



Ubuntu and Political Correctness in Nadine Gordimer's *No Time like the Present, None to Accompany Me and House Gun*.

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Résumé : Cette réflexion, basée sur la théorie postcoloniale, aborde la question de l'« Ubuntu » et du « politiquement correct », deux concepts importants dans la quête de réconciliation. L'étude se concentre sur l'influence significative que ces deux pratiques ont eue sur les protagonistes en envisageant le pardon et en renouvelant les relations afin de construire un avenir meilleur dans le contexte de la réconciliation en Afrique du Sud. S'inspirant de l'œuvre de Nadine Gordimer, cet article souligne l'importance de ces deux concepts dans la résolution des conflits et la réconciliation des différentes parties belligérantes.

Mots clés : Ubuntu-Politiquement correct- Protagonistes- conflit- Réconciliation.

Abstract: This reflection, which draws upon postcolonial theory, seeks to address the issue of “Ubuntu” and “political correctness”, which are two important concepts in the quest for reconciliation. This study considers the significant influence that these two practices have had on the individuals involved in contemplating forgiveness and re-establishing relationships with a view to constructing a more promising future within the context of South African reconciliation. It draws upon the work of Nadine Gordimer to illustrate the crucial role that these two concepts play in resolving conflicts and reuniting the various parties in contention.

Key words: Ubuntu-Political correctness- Protagonists- Conflict- Reconciliation

Introduction

In his 1973 publication, *Resolution of Conflict*, Morton Deutsch helpfully outlines the distinction between constructive and destructive conflict. According to Deutsch, constructive conflict has the potential to reinforce relationships and facilitate comprehension, whereas



destructive conflict may have the opposite effect, exacerbating tensions and impairing interpersonal dynamics (p. 14). This concept suggests that when conflict arises, it may be helpful to engage in constructive dialogue to identify and address the underlying grievances of all parties involved. Once these have been identified, it may be possible to develop strategies to address them directly. This would involve the creation of mechanisms, dialogue and negotiation, and the advancement of social justice and equality. If we consider the case of South Africa, we can see that the country has adopted a number of strategies in its pursuit of genuine and comprehensive reconciliation. These include the concept of Ubuntu and the use of political correctness. In her works *No Time like the Present* (1999), *None to Accompany Me* (2012) and *House Gun* (1999), Nadine Gordimer employs the aforementioned concepts to encourage South Africans to embrace forgiveness and reconciliation. Similarly, James Ogude (2018) offers the following paraphrase.

Ubuntu should be examined in everyday practices in society. The concept of Ubuntu was popularised during South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) by its chair, the Archbishop Desmond Tutu. (p.85)

Gordimer touches upon the ongoing efforts to achieve social justice and the complexities of political and social transformation in her country. It would be interesting to consider how the phenomenon of political correctness, which is associated with a change in language, and the concept of Ubuntu, which promotes forgiveness and solidarity, may have contributed to the process of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. Could we perhaps consider how Nadine Gordimer employed these concepts to encourage reconciliation in her country?

One might suggest that the Ubuntu philosophy, which has its origins in traditional African culture, could be regarded as a form of political correctness. It may be observed that the concept of Ubuntu has its roots in the cultural traditions of Africa, particularly in South Africa. As N. Mungi (2020) suggests, the concept of Ubuntu could be summarised by the phrase "I am because we are", which emphasises "solidarity, shared humanity, and interconnectedness" (p. 45). This assertion is further supported by A.E.W. Macculloch's (2017) definition of Ubuntu as a straightforward statement of identity: "I am you" (p. 15).

In the context of reconciliation, particularly following periods of conflict or division, it could be argued that the concept of Ubuntu is of pivotal importance. In her works, *No Time Like the Present* and *None, to Accompany Me*, Nadine Gordimer provides a comprehensive account of the necessity for this concept in order to achieve genuine and enduring reconciliation between South Africans. Similarly, Anna Monashenko (2021) defines the term "political



correctness" as "the formation of language and behaviour to minimise or avoid discrimination against certain social groups, ethnic, religious and sexual minorities, women, people with disabilities" (p. 49).

I-Political correctness, Ubuntu and reconciliation in Nadine Gordimer's works

In Nadine Gordimer's work, the concepts of "political correctness" and "Ubuntu" are employed as a potential means of initiating the process of reconciliation. It could be argued that the traditional philosophy of Ubuntu and the concept of "political correctness" are both characterised by the promotion of forgiveness and reconciliation, the humanisation of relationships and the strengthening of social cohesion, which are all key objectives in the reconciliation process. It might be suggested that the content of *None to Accompany Me* and *No Time Like the Present* and *House Gun* exemplify the practice of Ubuntu and demonstrate a commitment to political correctness.

1-1. The advancement of forgiveness

In her works *No Time like the Present*, *None to Accompany Me* and *House Gun*, Nadine Gordimer is clear that the process of reconciliation comprises three essential steps: acknowledgement of the wrongdoing, request for forgiveness and re-establishment of a relationship with the offender. These steps are the logical consequence of acknowledging the wrongdoing in question. Forgiveness frees not only the person who has done wrong, but also the person who forgives. This allows the latter to move forward in life and cease being defined by the act committed against them. The apartheid legislation that was in force in South Africa fostered a climate of enmity and antagonism between the racial groups, which polarised society.

In her 1998 work, *The House Gun*, Nadine Gordimer presents the murder of Carl Jespersen. The body of a man was discovered in a residence he shared with others. Upon returning to their residence, David Baker and Nkululeko Khulu discovered the lifeless body of their acquaintance, Carl Jespersen, in the living room. The victim had sustained a gunshot wound.

wound to the head". (Gordimer, 1998, p. 15) After initially expressing reluctance, Duncan ultimately divulged the details of his misdeed. "His parents, who had benefited from a quality education, retained the services of a prominent attorney, Hamilton, and sought pardon for their son's actions". (N. Gordimer, 1998, p. 92). The decision to select a Black lawyer to represent a White client in a court of law is a significant one. In South Africa, despite considerable

controversy, numerous perpetrators have been granted amnesty and forgiveness in exchange for public disclosure of their misdeeds.

The concept of considering "the other as oneself" is inspired by the idea of Ubuntu, and the language used to address people is seen as an important factor in achieving peace and reconciliation, as Gordimer notes. The sole expression utilized was "I'm sorry things went wrong" I ask for your forgiveness. The phrase "I beg you" (Payne 70) is of significant importance in the resolution of misunderstandings. In the process of requesting or offering forgiveness, Didymus and his wife (Sibongile) were compelled to reside in exile due to their experiences with the atrocities of the apartheid system. Upon returning home following the inauguration, they discovered that South African society had undergone significant changes. As a result," they opted to forgive those who had offended them". (Gordimer, 2012, p. 13)

The opening has been made possible by the fact that the new South Africa has been shaped by the logic of a new South Africa and by the grace of Ubuntu (forgiveness), which has proved to be a necessary tool for achieving reconciliation. T. Pierre (2010) posits that forgiveness is not a subversion of justice. "Those who adhere to the belief that an injustice must be rectified through compensation for the harm it has caused are mistaken" (p.45).

The concept of Ubuntu, which emphasizes the importance of the collective and the well-being of the community, played a pivotal role in enabling forgiveness and reconciliation. By fostering a sense of shared humanity and collective responsibility, Ubuntu provided a framework for individuals and communities to overcome past wounds and move forward in a positive manner. The concept of Ubuntu emphasizes not only the idea of shared humanity and interdependence between individuals, but also the importance of humility and self-transcendence, which allow for the possibility of reconciliation to be realized by all. Desmond Tutu attempted to persuade the South African population to adopt the concept of Ubuntu.

I would like to share with you two simple truths: there is nothing that cannot be forgiven, and there is no one undeserving of forgiveness. When you can see and understand that we are all bound to one another whether by birth, by circumstance or simply by our shared humanity. (A.Douglas, 2014, p.3)

1.2. Promotion of dialogue and intercultural comprehension.

The concepts of Ubuntu and political correctness are employed with the objective of revitalizing a relationship that has become compromised. This concept is articulated by Paul Gready (2011), who posits that "Reconciliation is inherently relational. It is a restored or created

anew to the extent that the parties are able to move on in peace while accepting each other's integrity" (P. Gready, 2011, p. 205). In her novels, Nadine Gordimer elucidates the pivotal role of dialogue and cultural acceptance in the reconciliation process. The concepts of Ubuntu and political correctness play a pivotal role in this endeavor, despite operating through disparate mechanisms. Political correctness is the use of language and conduct that avoids any infringement on the rights of marginalized or vulnerable groups. The utilization of respectful language, as defined by the principles of political correctness, serves to facilitate the acknowledgement and veneration of the inherent dignity of all. In the wake of the injustices perpetuated by the apartheid system, Black, white, and colored South Africans were compelled to identify avenues for coexistence.

The promotion of dialogue and mutual acceptance of difference was encouraged. In the 1990 novel *None to Accompany Me*, the character Vera, as portrayed by Gordimer, laments the various attacks that have occurred in post-apartheid South Africa. The transition from apartheid to a democratic society has been characterized by a series of atrocities perpetrated by all parties involved. Rape, murder and street violence were prevalent in South Africa. Vera asserts that South Africans have moved beyond the assumption that human life is sacred. "It is an unbreakable compact." (Gordimer, 2012, p. 135). It is therefore imperative that individuals engage in direct, unwavering eye contact and unequivocally condemn the killing of human beings, irrespective of race. This is because the act of killing is an act of killing, and death is death. In Nadine Gordimer's novels, it is evident that dialogue and intercultural comprehension are key to progress.

It is crucial to facilitate and encourage dialogue and communication between different communities in South Africa to achieve reconciliation. This was achieved through educational, cultural and community initiatives that promote mutual respect, tolerance and recognition of diversity. Nadine Gordimer's works promote dialogue as a means of consolidating national unity through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The commission has proposed recommendations for reparations and measures to prevent future conflict, as G. Lyin (2001) argues. "It is incumbent upon all South Africans to pursue reconciliation" (p.4).

Dialogue requires the commitment of all parties, with particular emphasis on the role of religious leaders, who are widely listened to. In the absence of the philosophical tenets of Ubuntu and the principles of political correctness, the possibility of dialogue is precluded. The effective management of this process serves to foster positive relations and to prevent the occurrence of misunderstandings that have the potential to erode social cohesion, which is the

primary guarantor of social stability. Furthermore, the advent of a new South Africa has been accompanied by a notable increase in cultural diversity, which can be defined as “the process by which the distinctive identities of cultural groups within a country are maintained or supported.” (G. Morgan, 2015, p. 374). As posited by South African Professor Thaddeus Metz, “Ubuntu represents a moral philosophy that upholds the notion of acting in a manner that is deemed right, or just, insofar as it serves to honour and uphold communal relationships, and to identify with and exhibit solidarity towards others” (S. Hanneke, 2006, p. 221). These concepts present potential avenues for nation-building and social cohesion in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. This social value serves as the driving force behind social transformation in the country. As a social value, Ubuntu and political correctness serve to challenge prejudice and xenophobia, whilst simultaneously influencing the nature of social relations.

1.3 .Strengthening Social and Economic Equity

The promotion of community links and cooperation by Ubuntu is facilitating the rebuilding of trust and solidarity within societies. In order to facilitate enduring reconciliation, South Africa persists in addressing the pervasive socio-economic inequalities that have their origins in the apartheid era. This necessitates the implementation of policies designed to reduce poverty, enhance access to education and employment, and promote equal opportunities for all citizens. Despite the establishment of numerous policies and institutions with the objective of reducing the disparities between the colonised and the colonisers, it is imperative to persist in the pursuit of ensuring that those who have suffered as a consequence of human rights violations are duly compensated and afforded justice. This process facilitated both the healing of the wounds of the past and the construction of a more just and equitable society. The prospects for reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa remain both promising and complex.

The social impact of reconciliation can be summarised in four key points: the alleviation of poverty, the reduction of unemployment, the reduction of inequality and the improvement of living conditions. In the works *No Time like the Present* and *None to Accompany Me*, a comparison is made between the apartheid era and the new era. The post-apartheid era and the era of democratisation present a greater number of opportunities and mark the end of oppression and unjustified marginalisation. The progressive removal of inequalities has created opportunities for all members of society. As Jabulile states, “Boundaries are undergoing a



transformation, ideologies are integrating, and sects, religious and philosophical, are now creating idols out of combinations of beliefs” (N. Gordimer, 2012, p. 45).

The enactment of new legislation that is non-discriminatory in nature has contributed to the emergence of a new mentality of coexistence and a desire for unity, which has in turn led to the formation of a diverse and inclusive nation. This process of reconciliation has resulted in the emergence of a culture of mutual aid and solidarity among all South Africans. President Zuma, who was democratically elected, has implemented changes that have benefited all citizens, regardless of race. The new South Africa is witnessing the emergence of women and their active participation in social, political, and economic activities. In the works of Nadine Gordimer, characters such as Jabulile, Vera, Lucy and Sibongile are presented as exemplars of forgiveness, restorative justice and courage. Such individuals serve as exemplars of peace and cohesion. These changes are made possible by the philosophies of Ubuntu and political correctness, which encourage people to consider others as human beings who deserve respect, love, and forgiveness.

The restitution of confiscated land and property, as well as the demolition of the Bantustans, have been shown to have significant social and economic impacts. Furthermore, social housing was introduced as a means of providing accommodation for those in need, while social security was established as part of the process of national reconciliation. The conclusion of the reconciliation process has enabled integration, which has been interpreted in a number of different ways. Although some South Africans have characterised immigrants as a burden on the economy, it is important to recognise their significant and beneficial contribution to the country's economic growth. “Migrants were motivated to stimulate the economy” (N. Gordimer, 1994, p. 247). Furthermore, Nadine Gordimer emphasises the considerable contribution immigrants have made to the country's economic development, in addition to the various immigration movements. In addition to the political, economic, and social impacts of reconciliation in South Africa, there is also a significant psychological impact on the population. It is certainly true that this preconceived opinion of immigrants is not entirely shared by everyone, as evidenced by Nils Holtug’s view that “immigration constitutes a threat to social cohesion and national unity” (p.25).

The fear and violence characteristic of apartheid are gradually being replaced by peace and hope for a better future. “It is now relatively straightforward for immigrants to enjoy the same socioeconomic status as their white counterparts” (Gordimer, 1994, p. 68). The



removal of linguistic, social, and political barriers has had a considerable impact on the South African economy. The implementation of reconciliation initiatives spearheaded by the newly-appointed authorities has facilitated the participation of a more diverse demographic in the economic sphere, rather than the previous monopoly held by the white population. To illustrate, Jabulile, a black woman, became a successful businesswoman as a result of her aptitude and abilities (Gordimer, 2012, p. 47). She was even invited to an international conference where emerging businesspeople convened to discuss potential economic opportunities. In general, the participants were preoccupied with the pursuit of economic well-being to such an extent that they perceived the battle for financial prosperity to have commenced, given the established political kingdom. "The economic field has undergone significant transformation, and social inclusion has considerably promoted progress, thus improving the poverty situation of those previously excluded" (N. Gordimer, 2012, p. 315).

The new non-racial constitution has created new economic opportunities and promoted equality among all components of society. The cases of Petrus, a prominent agricultural landowner, Motsamai, a successful lawyer, and Khulu, a distinguished journalist, exemplify the favourable transformations that have occurred in post-apartheid South Africa. Economic prosperity is not the exclusive domain of any particular racial group; rather, it is a resource that is available to all. To illustrate, Lucie, the daughter of David Lurie and proprietor of numerous properties and lands, has also derived benefit from this progress. Similarly, upon returning from exile, the couple Didymus and Sibongile dedicated their energy and expertise to the advancement of the country's economy. "The promotion of reconciliation has facilitated inclusive development".(Gordimer, 2012, p. 148). The socio-economic transformations that occurred in the period under discussion eliminated all barriers that favoured one group over another.

The dismantling of the Bantustans and the abolition of passbooks permitted the unrestricted movement of goods and people. Furthermore, the new South Africa implemented policies with the objective of reducing poverty. Facilities were established for the most disadvantaged people, including the restitution of confiscated land. During the apartheid era, numerous properties and lands were confiscated from non-white individuals through the use of force. In the novel *No Time like The Present*, Odendaal serves as a symbol of the injustices committed. As an Afrikaner, he was the proprietor of numerous properties, which he leased to Black individuals who were deprived of the requisite resources. In order to rectify these



imbalances, the government implemented a positive discrimination strategy through the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Programme, which aimed to return the lands to their rightful owners. The establishment of peace and stability has provided an enabling environment for the development of the informal sector. In the contemporary South African context, where the state is unable to provide employment for all, many individuals have opted to establish their own businesses as a means of self-sustainability.

II. Humanising relationships

The humanisation of relations between South Africans is evidenced by the various changes that have taken place in the new post-apartheid South Africa. It is important to acknowledge that the Ubuntu policy and political correctness have played a significant role in fostering respect and dignity, strengthening social cohesion, and combating corruption and promoting transparent governance in the new South Africa. The Ubuntu concept encourages a respectful and compassionate attitude towards others, which is a vital component in the process of repairing damaged relationships.

2.1 Respect and Dignity

The post-apartheid South African landscape, shaped by the new government's democratic institutions and diverse political arrangements, is characterised by a multicultural environment where individuals are free to pursue their chosen paths. Each racial or ethnic group is distinguished by its cultural identity, which is a defining characteristic of the group in question. In this way, Jamie Frueh posits that “identities are always in process, always contested, always an accomplishment of practice, sometimes their reproduction is relatively unproblematic because contestation is low” (Fred James, 2002, p. 67).

In Nadine Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me*, the couple expresses disquiet at their only daughter Mpho's inability to speak either the Zulu language of her mother or the Xhosa language of her father. The couple expressed profound concern about this loss of cultural identity. In emphasizing this behaviour, Gordimer seeks to illustrate the significance of instilling pride in one's cultural identity or mother tongue. By encouraging their children to embrace self-acceptance, they instil new values and norms that will shape the future generations. When an individual respects themselves, it is likely that others will respect them in return. Dignity is bestowed upon the individual through self-consideration.



The Ubuntu philosophy and the concept of political correctness both seek to utilise language and behaviours that challenge offensive attitudes towards marginalised or vulnerable groups. This is achieved by encouraging the use of language and behaviours that are respectful and inclusive of all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances. This ultimately results in the acknowledgement of the inherent human dignity that is inherent to all individuals. The respect and recognition of the dignity of non-white individuals has been a crucial factor in the reconciliation of Africa, which is now striving to become a strong nation. The status of women in South Africa has undergone a significant transformation. Prior to the advent of democracy, women were subjected to marginalisation and trivialisation. However, they have now secured a place and a dominant role in the new South African society. In Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me*, the characters, inhabiting a society where race was once a defining aspect of everyday life, are unable to possess a genuinely private life that is untainted by the clamour and turbulence of politics. In Gordimer's novel, the protagonist is compelled to move beyond the constraints of a life defined by sexual and domestic imperatives, towards a more elevated realm defined by the pursuit of social responsibility.

In contrast to the protagonist's journey of emotional and intellectual growth, Vera Stark (a woman) undergoes a transformation whereby she relinquishes her personal attachments and becomes wholly invested in a political cause. In consequence, she is enabled to ascertain her authentic identity. The commitment of women, and in particular that of Vera Stark, is aligned with the ideas put forth by Frantz Fanon, who posited that "independence produces the spiritual and material conditions for the reconversion of men and women." However, it is also the inner mutation and renewal of the social and familial structures that impose the rigour of a law upon the emergence of the nation and the growth of its sovereignty (Fanon, 1989, p. 179). This perspective suggests that while independence is a necessary condition for personal emergence and sovereignty, it is not sufficient. In other words, the individual must strive for both inner mutation and social change. In the context of the new South African society, women have collectively asserted their agency and autonomy, thereby assuming the role of active participants in the process of determining their own destinies. Consequently, they eschew the subordinate position that has traditionally been assigned to them. The objective is to achieve full inclusion in all areas of society, with a particular focus on politics, where the majority of decisions are made. The objective of women is to demonstrate that biological sex is irrelevant to intellectual capacity. The adage "what men can do, women can do" serves to illustrate the growing assertion by women that their capabilities are not constrained by gender.



Notwithstanding historical resistance from men to the participation of women in certain fields, women themselves are now willing to assume responsibility. In this context, Christine Anne Holmlund notes in an article that "women and sexual difference do not, as Gayathri Spivak has observed, represent just one more area to be studied." Rather, it is sexual difference that defines both men and women. (H. Christine, 2009, p. 6)

In the 1990 novel *None to Accompany Me*, Sibongile, who has recently returned from exile with her husband Didymus and daughter Mpho, serves as the deputy director of the movement's regional returnee redeployment programme. Subsequently, she was elected to the central executive of the post-apartheid movement. Another female figure, Vera Stark, was appointed to the technical committee responsible for drafting the country's new constitution. The involvement of women in politics demonstrates that the reconciliation process is attempting to narrow the gender gap. Jabulile's father, Elias Siphuve, provided her with the opportunity to flourish in South African society during the apartheid era. He was a man of authority, having achieved a high level of education. This is why he was opposed to the idea of girls remaining at home without an education. Notwithstanding the challenges she faced, Jabulile was able to attend school and perform well alongside her male counterparts. Subsequently, she became a renowned legal practitioner, working at the Justice Centre to assist individuals involved in the government's reconciliation process. Jabulile was appreciative of her father's guidance and resolved to advocate for the education of female children. The concepts of Ubuntu and political correctness, as defined, contributed to the reduction of discrimination in post-apartheid South Africa..

2.2. Anti-corruption and Transparent Governance

The fight against corruption and the promotion of transparent and accountable governance are fundamental to the reinforcement of public confidence in public institutions and the promotion of reconciliation in South Africa. The advent of a new context of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa requires all parties to alter their respective views and behaviours in relation to one another. The re-establishment of mutual respect is a crucial prerequisite for the reconstruction of the trust that was eroded by the dismantling of the apartheid system. South Africa has a long history of violence, and a significant proportion of the country's resources, both public and private, were allocated towards preparation for potential armed conflict.



The relationship between the colonisers and the colonised has undergone a positive transformation at the level of discourse. In other words, the process of reconciliation necessitates a shift in perspective, whereby those who were previously regarded as adversaries are now viewed with consideration and respect. There is a willingness among both white and non-white individuals to transform the conflictual nature of their relationship. In essence, the white population, who previously oppressed the Black population, have decided, in the name of reconciliation, to alter their language, their perception of the Black population, and most importantly, their behaviour towards them. The new political situation permitted the black woman Jabulile to become a lawyer, a profession that had previously been reserved for whites only during the apartheid era. Most notably, she was selected to spearhead the establishment of a national Centre of Justice, an initiative undertaken by the state. The domain of law was previously exclusively reserved for white individuals. This signifies that the roles of advocate, judge, and lawyer were solely reserved for white individuals. Only white individuals were permitted to engage in the practice of law, specifically as lawyers or magistrates. However, since the inaugural democratic elections, there has been a reconciliation between Black and white South Africans, both at an individual and a societal level.

It is the role of the state to determine the changes that occur within society, and it is the responsibility of the population to adhere to these changes. In the context of the new South Africa, the objective of the political authorities is the promotion of constitutional democracy, in which the authority of the majority is constrained by legal and institutional means to ensure the protection of the rights of individuals and minorities. In the post-Apartheid South Africa, a number of significant changes have occurred. The practice of preventing people of different races from residing in the same neighbourhoods or in the same house is no longer in effect. All individuals are regarded as South Africans and are afforded the same opportunities with regard to employment and residence. Furthermore, they reside in proximity to one another in a state of peaceful coexistence.

In the novel, *No Time like the Present*, we observe an intriguing image: that of black and white doctors working collectively to treat patients of all races. “White medical practitioners were among those who elected to treat patients alongside their black counterparts in the lengthy queues that formed in urban squatter camps”. (N. Gordimer, 2012, p. 39). Another aspect of democracy and equality is that, following the completion of her studies, the black woman Jabulile was employed as an attorney in a factory where reconciliation was promoted.



Previously, it was not possible for an African woman to be an attorney, and particularly to assume a position in the same factory as white men. The black woman is now able to engage in all aspects of social life without any sense of inferiority. In response to the changes occurring in South Africa, Jabulile articulated the following: “Mandela was advocating for improved living standards for the Black miners, who were subjected to inadequate remuneration and substandard accommodation”. (N. Gordimer, 2012, p. 39).

The aforementioned concept represents the manifestation of reunification. The unity created by the former combatants for the cause of freedom. The current situation allows black people to select their children's school without fear of reprisals from those in positions of authority. In her work, Nadine Gordimer describes the experiences of one of her characters, Gary Elias, who is now able to choose an appropriate educational institution for himself in a predominantly white suburb. These observations demonstrate the extent to which barriers have been dismantled in the post-Apartheid era. The ascendance of non-white individuals to positions of authority has led to an enhancement in the quality of life for numerous South Africans. Saly and Didy's youngest daughter, Mpho, who returned from her studies in England, observed the constructive outcomes of the reconciliation process in the country.

This concept of justice is exemplified in Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me*. In presenting the objectives of the foundation directed by Vera Stark, which fights against a number of prejudices caused by the former system of apartheid, Gordimer offers insight into the challenges that remain in the pursuit of racial equality in South Africa. The struggle was inclusive, encompassing all individuals regardless of race. The inclusivity of this struggle serves to underscore and highlight the shared desire of South Africans to coexist and move on from the atrocities committed by all parties. These actions are made possible by changes to the legal framework, which permit the formation of associations between individuals of all racial groups.

The functionality of a country is contingent upon the efficacy of its legal institutions and the prohibition of discriminatory legislation targeting specific groups. Electoral processes are integral to the democratic process and, as such, the rule of law. Sibongile and her husband Dydimus, who had returned from exile, were able to be reintegrated into their society. Furthermore, they participated in the elections for the executive. It was ultimately Sibongile, the woman, who emerged victorious. In his book, *None to Accompany Me*, Steve posits that post-Apartheid South Africa is characterised by pervasive corruption, mismanagement, embezzlement, authoritarianism and human rights violations. He maintains that reconciliation



is not feasible in this context unless these issues are addressed and resolved. The new political leaders are perceived as members of the comprador class, who retain vested interests in the colonial system and are determined to protect them. Such behaviour on the part of South African leaders is not conducive to the achievement of unity and progress for all. The current government is exhibiting similar tendencies towards corruption as those observed in the black states. In the event of a loss of power, it is likely that they will seek to ensure that the economy is left in a state of disrepair. He asserts that even the pension funds of retirees are not immune to embezzlement (N. Gordimer, 2012, p. 97). This observation leads to the conclusion that the post-apartheid South African government and all its members are pursuing their own interests rather than acting in the interests of the general public, which they were elected or appointed to serve. Such actions include the perpetration of theft and the dissemination of false information to the public, with the result that the personal interests of the perpetrators are prioritised over the national interest. Steve denounced the actions of the executive and all other branches of government. He posited that a substantial number of compromises have been made with regard to the past, and that black people have endured a considerable degree of indignity in order to reach their current position. They have entered into relationships that they previously considered to be either impossible or necessary. Consequently, if Black leaders are to fulfil their obligation to protect their people, they must alter their conduct and adopt a materialistic outlook that is less self-serving. This assertion is corroborated by Nadine Gordimer, who states:

They can truly have the change to be led and represented by honesty, by men and women who do not seek power to sleep in silk sheets, to give themselves huge salaries, to take and give bribes, to embezzle and cover up others who steal, to disperse secret funds of public money by buying contracts that will never be fulfilled, if we are going to ask our people to trust a new constitution, we must first put our lives on the table to swear to integrity. (N. Gordimer, 1990,p. 208)

It can be seen that the indigenous bourgeoisie, in its struggle against colonialism, grouped itself into African nationalist political parties. These parties initially presented themselves as patriotic and progressive forces, but it is evident that they subsequently became tools of hegemony for Indeed, in the struggle against colonialism, this indigenous bourgeoisie coalesced into African nationalist political parties that initially espoused patriotic and progressive ideals but subsequently became instruments of hegemony for the Black elite. As Fanon elucidates, the nationalist parties exhibited opportunistic and cowardly tendencies. "It was imperative that the national liberation movement and the socialist revolution be unified under the ideological and institutional leadership of the impoverished peasantry." (F. Frantz, 1964, p. 22). The concepts



of political correctness and the philosophy of Ubuntu facilitated the process of reconciliation and enabled the redress of the injustices and inequalities perpetrated by the apartheid system. As a result, social cohesion and unity were reinforced among all segments of the South African population.

2.3.The strengthening of social cohesion and unity.

The objective of any nation that has experienced periods of crisis and conflict is to address the resulting fractures and wounds. In other words, the objective is to create a reunited nation in order to establish social cohesion and unity. In the wake of apartheid, the new political authorities in South Africa have set their sights on the ambitious task of rebuilding and mending the social fabric that was shattered by decades of apartheid. In this context, the concept of Ubuntu and the notion of political correctness have proved instrumental in fostering a mindset of acceptance and inclusivity. All racial groups, including Blacks, Whites and Metis, are contributing to the realization of this objective. In practical terms, this entails the establishment of reliable institutions with the objective of reducing the social inequalities and injustices that have resulted in a divide between different population groups. The aim is to create a multiculturalist country, as multiculturalists believe that shared multiculturalist values are the foundation for national unity and can instil confidence in minority groups. From this perspective, Dolores Castro posits that “societies have changed because identities have shifted and new points of cohesion have emerged under different leaders and leadership structures”(p. 25).

The concept of Ubuntu and political correctness call for the consideration of others as oneself and for addressing them with courteous language. Such actions contribute to the strengthening of social cohesion and unity within the population. As posited by Mark Mathabane (2009), the African philosophy of Ubuntu has the potential to facilitate racial healing by underscoring the interconnectedness and shared humanity of all individuals (p.10). Similarly, post-apartheid South Africa must seek to reinforce the unity between all those who were formerly enemies. In addition to the efforts undertaken by the TRC to foster reconciliation among South Africans, it is imperative to reiterate and advance the necessity for unity. Reconciliation without unity among the citizenry appears to be an imperfect undertaking. In this context, Phillis Ghim provides supplementary insights concerning the concept of unity, proposing that:



Some people see unity as sameness and others see unity as a process that ultimately results in domination of one person or groups over others. These types of unity are totally unacceptable. The challenge of unity is to maintain the rich diversity of humanity and at the same time to see the fundamental oneness of all people and their interdependence with each other and with the world of nature. (C. Phillis Gim , 1998, p.30)

The philosophy of Ubuntu is predicated on the notion of human interdependence, which posits that one's humanity is inextricably linked to the humanity of others. This concept is founded upon the values of solidarity, sharing, and compassion. This is why Stanlake Samkange (1980) presents the concept as a “political ideology for postcolonial countries which manifests itself through social relations” (p.25). There was a significant rift between Steve and his brother Jonathan due to their differing perceptions of the concept of race. Indeed, Steve married Jabulile, a woman of African descent, a fact that his brother Jonathan found intolerable. Consequently, he elected to terminate all relations with his brother Steve for an extended period. In the context of the new South Africa, they resolved to rekindle their fraternal bond. In an orthodox church, where they met, representatives of all communities were present. This environment made them realise that only unity and social cohesion can save the future of the country. It is in context that Lacan wrote about the concept of the “other” Whereas the “other” corresponds to the focus of desire or power in relation to which the subject is produced, the other is the excluded subject produced by the discourse of power. (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 188). In fact, the other is really important for the self, and the construction of a united country requires the acceptance of everyone without any discrimination. In his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon describes and analyses the effects of colonial perception. In this perception, European culture is assumed to be the norm by which others are judged, making all others abnormal. Fanon writes: “It is a fact that white men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: black men want to prove to white men at all costs the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect” (C.L. Innes, 1993,p. 6).

Conclusion.

A close analysis of the three works written by Nadine Gordimer reveals that the concepts of Ubuntu and political correctness, when employed in conjunction, can facilitate the creation of an environment conducive to reconciliation. The concepts of Ubuntu and political correctness facilitate a comprehensive and humane understanding of community, while also providing tangible strategies for the preservation of respect and inclusion. While Ubuntu provides an ethical and philosophical basis for reconciliation by emphasising shared humanity and community bonds, political correctness offers practical tools to ensure that everyday



interactions respect values by minimising offence and promoting inclusive language. In *None to Accompany Me*, *No Time like the Present* and *House Gun*, Nadine Gordimer demonstrates, in a subtle yet unmistakable manner, how these works advance the ideals of forgiveness, dialogue and intercultural understanding.

The rectification of inequities and injustices has resulted in the reinforcement of social and economic justice, thereby humanizing relations. These two concepts have contributed to the respect and dignity of the oppressed in the new South Africa, thereby strengthening social cohesion. Furthermore, Ubuntu and political correctness have played a role in the improvement of South African society, facilitating the fight against corruption and the promotion of good governance. Despite the strides made towards reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done to consolidate these advances and promote genuine and lasting reconciliation.

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