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## Voicing Discursive Binaries: A Postcolonial Study of Gordimer's Short Stories

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**Abstract:** Massive decolonization occurred in the 21st century. The natives and the diaspora attempted to portray the other side of the image structured by the colonial hegemonic discourse. Gordimer has written against apartheid and raised her voice to articulate the realistic picture of the marginalization faced by the suppressed South Africans in the form of racial and social inequality. She incorporates discourse to challenge the existing colonial discourse and the explicit binaries. This study attempts to investigate the challenges she has put against the existing discursive binaries in her short stories. The concepts of colonial discourse and counter-discourse given by Edward Said and Helen Tiffin serve as a framework to analyze the data collected from the selected text. The findings reveal that Gordimer has employed different techniques of narration and characterization to redress the negative image of the oppressed others in the colonial discourse through binaries. She employs various textual strategies to expose the stereotypical binaries through counter-discursive practices to dismantle the colonial assumptions from the perspective of the natives.

**Key Words:** Gordimer, South Africans, Social Inequality, Voicing Discursive Binaries

### Introduction

Discourse is described as a formal way of presenting one's thoughts through language. It has been a major topic in fields like Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, and Discourse Analysis. It is a system of ideas, understanding, or communication that constructs the human experience of the world. Formally, it is defined as "a more formal speech, a narration or a treatment of any subject at any length, a treatise, dissertation or sermon" (quoted in Ashcroft et al., 2003, p. 62). Foucault (1972) views discourse as a way of getting social knowledge and "a system of statements within which the world can be known" (62).

Human beings construct the world, their reality, relationships, and their place through discourse. The significance of the discourse lies in its ability to connect power and knowledge, as those who control discourse enjoy power over powerless ones, and those who are powerful have control over what is known. He articulates that "discourse is within the established order of things" (216) and presents the idea that the power given to discourse is only possible through the individuals. He states that in every society, "discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed to a certain no of procedures" (216), and the whole process is to "avert its powers and dangers" (Ashcroft, 2003). He mentions fields of politics and sexuality where discourse is used to exercise powers on the counterparts. In Foucault's (1972) viewpoint, the idea of truth is directly linked with the knowledge present in discourse, and the discourse that contains power is ultimately true and desirable (218). In his opinion, discourse provides the chance for classification within the systems, and groups can be isolated through it. The idea of the 'will to truth' stands dominant in discourse, and therefore, the act of discourse is no longer significant. Rather, the subject of discourse became crucial for dominance. From a postcolonial perspective, "the 'will to truth' is linked to the 'will to power'" (Ashcroft et al., 2003, p. 64), and this is how Europeans incorporated strong

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discourse for their imperialistic purposes. Stephen Gill describes Foucault's concept of discourse as "a set of ideas and practices with particular conditions of existence, which are more or less institutionalized but which may only be partially understood by those that they may encompass" (Foucault, 1972).

Foucault's idea of discourse was adopted by Said (2010) to describe a system that gives rise to the existence of colonial practices. Said (2010) talks about the colonial discourse that was employed as a powerful tool because a dominant group imposes its truth and specific knowledge upon the dominant group to exert its power. (Foucault, 1972). Consequently, colonial discourse is the complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationships" (Ashcroft et al., 2003, p. 37). In Said's point of view, the colonizers make certain statements about colonies and the natives, and based on this discourse, colonization works, and this makes the colonized see themselves through the colonial discourse. This specific discourse uses the notion of race to create segregation among races and create a social and cultural hierarchy based on the concept of 'Us' and 'Them' where the colonizers are declared civilized, modern, and intelligent while the natives are uncivilized, barbaric, primitive and illiterate. Colonial discourse only focuses on the function of imperial purposes and excludes the reality of "the exploitation" (37) of the colonies and their systems, cultures, and resources.

Counter-discourse is a way to challenge the dominant or established discourse of the colonial empire to exhibit the power of the marginalized class or race. It is a kind of resistance to the colonized discourse. Richard Terdiman coined the term, and in postcolonial theory, "counter-discourse has been theorized through challenges posed to particular texts, and thus to imperial ideologies inculcated, stabilized and specifically maintained through texts employed in the colonialist education system" (50). The purpose of this discourse is not only to counter the colonial texts that exhibit unjust binaries but also to challenge the discursive colonial field. Postcolonial writers try to dismantle the hegemonic binaries that create discrimination of power and status. The binaries of us and them, civilized and barbaric, intelligent and stupid, white and black, men and women, etc., give the perspective of power relations, and the writers, while using them in their writings, are trying to depict the mentality of different races.

This research paper is based on the study of Gordimer's (1982) counter-discourse in her selected short stories taken from *Six Feet of the Country* as a challenge to the colonial discourse of the binaries highlighted by Edward Said (2010). Gordimer's way of resistance against racial binaries is discussed through Tiffin's (1987) concept of counter-discourse. She has used her narratives and characters to subvert the dominant dichotomies that stand dominant in colonial discourse to posit that this segregation is false based on incorrect fixed ideas as a result of colonization. The study aims to explore how Gordimer rejects and challenges the binaries present in the colonial statements. The objective of the paper is to bring to light how Gordimer presents the characters of the suppressed race and gender in opposition to the previous discourse. The goal is to highlight the morals, ethics, and intelligence of blacks, as positively portrayed by Gordimer in her short stories.

Nadine Gordimer, a South African fiction writer and political activist, produced literature against apartheid, and most of her works revolve around the life of the black community being segregated based on race. She highlighted racial and moral issues that are the outcome of apartheid in South Africa. The stories present common people who try to overcome various complex personal and social relations. She exhibits what she observes and tries to raise questions about the social inequality among white and black people.

Gordimer's (1982) short story collection *Six Feet of the Country* exposes the hierarchical structures of power operating in society and the everyday life of individuals belonging to different circles of life. She has used the setting of a landscape that is bound by racial inequality and class injustice. The stories bring to light racial oppression, which is prevalent in all institutes, and the racist mindset of human beings, which affects their relationships with one another. She has particularly thrown light on the complex interracial relations and affairs between men and women. She has excellent narration and characterization skills, which she employs to illustrate social reality. She tries to give voice to the voiceless community so that their image can be changed in the mainstream of colonial discourse.



## Theoretical Framework

This study has employed the concepts of colonial discourse given by Edward Said (2010) and the counter-discourse was given by Richard Terdiman.

Said (2010) coined the term Orientalism, which “reveals more about the West and its fantasies than it does about the actual people, culture, and history of the East” (1862). He exposes the Orientalist views that “participate in the conquest and continuing subjugation of the East” (1863). Orientalism “is a style of thought based on the distinction between the Orient and the Occident. It serves “as a Western style for domination, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (1868). The West sees the East as exotic, weak, uncivilized, and vulnerable and the West as rational, powerful, and intelligent. The categorical dichotomy affects every field of life. The Europeans reiterated that they “Had superiority over the Orient and enjoyed “the relative upper hand” (1871) in various relationships between the West and the Orient.

In “Culture and Imperialism,” Said states, “almost all colonial schemes begin with an assumption of native backwardness and general inadequacy to be independent, equal and fir” (1888). He sees the novel as a form that plays a significant role in the construction of imperial ideas, attitudes, and experiences. He thinks that it is the colonizer's way of representing the colonies and its people, which is not based on facts. While discussing Ragatz’s work, he describes his portrayal of the Negro as “having the following characteristics: he stole, he lied, he was simple, suspicious, inefficient, irresponsible, lazy, superstitious” (1901). These narratives describe the colonized as mysterious or stereotype Africans as barbaric or uncultured. These European works create the binary of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ and always maintain a certain difference to be able to rule over ‘Them.’ Said, while giving examples of various colonial texts, talks about the power of the narratives and how they form the identity of the non-westerns as inferior (Said, 2010).

Tiffin (1987), in "Post-Colonial Literatures and Counter-Discourse," presents the concept of counter-discourse in postcolonial writings. She views that during the process of literary decolonization, “radical dis/mantling of European codes and a post-colonial subversion and appropriation of the dominant European discourses” (17) take place. In her viewpoint, the writers try to cross-examine European discursive strategies to explore how Europeans established their dominance. She finds them subversive as “they offer fields of counter-discursive strategies to the dominant discourse” (18). Postcolonial discourse uses “textual strategies” to expose and erode those of the dominant discourse” (ibid). Tiffin (1987) articulates that the writers are intentionally engaged in counter-discursive practices for the dis/mantling of the colonial assumptions from a local point of view.

## Research Questions

To achieve the objectives set forth in this study, the following research questions have been formulated:

- Q 1:** How does Gordimer challenge the colonial discursive binaries in her short stories?
- Q 2:** How does Gordimer subvert the constructed images of the oppressed Others through her narratives and way of characterization?

## Research Methodology

This study investigates the challenge of colonial binaries depicted in Gordimer’s short stories from her collection *Six Feet of the Country* in light of Said's idea of colonial discourse and Tiffin's (1987) concept of counter-discourse. It analyzes the narration, ideas, and language to answer the proposed questions through critical reading and close interpretation of the text. All the points in the texts are analytically evaluated, and the textual shreds of evidence are analyzed by making use of logical reasoning to draw conclusions. Therefore, a suitable method for the study is textual analysis (Gordimer, 1982).

## Literature Review

The critics and the researchers have discussed and analyzed Nadine Gordimer’s works from diverse perspectives, including postcolonial ideas of race, hybridity, and the life of the subalterns. Her works are also investigated to highlight gender and class issues. Her writings are explicit of multiple themes and narratives emphasizing the voices of the suppressed ones.

Babaei & Pourjafari (2022), in their article "Living in Subalternity: The Voiceless Others in Nadine Gordimer's Selected Short Stories," have studied Gordimer's stories in the light of Spivak's postcolonial concept of the subaltern. They view that her stories depict the voiceless subalterns who are being influenced by the culture and language of the colonizers. They review the story "Six Feet of the Country," where the writer presents the blacks as weak and silent subalterns and "if they want their voice to be heard they have to ask the whites" (26). Talking about "Town and City Lovers," they find out that these stories are about forbidden interracial relations, which 'significantly indicates the subalternity in non-Western societies' (27) because "the racial laws forbid blacks as subaltern, to have relations with whites" (28). The study has investigated the elements of discrimination between two races and the status of women as double subalterns in the stories (Gordimer, 1982).

The idea of identity, mimicry, and hybridity has been explored in Gordimer's writings in the light of Homi K. Bhabha's Postcolonial theory in Babaei and Pourjafari's article "Hybridity, Mimicry, and Ambivalence: Re-Evaluation of Colonial Identity in Nadine Gordimer's Selected Short Stories." They reveal how the interaction between the colonizers and the colonized happens, and those who are unable to experience hybridity face non-belonging and cannot assert their agency. They depict mimicry in "Not for Publication," where the young boy, Praise, finds his identity through mimicry. They comment about Gordimer's stories that "some characters experience the hybrid situations and some of them remain in ambivalence. On the other hand, those characters who adapt themselves to new situations usually have to mimic the colonizers or upper class of society" (Gordimer, 1982, p. 596). They highlight the way how Gordimer reveals the moral, social, and psychological issues of people in a segregated society (Babaei & Pourjafari, 2021).

Sai and Abburi (2018), in "The Hostile World of the Oppressors and the Oppressed in the Selected Short Stories of Nadine Gordimer," attempt to deal with the antagonist world that exists between the dominant and the dominated classes. They express that her stories describe the life and struggle of the South African suppressed class. They have explored how she presents the treatment and exploitation of the blacks by the whites. They articulate that her works show "the working of the apartheid state by describing the awful way in which the blacks are deceived, repressed, and oppressed by the white minority government" (268). They describe her works as "the mouthpiece of a time and tireless examiner of moral and psychological truth" (270).

The theme of race has been quite prominent in Gordimer's writings and has been focused on by Michael King in his article "Race and History in the Stories of Nadine Gordimer." He states that Gordimer has presented the historical developments of the concept of race with truth to develop consciousness of history. King has studied her technique of showing reality by "using devices that allow her to enter the consciousness of the characters so that their inner pressures can be presented as real" (224). While highlighting the idea of race, King explores her way of expressing racial laws and binaries that exist between the races that lead to the alienation of the individuals. He concludes his study by pointing out that her stories include the values, feelings, and ideas, values that human beings experience in their respective societies and ages (King, 1983).

Gordimer's stories have been analyzed from a psychological and social perspective by Ghodake (2014) in her article "A Journey from Shipwreck to the Salvage in Nadine Gordimer's Selected Short Stories." She has explored how Gordimer includes individuals from all walks of life. She finds the mixed concept of negativity spreading all around as well as the ray of hope for change as she remarks, "her stories portray the transition from the psychological state of the shipwreck to the stage of salvage through the attainment of calmness of mind" (167). Through the analysis of her stories, Ghodake (2014) finds out that life in such a destabilized society is "never happy due to the constant threat of horror and bloodshed" (169). She quotes Liliane Lowel, who says, "Gordimer notices the first signs of hope leading to a post-apartheid society" (172). She concludes her study with the idea that she finds prominent in Gordimer's stories that the children "have to learn that the color of the brain is more appreciable than the color of face" (172).

Liliane Louvel (2019), in her article "Nadine Gordimer's Strangely Uncanny Realistic Stories: The Chaos and the Mystery of it All," studies the stranger and uncanny elements present in her realistic stories. She finds out that there are "persistent and unusual situations and events" (39) present in the stories that





show the other side of the writer's artistic abilities. Another prominent aspect noticed in her works is the use of significant details because of the way Gordimer "manages to bring to the European reader's eyes the very presence of such a far-off country, its landscape and its people" (42). While discussing her style of writing, Louvel views that she wants to show the world her beloved country in her "more and more outspoken and vibrant" (Louvel, 2019).

Michelle Goins-Reed (2019), in his research "Conflicting Spaces: Gender, Race and Communal Sphere in Nadine Gordimer's Fiction," has analyzed Gordimer's characters and the resentment they feel about their social places and the cultural roles they are assigned. He reveals how her "characters are victims of circumstances of birth and place" (51). This paper has looked into the role of female spheres and spatiality in her writings in the light of the feminist perspective.

From the above-mentioned critical studies, it is evident that Gordimer's fiction has been analyzed in the light of postcolonial theories and social, political, and psychological ideas. The researchers explored how she presented racial inequality and the unjust treatment of natives by whites. The studies reveal that Gordimer's stories have not been looked at from the perspective of counter-discourse, and her narrative has not been studied as a challenging discourse. To fill the present research gap, the current study attempts to explore her way of subversion of the binaries present in the colonial discourse through her writings.

## Analysis

Gordimer, in her stories, demonstrates the lives of those people who are truly affected by racial and social discrimination and suffering at the hands of the superior white community. She raises her voice against the binaries that separate whites from blacks based on rigid identities and challenges them by depicting the positive picture of the suppressed class living in South African Apartheid. She uses the technique of narration and describes the characteristics of the characters through their dialogues, actions, and mentality.

In the story "Six Feet of the Country," racial and economic classification is illustrated through the narrator's lifestyle, his farm, and the life of the blacks who are workers at his farm. He declares his relationship with the servants "is almost feudal" (9), which shows his control over them and their being subservient. The narrator's attitude and speech show his racist mindset, and it reflects how blacks are looked down upon by the whites, as he calls them "poor devils" (9). When he is informed about the death of his servant's brother and is brought to see the dead body, his dialogue depicts what he thinks about others as he says, "I felt like the others-extraneous, useless" (10). Here, the demarcation exists between him and others because he finds himself irrelevant to the matter and, at the same time, finds that as others are useless to him, he is of no use to them. The use of the words "us" and "them" shows how their speech differentiates them from others as his wife Lerice states, "You would think, they would have felt they could tell 'us'" (11). So, this difference between them and us exists throughout the story, where both the parties have their notion of fixed positions: the white couple is superior, while the black servants are inferior and dependent on their owner.

The narrator is portrayed as an indifferent person who does not seem interested in the life of the blacks, at least in the death of that young man. His rude behavior is obvious when he hesitates to involve himself in the matter. He states, "I haven't the time or inclination anymore to go into everything" (11), but when being forced into this by his wife, he considers this "the dirty work" (11), which he thinks he will have to do. He is such an unsympathetic and rude person who does not bother about the problems of the people who are working for him. His attitude during the whole process of the conversation between Petrus and the authorities is quite unconcerned, and he considers his role a "ridiculous responsibility" (14).

Gordimer deliberately employs the idea of disease to reject the notion that the natives spread contagious diseases. Due to this idea, the narrator considers it important to inform the authorities, but later on, through the post-mortem of the dead body, it is made clear that the person dies of pneumonia, not of any other disease. So, this negative idea about the natives is also negated by the writer's narrative.

As far as the matter of burial of the dead body is concerned, Petrus has to pay twenty pounds to take his brother's body. This is quite inhuman on the part of authorities that they are taking money from the poor workers. The reaction to the payment differentiates the white owner from the black servant, one from

the higher class while the other from the working class. When Petrus gets ready to pay, the narrator remarks, "They're so seldom on the giving rather than the receiving side, poor devils" (15), which indicates that they are so generous and aware of social ethics that they can give wherever needed. This shows the positive image of the blacks. The master, being indifferent to traditional values, considers them stupid to waste their money. The pre-supposed immoral people are represented as morally and ethically upright because they give significance to their African traditions and are ready to give a proper burial to the dead. Petrus gets collection from other workers who have poor pay but even care for their friends. The narrator expresses his "irritation," which he feels is "at the waste, the uselessness of this sacrifice by people so poor stint themselves the decencies of life to ensure themselves the decencies of death" (15). This highlights the difference between their ways of life and thinking. Gordimer challenges the preconceived ideas about blacks as immoral and uncivilized and portrays them as superior to their white counterparts.

In comparison to these poor immigrants who are fully dependent on the whites, even then trying their best to fulfill their duty towards the dead one, there is the white couple, "who spent life extravagantly and think about death as the final bankruptcy" (15). Gordimer, through her characters, indicates that whites are selfish and unethical people while blacks, though poor, are selfless and concerned about their values.

The apparent difference in the speech of both classes also demonstrates the mannerisms and behaviors of the people belonging to two different categories. The servants are always very polite in their way of calling him "baas" and asking for help without making him irritated. The narrator of the story calls them "devils," and his way of avoidance shows his incivility. In this story, Gordimer rejects the discursive colonial binaries of demarcation by portraying blacks as superior in manners, morals, and ethics.

In "Good Climate, Friendly Inhabitants," Gordimer (1982) exhibits the personalities of whites and blacks in a racially segregated environment. The story depicts the life of a white woman who works at a garage where other workers are black. She describes the black workers as "boys" (21) and maintains the opinion that they are inferior to her, although she belongs to a lower class. She tells about daily life during apartheid and how it works in social class structures and relationships. She relates the situation of the garage and how different jobs are assigned to different people based on color. Her job is "doing the books" and "keeping an eye on the boys—the petrol attendant" (21). Her remark about the natives shows her racist mentality, which is full of preconceived ideas about blacks being bad or criminals. Although her experience, on the whole, is not bad, as she says, "on the whole, they're not a bad lot of natives" (21), even then, she thinks that one gets "cheeky bastard now and then or a thief" (21). White people always reflect their racist mindset whenever they describe the natives as being involved in negative activities. Her way of description and choice of words is quite negative and uncivilized when she remarks, "a noisy lot of devils" (23).

Blacks are always looked down upon, even if they are not involved in criminal activities. The whites only need a little excuse to raise a finger to them as she criticizes why Boss-boy Jack receives a lot of calls from his family and the change of his name irritates her. On the other hand, Jack's reply about his identity indicates the life of the immigrants and displaced characters and their identity crisis. He says, "Here I'm Jack, and there I'm Mpanza Makiwane" (23). Their double identity is an issue because they are present in different places. Jack's strong personality is shown through his remark, "I'm the only one who knows who I am wherever I am" (23), so the strength of his character is due to his belief in himself and his ability to compose himself as a refined man. That is the reason that the lady finds him sensible as compared to another white lot, saying, "You get more sense out of the boss-boy, Jack, than you can out of some whites" (22-23). When they are discussing the white chap and his car, Jack's comments reflect his wisdom and understanding of the situation. He states, "You can't drive six hundred miles or so on those tires" (26), which shows that he has doubts about that man's personality. The lady accepts his wise thinking and considers his ability that of a white man because, in their mind, only whites can talk sensibly. Although she does not share her personal life with the "boys," she converses with Jack about the white intruder in her life because she considers him reasonable and reliable, which makes him a good person, breaking the preconceived notion.

The narrator gets attracted to a white man who comes to the garage with his big "American Car" (23) and starts an affair with him. The white chap proves himself fraudulent when he gives his gold watch instead of money, and that watch later turns out to be fake. Gordimer brings to light the fact that blacks



are mostly doubted and considered corrupt, but in reality, and she portrays whites as morally corrupt. The colonial discourse where whites are always given a margin is reflected in her remarks when she comes to know about the fake watch. Even then, she says, "I didn't say anything gave him the benefit of the doubt" (25). So the writer depicts him as a deceitful character, but the narrator, as a white woman, thinks that he may have some excuse.

Gordimer represents the white chap as a drifter who uses the lady for his purposes and lies about himself and his status. She becomes aware of his character but, even then, is stuck with him. She informs Jack about all these incidents, saying, "The man has disappeared, run off without paying my friend who ran the hotel" (30). Jack knows that the boy has deceived her, and this is the deception she gets based on her color and class. Jack makes a statement, "Johannesburg was full of people like that, but you learn to know their faces, even if they were nice faces" (30). She has been fooled by that person and is unable to get rid of him.

Blacks are portrayed as emotional beings who are concerned about their families as "they've got more feeling than whites sometimes, that's the truth" (34), and Gordimer is interested in highlighting that the natives are concerned about the well-being of their loved ones and show morals and ethics while in the opposition, a white man is a fraud and does not bother about social norms and values.

Gordimer incorporates the technique of presenting characters in opposition to each other, displaying the characteristics of these characters in the light, like Jack and the unnamed white intruder. Gordimer breaks the colonial dichotomy of whites being superior and wants to demonstrate that blacks are far higher in morality and civility. Jack, at the end of the story, protects his colleague from that white cheater as he "told him you're gone. You don't work here anymore" (35). This is his way of showing good manners as a person. That is the reason the narrator accepts the reality and declares her opinion that it is no longer about natives anymore. Rather, whites are corrupt and cheaters, as she remarks, "It's not only that it's not safe to walk about alone at night because of the natives, this whole town is full of people you can't trust" (35).

In "Not for Publication," Gordimer (1982) presents the character of a young African boy, Praise, who belongs to a displaced family from some far-off African tribe. Through his personality, she wants to highlight the positive picture of a native who can be intelligent and well-learned as compared to other whites. He proves himself to be the boy of "real intelligence" (74). Colonial narratives demonstrate the colonized or natives as illiterate and dull-witted without social and political awareness. The writer aims to bring to light the character of an African boy, a beggar, who is intelligent and can excel in education in a white school. As it is described, "In six weeks, the boy could write, and from the start, he could spell perfectly" (74), while other boys never succeeded in mastering. "His arithmetic was so good that he had to be taught with the standard three class instead of the beginners" (75), which reflects his capability and learning abilities more than his age. "In Eighteen months, he has completed the standard Five syllabi" (75), which was always the ability of a city child who has a "background advantage of a literate home" (75). This whole description attests to his extraordinary intellect with which he competes with the white boys. Though he comes from a poor African background and is considered inferior in learning, he undermines the constructed binary of being incapable. His way of speech also shows his manners of conversation as he calls her "Med-dam" (73).

When Miss Graham-Grigg comes to meet him at Father Audry's school, what she notices about his personality verifies him as distinct and enviable for others; "he had the unconscious bearing of a natural prince, among men that make a celebrated actor, a political leader, a successful lover; an object of attraction and envy" (79). She hopes for a bright future for the boy and considers him talented enough to display that an African boy can rise higher in life and stand distinct.

Father Audry establishes an opinion about the boy "that he would be eligible for an open scholarship that no black boy had even won before -what a triumph that would be, for the boy, for the school, for all the African boys, who were considered fit only for the inferior standard of 'Bantu education'" (84) and might be the first Black boy to become a scholar at Rhodes (84) which becomes the pride of his family and tribe who are always supposed barbarous and primitive.

The short story "A Chip of Glass Ruby" challenges the opinions constructed about females and Eastern people who are considered imperfect, irresponsible, unreliable, and limited in their specific sphere. The formers are always discouraged from participating in social or political activities and are restricted to household responsibilities. In most of the colonial discourses, female immigrants from the other world are shown as being suppressed characters who are voiceless and powerless. Gordimer subverts this discourse through the narrative of Mrs. Bamjee, an Indian immigrant settled in South Africa who proves herself to be a competent lady, fully aware of her personal and social roles (Gordimer, 1982).

Mr. Bamjee is a typical conservative male who shows the patriarchal colonial discourse in which females are conceived as incapable of any active role and disagrees with her political activities for the natives. He advises to "let the natives protest against on their own, there are millions of them. Let them go ahead with it" (36). He is least interested in these acts and wants her to stop protesting for the natives.

The concept of a male being active in all spheres of life is subverted and female, though a displaced character is shown playing her roles actively. Gordimer wants to illustrate to the world that women can be equally responsible and brave to take up the place fixed for the male in the colonial discourse, which gives preference to a white male. Here in the story, a female from an inferior ethnicity is sacrificing herself for the cause of the suppressed lot.

Mrs. Bamjee sets an example of a perfect lady who fulfills her role as a mother, wife, and political activist and does her best to complete all tasks. She does all household work, cares about her kids, and even prepares for family functions and political and social activities. When she is arrested, the first thing Mr Bamjee feels about her absence is that he will have to take care of the house and the kids. At that time, he feels her worth in her absence. Her superior self is portrayed in contrast to Mr. Bamjee, who challenges the binary created between male and female roles. At the end of the story, she reminds her daughter about her husband's birthday, which reflects her concern for a person who never encourages and supports her. Her daughter describes her personality by saying, "It's because she doesn't want anybody to be left out. It's because she always remembers everything: without a place to live, hungry kids, and boys who can't get educated all the time. That's how Ma is" (47). Mr. Bamjee's acceptance at the end indicates her to be significant and different. He states, "She was not like the others" (47).

To conclude, Gordimer, in the selected short stories, presented a counter-discourse to the discursive binaries prevalent in colonial discourse, as highlighted by Edward Said (2010). She has challenged all the stereotypes about the natives and the others as being ill-mannered, unethical, and immoral. She instead demonstrated a strong image of the suppressed voiceless community as superior to their equal counterparts. Through her narratives and characterization, she underpins the binaries and posits that the dominant binaries are wrongly constructed for colonial purposes and based on the selfish intentions of the white colonizers.

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