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Quest for Identity in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*

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Abstract

This paper analyzes Nadine Gordimer's The Pickup, a post-colonial diasporic novel. It examines how Gordimer shows diasporic people's sense of displacement, loss, identity crisis and their attempts for identity formation. It analyzes Gordimer's several motifs behind using Abdu, Julie and other minor characters to show the continuous process of identity formation which has vividly shown people's choice to exile from their place and willingly and unwillingly forms their diasporic identity. To explore the concept of diasporic people's formation of identity, this paper engages the ideas of cultural hybridity and diasporic people's formation of identity developed by Homi K. Bhabha's The Location of Culture, R. Radhakrishan's Diasporic Mediation, Stuart Hall's Diaspora and Identity and Salman Rushdie's Imaginary Homelands. This paper contends the issues of migrant people's identity formation as well as cultural hybridity depending upon the people and the land they belong to and they stand. By doing so, this paper opens new avenues showing that there are multiple ways to examine a particular theme with special attention to contextual relations.

Keywords: Diaspora, diasporic character, identity, migration, cultural hybridity

This research analyses South African writer Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*, a story of the troubled loving couple. In this novel, Gordimer brings into light an important truth about the migratory subjects whose identities are shaped by couples' cross-cultural and migratory experiences. Julie, a white girl from rich background falls in love with an illegal migrant whose pseudo name is Abdu and during a regular pickup when Julie visited a nearby garage in South Africa, like her parents she belongs to two different counties but their fate brought them together.

This research primarily focuses on the formation of identity of the diasporic characters and shows how colonizers compel subjects like Abdu to leave his homeland and be the catalyst of identity formation. Secondly, the researcher goes through Julie's transformation of identity from a secure life to a tantalizing effort she has done as a migrant tourist in an unknown land, and culture. Having this idea, this research analyzes how new identity is forged in a migrant, and create the new sensual diasporic identity.

Looking deeper into the context through the lens of theoretical perspective of postcolonial diaspora studies, this thesis highlights some of the key concepts from Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, R. Radhakrishan's *Diasporic Mediation*, Stuart Hall's *Diaspora and Identity* and Salman Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands*. Julie and Abdu are not just migrant characters but also diasporic characters representing diasporic sensibility. This novel, in a greater degree, addresses the question of socially acceptable identity more than the question of self-identity.

This research examines Julie's quest to be herself rather than what others expect her to be. Julie is a mentally defenceless woman in a passive and secure society. She intentionally chooses a life that is turbulent with an illegal migrant. Why an identity matters even when it has to be dealt in a raging crisis and chaos which is least psychologically hampering if not physically. Physical struggle of an illegal migrant is obvious who is compelled to leave his country by the effect of colonization. Identity production and social change on a person's periphery truly quenches the thirst of love without the bliss of life, where the identity of personal life meets with the identity of social and cultural identity, which at a time might not be very welcoming.

Most of the literature available in libraries and online sources focus on the

apartheid and colonial perspective of *The Pickup*. Julie is a member of a rich and sophisticated family in South Africa. She is a brilliant, beautiful, enormously talented and successful girl; yet she chooses a path that is not a choice for many. On the other hand, Abdu is compelled to leave his homeland and be an illegal migrant so such conditions in characters' life give room for a lot of literary reviews for the artists.

Leon de Kock argues upon the existence of South African literature. In his article "Does South African Literature Still Exist? Or: South African Literature is Dead, Long Live Literature in South Africa", he writes:

The country witnessed great volumes of crassly ethnocentric cross-cultural representation of the kind common to colonial occupations and racist mentalities - the as a stabbing needle. On a secondary level, a more subtle and unavoidable doubleness came to inhabit every representational act ever made efforts to stitch difference into sameness . . . , or to pretend sameness - equality - actually inhered in formalized difference, apartheid's elaborate discourses upon being 'different but equal' original argument, therefore, a crisis of representation was endemic cultural and geographical conjunction that had become South Africa, that 'it,' the country conceived as a third-person entity, was a seam could be undone only at the cost of its existence. (74)

Apartheid has become the main issue of writing around South Africa. Kock emphasizes on same issue of the existence of South African literature as he is examining in this part of literature. Issue of whether South African literature still exist or not is his major concern. Throughout time, lots of things are changed, but the African issues are remaining unchanged from then to now. Crassly ethnocentric cross-cultural, prevention of sameness, an argument of being different but equal notion is sustained long to show the third person entity.

Understanding the little in a diverse way, Ileana Dimitriu, in her article, studies this fiction connecting on Gordimer's personal life:

“Postcolonialising Gordimer: The Ethics of ‘Beyond’ and Significant Peripheries in the Recent Fiction”. She writes about their unfixed identity emphasizing as, “post-apartheid world of unfixed identities” (167). Furthermore, she comments on Gordimer's “own sense of exhaustion political overdetermination, or her disenchantment perhaps with more social configurations, both locally and internationally. . . It is also a sobering of the psychological damage that has been inflicted on Abdu by global colonialism” (171). Gordimer represents the hidden political scenario in social configurations in both local and international level, where Abdu and Julie represent the global colonization, more than that diasporic characters of the post-colonial world where they are looking for their fix identity in between unfixed identity.

M.J. Cloete talks about empathy through an interesting role in the novel of two different characters. On the one hand, this is a story of emigrants and immigrants, groups deserving of the kind of empathy that novels are uniquely suited to foster. She sheds light on Gordimer's characters Julie and Ibrahim from *The Pickup*: “They are clearly ciphers for two cultures in search of each other. This is the famous ‘clash of civilizations’ in human form. And Gordimer's contribution is not simply to bring these civilizations into recognizable, human relief but to show how their mutual incomprehension is also related to their mutual attraction” (17). Julie and Ibrahim belong to two opposite worlds but they are connected dismantling the boundary of the society although they misunderstood one another fundamentally at the beginning which is unclear till the end of the novel. They are not empathetically treated by Julies's family. The shared motivating force of their lives to put distance between

themselves and the self-perceived traps of their respective families. They are like two poles of the same magnet as Julie ultimately fails to see that everything Abdu does stems from his need to escape his village, whereas Julie refuses to live in the village with her scattered identity in the desert.

Similarly, Sue Kossew in “Australian Journal of Trans-national Writing” states *The Pickup* takes a little getting used to. Julie Summers’ car breaks down in the heavily populated, but dangerous South African city, ostensibly Johannesburg, where she lives. Obtaining help from the young mechanic at a nearby garage proves to be the kind of unexpected encounters which Julie has been trying to leave herself open to, and which ultimately changes her life. The story raises several complicated questions about privilege, and privation, about love, and longing, and ultimately about the nature and quest for home. Much of this adaptation occurs through language – what initially seems to be a barrier to communication can become a means for productive cross-cultural exchange. Warned by both Ibrahim that his country is “not for you” and her father who cautions Julie that it is a place where women are “treated like slaves”, Julie is nonetheless determined to expand her limited horizons and experience a culture of which she knows nothing. (2)

In contrast, J. U. Jacobs sheds light on the diasporic theme of South African literature in his article “Diasporic Identity in Contemporary South African Fiction.” In this article, he explains how Gordimer has shown the diasporic content of dislocation of main characters and their journey of migration to inner realization through culture transmission to identity transition. According to him in *The Pickup*:

Gordimer traces the formation of the unusual South African ‘mongrel cross-pattern’ in her fiction to examine contemporary, migrant South African

identity in the global migration, or the 'new diaspora' in the senses, the protagonist, Julie Summers. . . . The different streams of Gordimer have conducted her reader some way into the complex conflictual terrain of diaspora - often as political exile. (126)

Theme of political exile is main image which Gordimer always carries but not this time. It is an exile of protagonists to search for own identity and love far from the political chaos. More or less, Abdu's exile is guided by political cause because he is specially searching for a better life in foreign countries but Julie is completely new representative of this new world, who accepts her diasporic identity for love.

Jacobs further entertains the idea of diaspora connecting it with diasporic white identity. He writes: "The idea of identity as being based on shared cultural codes that provide an imaginary cohesiveness is associated with the concept 'permanent residence.' Permanent residence is what Ibrahim could obtain in South Africa; permanent residence is what Julie effectively when she leaves South Africa with him" (128). In contrast to Jacobs's idea of shared cultural codes which provides imaginative permanent residency of Abdu in South Africa, Ronny Noor has reviewed *The Pickup*. He has summed up *The Pickup* in a sentence of three words as "Life is elsewhere". For him, "In this touching, open-ended love story, Gordimer never falls prey to sentimentality". In her usually controlled style, she gives us pictures of bourgeois South Africa and rural Arabia as only someone of her insight and caliber can do. Her descriptions of the Arabian Desert and the desert communities are as authentic . . . The Pickup is another well-deserved success for this consummate artist." In this open-ended love story, Gordimer depicts two lives from the two opposite sides of the world and guided them in two different directions in the desert to seek their new identities.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes writes about Gordimer's writing in her death. She has taken *The Pickup* as Gordimer's apartheid and less celebrated novel. She writes, "Apartheid was her only topic and she herself confided that apartheid had forced her to adopt a genre of critical realism so as to 'describe a situation so truthfully... that the reader could no longer evade it'" (8). Apart from Nancy's point of view, for Straus Giroux Farrar,

The Pickup offers a realistic, unsentimental look at individuals torn apart by the love that united them as its 'acceptance' also brought about 'the authority to impose conditions'. With its densely colorful characters, its precise and lush narration, the 1991 Nobel Prize winner's latest novel is one that enthralls surprises and delights. (58)

Both Nancy and Farrar have picked the issue of race, but one accepts it as a forceful use of apartheid to adopt a genre of critical realism, another describes it as colourful union of acceptance of two people from two different worlds.

Tereza Stejskalova talks about the difficulties and differences in life: "The novel, as indicated by the title, flirts with the idea that one of these two has been a pickup for the other...Abdu needs residency, Julie needs an adventure. Is one-half of this couple taking advantage of the other?" Gordimer raises this question and in some ways, answers it, but this does not remain the central question. *The Pickup* goes on to explore the cultural and experiential differences between Julie and Abdu, and how they do find a connection. Julie's integration into Abdu's family home is a beautiful and respectful investigation of both sides of a huge cultural divide.

Hence, different critics have focused on different themes in their interpretation of this novel. This research finds a unique entity of cultural hybridity and tries to see it through the lens of identity formation and transformation of diasporic people. The

cultural hybridity and the transformation of identity of a person occurs when it mixes up with another culture far from their native land, their heart always seeks for their real home. Issue of migration and identity is the main theme of Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*, and to understand how different forms of identity surfaces from interactions between the culture and migratory experiences. Diasporic identity comes into the light in the post-colonial time. Diasporic identity is formed when one left his/her homeland forever, without having any expectation to return to the native land. They adjust in their new culture but cannot forget their past. They create their new identity but are unable to detach themselves from their past, and become people with hybrid culture and identity.

Drawing on and apart from the critics who have acknowledged *The Pickup* as a painful statement of what happens to a woman's and man's aspirations in a society that refuses to take them seriously. It shows the vulnerability of people, their hopes and goodwill as they are fighting for the formation and transformation of their true self. This thesis departs from such criticism taking it as the story of individualist girl who is subjected to pledge because of her alienation and dejection that resulted out of her socially unacceptable identity has created the sensitive diasporic sense through the identity transformation. To study the diasporic selves in Abdu and Julie's diasporic identity formation, the researcher uses theoretical insights from Stuart Hall's *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1990), Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), Salman Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands* (1992) and R. Radhakrishnan's *Diasporic Mediation* (1996).

Stuart Hall critically presents his idea of "cultural hybridity" in his text *Diaspora and Identity*. He has paved the way for a paradigm shift within Diaspora studies focusing in concept of hybridity especially in the African context. Visual

representation of the Afro-Caribbean 'black' has taken central place for his study of Diasporas of the West-new post-colonial subjects. According to him, "Cultural practices and forms of representation have the black subject at their centre, putting the issue of cultural identity in question. . . . Practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak or write-the positions of enunciation" (222).

People create their version of hybrid culture where they represent both previous and new culture. Such situation creates the questions of identity. In the same way, cultural practices and forms of representation have the black subject at their centre because black is representing their own culture within another as they are unable to leave their previous one. Further Hall writes, "Distinct images offer a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experiences of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced Diasporas" (224). Distinct images of African people represent the 'figure' Africa as the mother of these different civilizations where Africa is in 'centred'. Africa is the name of the missing term, the great aporia, which lies at the centre of their cultural identity and gives it a meaning which, until recently, it lacked more than this, outcome of the history of an enforced diaspora of Caribbean experiences. In this novel too, Gordimer uses the enforced diaspora upon Abdu but opposite to it, self-chosen diaspora upon Julie. No matter what, they are represented two diasporic characters of this modern world.

Postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha is known for his concept of hybridity, mimicry, difference and ambivalence. His central idea is hybridization which he has taken from Frantz Fanon's work. He transformed the study of colonialism by applying post-structural methodologies to colonial texts with his concepts of hybridity which is well discussed in his book *The Location of Culture*. From the dislocation of their native place, people fall into the life of ambivalence, faced the cultural difference,

enunciation, stereotype, compelled to mimic the other culture, and remained somewhere in between becoming the person of the third space as a new member of hybrid culture.

He critically presents his ideas of hybridization in *The Location of Culture*. He opines:

The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The 'right' to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are 'in the minority'. The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. (3)

The society owns the complex structure of culture and identity. One's identity is defined by the culture s/he follows. The social articulation of difference is made complex if it is seen from the minority perspective where they have to go for negotiation to search for their identity and to get authorize identity which leads towards the cultural hybridization throughout the historical transformation. Identity is based on power and power is in the hand of the majority. It is resourced by the power of tradition which is followed by the minority because the recognition that the tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. In the novel, Abdu belongs to a minority group in South African land, where he is trying to adopt the culture of majority (Julie's culture) but in Abdu's homeland, Julie belongs to the group of the minority where she is trying to learn and adopt Abdu's culture because both are trying to create their own authorized identity in each other's land.

A person migrates from one place to another due to various reasons. Leaving their native place is not easy while searching the meaning of their own existence in another land; a person lost within his/her imagination. Salman Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands* is all about the feeling of belonging nowhere. Feeling of insecurity and sense of belonging nowhere always remains in the depth heart of a person, which is reflected in Rushdie's work from his own life experiences as a member of Indian Muslim family in Bombay, then as Pakistani and, at present time as British Asian. He writes:

Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy. If literature is in part the business of finding new angles at which to enter reality, then once again our distance, our long geographical perspective, may provide us with such angles. (15)

Identity is always complex as it is throughout the historical transformation; once plural and partial. It is complete but at the same time incomplete. People have to straddle between two cultures like fall between two stools. Rushdie reflects his own journey of life in various places with different identities where he cannot claim any identity or root as his fix identity in this text which has created his imaginary homeland. This has not happened only with Rushdie, but it happens with everyone who is far from his/her homeland on the journey to create their identity as it happens with Abdu and Julie. They have their own identity, but still, they lack something. Their identity is complete and plural but partial in their respective diasporic lands.

R. Radhakrishnan is another renowned theorist in the debate about the postcolonial and the global proposes. He contributes to the field of Diasporas' studies.

His major contribution is *Diasporic Mediation between Home and Location*, where he presents his concept of Diasporic subjectivity. For him, Diasporic subjectivity is “acknowledging the imperatives of an earlier ‘elsewhere’ in an active and critical relationship with the cultural politics of one’s present home, all within the figurately of a reciprocal displacement” (xiii). Diasporic characters are born only after the displacement of a person in a new place. It is a situation when one acknowledges himself/herself from his/her previous ‘elsewhere’ identity comparing with the critical relationship with the politics of his/her new identity in present so-called home.

Displacement is a common cause of identity transformation in post-colonial diasporic world. The post-colonial world has given birth to a number of diasporic characters in their journey to the quest of self-identity. Gordimer writings shine with her personal experiences from this apartheid world. *The Pickup* is one of her South-African novels, where she has presented the same issues of two displaced hearts (diasporic characters Julie and Abdu) from their original places, searching for their unknown future and identity in this post-colonial world.

In the beginning, novel shutters opens with the scene of busy streets somewhere in South Africa introducing the major character Julie. She is the daughter of white parents. This is her place although her parents were migrated here with the business purpose. She belongs to this place but not at the same time. Her parents do not live together and she is on her own. In the beginning of novel, Julie is heading towards the “EL.AY. Café” (11) to meet her friends as usual. EL.AY. Café is not just a café for the common; it is a place for the young. It offers the “inspiration of imagined lifestyle to habitués” (11) which represents the era of modernity and modern culture, winning the young heart. Julie is deeply connected with this world; indignation of this city. Her life is smoothly running with the modern culture in this

modern city. Unfortunately, with the problems occurs once in a busy street, her life encounters with new experiences of her life in a series, one after another. She encounters with Abdu (a black migrant from the unknown city), who is a mechanic, and helps her to fix her car but with the suggestion of buying a new one instead of driving her old car. In her own words, Abdu is “young”, appears with his “greasy work-clothes”, looks like “he wasn’t one of them” (13). His appearance is speaking lots of about him.

He is a diasporic person in this land, who has come there to form new identity for his better future. She is quite attracted to him at that time from the way he has treated her. In the process of searching for a new car, they become friends and start to enjoy each other’s company. He has started to join her in the EL.AY café with her friends but no one notices how he is feeling there among them. Salman Rushdie speaks out from his experiences, “Exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge which gives rise to profound uncertainties” (10). Like Abdu is facing is isolated self far from his home. He is homeless, more than that he lives in his imaginary homeland, far from reality, remembering her mom. In R. Radhakrishan’s words, it is Abdu’s “elsewhere” self-acknowledging the “critical relationship with the cultural politics” of his present home (South Africa) (xiii). Abdu represents all those migrants who have left their home, in their mission of searching a brighter future in another place. He is haunted by his sense of loss, some urge to reclaim his identity, but in reality, he is unable to speak for himself in this alien land. He is trying to put in himself in this new culture and city, with these new friends but neither he can completely join them due to his background nor can he go away from them. He is

taking himself different from them in his thoughts and keep silent most of the time with the fear of they may find unusual out of him. He finds silence is the best way to avoid things. Once, Julie's friend satirizes upon his silence stating that "he would keep silent if he wanted to, he could speak if he wished, it wasn't up to her. Many things, different countries. Perhaps that's the way" (18). This is not just a satire but the reality of his ground; his collapsed changing identity with his travel history from one place to another as migrant and different origins than them.

Abdu is living in-between-life which is called "hybridization" in Bhabha's point of view. He is struggling to form his identity in this diasporic land. For Bhabha hybridization is "prediction upon the ever-changing location of culture and, most importantly, offers the possibility of repositioning and empowering the marginal voice within mainstream discourse". Away from home, learning a new culture, trying to empower own marginal voice within the mainstream discourse on alienated land. Once Abdu is sitting with his new friends (Julie and her friends), they are discussing him and other matters. While they ask about his origin, he replies, "I can't say that 'my county' because somebody else made a line and said that is it. In my father's time they gave it to the rich who run it for themselves. So whose country I should say, it's mine" (21). He does not have a fixed identity. He is unable to form his new identity in this foreign land yet to claim as his and old is not enough to introduce him here. His English is adequate to hide his mother tongue his accent and locutions. His new identity is mechanic, losing his all previous identity and academic degree of engineering in his unnamed homeland. He belongs to the manual world of work. One of them ponders, breaking a match over and over. Rushdie opines, "Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools" (15). We live in a society where our identity is

at once plural and partial. Abdu is in such a situation. He has his own complete identity but hiding his real identity, he is living with his partial identity of a mechanic, fighting to have a better future in this foreign land.

Identity is flexible, not fixed, not attached to a single relation, person, and place. It keeps on changing. It continuously forms and destroys too. It is dynamic. Diasporic people adjust according to the new situation, every time creating a new identity with time and new place in their identity formation process. Gordimer presents the same idea in *The Pickup* where Abdu is trying to adjust with his new life, identity and relation with Julie. With running time, their (Abdu and Julie) relation has taken progress. They start to live in living relation far from societies' norms and values. Identity always plays a political role. Group of majority dominates upon the minority. Line of differences is a natural bar to divide the people. R. Radhakrishnan critiques upon the concept of identity comparing with dominance and subaltern as, "the politics of identity and difference, dominance and subaltern, majority and minority, one had to address and redress the asymmetrical relationship between the two histories" (xxii). Abdu's identity is different from the South African people; he belongs to subaltern minority groups, lingering with different histories from two different worlds although Abdu's relation with Julie is helping in Abdu's identity formation. They are enjoying each other company and different culture from their different origin. Sharing and caring for each other in every step is necessary. Exchanging culture and accepting a new environment is not easy for a living, but they are trying to do it very well with their diasporic identity.

Gordimer is prudent about this thought of society. She has created a peaceful world but thrown the stone of politics of identity in Abdu's and Julie's relation one after another. They are happy with each other till the day, Julie decides to take his

new friend from some alien country to meet her reach father (Nigel AckroydSummers), and stepmother (Danielle). This is the first time, for her, “difference between them, the secret conditioning of their origins, an intriguing special bond in their intimacy against all others, is a difference in a different sense an opposition.” (44). She wants to make it clear to him before she decides anything. She says:

I have to tell you. You’ll hate it. I wouldn’t know which to choose first, my father and his new wife, my mother and the casino owner who’s her latest husband. Just to confirm: you have no sisters and brothers. No, she is not part of that constellation of siblings which, she sees, he probably knows himself in even though it is not visible from under these skies where he and she lie together. My life is my life, not theirs. (44)

After listening to her, he finds, “she is distanced and distressed. Love engraves a profile definitively as the mint does on a coin. She is ashamed of her parents; he thinks she is ashamed of him. Neither knows either, about the other” (44). If he belongs to her origin, her colour, her status level, from her country, she does not have to think twice before taking him to her parents. He realizes her situations and the reason behind this.

Julie knows about her father’s elaborate social life and his house which are conveyed by the social talent of his new wife. Danielle is a kind of personal announcement of her beauty. Julie appreciates Danielle beauty of her “social intelligence” but none knows her real intelligence which “went drier and deeper” (47). Julie is observing her father when she introduces him with Abdu, “there was across his face a fleeting moment of incomprehension of the name, quickly dismissed by good manners and a handshake” (46). There, Abdu is not black alone but another

black couple among the guest. Then, she realizes that “her father, as an investment banker in this era of expanding international financial opportunities and the hand-over-list of black political power on the way to financial power at home, must have to add such names to the guest lists for a balance of his contacts” (47). He may have developed such international relations, with various peoples from a different field, but it is still unimaginable to accept Julie's relation with a black illegal immigrant, whose identity is unknown.

Identity is constructed through the culture and culture is connected with the root. In Hall's view, there are at least two different ways of thinking about ‘cultural identity’. According to him, “the first position defines ‘cultural identity’ in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (223). People search for their identity within the shared culture but, when they are away from their root culture, they left with partial identity. Gordimer has taken Abdu far from his real place, away from his real identity. In this land, Abdu is living with imposed identity with imposed selves; away from his shared history and ancestry. In his own words, “He is here, and he is not here. It's within this condition of existence that they (Abdu and Julie) exist as lovers. . . There is no future without an identity to claim it; or to be obligated to it. There are no caging norms. In its very precariousness the state is pure and free” (43). In an apartheid world, colour is enough to distinguish the person from the rest of the group. Danielle (Julie's stepmother) has mistaken Abdu as an Indian boy. So she asks with him, “Have you ever been home to India?” (50). As an answer, he simply replies, “I'm not Indian.” But he doesn't offer an identity. Her dad is not happy with his daughter's choice for his life, with his rejection; they fall into the series of new problems. In such

a situation, how a father can accept his daughter's relation with such an alien person. But, he is unable to stop her from going close to an illegal immigrant. How hard he tries to pull her towards him, she jumps away from his grasp. Danielle tries to show the entire real situation to Julie, what happens if Julie follows Abdu. It is all because of politics of identity, where one rich white dad is unable to accept his daughter's relation with a black illegal migrant, whose identity is collapsed, partial and hidden.

He is illegal here, without an identity. Nobody knows about his real identity and homeland there. Without identity, there is no future. He is there, but his existence does not exist there. When legal notice is sent for him after meeting Julie's parents:

There is no record of him on any pay-roll, no address but c/o a garage, and under a name that was not his. Another name? She was bewildered: but there he was, a live presence in her room, an atmosphere of skin, systole and diastole of breath blending with that which pervaded from her habits of living, the food, the clothes lying about, the cushions at their backs. (24)

Life does not prove your existence in a foreign land without identity. Abdu is there, alive, moving, doing his work but that does not prove his existence. He is not allowed in this country without legal identity and permits. If there is a person like Abdu, it is bad news. His identity as an illegal migrant is enough to put him in Jail. He, as a diasporic person, without holding proper identity is like an alien in the foreign land. When Julie reaches the garage to meet Abdu, after the legal notice arrived, she meets with the owner of the garage. He also tries to convince her not to follow Abdu's footprint by saying, "He's bad news, he's not for you, he's not even allowed to be in the country" (60). No one can understand the tempest of her heart and the decision she is going to make.

There is no legal ground for Abdu to stay there. His old problem at this new time with his old solution is disappearing again. For him, “darkness is the only freedom” (65) and his only solution is to “Disappear. . . Disappear. Yes. Again. Again! And again another name!” (60) He asks her to take help from her father. She can convince Abdu after all that they cannot go to her father but decides to take help from her uncle (Dr Archibald Charles Summers) who is “the gynaecologist and obstetrician, MBBCh Witwatersrand University, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, St Mary’s London, Fellow of the Institute of Obstetrics, Boston Mass” (71). He helps her to connect with David (Lawyer). After knowing the situation of two diasporic love birds, he breaks out his silence explaining their complex situation.

Without finding any solution because of a criminal charge and expired permit, Abdu is ready to leave the country. He is shocked with her decision to leave this country, simply to live with him, marry him. He is unable to understand this girl from the beginning. Every time, she is someone else, before the one. He knows the alienated life in other’s land. He knows upcoming the troubles which are welcoming her in a diasporic identity formation process. He knows about the sufferings from his own experiences in different countries. His country is different from this one, from others, she does not know so far. He knows hard days will be waiting for her if she comes along with him. But, once she decides means decides. She is going to step in an alien life, where bundle of troubles are waiting in her way of new identity formation.

The complete world has changed suddenly just after crossing the boundaries. Julie has reached the foreign land becoming one white girl who has come with one black person as his wife, where Abdu reached his land with his real identity as ‘Ibrahim ibn Musa’. Just after crossing the boundaries that are all; nothing much is

needed to alter the identity. Abdu, illegal immigrants in her land, has arrived his native place with his real identity but now, she is in his land, carrying her identity with his name, “The wife; Ibrahim ibn Musa” (115). Julie is no different, she has no sense of who she is in this immersion, and everyone is nameless: only him, officially: Ibrahim ibn Musa. Julie is new to this land and this land is new to Julie. Bhabha sheds light on his idea in international identity formation as in terms of ‘new’ internationalism. According to him, “What is striking about the ‘new’ internationalism is that the move from the specific to the general, from the material to the metaphoric, is not a smooth passage of transition and transcendence” (8). This newness is different from the normal. When people cross the boundaries, they cross with their old identity but ‘new identity’ generates automatically. Gordimer has shown the tussle between the same ‘new’ internationalism with their (Abdu and Julie) old identities. Julie is in one alien land but Abdu is in his. He also looks like alien to his land, whereas Julie is trying to find out her place in this new immersion. Although he is in his land but connected with his land, he does not hold his old identity completely. He is influenced by foreign culture and returned with a foreign girl.

Bhabha says:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with ‘newness’ that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The ‘past–present’ becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living. (10)

Abdu is very efficient, speaking his language, making enquiries, engaging in

exchanges of colloquial ease with those he approached. But, where is she? What is her place in this land? In this so-called “new” place, where everything is new except Abdu but he is also ‘new’ to her as Ibrahim ibn Musa. She was suddenly exhilarated and laughed, feeling for the hand of this new being. She is here! She is with him but who is she; Julie an independent girl or wife of Ibrahim of this foreign land where she cannot come out without companion. Her complete world has gone for identity transition where she can feel the pain of Abdu when they were in her place.

The minority has to follow the culture of the majority in a new land. As Rushdie takes identity in “plural and partial” form, she is here with her complete identity, but that is partial, she has her plural identity, which may be single. She is trying to learn a new culture with her new identity in this new land. She was shocked when she has learnt that girls are not allowed to come out without covering her head with a scarf. Her habit of wearing her chosen clothes, travelling alone is now over. She will be tramping over them but she cannot. She is in the nostalgia of her freedom, her independence, and her world. Salman Rushdie opines: “It was precisely the partial nature of these memories, their fragmentation that made them so evocative for him. The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were *remains*; fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities” (12). Rushdie’s memories are partial in nature, and so are Julie’s. Her fragmented memories of her places are evocative for her within culture boundaries and restriction of a new culture. She was aware of this with an intrigued detachment. She was strangely new to this place; she was also strangely new to herself. Gordimer has tried to show the same feelings of what she has seen in the African life. Gordimer opines, “My country did not set my writing; on the contrary, it was learning to write that sent me falling, falling through the surface of the ‘South

African way of life.’” (qtd. In Rushdie 193). In this fiction, Julie has observed thoroughly the situation around her and the way of life. Julie is trying to adjust with new air on new land. Culture, people, language, way of life and so many other things, which she has encountered here, and trying learning, and adjusting is beyond her imagination.

Postmodern condition comes with great awareness and limits of ethnocentric ideas. Bhabha describes, “The wider significance of the postmodern condition lies in the awareness that the epistemological ‘limits’ of those ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices – women, the colonized, minority groups, the bearers of policed sexualities” (6). Postmodernism has introduced all dissident histories and voices of women, the colonized, minority groups, and the bearers of polices sexualities too. It enunciates suppress, low, backward voices to the mainstream, where minority groups’ women had faced more trouble. Julie’s condition is not the same but she has fallen into the same basket with identity transformation when she reached Abdu’s land. She is in the minor group, different from the rest of the people, holding the identity of Abdu’s wife, completely depending upon her husband’s identity. In the fiction, “She was produced before his mother by her husband” (125), where she receives the formal welcome. She does not have any idea, what is exactly going on but she knows one thing that is, this is her place now. This is her identity today onwards and these are the members of her new family in this alien land. She is holding the new identity and she wants it to be someone at this place. In Bhabha’s words, “Once more it is the desire for recognition, ‘for somewhere else and for something else’ that takes the experience of history *beyond* the instrumental hypothesis. Once again, it is the space of intervention emerging in the cultural interstices that introduce creative invention into

existence” (12).

Julie is trying to understand each and everything as she is noticing each small detail from the garment of their clothes to variation of foods. In Bhabha’s words, “It is the ‘synchronous and spatial’ representation of cultural difference that must be reworked as a *framework* for cultural otherness *within* the general dialectic of doubling that postmodernism proposes” (345). Here, Julie is trying to rework to frame the cultural differentness within the general dialectic of postmodernism which has produced the cultural hybridization. Her strong decision is she wants to learn the language now because it is the first steps to step in into other place and culture.

Julie is in the process of “becoming” as well as “being” in Hall’s words (225). She is in the process of new identity formation as a diasporic character. According to Hall:

It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised part, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. . . This inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. (225-26)

She is in her journey to create a new identity but it is not easy. Her uncovered head is enough to disrespect her in this alien land but they can tolerate with a white face, maybe. Both sides are trying to adjust with new transformation in culture because their old culture is disrupted by this new white face, cause of pain which belongs to foreign land brought by their son to this family at present.

The first adjustment to any change must be to the timeframe imposed within it,

like the containment of life in a society commences. The other demarcations of the day set by that particular society follow to the last divide of the living of a day, depending on the circumstances faces by the person. Julie is not a tourist here. Now, she belongs to this land and has to learn the way of living like Abdu was adjusting to his life in her place before, trying to learn each and everything of the place. They are in each other's shoes. What had faced by Abdu at her place, she is facing now in his place. Identities have changed with the places and relations have changed. Their vain effort to leave this place is continuously rejected by the officers. They are tired to see rejected letters.

A cultural clash occurs when one is unknown to other's culture. She is the one who is there without the language and culture although she is trying hard to learn. She is trying her best to create place/identity in this group. At the time of Ramadan, she promises to take fast, without having any idea about it. She is like an innocent child, who is trying to imitate but without knowing the rules of "a husband and wife must not retire together to their bedroom during the daylight hours of Ramadan, when any intimacy between men and women is forbidden" (160). But, the forbidden rule has broken by Julie and Abdu. Even though Abdu's mother finds out about it, she remains silent as she does not know anything, just because of her love towards the son.

Culture is in the centre but relation is crucial.

Julie is struggling to adjust to this new place with new hope. Her dream has symbolically presented her hope to get new life in this desert. In her dream, "there are no seasons of bloom and decay. Just the endless turn of night and day. Out of time: and she is gazing not over it, taken into it, for it has no measure of space, features that mark distance from here to there" (178). Her monotonous life is visualized in her dream. She is in the desert in both ways; place and future. There are no seasons which

can bloom her future in this place. There is no horizon, no end, no life but sand is everywhere which represents the eternity of the desert. But, she dreams about “water”. Which is her “lost memory: memory the passing proof of time’s existence. Ice to cover the sands and melt them back into time with its melting, over millennia. . . . When the ice age melts, this will be forced to become again: become the vast grassland . . .” (178). She has dreamed green. She has dreamed of ice, water, rocks, grass. She has dreamed of new hope. She has dreamed it not because it exists because she exists and her wishes to see new life exist. In this place, one can have both desert and life (green). Her dream brings new hope into their life as they get visas and entry permits. They get the chance to move in the land of the dream from the land of the desert. They are migrating again. It will be the second time for the Julie but Abdu is habitual to it. From the perspective of Radhakrishnan:

‘Home’ then becomes a mode of interpretive in-betweenness, as a form of accountability to more than one location. The demands of the ‘politics of location’ are complex: ‘home’ and ‘not-home’ and ‘coming’ and ‘going’ are neither literal nor figurative, but, rather, issues within the politics of ‘imaginary’ geographies. (xiii-xiv)

Again, new place with a new identity! Again constantly creating, producing and reproducing themselves with new identity through transformation and difference at a new land. They want to create a home there but there will be no home. But, in the end, she has chosen the desert instead of the hope of her dreamland, leaving in shock everyone.

There is no last time, for the desert. The desert is always there. Ibrahim has abandoned this place again:

His eyes were on the road, the arrival at the same airport, the initiation through

security body-check, handing over of ticket and passport where the visa is plainly stamped, cannot be doubted this time, sight of the same canvas bag borne away on a moving belt, the pressure of other bodies, leaving, pushing close at the boarding call. (273)

He is standing at the door of a new diasporic identity which is waiting to receive him with the coldness of new culture, which he has to change into the warmth after the long struggle to adjustment. He is left to fly, alone in the mob, with his partial identity to receive another identity, but that's too going to remain partial as Julie chooses her life with her new identity in the desert. Cultural identity is not fixed. "It is not a mere phantasm either. It is something- not a mere trick of the imagination," as Hall defines (227). Now, Julie and Abdu are in their journey to create a new identity holding the dream of a better future in their eyes.

To sum up, the formation of identity is a continuous process. It is dynamic and flexible. It is not whole, but partial. In the post-colonial world, the process of diasporic people's formation of identity continuously moves on but they are never able to form their fixed identity. In *The Pickup*, Gordimer has successfully depicted the process of diasporic people's formation of identity. Gordimer's two characters- Abdu and Julie have successfully represented the life of diasporic people. Both of them are diasporic characters, far from their native land. Julie, a daughter of white parents from European origins in South Africa with a family, is trying to find herself. Abdu has represented the thousands of illegal migrants and their suffering, who forced to live diasporic life. In contrast with Abdu, Julie represents those women who are migrated in a foreign land in search for love willingly putting them into the diasporic life.

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