

Confrontation and Violence: Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter*

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Abstract

Nadine Gordimer, novelist and short story writer, was born in Springs, South Africa, in 1923. In her novels she often lets a protagonist re-examine his/her most deeply held beliefs through a confrontation with the repressed. The major social and political pressure on the writer in South Africa over the past forty years was apartheid. Her characters live in the shadow of violence, threatened by unpredictable brutality. Races and classes, conventions and codes ferment in a decoction of final show downs and a mysteriously glimmering hope of unexpected merger and elective affinities outlined in the sands of the future.

Key Words: Confrontation, violence, race, class, South Africa

Nadine Gordimer, novelist and short story writer, was born in Springs, South Africa, in 1923. She spent her childhood in Transvaal, and began writing at an early age, publishing her first short story, "Come Again Tomorrow," when she was 15. At 21, Gordimer briefly attended Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg where she was exposed to the social and political atmosphere of South Africa, which would become the focus of her works. Gordimer married twice "First in 1949 to G. Gavron, with whom she has a daughter, and then to Reinhold Cassirer in 1954. They have a son.

Nadine Gordimer received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1991. She continues to live in and write about South Africa.

Nadine Gordimer seems to have reconciled the conflicting demands of ethics and aesthetics "in an age when any transcendental basis for ethics (s for aesthetics) is being denied in the name of politics",

In her novels she often lets a protagonist re-examine his/her most deeply held

beliefs through a confrontation with the repressed. The major social and political pressure on the writer in South Africa over the past forty years was apartheid. Gordimer wonders whether she would have become a writer at all, if she had been born "black", as she acquired her real education through reading. This presupposes between English literature and translations of European writers which would have confined her imagination to late 19th and early 20th century Europe and America.

Her characters live in the shadow of violence, threatened by unpredictable brutality. Races and classes, conventions and codes ferment in a decoction of final show downs and a mysteriously glimmering hope of unexpected merger and elective affinities outlined in the sands of the future. Through her language and fearless characterization, Gordimer became a counter weight to the regime's propaganda.

Burger's Daughter (1979) is, in her own words, "a coded homage" to Bram Fischer, the communist lawyer who was sentenced

to life in prison and whose name nobody was allowed to mention. Gordimer never claimed to portray him – although his daughter recognized their lives – but to convey the hidden truth behind a public person. The challenge to the writer is to penetrate official lies and facades, to go beyond and behind, with an intuition and insight unhampered by social conventions or family discretion. She intended, She said, “to bring to a broad canvas the position of the white Left in South Africa, and the extraordinary dynasty of belief and struggle in these families.

In this work Gordimer honestly confesses that if she had been black that would at least have given the information that she was from Africa. It tells the story about a black American even after 300 years. Nobody could see her for she was black where she came from. Her cousin lives in Paris. The daughter of Auntie Velm was in Paris with me selling South African oranges somewhere in this buildings flaring to a prow from diminishing perspective where two spirits merge V shaped, in my single evening, walking could have looked up the litmus board under its French title in the desultory it's a great pity we Africans don't travel enough she at 43 “she confessed and I at 27 going to Europe for the first time”.

Burger's Daughter collects books and talk of people like of Flora & William who are the main characters who visited Europe. Gordimer represented South Africa but she was herself of Russian Parentages. The world is divided into two sharp contracts as Blacks and whites. Paris is the cultural centre of modern Europe. The nineteenth century writers who had lived and worked there had been popularized romantically. Thousands of students seem to occupy

holes of hostels and haunts now. Blonder and gypoy's in displayed poverty the poor stone to conceal, going in fishermen goods of barefoot through the crowds. Girls and men talk out their lives the way clock stick. They buy tiny cups of coffee for the prize of a bag of mealie-meal. They drink wine in the clothes of guerrillas surviving in the bush on a cup of water a day.

Gordimer tries to explore the commonness in cultural diversity of the subalterns life of a metro city. “Dim stairs, tiny bent balconies, endless dovecotes of dormer wonder when early all dark, everyone in the spirits.” Nadine Gordimer unfold here of young woman's involving identity in the turbulent political convergent of present day. South Africa. His father's death in Parison leaves Rosa Burger alone to explore the intricacies of what it actually means to be Burger's daughter. Gordimer has been concern with the individual costs of the event she describes. Because she has had a long career twelve novels and ten collections of short stones, her writing creates a king of record of South Africa has passed than in the intimate portrayals Gordimer had given us particularly in her Burger's Daughter. In discussion novel, Gordimer drew an example from Russian Literature. Eugena Goodhart “the Clusteral world of Nadine Gordimer”

Although Lionel Burger dominates the novel, it is not about him but his daughter, Roza. It is through Roza that Gordimer examines the predicament facing the inheritor of a revolutionary tradition in the contact of South African the 1970 – or for that matter elsewhere. In an interview Gordimer gave in 1979 soon after the public action of the novel, she said, “you can say on the face of it, Burger's

Daughter is about white communists. But to me it is about something else. It is about commitment.

Nadine Gordimer's handling of political and philosophical agreement among her characters European and African Is something unique in the in the modern English novel; not only in particular sense but in her fundamental interests she has brought the novel of idea back into English literature, filling a place that had been vacant in living memory, and was never exactly crowded.

At the centre of the dialectic is Rosa, who is a disturbed by the death of a white meths drinleer on a park bench as by political injustice, and who looks for a meaning outside herself and her destiny as the daughter of a famous communist. There are areas of numberless and obscurity in Rosa a love affair with a professor in France, an under – examined affairs that somehow just happened, offering an tunity of escape; in fact, anything at all in her not directly concerned with south Africa but that memberness too mergesints the meaning of the novel, Her olded as well as bonned in her native country, Gordimer has consistently refused to have South Africa. By addressing his political and social turmoil in his fiction, she has chosen a spiritual exile over an actual one. In announcing its selection to the press yesterday morning, the Academy praised Gordimer for his “magnificent epic writing..... her compassion and her outstanding literary style.”

Nadine Gordimer's affirmative and patriotic side has emerged in the south Africa. Her character as an artist and thinker about the elusiveness of human

relationship, about communications and its opposite – it opposite normally being more prevalent in our lives was formed in the old repressive South Africa. Her work than was situated in a specific time and place, in the very Transvaal soil which sometimes seemed to figure almost as a character in her writing. But the miracle is that these solitary artists toiling away in a fine old Johnesburg neighborhood where she only black neighbors were servants seeing in this artist managed by dint of a courageous intellect to touch universal themes. The result is a body of work that resonates powerfully with people who were never engaged in her struggle.

With the passage of time and the sinking of that old South Africa, this becomes even clearer. The apartheid era's metruments of repressive power sound almost as antiquated today as the Spanish Inquisition's. Who has the patience any one to explain what the suppression of communism Act or the groups areas Act were all about? Something like an anto-da-fi You don't have to know precisely – you never did – to connect to a story like “Six feet in the country” or novels like” The Conservationist: or Burger's Daughter.”

In the dialogue of Gordimer's Character, the silences are sometime deafening: No one does silence better. Interior thoughts such on as verbalized ones clatter half – formed, the trail off. An when it's well-off whites confronting blacks of any description, what usually unsaid tends to drown out what's said, Black and White Gordimer's characters are not allegorical but they confront what with the questions of whether humans can ever really known one another.

Burger's Daughter is hard on herself for "prosing over the novel of a single identity," but a single identity is not always an essay thing to hold together, here or there. Rosa lives today not because she's an revolutionary's daughter but

because we're all existentially speaking, in the same place that "we," at least, of a relentlessly modern world, which you might call "this late bourgeois world" if someone hadn't already captured that phrases.

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