebowa homeland, Harrismith in Eastern Free State intended to serve Qwaqwa homeland, Bloemfontein intended to serve Thaba Nchu and Botshabelo and many others. This is how Ten-to-Ten's character and role in the community portends a shift to stricter divisions. Going back, we find Ten-to-Ten and his colleagues "turned into the dark Second Avenue of the location...". This place is so dark that one cannot see one's hand, but people are living there. The darkness of the place contrasts sharply with the following statement "...guided by the blinking neons...". The city neons are helping Ten-to-Ten and his men as they were just walking comfortably under the city lighting. Now they have turned "...into the murky streets where only their feet found the familiar way..." The latter statement contradicts the former and one can only pursue darkness to the extent that he hears "...their woman, as he entered the street, calling

down along it..." and they were his name as if they are warning 'Arraa' as we earlier learned with "The Urchin".

Fifth Street was empty and dark, but before long they heard familiar grunting sounds. Ten-to-Ten signalled the other policemen to walk quietly. Off the street. Hidden in an opening among tall grass, was a group of dice players. They had formed a ring, inside which a candle was shielded from the breezes, the thrower retreat a little from the ring and, shaking his dice in his bowled fist, lunge forward, and cast them into the patch of light, giving a visceral grunt to coax his luck. Coins to the stake lay in the centre. (p. 69)

The narrator goes straight into the clandestine spaces that people rush to in order to hide from the law. Hearing "grunting sounds" Ten-to-Ten figures out that he has arrived at a spot where the dice gambling is going on "...hidden in an opening among tall grass, was a group of dice players". Space is used by the gamblers with the formation of "...a ring, inside which a candle was shielded from the breezes". The gambler would "...retreat a little from the ring and, shaking his bowled fist, lunge forward, and cast the dice to the patch of light, giving a visceral grunt...". The money for the game is surrounded by the gamblers with intense concentration. This is because gamblers are prone to cheating their opponents. Some players have the tendency of opening a dice and loading it with light metal inside. This will cause it to tilt favourably to his throw. Once the other players discover that cheating ways have been put in use to the advantage of the player, such a player could be killed outright. Perhaps that is why the law is against

gambling as played in this manner. Arriving stealthily at such a place, Ten-to-Ten would say, "... 'Search them, Masemola. You know I'm only interested in knives.' (p. 69)

Ten-to-Ten's method of working with the people who are on the wrong side of the law is, in many respects, intended to be exemplary to Constables Masemola and Ramokgopa. However, this method is not appreciated by other policemen in general. And we understand that Ten-to-Ten loathes the policing job. What he should be doing is to arrest the bunch of dice players and lock them up rather than be "... only interested in knives".

Ten-to-Ten's journey proceeds to all corners of the city where the presumption of law breaking is likely as in the following quote:

Ten-to-Ten walked with other policemen, Constable Masemola and Ramokgopa, up Fifth Avenue into glittering Boom Street. It was like suddenly walking out of an African slum into a chunk of the Orient. (p. 66)

Earlier on, the narrator introduced the story by indicating the location of the police station in Fifth Avenue. He is gradually acquainting us to the streets and their typical characterization. So, in "... First Avenue into glittering Boom Street" is Ten-to-Ten and his men moving. Once more, we find a strong contrast in their movements as they were in the location characterized by darkness and now all of a sudden they emerged into Boom Street and are wearing light. The narrator says "It was like walking out of an African slum into a chunk of the Orient" whereby we understand the statement to mean that they emerged into a street populated by Orientals such as Chinese, Indians and even

Japanese. The oriental people, besides being commanded by apartheid to be separate, they normally build their shops and businesses at one place. There are places such as Oriental Plaza that specialize in selling wares predominantly from the East. In other words, the other business houses selling American, German, English and Occidental wares are typically European and will also be built at a common centre. Seen walking under splendid lights of the city, the air around Ten-to-Ten is like that of a monarch walking the streets of his empire and meeting his subjects.

The visibility of Ten-to-Ten in the midst of crowds helps the culprits to see him in time and run:

... a hundred yards ahead, you could see the Africans who had no special permits to be out tonight, sorting themselves from the Indian and Coloured night crowds and dodging down some dark streets. They had long noticed the stalwarts shadow of Ten-to-Ten coming up. He knew it too. He did not bother. (pp. 66-67)

The tone of the passage is unpleasant. Some Africans "... who had no special permits to be out at night" run helter-skelter into the dark alleys when they see Ten-t-Ten and his cohorts coming up or down their way. However, Ten-to-Ten "... did not bother" about scampers. This is another indication that this stalwart figure does not like the policing job which he finds himself doing and in the process seeing himself a persecutor of his people. In contrast to this uncomfortable position in which his African brothers find themselves, Whites, Indians and Coloured are having it nice. They move majestically in all directions of the city. These scenes make Ten-to-Ten realize how the

sharp knife of apartheid assays the Africans from the other human species of different hues

One thing stands clear, the Europeans have brought the Coloureds, Indians and Orientals closer to them. Since they are less fortunate than the Whites but more fortunate than the Africans, they must be brought closer to the Europeans. As these hostile attitudes work according to apartheid ideology, Whites shall have created a buffer between themselves and the Africans. And the hatred generated between Coloureds, Indians, Orientals and Africans must be removed first before that between Whites and Africans could be removed. This would take aeons as social classes shall have been formed and once started they would be hard to eliminate.

The fact that Ten-to-Ten loathes the police job that he is doing, that does not exonerate him from his responsibilities as a man. He has a wife back at home in Tzaneen in the Northern province and homeland. But he finds himself arguing as follows:

But I have to work. I came here to work because I to like work. No, because back home in Tzaneen the people are starving, the rains haven't come for many years and the land is crying out, giving up the vain struggle to live --- to push up one little green blade, to justify herself --- she just lies there like a barren passionless woman, seeing men hunger and die. (p. 7)

The above quote paints a sombre situation where Ten-to-Ten argues with himself out of the fact that, he hates the police work that he is doing. However, this is not helping his cause in anyway except to arrive at the conclusion that "...I have to work. I came here

to work because I like to work". The inner compulsion has it that he must work. He has developed work ethic and has come to like work itself. He must work. Another reason that comes to his mind is that "... back home in Tzaneen the people are starving, the rains have not come for many years and the land is crying out...".

Ten-to-Ten comes from the Venda homeland and left home when rains were in vain to come and look for work in Pretoria. It is apparently many years that it has rained and in the rural areas subsistence is eked out of the soil. Rain would be great blessing there. He remembers that his people are starving and the soil is crying out for water. It furthermore occurs to his mind that "... to push up one little green blade, to justify herself --- she just lies there like a barren passionless woman, seeing men hunger and die." He reasons out that when there is rain at home, his wife would prove herself to her in-laws that she is a true wife. And in the event that it is not raining, she has no chance of proving her mettle. She is like a person who has no brains and passion for life. Most lamentably, is to see her in-laws die of hunger. He pronounces the importance of rain in space and setting in which he mixes the various ingredients of life on this canvas. These are justifying reasons that he has to work despite the fact that he loathes the job that he is doing. It makes some difference as he can occasionally send some money home. He remembers that he left home because of drought and if he does nothing to help them overcome the hard times imposed by the absence of rain, to his people, he would be like a traitor to his community.

There is a serious intersection between time and space here. For man to put seed in the soil there must be rain and rain is expected to come on the right moment. It is in this sense that there is serious conflict in him when time has arrived but rain comes in

vain. The setting loses its beauty and its capability to produce food for man. Deducing from his soliloquy, Ten-to-Ten's wife is a typical African woman who, everything remaining predictable between time and space, is capable of working on green vegetation so that "...to push up one little green blade..." is an achievement that brings a happy moment closer in life. The rain would see Ten-to-Ten hurry back home to plough land inherited from his forefathers. That rainy moment also brings him closer to his beloved wife so that when he comes back to the city, possibly he could as well have impregnated his wife ushering in the arrival of a new member in the family. The longer he remains away from her, the more 'drought' she also has in her loins.

An attempt has been made in the foregoing pages that apartheid has not only made it difficult for the Africans to live uncomfortably in the urban areas but also in the rural areas.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

4.1.1 Reflections: Chapter One

Chapter One of this thesis is the Introduction to the general situation with regard to space and setting in South Africa. The aims of the study have been indicated as the exploration of how South African fiction writers use depictions of space and setting to critique the ideological pursuits of the apartheid policy of the nationalist government since 1948. The fiction of Nadine Gordimer and Can Themba are of major interest in as far as space and setting are concerned.

The history of relationships between Africans and Whites in South Africa form the background of this study. Under apartheid social relationships, except on contractual work purposes, since these different races occupy spatially different areas were not generally tenable. The characters in *Something Out There* confirm this observation. They are out to convince the neighbourhood that the relationships between Charles, Joy, Eddie and Vusi are normal as they assume master-servant attitudes. Whites monopolized ownership of land and in that vein, Africans were bound to challenge this unilateral possession of land by Whites alone while the Africans as indigenous inhabitants and majority population have been disinherited. Seeing that Whites would not consider that Africans have to own land in South Africa, Blacks understand that they have to embark on revolution as the final mechanism through which they would win the country back. On the other hand, Whites refused to yield to this demand and indicated that when Blacks regained the country it would be 'scorched by bombs and the architectural developments would be brought down and annihilated.

It is in this sense that Gordimer's *Something Out There* is a study of such cardinal importance as it addresses the illegitimacy of land ownership by Whites when Africans remain dispossessed. In that very note, Whites have been privileged by the policy of apartheid to become super citizens when Africans have, in fact, been relegated to the third class. The Indians and Coloureds have been buffered between the two extreme groups, namely, Whites and Blacks.

As for Africans, the country was balkanised into ethnic homelands and this was seen by Blacks as the implementation of the old British colonial policy of divide-and-rule. With the homelands scattered regionally throughout South Africa, seeds of Black-on-Black hostilities were sown with the heightened significance on divided homelands by the government. As Africans started to fight one another, concentration of the apartheid hegemony would remain intact. The apportionment of land allocated to the minority Whites 87% of South Africa against 13% to Blacks who are the country's majority race. The 87% portion of the country would be used by Whites, Coloured and Indians for whom the hegemony would not create homelands.

As I have argued, the ethnic homelands were patterned in accordance with the specifications of the Land Act of 1913. It is that Act which apportioned land at 87%-13% ratio to Europeans and Africans respectively. The unification of the four provinces of South Africa in 1919, precipitated a sequel of the founding of the African National Congress in 1912. the Land Act came as an added insult to the Africans. When the colonial government wanted to buy some land adjacent to the reserves for their enlargement, white farmers refused to sell any land to the government for that purpose. With enlarged reserves, the white peasants thought, Africans would not easily avail

themselves to be exploited as cheap labour on white farms, mines and other job categories seen as fit for the Africans. The loss of land which was a premeditated ploy by Whites was crowned with the introduction of the pass and later the passbook. The latter carried almost all the individual's particulars as stated above. Somehow people called it the book of life. The passbook generally created a sense of suffering on the Africans as it impacted on one's access to town, city and the remote rural areas. The correlation between the passbook and space were worked out by the regime.

The exclusion of African place names on the majority of places on the face of South Africa has been noted with serious undertones. Kwa-Zulu Natal has the highest frequency of place names that reflect Zulu culture and history. And so does Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland which were spared that lopsided toponymy because of their protection under the British colonial rule. With the other erstwhile three provinces that made up the union, the frequency count of African place names needs serious revisiting. Another factor that contributes to this dearth, is the parallel naming as assigned to cities or towns and location or townships with emphasis on separate places of above for Africans and Europeans. It is as if the regime wanted to create an artificial sea suggestive of the 'twain never shall meet' syndrome. The symbolic sea has to be navigated before groups could encounter across the divide.

South Africa as the name of this country is also embroiled in the controversy of place naming or onomastics. Scholars of ancient African history would like the country to be renamed Azania. It is obvious that Azania for South Africa is seen with the glasses that renamed Southern Rhodesia Zimbabwe and Northern Rhodesia Zambia. The approach of naming places as newly independent African states have done, including

South Africa, has seeds of renaissance that Africans have still to give profound thought as Europe did about the classical Greece and Rome developments and inheritances. The Africans who form the force behind the reconstruction and redevelopment of Africa have to take the time telescope and look as far back as possible in the history of ancient Africa so as to dig the historical fossils for digestion, sifting and selection materials for renaissance. As the conclusion to Gordimer's novella suggests, Africa has a wealth of knowledge buried in antiquity and needs to be retrieved and reintroduced for recycles of knowledge if needs be.

The notion of South Africa becoming Azania, if the idea is ever implemented, would result in South Africa wearing renaissance robes. The map of Africa would gain a new complexion indicative of her introspective moments of self-discovery after the ravages of both colonialism and apartheid. The word African as synchronized by the colonial and post-colonial powers, always speaks an ideological language of that particular power. It is in this vein that the colonial and apartheid orders deliberately bracketed the presence and existence of Africans, not recognizing their presence. The political boundaries that the British Empire drew for her conquests northwards, brought serious divisions amongst the Africans. Kenneth Kaunda, the Zambian also said to be Malawian, was really perplexed when this statement was uttered by President Chiluba, his successor and opponent. Although in South Africa people always say that the provinces are divided by natural boundaries, such as rivers and mountains, the fact of the matter is that the present boundaries were determined by the colonial powers. At the same time, the undoing of the boundaries as the rejection of colonial imposing would bring utter chaos in Southern Africa. Countries like Lesotho, that are so landlocked, are

suffering because of borders that were drawn by the colonies who could only think through the barrel of the gun to ignore historical demarcations as they imposed their own.

4.1.2 Reflections: Chapter Two

Chapter Two is based on the novella *Something Out There* written by Nadine Gordimer. This book's setting is the northern suburbs of the city of Johannesburg where the opulent Whites live. It portrays the life of rich Whites who are sitting on a time bomb likely to explode at any time in the form of revolution between Whites and Africans. While a mysterious creature thought to be an ape, baboon, gorilla or chimpanzee by different white families in the suburbs it turns out that those labels are another way of seeing Africans in general and guerillas hell-bent to crush Whites in a revolution of retaliation.

Something Out There was written in 1984. the political set-up in South Africa then indicated that Africans were leaving the country in large numbers to undergo military training overseas under the aegis of the African National Congress and pan-African Congress. They were returning as secretly as they left. In the process of applying their military skills acquired overseas to overthrow the apartheid government, guerillas targeted sensitive and strategic structures such as power stations, Koeberg nuclear plant sabotage, Park Station bomb explosion and many others. It is with such consciousness that Gordimer wrote the novella entitled *Something Out There*. Whites were also conscious of the threat brought about by guerillas along with the thought of general insecurity, anxiety and paranoia, hence the strange creature that is actually nameless but lives in the unconscious mind of the Whites. As I hope my analysis in this chapter

suggests, *Something Out There* actually means one should not look outside oneself for the problem, there is 'something in there' in white people's consciousness which is actually the apartheid ideology and its tenets.

Something Out There has been designed to use projection as the basis on which the characters' inner thought world can be detected and understood. Projection enables an individual to blame someone or something else for one's own shortcomings. The Europeans living in the northern suburbs blame their insecurity on the mysterious creature whose identity is taken for an ape, monkey or gorilla. And when each incident unfolds where the creature features, mention of an African personality is made. This parallelism makes us aware that the image of the creature and that of the African would not identify and that identification would rather be assigned to the creature or that African. The frustrations brought about by apartheid are rationalized on the African personality. The apartheid reality that is so well known to the European residents that is universally offensive, they do not seem to want to accept that way but would rather project it on other objects.

4.1.3 Reflections: "Mob Passion"; "The Urchin"; "Ten-to-Ten"

Can Themba's two anthologies, namely, *The Will to Die* and *The World of Can Themba*, were collected posthumously and published in 1972 and 1984. In this chapter I have chosen to reflect on three short stories and a number of journalistic articles from the two anthologies that foreground the relationship between space and apartheid ideology.

"Mob Passion" depicts moments when the Russians who are a group of men and women brainwashed by apartheid ideology think that racial purity can be maintained. In

this story, the Russians become involved in a situation where they would like the Nguni lad to refrain from falling in love with the Sotho lass. This is the center of controversy and conflict that Themba develops throughout the short story.

In similar fashion, *The Urchin* is a short story about juvenile delinquents living in Sophiatown after it was partly demolished. The group of boys, obviously not attending school, are on the loose to attack the Berliners, another rival group of boys also united in mischief. The Berliners are caught unawares while concentrating on a game of dice by Macala and his group. The battle ensues in which the Berliners are trapped between one gang that strategically divides itself into two. It is clear that, on the eve of the demolition of Sophiatown, the majority of the residents were already living in Meadowlands while few were still left behind. It is logical to assume that at that time, facilities and amenities were already transferred to Meadowlands and the place was already half empty of people and facilities.

"Ten-to-Ten" is the short story featuring a gigantic African policeman who is generally associated with the curfew time effective from ten o'clock at night. It turns out that the benevolent "Ten-to-Ten" finds himself reluctantly chasing the offending African people. He realizes that he is only enforcing the skewed laws of the apartheid government regarding curfews, passes and many other issues viewed commonly. The spirit of the law that is supposed to be embedded in law is not detected by Ten-to-Ten in the spirit of the apartheid laws, but only the one-sided interests of the white minority. In line with the apocalyptic thoughts that Ten-to-Ten seems to be striking on in his scrutiny of the apartheid developments. Themba seems to be suggesting that Africans and other racial groups oppressed by apartheid, need to see the divisions between themselves as a result

of apartheid's artificial thinking, not natural or representative of some form of true justice.

4.2 Similarities and Differences

Both Gordimer and Themba write about space and setting in their works, especially in relations to the city of Johannesburg. While Gordimer writes about the northern suburbs of the city as well as the immediate outskirts, Themba writes about the southern part of the city on a setting known as Soweto. Gordimer concentrates on the opulence of her European characters and their ways of living. Despite the richness enjoyed by Whites, they live behind barricades, and lock and key because they fear that the animal, thought to be an ape, gorilla, gorilla or the chimpanzee or significantly, a black man seems to be at large in the suburbs. On the other hand, Themba writes about Soweto and its people whose main fear is human beings called tsotsis, who are wayward youth who also go about violently attacking girls and who refuse to fall in love with them. They move about in trains with contempt, terrorizing and humiliating innocent people under the spell of apartheid thinking.

Themba and Gordimer also write about movement of their characters in their daily lives. The movement of Themba's characters across space and setting starts from Soweto to the city of Johannesburg for the purpose of employment. It is movement that is rapid and intensified by swift trains, buses and other vehicles throughout the week when they go to the city to do shopping and also to work. The knife-wielding thugs who have no respect for other people generate great fear in the midst of passengers in transit to or from Soweto. Gordimer's characters in *Something Out There*. Are also engaged in

movement over space. The uncontrolled movement of the thing in the suburbs that causes such anxiety and the freedom fighters whose ability to move freely is constrained by their skin colour, gender and class positions. For instance, when Eddie is going to the supermarket his movement is not only tense but it is engulfed in anxiety. Seen against the backdrop of Charles' movement as a white man, the latter moves more freely and his skin colour is the passport to go anywhere the business of freedom fighting would take him.

Gordimer's characters trade with dangerous weapons like the AK-47 rifles, bayonets, grey limpet mines with detonators, defensive and offensive hand-grenades to help derail the apartheid government authority in South Africa. in "Mob Passion", Themba's characters use clubs, knob-kieries and these are used in cross-cultural and inter-ethnic battles that predominantly destroy the lives of people in their communities. Gordimer's characters, while dealing with dangerous and advanced weapons, these are calculated to liberate black people en masse, not used on individuals. While Themba's characters engage in inter-ethnic extermination and violence, the revolution aimed at by the freedom fighters in Gordimer is determined to mobilize all black and white people against apartheid. The Urchin also engages youth in inter-group battles that are calculated to eliminate one another in their fighting for imaginary territories. Gordimer's characters also aim to waken up the apartheid regime that is comfortably sleeping on the atrocious outcomes of black people's suffering. The inter-ethnic and inter-gang wars appear to be going to be absorbed by infighting while the freedom fighters in *Something Out There* are busy with getting on with the war against apartheid.

Whites in the northern suburbs have given to themselves vast yards and plots. In fact, they never find themselves running short of space for almost everything they can

think about. The plots and yards are punctuated with big houses and mansions of ornate beauty. However, it is the height of irony to find that Whites keep their doors locked and live inside their mansions with a sense of fear and paranoia. On the other hand, the Soweto in Themba's stories is crying out for more land. Its four-roomed houses are built on small yards. It is possible that up to ten Soweto four-roomed houses can fit wonderfully well into a typical white yard.

As regards *Something Out There*, the man despicably known as Kleynhans's boy plays the role of a watchman at this house. It seems that he has adopted the style of watching the place from far. This man has a deep liking for working with the soil but does not stand any chance of legitimately doing so under apartheid laws. The patch of mealies that he planted at Kleynhans's place receives regular attention and care from him. This is the one instance where the man markets his skills to the new occupants of Koppiesdrif. Unfortunately, he is not aware of what is really taking place here. For an African, the ownership of land is not tenable under the laws of apartheid. The extent of the man's plight is revealed when the narrator tells us that this nameless man has a son undergoing the same plight as the father. The son is staying in a shack that has repeatedly been brought down by the municipality bulldozers.

4.3 Space and setting in the future South Africa.

This discussion has explored factors of space and setting in the fiction of South African writers with special emphasis on the influences brought about by the apartheid ideology. It concentrated on the suburbs, city, locations, veld, stations and the movement of Africans especially from Soweto as the immediate setting vis-à-vis the northern

suburbs of Johannesburg. In this section, it is my intention to explore space and setting in the general South African set-up since the new political and democratic order took root in the new South Africa.

As events in *Something Out There* suggest, the apartheid South Africa viewed Africans as sojourners, the homelands in which Africans were living were dissolved. Apartheid was the cornerstone of discrimination with the use of passbooks as the means of controlling the movement of Africans. In that vein, Africans have been incorporated in greater South Africa and the homelands will be the setting that they always have been prior to the promulgation of the 1913 Land Act and the 1958 Bantustan Act. Stated differently, the 87% versus 13% Whites and Africans land apportionment has been reversed and Africans can live wherever they want in the new South Africa. Even Whites can live with Africans in locations and townships. And one other development that has rapidly surfaced since the 1994 democratic elections, Africans have moved to town and suburb to live in the midst of their white counterparts. Be that as it may, not surprisingly, there are no Whites who make attempts to live in locations and townships. That Africans have joined whites in towns and suburbs has not improved the attitudes of Whites towards Africans. Africans are regarded as intruders and curious at that.

The African people living in South African farms are still receiving the worst treatment from their white masters. The white farming community retains granite attitudes and see no reason why they should accommodate Africans who are hostile to Whites who have been so good to them all along. Since 1994, white farmers have taken it upon themselves to see to it that they drive away their African servants who have been serving them for as long as thirty to forty years. Mpumalanga province that shares

boundaries with Mozambique and Swaziland is leading the Free State and North Province in perpetrating these cruel conditions. Since most farming Africans are paid pathetically meagre wages and are barely literate, they find themselves exposed to the worst conditions ever. They would not challenge Whites as they have no means to pursue litigation against their masters in the courts of law. They barely have anything to live on. Some are paid, say R100 per month and will get, say fifteen bags of 250lbs mealies annually after reaping and garnering.

The situation has been aggravated by new legislature laying down that Africans who worked on farms for say, twenty years and more, do not have to anywhere to start new life. The white farmers should cede some piece of land on which one should be in a position to eke out subsistence from the soil. White farmers are not budging as was the case they refused to sell some land adjacent to the reserves to the colonial government. Therefore, the issue of land in South Africa is emotionally loaded and remains a flashpoint that asks for honest commitment from the white masters. It is one thing that can worsen Black-Whites relations and it is so sensitive that it could ignite an explosion and lead to the Boers struggling to be freed from the African democratic government. This is the path that the democratic order would have liked to avoid at all costs.

The removal of Africans en masse from the townships and locations to alternative places starting with Sophiatown in 1955, are heading for reversal of this trend since the 1994 democratic order. This is happening with removals that were enforced by the nationalist regime in rural areas (such as the Ngomana tribe in Mpumalanga province), townships (such as District Six) and locations. With the democratic government in power, there is hope that people will be given their lands back.

Improvisations are also made by leaders of these communities to see to it that the returnees are given access to financial institutions for help in rebuilding these areas to better homes than the ones demolished by the apartheid regime. In certain areas, evacuated places were not used in anyway by the apartheid regime. The removals were carried out of malice. These people have been taken out of their historical contexts and planted far from their roots. In a place where these people have to go, say, Johannesburg to work, when they return "home" they return to nowhere except to empty spaces where they can only imagine houses at places where they used to stay. Unsubstantiated nostalgia. They worked in the city to which they do not belong. They come to the rural spaces where their imaginations cannot fit any logic pushing from their experience of yore. They have returned from the city to a meaningless life where their communities were uprooted.

Some African children are attending white schools with their white counterparts in towns and cities. This trend was initiated earlier under what was known as Model C schools. Most African parents opted for these schools and sent their children there that they be taught in Afrikaans or English. Some innocently saying the children could do without their mother tongues as the latter is sufficiently spoken at home. Since the Afrikaners would not tolerate a situation where their language is looked down, African children almost always find themselves being taught alone without their white counterparts. Instead of liking one another, the Black-White children usually clash and fight it out since they have not learned to honestly know one another. This is the most convenient way of circumventing integration. And it further seems that white schools have only incorporated African children in their midst only to increase their numbers and

also suck as much money as they can from black communities. While the Afrikaans schools have become the most boisterous and violent schools, the English medium schools proved not to be violent against Blacks. Since English schools only accept black children in their midst, these children become isolated as they have to pay a cultural price. They can only feel comfortable so long as they are accepted in totality. This is impossible as they have not grown up in English culture and environment. However, these developments have not eliminated or diminished the concerted hatred directed to black children. The setting in the schools is volatile because of these stereotypes.

In the apartheid South Africa, each of the eleven languages developed its own body of literature. Even then those literatures were under the eye of the Big Brother in Pretoria as they were expected to toe the line on what to write and not. It so happened that there were "mind detectives" who interpreted what the Africans have to say in these literatures. It is not just any topic that the African could write about without finding him/herself in trouble. Said differently, writing about space was to be as innocent as can be. These literatures were expected to write commendably about the homelands thus extolling their suspect virtues and the freedom they brought to the Africans without finding themselves having to interfere with anything beyond the pigmentation borders. Writing about space and setting in the apartheid South Africa was therefore never going to be a genuine exercise. Indirect methods of expression were used so as to render the search of the mind detectives futile and their attempt to unravel profound metaphors about certain aspects of life in the country. Therefore, works that genuinely treated space and setting in disparaging terms were highly condemned and censored. Although this stifling of critical writing on space and setting through the censorship laws. Time has

therefore arrived when Africans should take it upon themselves to write serious literature about space and setting in the new South Africa. As I hope this thesis has suggested, Can Themba and Nadine Gordimer are two South African writers to look to for how this critique might be developed.

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