

THE REFLECTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN NADINE GORDIMER'S NOVELS: A LITERARY READING OF APARTHEID

Kabul Tarihi: 27.07.2016

Yayın Tarihi: 31.10.2016

Şahin KIZILTAŞ*

Abstract

It is known that racism has emerged in the ancient civilizations and has influenced every sphere of life since then. In its historical process, it has appeared at different stages and its final stage is institutional racism. The racism at this stage is practiced through legal arrangements by governments and by means of repressive apparatuses of the state such as police, army, jails and so on. South Africa is among the leading countries where institutional racism has been harshly practiced until recently. The intellectuals and writers in this country could not keep silent against these racist practices and they discussed them in their works. One of these is Nadine Gordimer, the nobel-winning writer in literature. Being a white activist who has been an eye witness of racist era, known as Apartheid in the world, and felt the same grief with black people has made her discourses and expressions about the issue important. In this paper, the reflections of institutional racism in her novels in which, compared to her other novels, the racist practices have been emphasized more will be discussed. Furthermore the Apartheid legislations which were so devastating and discriminating especially for the black people will be analysed and their reflections in those novels will be studied.

Keywords: Apartheid, Institutional Racism, Racist Acts, Bantu Education, Nadine Gordimer

NADİNE GORDİMER'İN ROMANLARINDA KURUMSAL İRKÇİLİĞİN YANSIMALARI: APARTHEİDİN SANATSAL BİR OKUMASI

Öz

İrkçiliğin ilkçağ uygarlıklarından beri var olduğu ve yaşamın her alanını etkilediği bilinmektedir. Tarihsel gelişim sürecinde farklı evrelerde ortaya çıkan ırkçılığın en son evresi kurumsal ırkçılıktır. Bu evredeki ırkçılık, hükümetler tarafından yapılan yasal düzenlemelerle ve polis, ordu, hapishaneler gibi devletin baskıcı aygıtları aracılığıyla uygulanır. Kurumsal ırkçılığın yakın zamanlara kadar şiddetli bir şekilde uygulandığı ülkelerin başında Güney Afrika gelir. Bu ülkedeki entelektüel ve yazarlar ırkçı uygulamalara sessiz kalmamış ve bunları yapıtlarında ele almışlardır. Bu yazarlardan biri Nobel edebiyat ödüllü yazar Nadine Gordimer'dir. Tüm dünyada Apartheid adıyla bilinen ırkçı döneminin canlı bir şahidi olan ve siyah halkın yaşadığı acıları paylaşan Gordimer'in beyaz bir aktivist olması, onun bu sorun hakkındaki söylem ve ifadelerini kuşkusuz önemli kılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Gordimer'in - diğer romanlarıyla karşılaştırıldığında - ırkçı uygulamaların daha fazla vurgulandığı romanlarındaki kurumsal ırkçılığın yansımaları tartışılacaktır. Ayrıca özellikle siyahlar için en yıkıcı ve ayrımcı olan Apartheid yasaları incelenecek ve bunların romanlara yansımaları tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Apartheid, Kurumsal İrkçilik, İrkçi Yasalar, Bantu Eğitimi, Nadine Gordimer

Introduction

It is surely beyond doubt that one of the most crucial problems occupied humanity during history is racism. Racism is claimed to have emerged in the ancient civilizations and it has influenced humanity since then. Having ruined the lives of both its agents and victims, racism sometimes seems to tend to disappear but always re-emerges more efficaciously and more strongly by swinging to simple incidents or weak reasons. However it is clear that anywhere in the world, it has not encountered any difficulties to find proper ground to arouse. We can easily find the traces of racism in Ancient Rome, Greek and Egypt civilizations. Furthermore, in the writings and discourses of the Renaissance philosophers such as John Locke, David Hume, Montesquieu, Rene Descartes, racist ideas have explicitly appeared. Even today, it is accepted that the concepts such as tribalism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, nationalism, discrimination, exclusion feed from the roots of racism and all have a racist inclination.

Although the humanity has witnessed to racist practices from ancient civilizations to today's modern civilization, it is interesting that it has not followed a linear course. The samples of today's racist practices can be found in ancient civilizations or the samples of ancient racist practices can be found

* Assist. Prof. Dr. Şahin KIZILTAŞ, Bitlis Eren University, The Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Western Languages and Literatures, sahinkiziltas@gmail.com

in today's modern world. During its historical process, according to Michel Wieviorka, racism has appeared in four different levels: infra-racism, split racism, political racism and institutional racism (Wieviorka, 2010: 269).

Institutional racism is the final level and in this level, it is enforced by the political powers through legal regulations. South Africa is one of those countries where total racism has been practiced harshly in all spheres of life. In this country both the repressive apparatuses such as police, army, prisons and ideological state apparatuses such as schools, churches, families, traditions have been used as the means of racist implementations. This oppressive system is known as apartheid all over the world. A. J. Christopher defines apartheid as:

Apartheid has been one of the emotive terms in the political world of second half of the twentieth century. The Afrikaans word, apartheid, became the universally employed nomenclature for legalized and enforced racial and ethnic discrimination, notably in the fields of residential segregation, job opportunity and political rights (Christopher, 1994: 1).

David M. Smith describes it in a similar way. For him, apartheid in Afrikaans language[†] means apartness or separation and the essence policy of apartheid is the social and spatial separation among major race groups (Smith, 1987: 10).

Similarly cultural dictionaries also draw attention to this discrimination between races and describes it as the racist policy of South Africa that long denied blacks and other non-whites civil, social, and economic equality with whites (The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, 2005: 312).

The Apartheid practices has caused unequal and tragic living conditions, particularly for black people. Nadine Gordimer, in spite of sharing the same colour with the racist white government, has been an efficient opponent and enemy of the apartheid regime. So being a white eye witness to the racial practices, her discourses and expressions about the issue seem to be significant. This study aims to reveal those practices that the black people have been exposed to from a white perspective through analysing her important novels.

Apartheid Legislations in South Africa

After invading the country, the white hegemony made a great number of racist laws. The most influential and relentless ones were made after the general election in 1948 which conveyed National Party into power. These were; The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953), The Group Areas Act (1950) and Bantu Education Act (1953). During the practices of these acts, sometimes tragic and absurd incidents occurred. Paul Maylam, in his book, *South Africa's Racial Past*, gives a few examples to these. For example, when the ambulance arrived at an accident, the staff declined to convey the victim to hospital if the colour of the victim was wrong for that particular ambulance. People died tragically as the result of this rigid apartheid law. In the whites-only cinemas, the coloured usherettes employed to direct patrons to their seats, they had to keep their heads down and were prevented from looking at the screen, in case they might catch a glimpse of the film (Maylam, 2003: 184). These were the tragic and absurd reality of apartheid lasted on for many decades in the country.

The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, 1953

This act

...was to provide for the reservation of public premises and vehicles or portions thereof for the exclusive use of persons of a particular race or class, for the interpretation of laws which provide for such reservation, and for matters incidental thereto (Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1953).

[†] Afrikaans is the language spoken by the first Dutch settlers and their descendance in South Africa.

Through this act,

...the wilfully violating people “shall be guilty of an offense and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months, or to both such fine and such imprisonment.” (Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1953).

It allowed public premises, vehicles and services to be segregated by race. Through this legislation, 'Whites Only' notices appeared in every conceivable place. Laws and regulations confirmed or imposed segregation for ambulances, buses, trains, lavatories, parks, church halls, town halls, cinemas, restaurants, hotels, schools and so on. The non-white or coloured people of the country faced practices that restricted and prevented their participation in living areas of white people. The justifications of white regime were totally their racist prejudices and approaches. Hence, the Minister of Justice, C. R. Swart defended this act for the reason that it might lead to miscegenation and a pure white race might not survive. He also tried to elucidate the paradox of unequal number of facilities allocated to white and coloured people as the need of civilized, semi-civilized and non-civilized people to facilities might vary and be parallel with their living conditions (Karaşahan, 2010: 71).

This unsatisfactory explanation seems to be racist and derogatory for coloured people of the country. They claim that, compared to other African countries, all these racist practices are experienced only in their country. For example Nelson Mandela alleges that the white and black people in other African countries live together; they go to same cinemas and same hotels; they are neighbours and run shops in the same territories; they get on the same transportation vehicles (MANDELA, 1986: 55). Mandela expresses whatever he has witnessed in other countries as extraordinary events, but he actually tries to focus on the limits of racism in his country.

As a close friend of Mandela, also having the same sensibilities, Gordimer draws attention to peculiarity of these practices in her works. For example, in *A World of Strangers*, he mentions of the fact that the people having different skin colours cannot eat in the same restaurant. The white character of the novel, Toby Hood, who is also the spokesman of the author, has a black friend and he wants to see him again and says:

I hoped I should see him again sometime. But he said, ‘Sure thing. Whenever you say?’ ‘Could we have lunch together, Friday perhaps?’ He laughed at me in a leisurely fashion. ‘But where can we go together for lunch, man?’ Of course, I hadn’t thought; he couldn’t go into any restaurant or tea-room in town. ‘What about one of your places?’ I said. ‘Would I be allowed in one of them?’ he replied (Gordimer, 1962: 112).

Toby, in order to hurdle this problem, invites his black friends to his office for lunch. The Black man, Chaputra goes to the toilet and comes back into the room again, he chuckles and says: “Nobody saw me”, - he had slipped into the men’s room in the building, which was of course, meant only for white men.” (Gordimer, 1962: 146) Through this act, even toilets were segregated by race as white only and non-white. But the people, especially the black, flout the law when they get a chance.

In her another novel, *My Son’s Story*, Gordimer goes on mentioning of toilets as racially segregated zones. Sonny and her family go for shopping at weekends. When their children need to use the toilet, they have to take them to the toilet of train station. Because;

If – as always – the children needed to go to lavatory, the parents trotted them off down to the railway station, where there were the only toilets provided for their kind, although the department store had a cloakroom for the use of other customers. As some lordly wild animal marks the boundaries of his hunting and mating ground which no other may cross, it was as if the municipality left some warning odour, scent of immutable authority, where the Saturday people were not to transgress (Gordimer, 1990: 12).

For Gordimer, the white regime tries to clamp down on by separating public premises according to races and this segregation gives off odour of the authority of white regime. So these laws seem to be the signs of white authority teaching coloured people their borders.

In the same vein, the coloured people are not allowed to enter buildings or shops from the same door with white people. Using the same entrances has also been banned by white regime. The cousin of Anna, a white lady working for Legal Support Office, has a shop having different entrances for different races:

... a place where natives come in to buy a bottle of milk or bread or cigarettes. Someone told me that the latest improvement in that natives are not allowed to come in at the front door of the shop. My cousin Toy – he is running it now with one of my brothers – has another door, in the lane off the street, for natives (Gordimer, 1962: 179).

Along the same line, public transportation vehicles are the most common places where the racially segregation laws are practiced. Gordimer presents this through the eyes and feelings of juveniles in *My Son's Story*:

... it reminded me of the axles of great steam engines my father had taken me to see in an open-air museum. He promised to find a line on which they were still in use, and take me for a ride; that was the one promise I can remember he didn't keep. Probably he found that people of our kind weren't permitted to enjoy the treat, and he didn't want to tell me. ... He didn't keep from us, in general, the knowledge that there were places we couldn't go, things we couldn't do; but he never tried to expose us to such places, he substituted so many things we could do (Gordimer, 1990: 20).

For her, the opposition of black people to these laws is not just a protest, an impulsive reaction or obstinacy. She aims to give the message that they are grown up with a humiliated psychology from childhood since they have experienced the exclusionist and insulting behaviours of white people. Thus this feeling makes them more conscious on race and colour. Sonny, the black hero of the novel tells his students one of his memories and Gordimer leaves the interpretation of the moods of students to the readers:

What a disaster. There was a washaway. I herded them together at this siding hoping to get them onto a train. We stood there for hours in torrential rain and when a train came it was for whites and the driver wouldn't let us on (Gordimer, 1990: 210).

But all these do not mean that the white and the black never share the same residential areas or never breathe in the same atmosphere. The black can be around the white people on the condition that they serve to their white masters. The author remarks to these too in her novel. For example white people, Patterson, John, Hughie and Toby Hood go hunting. There are two black men accompanying them. But they are there not for hunting or for fun; just to serve to their patrons: to carry the bags of their white masters, to carry water from the river, to fetch wood from the forest and to cook (Gordimer, 1962: 242). The author means that if the black people want to stay in a white environment, they have to be their servants and avail to their masters.

However, Gordimer has a dream and she wants to realize it. Despite the fact that the white and the coloured people cannot league together under the same roof in real life, she tries to achieve this in fiction. Anna takes Toby to a party where many people of different races and colours have fun together. Yet, she feels obliged to remind the impossibility of this scene in real life:

... in real life, are not found together, cheek by jowl in the space of experience. Nothing very remarkable, was happening in the room; three Africans were talking to each other, a conspicuously well-dressed Indian was explaining something surprising to a white man and white woman. ... All these people lived together in one country, anyway; all their lines were entangled by propinquity (Gordimer, 1962: 84).

Via this setting, the author concretizes her desire or expectation of a world which is not disintegrated through colour and race discrimination. For this purpose, she accentuates the change in social life on behalf of coloured people. In her novels she sometimes focuses on first civil disobedience of coloured people against strict apartheid legislations and then the abolishment of those legislations. For example in *My Son's Story*, she mentions of people with different skin colours can get on same trains

together or of the invalidation of the law preventing a white woman and a black man from sharing the same bed (Gordimer, 1990: 210). She goes on conveying the flexibilities of those racist legislations: the black people can go to bars with white people and sit in the same table (Gordimer, 1990: 64); they can go to cinemas together (Gordimer, 1990: 185); they can use same beaches together (Gordimer, 1990: 136); the black people can enter most of the hotels in vacation places (Gordimer, 1990: 74). Along the same line, in *None to Accompany Me*, she tells readers the practices of those abolished legislations. When Vera, a white lady and Oupa, a black man go on a business trip, they stay in the same hotel which renders service to white farm owners and swim in the pool (Gordimer, 1994: 190).

On the other hand, although the legislations enable the coloured people to share same facilities, for Gordimer, the determinative provision in this is the existence of white people. Unless the existence or help of white people, the coloured people cannot get benefit from these opportunities. For example, Oupa wants to hire a house in the district of white people but for this the help of his white friends is requisite since the estate agent needs to be persuaded (Gordimer, 1994: 54).

In other respects, in consequence of softening in racist apartheid legislations, the struggle of coloured people to raise their living standards does not escape the attention. For Frantz Fanon, this is substantially pertinent to the fondness of coloured people to pleasure or luxury (FANON, 2013: 155). The readers witness to many coloured particularly black characters whose living standards have risen in time. For example in *None to Accompany Me*, Zeph Rapulana is the representative of passive, poor, excluded, marginalized and abased black people. Yet, later, he becomes the representative of black bourgeoisie who eats in luxurious restaurants, lives in a great house in white district and becomes the agent of big companies. The author alludes to the fact that these attitudes of black people are for devastating racial discrimination and segregation in society:

What has been abolished along with the laws of segregation is the law and custom, more deeply entrenched than any law, that only white people could live in these pleasant areas. Anyone who can afford to pay the rent or buy the property may do so now (Gordimer, 1994: 257).

Moreover in her another novel, *My Son's Story*, she goes a step further and articulates this clearly. The black people opposing and disobedient to apartheid regime ask for Sonny to move to a big house in the white neighbourhood. Sonny discusses this demand with his wife, Aila:

-We are going to move in among whites. It's a tactic decided upon, and I'm one who is volunteered. If you agree. ...

-But it's illegal, how can you own a house in a white place?

-That's the idea. We don't accept their segregation, we've had enough of telling them, we're showing them (Gordimer, 1990: 41).

In South Africa, the black people first broke spatially segregation acts through races actually and then those acts repealed in 1990 by the white government of the country. Gordimer has witnessed all and reflected them in her works.

The Group Areas Act, 1950

This Act enforced the segregation of the different races to specific areas within the urban locale. It also restricted ownership and the occupation of land to a specific statutory group. This meant that Blacks could not own or occupy land in White areas. While the law was supposed to apply in converse, it was essentially land under Black ownership that was appropriated by the Government for use by Whites only (South African History Online, 2016).

According to this act, urban areas were divided into racially segregated zones. It aims to prevent races to contact each other. This legislation, like other ones, has prepared legal ground to racial discrimination in the country. As a result of this act, the non-white people have forcefully evacuated from their own lands where they have been residing for centuries to arid and barren lands. This compulsory evacuation proves Jean Paul Sartre right who claims that to be in exile is to lose your

position in the world (Gordimer, 2009: 71). In South Africa there were millions of black people who lost their position in the world. It is alleged that during the validity period of this act, 18 millions of coloured people have been forcefully evicted and arrested due to their opposition to the act. As an intellectual who cannot be unaware of the problems in her country, Gordimer picks up on this problem in her novels. For example, in *My Son's Story*, she says: "Shopkeepers who were not really black but not white, either, were being moved out of the shops they had occupied for generations in the white towns." (Gordimer, 1990: 32)

Those people having been resided in different territories have also been prevented from leaving their residences unless they have pass cards which can be described as passports. Their entry to big cities are possible on the condition that they have pass cards and they are invited by white people to work for their white masters. Gordimer describes the functions of these cards in *My Son's Story*:

... the rough hands of those generations did not write letters or keep notes; brick-layers and carpenters, the only documentation of their lives was their work-papers and the various, much-folded slips entitling them to be employed in the town and to live in the area, outside the town, designated by the municipality for their kind (Gordimer, 1990:5).

On the other hand the act does not encompass only the non-white people but also the white. The white people have been prevented from entering the locations of black people. Gordimer also touches on this issue. Toby goes to visit his black friends and he is stopped by the police:

As I drove away in the afternoon, I was stopped by police and told to report to the charge Office because I had no permit to be in the location; I was lucky – it was the first time I had been caught and I had been in the townships innumerable times without a permit (Gordimer, 1962: 194).

The prohibition of poor non-white people to enter cities can be explained through the reflex of rich white people to protect their properties. However, the prohibition of white people to other zones can only be explained with racism and racial discrimination. Toby has the same skin colour with the police but nevertheless he feels lucky since he is not arrested. It is clear that racist legislations made the whole country an open jail not only for the black but for the white as well. The white who could not travel wherever they want within the country were the white prisoners of racist regime.

Those legislations that also take the proprietary right of non-white people from their hands present the opportunity to them to live in territories where the white regime shows them. Yet, the white people receive their share from these oppressive practices as well. Even in their own properties, they cannot choose their guests; it is under the permission and control of white regime. Gordimer refers to this issue in her same novel again. Toby invites his black friends to his house. When they have fun together, the Afrikaner lady who is the owner of the house comes and knocks at the door:

'Mr Hood, 'ev yoo brought natives into the building. I've hed complaints yoo been bringing natives in the building, end jis now Mr Jarvis seen yoo coming in the front door with natives.' ... 'I wanna tell yoo, Mr Hood, whatever yoo been used to, this is'n a location, yoo can't 'ev natives. If yoo bringing natives, yoo'll 'ev to go.' (Gordimer, 1962: 216)

The White regime is so decisive to enforce the racist legislations that they are mentioned even in rental contracts. The woman reminds the contract but Toby does not believe; however his black friend Steven confirms that it is written in the contract (Gordimer, 1962: 217).

Considering of the history of apartheid in South Africa, it is quite obvious that there have been many other acts and this is, to some extent, the continuation the previous ones such as Masters & Servants Act of 1856. In fact it seems to be the modern version of slavery. Those laws have been supported with supplementary acts foreseeing severe sanctions to servants who do not comply with their masters and all these have remained in force by 1974. All these acts seem to serve to colonialist goals of white people and the have been used to provide the black people to work for white people. Hence, the decision of the authorised commission of Transvaal Province which indicates that the

native can only enter districts of white people if he/she feels desire to serve to the needs of white men and should leave those cities if he/she stops to provide service vindicates this assertion (Karaşahan, 2010: 52).

Through this act the white regime tries to provide white race remain pure by preventing contact between races and force them live alone. Yet, it seems so difficult to defend this legislation in international platform and the government explains its justification as they aim at completing the development process of each race through allowing people to live with people of the same race (Karaşahan, 2010: 69). But for Gordimer the practice and the reality in the country is not so; people from different social status, education and class have to share the same living environment:

Every time I went to a township I was aware of this sudden drop in the horizon of buildings and rise of humans; nothing concealed, nothing sheltered – in any but the most obvious sense – any moment of the people’s lives. A blinding light of reality never left them. And they lived, all the time, in all the layers of the society at once: pimps, gangsters, errand boys, wash women, school-teachers, boxers, musicians and undertakers, labourers and patent medicine men – these were neighbours, and shared a tap, a yard, even a lavatory (Gordimer, 1990: 130).

This scene is exactly what the white regime that aims at providing completion of development process of races by isolating them from each other presents for coloured people. As an intellectual accepting this as a crucial problem of society, Gordimer touches on the problem in *None to Accompany Me*:

As a part of their schedule of work for this week or that, Government officials commandeered the appropriate personnel from the appropriate department and went off to bulldoze the homes of a community, pack the inhabitants and their belongings onto trucks drawn, like any other government equipment, from the State’s stores, and transport them to an area designated by the appropriate department. There they were supplied with tin toilets, communal taps, and sometimes, if these could be drawn from the stores department, tents. Sheets of corrugated tin might be supplied for them to begin building shacks. They might be allowed to bring along bits and ends left intact by the demolition of their houses – a window-frame or some boards – but cows and goats had to be left behind; what would the beasts feed on, in a stretch of weld cleared and levelled for the barest human occupation? (Gordimer, 1994: 12-13)

Yet, the aim of this legislation is not only to disintegrate the races; it has a close and direct relevance with the economic interest of white people. At first, the natives have been dispossessed from the lands which have rich ground sources to infertile and waste lands. But later, when it is appeared that those lands have rich underground sources, they are forced to a second eviction. This kind of mobility has continued for generations. As an intellectual who cannot be unaware of the problems in her country, Gordimer picks up on this issue in her novels. For example, in *A World of Strangers*, the mother of Amon, the black office boy working in Toby’s office has been forcefully dispossessed:

Amon has got a mother, living in Jagersfontein location. Or at least, she was living there. She’s been evicted, along with the other residents and re-settled in a new native township. The only trouble is, she has freehold, a house of her own in the old location and in the new place there is no freehold (Gordimer, 1962: 71).

Toby asks Anna where this location is. Anna replies and reveals the real cause of this forceful eviction:

It’s a part of a town named Jagersfontein on the West Rand – the gold mines to the West of Johannesburg. They’ve started mining uranium there near Jagersfontein now, too, and the town’s been going ahead furiously. Hence this move to give the Africans the boot; to push them further out of the way of the town (Gordimer, 1962: 72)

For her the real cause of this evacuation is economic and through explaining the reason of this compulsory evacuation from an economic perspective, she justifies the intellectuals such as Robert Miles, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Steve Fenton, Ania Loomba who claim the reasons of racism and racist practices to be economic.

The Group Areas Act obliged the white and coloured people to live in separate areas has abolished; however, in spite of legal arrangements, it has survived in social life. The superiorities and domination of white people against black people last after the victory of black people in general elections. The privileged and superior position of the white does not change even in the political supremacy of the black. This superiority is not something related to race or colour, but to economic indicators. In *None to Accompany Me*, Gordimer refers to this reality of her country:

Even Oupa managed to move into a white suburb. Why did his white colleagues at the Foundation use, to themselves, the prefix 'even'? Because once the legal restrictions they campaigned against were lifted there remained an older, even (yes, again) greater restriction to be addressed: poverty (Gordimer, 1994: 52).

For Gordimer, poverty and deprivation are also among the major determinants of the black's inferior and marginal position.

Bantu Education Act, 1953

This legislation was intended to separate black South Africans from the main, comparatively very well-resourced education system for whites. Its very simple curriculum was advocated by governmental authority as it was quite congenial with the nature and requirements of the black people. The architect of the act was the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. Hendrik F. Verwoerd and he explained the government's new education policy to the South African Parliament as:

There is no space for him [the "Native"] in the European Community above certain forms of labour. For this reason it is of no avail for him to receive training which has its aim in the absorption of the European Community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his community and misled him by showing him the greener pastures of European Society where he is not allowed to graze (Kallaway, 1984:92).

For him, black people are not a part of white world and they are not to aspire to certain positions in society, so it is unnecessary to give them equal educational opportunities with the white people, because it will be exactly useless for them. Verwoerd believes in the fact that the contributions of black people to society is limited to psychical strength; so an advanced level education is unnecessary for them since they will not be able to use it. He asks why they should teach the Bantu children mathematics which they will not use in daily life (Kallaway, 1984: 93). "

Opposing to every type of racist practices against black people, Gordimer discusses the simple education given to black people for simple duties. For example, the grandfather of Hannah Plowman, a white character of *My Son's Story*, forces her granddaughter to teach black children at his mission school but Hannah rejects her grandfather's offer. Because the rich and well-educated white girls and boys are working for art programmes, law offices and human rights projects but she is asked to teach coloured children bottling beer or how to clean the dirt of white tourists in bathtubs (Gordimer, 1990: 88).

Similarly, the prime minister of the country then stated that he would give to the natives an education which they will understand from childhood that they would never be equal with Europeans. He also expressed that the teacher who believe in equality of black and white could not be participated in the education of black people (MANDELA, 1986: 95). That is to say, this act was for teaching all people the inequality of races. Gordimer criticizes this racist educational system through telling the touching story of a black teacher, Sonny. Although he has been consistent with the apartheid system at first, he is dismissed from his work. Because, in time, he has realised that the black people have equal rights as the white and started to engrain this conscious in the minds of his black students:

The education department responsible for people of their kind had informed the principal that his teacher was to be dismissed.

-Sonny, I held them off. ... I told them you are one of my best. I told how popular you are with the kids. What you've done for the school.

But he said the wrong thing again. It was exactly what the teacher had done for the school that had opened the dossier which had led to this: dismissal. In distress the principal unburdened himself of the worst. – You know... don't you... man, it's bad. The Department won't allow any other school to give you a post (Gordimer, 1990: 34).

Sonny is a concrete sample of those teachers believing in the equality of races who are told, by the prime minister, to be excluded from education system.

On the other hand it is not only the curriculum that is changeable according to the colour of people; the educational and physical opportunities presented to people are changeable as well. There is a deep abyss between facilities for black and white students. Tuncer compares the physical conditions of schools segregated by race: the schools of white people has televisions, laboratories, libraries, sports halls, but the schools for black people do not even have either ceilings or windows. For Tuncer, those opportunities changing according to the skin colour of people clearly show racial discrimination in the country (Tuncer, 1997: 26).

Accordingly, Mandela also points out this educational discrimination between white and black students. For him, the legislation does not provide equal opportunities for different races. The white children receive compulsory and free education which non-white children are deprived of. The schools for the white are afforded by government but the schools for black children are divested as a result of this legislation (MANDELA, 1986: 95). Touching on the detention of black people to educational and cultural activities, for example use of library (Gordimer, 1990: 12), Gordimer makes similar point with Mandela.

However, Gordimer does not neglect to give information about the educational process of black people during the colonial history of the country. The grandfather of Motsamai, the black lawyer in *The House Gun*, divides the education of black people after arrival of the white to the continent into three basic periods. At first the black people were provided a religious education curriculum in missionary schools. Then they were given Bantu education which only taught them how to serve white people. In the end, they were educated in private schools and universities; they also studied abroad and took positions in redevelopment and reconstruction of their own country (Gordimer, 1998: 185-187). This education system that is defined as the education for three generations by Motsamai's grandfather, actually, summarizes the colonial education system of the country. Believing in the fact that this system is unequal and based on racial discrimination, Gordimer confesses its fallacy through the discourses of a black character and have approved it to a white European. The black Rapulana states that the governments have made many mistakes, aggrieved black people, deprived black children of their schools and childhood, debarred them from many opportunities but they have not done the same for white children. The white Vera obeys and accepts what Rapulana says (Gordimer, 1994: 261).

The results of this education system seem to be frustration for black people. Herbstein claims that the white regime realised they could not give an education focused on racial discrimination in church and missionary schools. In order to teach to black people that they can never be equal to white people, they converted more than % 90 of five thousand missionary schools to Bantu education schools by means of this legislation. He clearly suggests that there was only one black engineer and one black doctor in the country in 1973. The ratio of graduate students between black and white people, even in 1980s, was almost 1/120 (HERBSTEIN, 1985: 29-30). These percentages explain why the black people stand out against this act.

Conclusion

Racism has affected the lives of people for centuries. It was expected that it would either disappear or lose its influence in 21st century by virtue of globalization and proliferation of mass media. However, the emergence of more than twenty nation states in the middle of Europe in 1990s, has disappointed the whole world and lighted the fuse of a dark and pessimistic future for humanity.

During the recent years, it has been carried out by some countries via legislations. This type of racism is called as institutional racism and South Africa is one of those countries where institutional racism is unmercifully implemented. The racial discrimination in this country is known as Apartheid. As an intellectual living in the dark days of Apartheid era and witnessing racism applied to black people by white governments and white people, Gordimer has felt responsibility to announce those racist practices to the world. Through writing novels, she has declared the racist practices of the white regime and presented the living conditions of non-white people of the country. In her novels, she has created black characters suffering from racial discrimination and white characters trying to help those black people. People who read her novels can easily become aware of how non-white people are exposed to racial discrimination in this country. That is to say, her novels, to some extent, can be regarded as historical documents indicating the living conditions of people under apartheid, especially the black.

References

- Christopher, A. J. (1994) *The Atlas of Apartheid*, Routledge, London&New York.
- Fanon, Frantz. (2013) *Yeryüzünün Lanetlileri*, 2. Baskı, (Çev.) Şen Süer, Versus Kitap, İstanbul.
- Gordimer, Nadine. (1962) *A World of Strangers*, Penguin Books, London.
- Gordimer, Nadine. (1990) *My Son's Story*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.
- Gordimer, Nadine. (1994) *None to Accompany Me*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.
- Gordimer, Nadine. (1998) *The House Gun*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.
- Gordimer, Nadine. (Winter 2009) "Literary Witness in a World of Terror: The Inward Testimony", *New Perspective Quartely*, s. 66-72.
- Herbstein, Denis. (1985) *Irçılığa Karşı Mücadele: Güney Afrika'da Siyah Öfke*, (Çev.) Levent Can, Şahin Beygu, Semih Sökmen, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Kallaway, Peter. (1984) *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg.
- Karaşahan, Mesut. (2010) *Irçılık Cehennemi Güney Afrika'da Apartheid Uygulaması*, 1. Baskı, Pınar Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Mandela, Nelson (1986) *Özgür Bir Güney Afrika*, (Çev.) Ayşegül Erol, Belge Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Maylam, Paul. (2003) *South Africa's Racial Past*, Ashgate Publishing, England.
- Smith, David. M. (1987) *Apartheid in South Africa*, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, England.
- South African History Online. (2016), "The South African Government passes the Group Areas Act", <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/south-african-government-passes-group-areas-act#sthash.U76a4eA0.dpuf> (Access Date: 01.07.2016).
- Statutes of the Union of South Africa. (1953), "Reservation of Separate Amenities Act", <http://www.aluka.org/stable/10.5555/al.sff.document.leg19531009.028.020.049> (Access date: 01.07.2016).

Statutes of the Union of South Africa. (1953), "Reservation of Separate Amenities Act", <https://blogs.loc.gov/law/files/2015/11/Reservation-of-Separate-Amenities-Act-49-of-1953.pdf>, (Access date: 01.07.2016).

The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy. (2005), "apartheid", <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/apartheid> (Access Date: 13.10.2014).

Tuncer, Hüner. (1997) *İrkçılıktan Özgürlüğe Güney Afrika*, Çağdaş Yayınları, İstanbul.

Wieviorka, Michel. (2010) "Racism in Europe: unity and diversity", *Selected Studies in International Migration and Immigrant Incorporation*, (Editors) Marco Martiniello and Jan Rath, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.

dübed