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CORRESPONDENTE

**CITIZENS OF NOWHERE?
ASYMMETRICAL DISPLACEMENTS IN NADINE
GORDIMER'S *THE PICKUP***

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ABSTRACT**CITIZENS OF NOWHERE?
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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
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This study discusses the asymmetrical displacements of a white Western woman and a black Eastern man in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*. The characters are analyzed in their process of border crossing between West and East taking into consideration the perspective of globalization. The findings demonstrate that the white Western woman is a tourist in conflict with her own privileges whereas the black Eastern man is the exiled who struggles in order to release himself from his historical framing – which confirms my hypotheses that displacement is related to social mobility and that it produces social asymmetries between the two main characters.

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RESUMO

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2010**

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Este estudo discute os deslocamentos assimétricos de uma mulher branca ocidental e de um homem negro oriental no romance *O Engate* de Nadine Gordimer. Os personagens são analisados em relação ao processo de cruzamento de fronteiras entre Ocidente e Oriente dentro da perspectiva da globalização. Os resultados demonstram que a mulher branca ocidental é uma turista em conflito com seus próprios privilégios enquanto o homem negro oriental luta para se libertar de seu enquadramento histórico – esses resultados confirmam minhas hipóteses de que o deslocamento está relacionado à mobilidade social e que produz assimetrias sócias entre os dois personagens do romance.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION – IS THE WORLD AT OUR (WHOSE?) COMMAND?

This study is an attempt to examine the characterization of displacement in the context of globalization departing from the analysis of Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* (2001). The general problem to be treated is the varied constructions of displacement in the characterizations of an upper middle-class Western woman as compared to that of an upper middle-class Eastern man. The specific problem to be focused is that the characters' displacements highlight asymmetrical relations of *global citizenship* – a concept to be clarified in section 1.1.3. and which, in short, implies “overcoming the imperial and colonial differences that have mapped and continue to map global racism and global patriarchy” (Mignolo 312).

This research aims to investigate how displacement is constructed through the characterization of Julie, a Western woman, and Abdu/Ibrahim, an Eastern man, who do not share equal access to social mobility and global citizenship as they cross borders between “East” and “West” in Gordimer's *The Pickup*. In sum, my aim is to demonstrate how displacement is portrayed in the novel as the two main characters exchange geographical positions and negotiate complex social asymmetries in border-crossing.

My hypotheses are that displacement is directly related to social mobility across “East” and “West” in *The Pickup*, and that it produces social asymmetries between the two main characters in the novel, which can be articulated by Caren Kaplan's distinction between *travel* and *exile* (1996, 27). Also, I intend to verify if the change in their place of location also influenced each other's displacement.

This study should contribute to a deeper understanding of the transitional era of globalization which current generations have been going through. Moreover, it should also contribute to the critical literature on Gordimer, on displacement, and on globalization – by demonstrating textual strategies that demystify mainstream notions of freedom. Specifically, I refer to those which presume that displacement and globalization are homogeneous and egalitarian processes leading to social privilege, global citizenship, and other (hegemonic) components of cosmopolitan cultural identity.

The general context of this investigation is displacement, which requires an examination of notions of citizenship, illegal immigration, and cosmopolitanism in specific contexts of globalization (for notions of

citizenship and cosmopolitanism, see section 1.1.3., and for notions of illegal immigration, see section 1.1.2.). Globalization is understood here as the “structural dialectic of imperialism [which] *includes* . . . the deepening penetration of all available global spaces by the working of capital *and* intensification of the nation-state form simultaneously” (Ahmad 285, qtd. emphasis); or, still following Ahmad, “the economic, political and cultural weakening of the nation-state’s apparatus [when it comes to defending] social welfare and human rights, vis-à-vis its strengthening [when it comes to further serving] the interests of transnational capital, mass culture and information flows, resulting in the proliferation of capitalism’s self-perpetuating ideologies” (qtd. in Ávila 222). From the perspective of postcolonial studies, displacement entails contrastive political meanings when occurring from different social positions – as we shall see, for example, from that of illegal immigration (Pelser 339) and from that of “soft cosmopolitanism” (Calhoun 893).

The specific context of this investigation is the construction of displacement of the two main characters in Nadine Gordimer’s *The Pickup*. I shall argue that displacement is constructed differently through the characterization of these two protagonists, and that such differences can be problematized by the conceptual distinctions put forth by Craig Calhoun and Caren Kaplan.

The theoretical parameters for this research are conceptual. I analyze displacement departing from Angelika Bammer’s definition (1994) in order to develop the characterization of Julie as the cosmopolitan (Calhoun 2002) tourist (Kaplan 1996) and of Abdu/Ibrahim as the exiled (Kaplan 1996) in the context of globalization – these terms will be explained in section 1.1.3.

1.1. Review of Literature

This review of literature is divided in three parts. In the first part, I offer a thematic overview of the critical history concerning Nadine Gordimer’s novels and short stories. The second part is a brief historical context directly related to the situation of the two main protagonists in *The Pickup*. Finally, in the third part, I discuss the theoretical parameters for my analysis of their characterization.

1.1.1. Thematic Overview of the Critical Literature

In this thematic overview regarding Gordimer’s novels and short stories, eight essays are revised as they refer to seven main themes: Displacement as an Element of Characterization; Freedom as

Geographical Mobility; Freedom as Cultural Mobility; The Notion of Space; The Instability of Identity; The Uncanny; and Reality and Everydayness. Four of these themes will be developed more deeply in the chapters that follow, namely: Displacement as an Element of Characterization; Freedom as Geographical Mobility; Freedom as Cultural Mobility; and The Notion of Space. However, the other sub themes are also relevant to the understanding of Gordimer's work as a whole.

Displacement as an Element of Characterization

The critical literature on Gordimer focuses on displacement in the construction of her main characters. Sue Kossew, in "Beyond the National: Exile and Belonging in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*" (2003), analyzes displacement by demonstrating the reverse roles played by the main characters. In this research, I also intend to problematize the issue of asymmetry in the protagonist's displacements by challenging the dominant reading by which globalization is egalitarian – in the novel, each of the characters presumably ends up with a different set of gains and losses, as if voluntarily, or by their own choices. Julie is a privileged woman who refuses her father's support in Johannesburg. However, when she goes to Abdu's hometown, she finds fragments of the spiritual and family values that she had missed in her "previous life" in the West. By contrast, when Abdu struggles to escape the poverty of his land in order to reach Julie's social status in a developed country, he is forced to let go of those values in order to adapt to his "new life".

Thomas Knipp also deals with displacement, in "Going all the Way: Eros and Polis in the Novels of Nadine Gordimer" (1993), specifically in relation to love and politics. For Knipp, Gordimer's novels share, in different ways, the same theme: "the journey outward is also a journey inward, because, for her, the discovery of the other (i.e., the male, the black) is also the discovery of the self" (40). Note that Knipp situates "the self" in Gordimer as white and female, and "the other" as black and male. This is important to highlight as, in dominant narratives, the self is usually white and male – including the South African, specially considering the apartheid regime which ruled the country for so many years. The effect of this self in Gordimer's novel is a reinforcement of the asymmetry, because each of the characters has a dominant and, at the same time, an oppressed side.

Salman Rushdie, on the other hand, focuses on displacement in the construction of Gordimer herself, in his *Imaginary Homelands* (1993), when describing her as a sleepwalker, that is to say, a South

African white writer in an existential dilemma in which she feels displaced when asking herself about her 'white' place in New Africa (192). Rushdie points out that such existential dilemma is essential "for the ethical validity of her position on the willingness of some South African blacks to concede that whites who reject apartheid have a genuine role to play in the struggle for freedom" (193).

Freedom as Geographical Mobility

The critical essays also focus on the struggle for freedom performed by Gordimer's characters. Sue Kossew (2003) deals with the ambiguity that surrounds the notion of globalization regarding the freedom of people in Gordimer's *The Pickup*. Kossew problematizes globalization's intensification of social asymmetries between classes. She argues that upper middle-class Western society (represented by Julie) can afford to exchange cultural values according to convenience, whereas the upper middle-class of Eastern society (represented by Abdu/Ibrahim) is rejected by developed countries in its searches for better life conditions across borders.

On this note, Emma Hunt argues, in "Post-Apartheid Johannesburg and Global Mobility in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to our Hillbrow*" (2006), that Gordimer indicates class, race, ethnicity and citizenship as obstacles selecting who will have access to the resources of global citizenship, and who will not. For Hunt, such relations of hierarchy are decisive for access to privilege in the modern world. But the ideology¹ of globalization takes for granted that it minimizes discrepancies and opens borders between classes as well as nations: far from opening such borders, globalization has restricted spaces instead, for most around the globe. Still according to Hunt, Gordimer draws attention to the necessity of recovering "a sense of specific space". This is because "increasing deterritorialization means that there is no place to ground a sense of self". Thus, she argues

¹ James H. Kavanagh glosses *ideology* as a

social process that works on and through every social subject, that, like any other social process, everyone is 'in,' whether or not they 'know' or understand it. It has the function of producing an *obvious* 'reality' that social subjects can assume and accept, precisely as if it had not been socially produced and did not need to be 'known' at all. The 'nonideological' insistence does not mark one's freedom from ideology, but one's involvement in a specific, quite narrow ideology which has the exact social function of obscuring – even to the individual who inhabits it – the specificity and peculiarity of one's social and political position, and of preventing any knowledge of the real processes that found one's social life. (1995 [1990], 311-12)

that Gordimer provides various alternative spaces for such grounding, through partnership, family, spirituality, and region. For Hunt, it is in this sense of self-grounding through region as one of the signifiers of an alternative space, that the desert in Gordimer's novel has such a "strong identity", made more complex by the fact that Hunt also claims that "Julie's desert is a place without boundaries and borders" (on-line). I shall discuss Hunt's claim in chapter 4; for now, I want to point out that it implies that the desert provides for the female protagonist a *resort*, a space of neutrality or freedom from conflict.

Freedom as Cultural Mobility

Nadine Gordimer herself also problematizes the theme of freedom in "The Status of a Writer in the World Today: Which World? Whose World?" (1999). A major achievement of this essay is to question the status as well as the location of the African writer in contexts that take the prevailing relevance of European and North American literatures for granted. She affirms that such status "begins at home" (19) and writers do not have to fear when expressing their struggle for freedom. As a writer, she argues that it is necessary to develop awareness of the rich cultures on her large continent by hearing and understanding one another. Above all, as a writer, she demands access to the symbolic works which represent values of other African countries: "what they believe, what they feel, how they make their way through the hazards and joys of living, contained by what varieties of socio-political and cultural structures they are in the process of pursuing" (23). For Gordimer, South African writers passed the stage of finding European and North American literary cultures irrelevant. Gordimer points out that people must be free to access and make use of such literature: "I believe that, as writers and readers, all literature of whatever origin *belongs* to us" (26). It seems here that she is demanding an awareness of a wider range of literature which is not just centered in the traditional Western canon. In doing so, she bonds African literature with the little known South American writers as they share historical, postcolonial – and, as she points out, "*existential* ties" (original emphasis) – in comparison to writers in Europe and North America (27). She concludes her essay by affirming that in an African "world literature", writers have to accept that such a literature of awareness will result from an unavoidable mixture (the same phenomenon which occurs among people): "let our chosen status in the world be that of writers who seek exchanges of the creative imagination, ways of thinking and writing, of fulfilling the role of repository of the people's

ethos, by opening it out, bringing to it a vital mixture of individuals and peoples re-creating themselves” (28). It is important to notice that Gordimer’s argument lies not in a radical change in the imperial literary world, but in a mixture among with less known traditional cultures.

The Notion of Space

Emma Hunt deals with the concept of the *global city* as the space where new forms of power relations are developed in contexts of globalization. Hunt contends that in Gordimer’s *The Pickup*, an unequal exchange takes place in terms of labor and culture. She points out that Gordimer’s novel criticizes the characteristic “flow” that symbolizes globalization, as each city has been losing its uniqueness by incorporating “a network of global cities linked by capital” (on-line). In this sense, she argues that the idea of space within the globalized world needs to be rethought.

Graham Huggan, in “Echoes from Elsewhere: Gordimer’s Short Fiction as Social Critique” (1994), deals with space when describing the narrator’s voice (he does not have a name) in Gordimer’s “Six Feet of the Country”. The narrator is elsewhere, and his wife desires to be someone else. Moreover, their unstable marriage may refer to their unstable political space, due to the recent fall of the apartheid regime. For Huggan, this portrait of a decadent relationship reinforces the sense of a submerged consciousness – which can also be considered emergent as the urge for justice silenced for so many decades was more present than ever – and offers no place to run to – only the quest within. This is precisely one of the major themes I intend to explore regarding the desert for Julie, in *The Pickup*, concerning her characterization when she is in Abdu/Ibrahim’s hometown.

The Instability of Identity

The instability regarding politics, love, and family is another relevant theme of the critical literature about Gordimer’s work. According to Susan Pearsall, in “Where the Banalities are Enacted: The Everyday in Gordimer’s Novels” (2000), family is an iconic symbol of political conditioning interests: as the bourgeois lifestyle defends comfort over justice, an aestheticized politics contributes to such an ideology by providing a stable identity associated to family ties (99). Pearsall affirms that in Gordimer’s novels, the politics of the everyday is an instrument to construct each individual’s authentic identity, enabling citizens in their search for a fair society. Thus Pearsall indicates the relevance of Gordimer’s character’s struggle to resist the inauthentic or

alienating forces of globalization. Claiming a Marxist inheritance, Pearsall sees “authenticity” as a refusal of identitarian fixity or oppressive stability, in other words as a creative incorruptibility or resistance against mass alienation and homogenization. For Pearsall, therefore, what she calls the “authentic” (following Ian Glenn) is antagonistic to bourgeois aestheticism, family ties and other forms of oppressive identitarian and cultural stability, and not so far removed from the uprooting potential of globalization and postmodern displacement. (See more on authenticity in section 1.1.3.).

Another symbol of family is home, which is also related to stability and conformity. “The traditional idea of home allows the subject to feel cozily secure in an inherited role, among others presumed similar to him or her, and excluding those who are different” (109); by the same token, in rejecting a given position in the family and at home, estrangement and discomfort take place. This is one of the issues concerning displacement which I intend to analyze in the construction of both main characters in *The Pickup*. For Pearsall, displacement is contestatory, if not transgressive, of the status quo: “In protest against aestheticized politics², Gordimer proposes a form of “heroism” that rests on subjective disharmony and self-division, elements of a genuine democratic politics” (115). In this light, Julie’s and Abdu/Ibrahim’s struggle against family and home, and their consequent self-division, may be a way of building an alternative citizenship, regardless of their place of origin.

Thomas Knipp’s main argument in his aforementioned essay (1993) is the close relation between love (symbolized by *Eros*) and political struggle (symbolized by *Polis*) in the construction of characters within Gordimer’s novels. For Knipp, Gordimer finds in her writings a form to understand South African social and political issues as she states that one of her main interests was to realize what people wanted to say, but were not able to (not solely in matters of sex, but also of politics). Highlighting the feminist axiom that “the personal is the political,” Gordimer often makes use of strong female characters to represent a quest for self-understanding as well as an understanding of the outside world (including here politics and society at large). Knipp affirms that “in a sense, each of Gordimer’s female protagonists makes love to her

² Pearsall argues that “an aestheticized politics denies, in favor of a disingenuous representation of societal harmony, the possibility that politics can be an actual day-to-day- struggle, can be both banal and transcendent”. (114-15). Her text implies that “aestheticized politics” is a resort to escape ethical conflict by covering up subjective disharmony and self-division.

own principles” (38). In other words, Gordimer’s female protagonists search in the erotic a way that will lead to politics.

The Uncanny

Lars Engle problematizes the concept of the uncanny regarding politics in two of Gordimer’s novels, *Burger’s Daughter* (1979) and *July’s People* (1981). Following Sigmund Freud, Engle regards the uncanny as “the return of repressed truths, the rising of dead bodies, the discovery of the strange in the close at hand and of the familiar in the bizarre” (110). He situates this notion in the context of the apartheid in Gordimer’s writings: during this period, the characters in her novels often faced the dilemma of being South African whites seeking relative independence from the system they did not agree with. The solution offered at the closure of the stories was a direct action against apartheid, considering that South African whites’ tolerance was a form of accommodation within that system. This is the sense in which, for Engle, following Freud, “homes” can be “unhomelike *from within*” (112). In other words, Engle means that security is often desired in order to stay away from the secret rooms in one’s mind, sometimes impenetrable on the verge of the uncanny. On this understanding, to be conformed or to tolerate the apartheid regime was a way to escape one’s guilt, whereas being aware of the injustices of such system could cause estrangement, even if its effects were felt unconsciously. Still regarding the uncanny, Engle claims that “what we intimately recognize as weird but familiar is the *marginal excluded product* of mental systems” (114), which must be hidden so as not to bother the stability of the system.

Like Engle, Susan Pearsall cites the uncanny as the mark of the instability of identity in everyday life – considering that the stability provided by daily routine may be transformed into “a source of counterrevolutionary contentment, and as a potential site of instability when transformed by a politicized aesthetic³ practice” (98). This suggests that dullness may start self-questioning, which may start an individual as well as a collective reaction against the supposed normality of a given system.

³ Regarding the issue of politicized aesthetic, Pearsall argues that “by confronting an artistic politics with a critique of its sources in the everyday, Gordimer’s work avoids aesthetic banality, defined as the ‘fastidiousness’ that results from the writer’s unconcealed subjective stance of anger or horror toward his or her subject matter (98-99). On the other hand, the author links the idea of aestheticized politics to “bourgeois banality” (101) in which people become used to what is habitual – including a segregation regime.

Reality and Everydayness

For Salman Rushdie, “white South Africans have no need of dream-ogres: it is reality that they fear, and the something out there is the future” (187). He describes how such reality is dealt with in Nadine Gordimer’s *Something Out There* (1984) and *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics, Places* (1988). Regarding the former text, Rushdie affirms that the monsters which people fear are products of power and that, currently, for white South African people, reality itself characterizes such a monster. Rushdie states that “this quality of subversion, this deliberate use of banality in order to disturb, is what sets Ms Gordimer’s version of the Beast myth apart” (188). He also highlights in Gordimer’s novels the exposure of the ways white alienation is challenged, once such disturbance lies in people’s ordinary lives and their social relationships – in other words, the monsters are among us and can even *be* ourselves. That is why fear becomes a constant feeling, denying uncontrollable reality. Regarding *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics, Places*, Rushdie calls it “the story of an artist’s awakening; to literature, to Africa, and to the great ugly reality of apartheid” (192).

For Pearsall, in her essay mentioned above, it seems that the monster is aestheticized politics, as it produces – at the site of sensorial and visual perceptions – South African “everydayness”. This concept of (the aesthetic) of everydayness, unlike Pearsall’s notion of “the politics of the everyday,”

is only a step away from biological compulsion, comprising the routine activities required or the maintenance of life, activities performed repeatedly and almost unconsciously, as well as the familiar surroundings that one sees frequently enough to take them for granted. (103)

Pearsall thus argues that Gordimer’s aim has been to show, through an aura of normality, the abnormal conditions of split existence (blacks being treated differently from whites) demanding self-changing initiatives from ordinary citizens in order to challenge the authoritarian government along with the aesthetics, politics and culture of white supremacy.

1.1.2. The Historical Context

Nadine Gordimer wrote *The Pickup* in the wake of the Apartheid, a policy of racial discrimination institutionalized by the government of South Africa from 1948 to 1994. According to Alonford James

Robinson, in “Apartheid, Social and Political Policy of Racial Segregation and Discrimination Enforced by White Minority Governments in South Africa from 1948 to 1994,”

the implementation of the policy, later referred to as "separate development," was made possible by the Population Registration Act of 1950, which put all South Africans into three racial categories: Bantu (black African), white, or Coloured (of mixed race). (...) laws further restricted the already limited right of black Africans to own land, entrenching the white minority's control of over 80 percent of South African land. In addition, other laws prohibited most social contacts between the races; enforced the segregation of public facilities and the separation of educational standards; created race-specific job categories; restricted the powers of nonwhite unions; and curbed nonwhite participation in government.

(on-line)

Against such an unfair policy as depicted by Robinson and others, the black South Africans struggled for their freedom until the apartheid regime fell in the early 1990s. In 1994 Nelson Mandela was democratically elected the first black president in the history of South Africa.

The fact that, nowadays, the country offers the prospect of financial gain – as happens in Europe – is a major attraction for immigrants, not just from within the African continent, but also from other poor places. This is the case of Abdu/Ibrahim, who comes from a non-specified Eastern country. In order to find better life conditions, these immigrants remain in the country longer than allowed, and thus become illegal. In turn, their illegal status makes them more vulnerable to being exploited at work. In “Migration in South Africa: A Profile of Patterns, Trends, and Impacts” (2003), André J. Pelsler defines the “illegal alien” and cites four contraventions which the Aliens Control Act seeks to restrain:

an undocumented or illegal alien is anybody who enters or remains in South Africa in contravention of the Aliens Control Act and, therefore, resides in South Africa without official endorsement. This includes any person who (a) enters South Africa at a place other than a port of entry, (b) remains in the country without a valid residence permit, (c) acts in contravention of his or her residence

permit, and (d) remains in South Africa after the expiration of a residence permit. (339)

Furthermore, Pelser distinguishes two main categories of illegal aliens that are “undocumented voluntary migrants” and “undocumented forced migrants (or refugees)”. Pelser also discusses the economic, social, and political impact of illegal immigrants on South African society mentioning among some factors, the labor market; the arousal of local hostility regarding foreigners; crime; and health care.

Concerning globalization, in “The Question of Cultural Identity” (1996), Stuart Hall states that such a phenomenon is not recent and it has been affecting cultural identities. Following Anthony McGrew, Hall defines globalization as “processes, operating on a global scale, which cut across national boundaries, integrating and connecting communities and organizations in new space-time combinations, making the world in reality and in experience more interconnected” (619). Hall is interested in stating how the compression of distances and time-scales affected the cultural identities in a globalized world. In the same line, Jameson defines globalization as “a communicational concept, which alternately masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings” (55). Ahmad also makes his critique regarding the notion of globalization as a mere transcendence of frontiers: the author debates the strengthening of the nation-state by transnational capital and cultural and information manipulation (see the Introduction of this chapter). Hall, following David Harvey, affirms that places are fixed as they are related to people’s roots, but “space can be ‘crossed’ in the twinkling of an eye – by jet, fax, or satellite” (621). Regarding the cultural identities in the context of globalization, for Hall,

cultural flows and global consumerism between nations create the possibilities of ‘shared identities’ – as ‘customers’ for the same goods, ‘clients’ for the same services, ‘audiences’ for the same messages and images – between people who are far removed from one another in time and space. As national cultures become more exposed to outside influences it is difficult to preserve cultural identities intact, or to prevent them from becoming weakened through cultural bombardment and infiltration. (621)

In other words, people from different nations are reconfigured into new groupings based on their characteristics as receivers/consumers; regional cultures are thus minimized under intense global consumerism pressure. And such shared identity is generally related to Western customs. Hall

affirms that the *homogenization of culture* is directly linked to consumerism. These are important aspects for my research, as Abdu/Ibrahim, the Eastern character, is the one who desires to be part of the Western world, as he wants social and economic ascension.

Moreover, Hall points out three countertendencies to cultural homogenization in the context of globalization. The first is about “a fascination with *difference* and the marketing of ethnicity and ‘otherness’. There is a new interest in ‘the local’ together with the impact of ‘the global’” (623). Eventually, Hall states that the global does not replace the local: they just have a new relation. The second argument is that “globalization is very unevenly distributed around the globe, between regions and between different strata of the population *within* regions” (624). This is to say that, although people from all around the world are exposed to the impact of globalization, such impact varies according to the places. And this is explainable if we consider the idea of cultural homogenization linked to consumerism: some places consume more than others. The third countertendency is that “since unequal relations of cultural power between ‘the West’ and ‘the Rest’ persist, globalization – though by definition something which affects the whole globe – may appear to be essentially a western phenomenon” (625). These are important issues for my research, as I will discuss the unequal access to global citizenship of both Eastern and Western characters.

In “Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue”, Fredric Jameson regards four aspects of globalization. In the first one, Jameson states that globalization does not exist “(there are still the nation-states and the national situations; nothing is new under the sun)” (54). The second is that globalization is not a recent phenomenon. The third is that globalization is strictly linked to capitalism and that “the current world networks are only different in degree and not in kind” (54). The fourth aspect is that we are in a new stage of capitalism in which globalization is an important characteristic associated to postmodernity. It can be noticed that both authors, Jameson and Hall, agree that globalization is not new and that it is linked to consumerism. Such phenomenon related to capitalism is essential to analyze the characters’ behavior, especially Abdu/Ibrahim, the Eastern one.

For Jameson, language in a globalized world is also linked to certain interests. “For most people in the world English itself is not exactly a culture language: it is the lingua franca of money and power, which you have to learn and use for practical but scarcely for aesthetics purposes” (57). This is to say that to take part in the globalized world –

which is ruled by capitalism – you have to speak its predominant language. In this case, English – not surprisingly, a Western language. The issue of language will be a topic to be analyzed regarding the two characters both from the East and from the West.

1.1.3. Theoretical Parameters

This study is grounded in Angelika Bammer's concept of displacement, in Caren Kaplan's distinction between travel/tourism and exile, in Craig Calhoun's distinction between soft cosmopolitanism and exile, in Rey Chow's concept of authenticity, and in Taso G. Lagos' notion of citizenship.

For Bammer, "the separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles, or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture – what [she is] calling here displacement – is one of the most formative experiences of our century" (xi). The author problematizes modernism as corresponding to a period in which people could no longer understand how the system worked as an entire unity. As a consequence, postmodernism is marked by marginality and otherness; this is to say that the fragmented identities of the postmodern period hide in the margins and/or in the other the problem of one's self: "the politics of identity, in short, is a constant process of negotiation" (xv). Bammer pursues such identity being in constant conflict between necessity and choice as well as oppression and resistance.

Regarding the concept of exile and tourism, Kaplan makes a clear distinction:

exile implies coercion; tourism celebrates choice. Exile connotes the estrangement of the individual from an original community; tourism claims community on a global scale. Exile plays a role in Western culture's narratives of political formation and cultural identity stretching back to the Hellenic era. Tourism heralds postmodernism; it is a product of the rise of consumer culture, leisure, and technological innovation. Culturally, exile is implicated in modernist high art formations while tourism signifies the very observe position as the mark of everything commercial and superficial. (27)

In other words, exile is displacement caused by forced detachment, whereas tourism is displacement symbolizing free mobility. The former represents the site of a fragile mass which has no choice, out of being in

a lower position, uprooted; the latter regards the privilege of a minority which may go anywhere without being questioned.

For Kaplan, “the modern era is fascinated by the experience of distance and estrangement, reproducing these notions through articulations of subjectivity and poetics” (1). This historical understanding of contemporary literature’s elaboration of displacement informs my study of the characterization of Gordimer’s protagonists and of how their displacements are based on distance and estrangement between each other and within their own selves.

Moreover, Kaplan argues that “the emergence of terms of travel and displacement in contemporary criticism must be linked to the histories of the production of colonial discourses” (2), which can be noticed if a threshold is established regarding historical contexts and geographical locations. I intend to contribute to making such links through my analysis of the relations between setting, displacement and characterization in Gordimer’s novel.

In “The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Toward a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism” (2002), Craig Calhoun problematizes important issues related to globalization, such as *exile* and what he calls *soft cosmopolitanism* – two main conceptual paradigms in my research. Calhoun’s objective is to discuss the limits and ideological influences of cosmopolitan theory. He claims that the notion of cosmopolitanism is a far-from-recent dream of empires because it favored their concern with trade among far-away cities. Cosmopolitanism was also idealized in the 18th century, especially for the elite, as a homogenizing force of modernity against religion and prejudice. Nowadays, the cosmopolitan notion of the “citizen of the world” exposes an ideology masking inequality among people. Such inequality is epitomized by the “frequent traveler,” which Calhoun articulates as marking those who have access to the advantages of border-crossing.

In his discussion of the “frequent traveler,” Calhoun argues that cosmopolitanism without local democracy is elitist:

democracy must grow out of the life-world; it must empower people not in the abstract but in the actual conditions of their lives. This means to empower them within communities and traditions, not in spite of them, and as members of groups, not only as individuals. (875)

He argues, moreover, that cosmopolitan democracy requires attention to social differences, because it must be based on *diversity instead of*

*universalism*⁴. That is why his essay calls attention to the need for social solidarity, such as through public discourses capable of changing contemporary life and experience (i.e., anti-sexist movements, anti-racist movements). He concludes that without solidarity, what will predominate is the current tendency to develop a cosmopolitanism which benefits the upper classes only and which is oblivious to the growth of poverty among people.

Calhoun's distinction between exile and soft cosmopolitanism is relevant to this study because such concepts are related directly to the analysis I intend to carry out regarding *The Pickup*. I find that Julie, one of the main characters in Gordimer's novel, carries Calhoun's profile of the "soft cosmopolitan", whereas her partner Abdu/Ibrahim has to face exile and the disadvantages of border-crossing, which constitute him as an illegal immigrant rather than a "global citizen" (see Taso G. Lagos' definition in this section).

Regarding authenticity, in "Where Have All the Natives Gone?" (1996), Rey Chow discusses the concept of lack, which is related to self-construction. This is an important point in my thesis because it helps to clarify the conflict experienced by the two main characters throughout the novel and, most of all, in the way Abdu/Ibrahim is characterized. Thus I keep in mind Chow's discussion of Western scholarship: she affirms that "what confronts the Western scholar is the discomfiting fact that the natives are no longer staying in their frames" (123). What calls attention in this sentence is the framing of the native within a constructed idea made by the West: the site of lack, the foil for the presence of "Western man". Furthermore, Chow states that "whether positive or negative, the construction of the native remains at the level of image-identification, a process in which 'our' own identity is measured in terms of the degrees to which we resemble her and to which she resembles us" (127). This sentence reaffirms the idea that the construction of the native is an empty image. So, how can one be authentic if such authenticity is the product made/idealized by the West?

Chow also problematizes the myth of the authentic other by using Walter Benjamin's idea of the original in the age of mechanical reproduction. "Benjamin's notion of the aura and its decline partakes of the contradictions inherent to modernist processes of displacement and

⁴ For Calhoun: "we need to pay attention to the social contexts in which people are moved by communities to each other. Cosmopolitanism that does so will be variously articulated with locality, community, and tradition, not simply a matter of common denominators. It will depend to a very large extent on local and particularistic border crossings and pluralisms, not universalism" (875).

identification (...) Displacement constitutes identity, but as such it is the identity of the ever-shifting” (135). There are two points to be analyzed here: the first is related to the modern idea of the death of the original as things can be mass reproduced; the second regards not the copy, but the change, the idea that the identity is unstable and mutable. Towards the end of the essay, Chow concludes that “where the colonizer undresses her, the native’s nakedness stares back at him both as the defiled image of his creation and as the indifferent gaze that says, there was nothing – no secret – to be unveiled underneath my clothes. That secret is your phantasm” (140). It can be said that such phantasm is not just the image made by the Westerns, but, above all, the anxiety hidden in the necessity of filling oneself through the imaginary other.

Regarding the concept of global citizenship, Taso G. Lagos problematizes it stating that global citizens are best represented as “associatively” as they do not exist in legal terms. The author states in “Global Citizenship – Towards a Definition” (2002), that

global citizenship is less defined by legal sanction than by “associational” status that is different from national citizenship. Since there is no global bureaucracy to give sanction and protect global citizens, and despite intriguing models suggested by the EU, global citizenship remains the purview of individuals to live, work and play within transnational norms and status that defy national boundaries and sovereignty. (4)

Lagos’ definition brings global citizenship in close relation to soft cosmopolitanism as defined by Calhoun. This privilege contrasts with the disenfranchisement of growing numbers of immigrants who cross borders in order to find better work and living conditions. These immigrants – mostly the illegal ones – can be considered essential to do the job the citizens of developed nations do not want to do, but, at the same time, are considered a threat to the sovereignty of rich nation-states.

The title of this chapter, “Is the world at our (whose) command?”, refers to the choices the two main characters in Gordimer’s novel have to make, in terms of border crossing, throughout their staying in both Western and Eastern sides of the world – considering each one’s historical and social conditions. I intend to problematize the possessive pronoun “our”, because in a globalized world, the “command” does not belong to a person himself/herself, but to the system one is inserted in –

including the historical and social conditions aforementioned one had the privilege to be born with or acquired during his/her life.

In the second chapter, "Displacement in the West: Underprivileged x Choice", I analyze Julie's and Abdu/Ibrahim's characterization in Gordimer's novel taking into account the critical and theoretical parameters explained above.

CHAPTER II
DISPLACEMENT IN THE WEST:
UNDERPRIVILEGED X CHOICE

This chapter discusses the characterization of Abdu/Ibrahim and Julie Summers through the analysis of passages from Gordimer's novel which are the most relevant towards indicating the terms of their displacement in the West. Using the conceptual parameters by which theorists have discerned different meanings of displacement while demystifying the egalitarian narrative of globalization, I shall focus specifically on the construction of Abdu/Ibrahim's displacement as *exile* – not in terms of geographical exclusion, but in terms of access to global citizenship⁵ – in contrast with Julie's displacement as *tourism* – as she is the character who benefits from the advantages of such global citizenship.

It is important to highlight that the geographical split in the novel between the metropolitan capital of South Africa (West) – where he is regarded as Abdu – and Abdu/Ibrahim's unnamed hometown (East) – where he is regarded as Ibrahim – is essential to understand the contrasting meanings of displacement as represented by the two protagonists of the novel in their processes of border crossing. Although the book is not divided in chapters, it is clear such geographical split in which half of the story happens in the West – represented here by Johannesburg – and the other half in the East – represented by Abdu/Ibrahim's unnamed hometown; actually, Gordimer dedicates more pages to the East (160 pages) than to the West (105 pages). Therefore, I have opted to organize my analysis in accordance with the geographical division within the novel's plot. Regarding Abdu/Ibrahim, whose name disturbingly shifts (suggesting a displaced or split or *schizo* identity) depending on whether he is in the West or in the East, respectively, the former is the site of his desire where he has to face the lack of job opportunities, which places him in a lower social position – even though he holds a university degree (14), while the latter is the place where he was born, has his family, but does not identify with. Regarding Julie, both the East and the West are places where she has access to such social prospects Abdu/Ibrahim is looking for.

⁵ See 1.1.3. Theoretical Parameters in Chapter 1, specially Kaplan's distinction between exile and tourism, Lagos's definition of global citizenship and Stevenson's discussion about cultural citizenship, which are the main paradigms that I use to explain the context of displacement in *The Pickup*. The four concepts regard the geographical movement related to global accessibility – dictated by social and economic privilege.

In this chapter, my aim is to demonstrate that the characters' asymmetrical access to *global citizenship*, as defined by Lagos, demands Kaplan's conceptual distinction between *exile* and *tourism* and Calhoun's between *exile* and *soft cosmopolitanism* (the terms in italics are defined in 1.1.3. Theoretical Parameters).

2.1. Language

One clear mark of Abdu's characterization as one excluded from global citizenship is his relation to the language he is obliged to speak if he wants to be part of the Western world. To make himself understood rather than just minimally accepted, he has to express his ideas in a foreign language. And his efforts towards such objective are quite visible in his characterization as contrasted with Julie's.

Their idiosyncrasies are emphasized in every single moment they spend together. For example, Gordimer's narrator portrays Abdu as a character willing to reach out to the unfamiliar in order to engage with historicity, to "test the facts". By contrast, Julie reads what is already familiar to her, in a way that does not "test" or challenge what is written but, instead, confirms its familiarity, self-centeredly:

brings along books as well as food to these hours when they double the disappearance of his identity, they disappear together, this time, in the veld, but the writers she favours are generally not those known to him from his courses in English at that university (in the desert? In a postcard oasis? – there are no photographs). (34-35)

Julie's point of view is adopted by the narrator through image-making according to tourist stereotypes – represented here by the postcard oasis. It is interesting to notice that the narrator remarks that "there are no photographs". Gordimer's narrator makes an ironic anticipation of the plot by this scene: it is the exoticization of the East which attracts Westerns' attention, but when they really reach the East, they realize that the exotic is part of their imagination. When Julie and he go to the veld, "they disappear together" in accordance with her desire for alienation, timelessness, and ahistoricity: Abdu is not aware of the authors she favors, because they were not taught in his Eastern university. His knowledge is characterized as limited in relation to hers, which is thus centered as the reference. However, this asymmetry is itself historical, and it is such historicity which Julie wishes to escape in her idealization of Eastern otherness. Thus, Julie's characterization emphasizes her desire for alienation, timelessness, and ahistoricity. The

contrast shown in the sentence “but the writers she favours are generally not known to him” portrays that “their disappearance” does not happen in equal terms. The knowledge they have about culture – represented here by the authors – reinforces the social and economic abyss between them.

He is a reader of newspapers; he buys, from the last street vendor as they leave the city, all the weekend papers, and they billow and crackle about them, sails in the wind, as they lie on an old groundsheet she keeps in the car. He reads the newspapers with an intense concentration and a discipline of disbelief as first principle in testing the fact. Sometimes he asks her for the meaning of an unfamiliar term or word. She surreptitiously watches him while he is unaware of her – it’s one of the tranquil pastimes of loving: he reads as if his life depends on what is there. (34-35)

While for Abdu, disappearance seems to be a reinforcement of Western knowledge – he wants to improve his English by reading the newspapers with discipline and asking for her help whenever he needs in order to “test the facts” as they are told instead of taking them at face value – for Julie, disappearance seems to be related to joy outside her everydayness. Julie has a book that she is not reading. She does not rush, because she has the privilege of choice. She can read or stop whenever she wants, because her language provides her a certain security in society, this is to say that her social status guarantees a comfortable position to live in her own pace. The place where they are, the veld, represents for Julie a location to escape from her ordinary life; a space between the city – where she is used to being – and the unknown she is willing to discover.

In relation to language, Julie does not face such a problem in the West due to the fact that, as she is a native speaker, her communication within this world is facilitated by her English fluency and also by her background knowledge provided by her access to social privilege. Furthermore, she is a Public Relations executive and a fundraiser (11), which allows her ample communication on a daily basis. Julie is thus characterized by Gordimer’s narrator as a person able to choose in many areas: personally (regarding her family and friends) and professionally (her job provides her vast networking) – she does not want to live with her wealthy father, she prefers the company of her bohemian friends. Besides, she studied law, then languages. and landed up working as a PRO.

However, for Abdu, words have to be acquired in a fast way if he wants to be minimally heard in the Western world. His native language is not even mentioned throughout the novel as it seems that it is one of no importance in the West. In this regard, Angelika Bammer claims in "Dog Words" (1994) that "when two languages meet, one of them is necessarily linked to animality. Speak like me or you are an animal" (xxvii). Indeed, he is silenced, as a strange element not to be heard as when he is at The Table with Julie's friends: "he did not take much part of their unceasing talk but listened, sometimes too attentively for their comfort" (20). Gordimer's narrator is ironic when mentioning Julie's friends' "unceasing talk" as something done excessively, as if to ward off any doubt or question as to their dominant version of "the facts". It is clear that Abdu is in a disadvantaged position in which there is not much to do but listen to them as he is in their place, speaking their language. Abdu is characterized, through his relation with English, as an outcast, silenced subject in relation to Western society. Gordimer's narrator is careful to show that even in relation to the more multicultural venues of that society such as the EL-AY Café (20), the mark of silence and exclusion remains. Even while speaking the language and holding a university degree, he is not on equal terms with upper middle-class Western citizens. He does not like Julie's friends of The Table because he does not identify with their "unceasing talk" (20). Refusing to be assimilated into the mainstream of such uniformity, Abdu's presence clearly disturbs Julie's friends as they become self-conscious of his gaze not *although*, but *because* their speech has silenced him into listening. And by listening attentively, Abdu becomes a source of anxiety for the group caused by his gaze over them. He causes discomfort, or disturbance, for "not fitting" in the frame of authenticity and subalternity. In this sense, the group's unceasing talk in contrast to Abdu's silence highlights his displacement in the West. And this silence may be perceived as the concept of lack discussed by Rey Chow in "Where Have All the Natives Gone?" (1996), in which she discusses the framing of the native within a constructed idea made by the West: the site of lack, the foil for the presence of "Western man". Julie's friends' unceasing talk fulfills Abdu's silence. And his gaze, transforming the politics of this silence, is the foil that marks their discomfort, their anxiety.

Nevertheless, there is one point in which Abdu tries to raise his voice in order to state his point of view: "that is how it is. You have no choice – choice – or you have choice. Only two kinds. Of people (21)". By two kinds of people, Abdu means the ones who are able to choose

and the ones who are not. He wants to be part of the ones who have choice – therefore, it makes sense to see his characterization as more complex than that binarism allows. Abdu chooses to be in the West, but in the West his choices are restricted – he has to work illegally as a mechanic even holding an Eastern university degree. In the introduction of “Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question” (1994), Angelika Bammer defines displacement as “the separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles, or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture” (xi). It is important to highlight that, although Abdu/Ibrahim is far from his native culture and having a foreign culture being imposed, it was his choice to move westward – for social and economic purposes.

There is no evidence that Abdu ever meets other people with whom he shares his native language, or even that he ever communicates with his family throughout his long stay in the cosmopolitan city of Johannesburg, which represents the West in the first part of the novel: Gordimer’s characterization of Abdu in relation to the city of Johannesburg is mostly about his difficulties in working – illegally as a mechanic – and the prejudice he suffers socially – with the South African citizens such as his boss, Julie’s friends and her father. Most likely, Abdu does not speak in his native language there at all. However, chances are that he does not want to, either. He is by no means alienated from Western cultural values, nor is he unable to assimilate or incorporate a Western lifestyle characterized by ideals of geographical and upward social mobility. After Abdu and Julie leave her father’s Sunday dinner, he states to her: “interesting people there. They make a success” (51) in reference to her father’s successful business friends. This characterization of Abdu as an immigrant in search of geographical and upward social mobility is linked to the concept of cultural identities in the context of globalization made by Stuart Hall in “The Question of Cultural Identity” (1996). When Hall affirms that regional culture is being minimized under intense global consumerism pressure and that people are being reconfigured in relation to what they receive/consume, it is possible to perceive that Abdu is influenced by this homogenization of culture. That is why the successful business friends of Julie’s father are a reference for him: they are the model of global receivers/consumers who already have social and economic ascension.

It is not surprising, then, that he is irritated by attempts to place him in the role of the exotic other. When Abdu/Ibrahim is at the Table discussing the kind of people to choose, Julie’s friends make fun of him

when “they choose to laugh. – Abdu, what a cynic. – So come on David, what kind are you, in his categories – Well at the moment my choice is pitta with haloumi” (21). Here, they are not only showing their indifference to Abdu’s opinions – the talk was about a lower-class immigrant who became wealthy in Johannesburg and did not care about his Brotherhood after he gained social and economic ascension (21) – but they are ironic and prefer to change the subject rather than give Abdu the chance of expressing his diverging opinion. Laughing at Abdu is thus a result of the anxiety to re-frame him as the “exotic other”. The act of laughing here reinforces Abdu’s condition as the other, as different, and confirms the presence of the “Western man” by contrast, as Rey Chow discusses in “Where Have All the Natives Gone?” (1996).

As an exotic ornament, as long as he kept silent and paying attention to the ones who had the spotlight of *The Table* (and also the spotlight of the world as representatives of an upper-middle class), the conversation could follow without any obstacle. In “Beyond the National: Exile and Belonging in Nadine Gordimer’s *The Pickup*” (2003), Sue Kossew demonstrates that “there is some evidence in the novel of the kind of fetishistic Orientalism that images Abdu/Ibrahim as an ‘oriental prince’” (25). Such argument Kossew makes depicts clearly her view that Abdu was not part of the group by similarity: he was accepted for being different, exotic. I agree with Kossew, and I want to add that when Abdu states his different point of view by saying, “where I come from – no capitalist economy, no socialist economy. Nothing. I learn them at the university...” (22), people laugh at him. It is significant that for Gordimer’s narrator, making *The Table* laugh is the way you are accepted at it. Such a conditioning gesture portrays their contempt towards his different values. Thus, when someone in the (exclusionary) group asks what he means by “nothing,” as a result “he seems to search for something they’ll think they understand, to satisfy them” (22). Satisfaction, as a condition for acceptance, is what Abdu wants to give to Julie’s group at *The Table*, according to Gordimer’s omniscient narrator. The unexpected insertion of “they think” in “he seems to search for something they think they’ll understand, to satisfy them” (my emphasis) is significant here. It conveys Abdu’s skepticism towards their understanding of – and even interest in – cultural values that do not confirm their own. Ironically, then, Abdu’s voice is heard to the extent that it confirms theirs. In “The Postcolonial Exotic,” Graham Huggan states that “in the ‘global’ cultural environment of the late twentieth century, exoticism becomes a function not of remoteness but, on the contrary, of proximity” (27). Huggan’s argument is that the

circulation – and mainly the availability – of exotic goods in the global economy approximate these commodities to the consumers. Considering that people also circulate in the global economy, the exotic other is more proximate everywhere – a contradiction which shows that the exotic is reproduced incessantly to confirm the binary construct and the Western norm.

Abdu seems to have the duty of being always kind to the citizens of the country in which he is foreign, even while having to face the strong barrier of a language he does not command. In other words, although he faces such a strong language barrier, this is not necessarily what silences him. Actually, it is the normatizing attitude of Julie's friends toward his language barrier, and not the language barrier itself, which leaves him unheard: as when Abdu talks about the "Brotherhood" and they laugh and call him cynic (21).

Regarding Julie's behavior at The Table, she seems indifferent in relation to the discussion her boyfriend and her friends are having. When Abdu calls them "disgusting", "she said, as if speaking for them: I'm sorry" (22). Her apology places her at their side, silencing Abdu's complaint. She apologizes away from The Table, but during the conversation, she does not say anything for Abdu or against her friends. When they call him "cynic," Julie does not manifest and when Abdu looks at her to confirm if he is using the proper words in his speech, there is no evidence that she helps him. This is to say that Julie also silences Abdu as she feels the same discomfort of her friends for facing a person that is neither in the position of subaltern nor in the social/cultural position to speak.

Abdu also deals with Julie's friends' disregard in relation to his efforts towards communicating with them. When they are talking about "Brotherhood" and the capitalist economy, Abdu states his point of view by saying that the person who suffers to have access to global citizenship does not have debts to his/her past. Julie's friends' reaction of laughing just reinforces their indifference to his current situation as an illegal immigrant. In "Dog Words," Bammer affirms, regarding the displaced people, that

every time he opens his mouth, he must exert a significant effort, an effort that sets him apart from the others who speak comfortably, like people playing themselves, who speak as they breathe, and whose breathing is calm and regular. It is the effort that marks him as a monkey and mimic. (xxvii)

This is to say that, even while struggling to speak a language he does not command, Abdu has to face the oppressor's typical behavior twice at The Table. The first time, when "they choose to laugh" (21); the second time, by his own useless effort when trying to take part in the conversation.

Another passage of the novel that reveals the silencing of Abdu is the scene in which the couple goes to Julie's father's dinner and he is not regarded by his name, but as "Someone". In this passage, Abdu reaches such an ultimate place of displacement in terms of global citizenship that he is not even treated throughout this passage by his name, but as Someone by Gordimer's narrator. Angelika Bammer affirms that

our sense of identity is ineluctably, it seems, marked by the peculiarly postmodern geography of identity: both here *and* there and neither here *nor* there at one and the same time. It is in this sense and for this reason that marginality and otherness increasingly figure as the predominant affirmative signifiers of (postmodern) identity. Indeed, it would appear, almost by definition, that to "be" in the postmodern sense is somehow to be an Other: displaced. (xii)

Abdu does not identify with his Eastern hometown. On the other hand, he can be considered a cultural citizen according to the concept of Nick Stevenson. In "Culture and Citizenship: An Introduction," the author states that the cultural citizen cannot or does not want to identify himself/herself with a single community. Abdu speaks more than his own language, travels to developed countries in search of upward mobility and refuses to stay in his community.

Julie also feels uncomfortable for being in the middle of her father's friends. The dinner episode starts when Abdu insistently asks her to take him to meet her family. She calls her father who accepts immediately while she hardly gives news about her life. Then, she explains to Abdu that

it is a good idea to observe some convention for guests – even if she is supposed not to be a guest in her own father's house, her 'someone' is – so on the way she asks him to stop the car at a corner where a flower-seller has a pitch, and she buys a bunch of roses. (39-40)

Julie decides (there is no suggestion here, but a decision) that Abdu will give a bunch of flowers to the beautiful Danielle, her stepmother. Julie feels obliged to conduct Abdu in the arena of her family spectacle she keeps refusing to take part of. Gordimer depicts the scene through Abdu's point of view, and voice: a voice demanding the opportunity to know the world he desires to belong to. Throughout this entire passage, it is interesting that Abdu is not treated, at any time, by his name. He is regarded as Someone (with capital letter). "When her father was introduced to her Someone there was across his face a fleeting moment of incomprehension of the name, quickly dismissed by good manners and a handshake" (40). In other words, in high society, his name is not even acknowledged; he is no more than Julie's Someone. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1994), Gayatri Spivak states that "the clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity." (76). Indeed, Julie obliterates Abdu's Otherness even as she desires to detach her image from the bourgeoisie – represented by her father and family – by driving a second-hand car, and dating an illegal immigrant, as if to identify with the underprivileged. Still during the dinner event, Gordimer's narrator describes Julie as "overcome by embarrassment – what is he thinking, of these people – she is responsible for whatever that may be. She's responsible for them" (45).

Julie's embarrassment in relation to her father's friends might reveal her fear that Abdu may compare her to them. And such embarrassment of being part of the upper-middle class of Johannesburg leads to a sensation of responsibility of what Abdu may suffer in that environment. But, does Julie feel responsible for Abdu or for her father's acquaintances' behavior towards him? Her reaction is very similar to what happens at The Table. She does not say anything. She just observes. And then she leaves the dinner and goes upstairs, because it seems that when Julie feels hammed in, the solution she finds is to run away from a situation that disturbs her.

Moreover, the ambiguity that results from the unexpected pronoun "them" in place of "him" shows Julie shifting back to the side of "these people" even as in her thoughts, according to the omniscient narrator, she purportedly detaches herself from them. This is to say that she sets out with a purpose which is more ideal than real, as it is ironically not strong enough even to reach the end of the sentence. Such

a split between the wealthy class and her refusal to be part of it is an important element that unveils Julie's (dis)placement.

2.2. Work

Abdu's characterization as one excluded from global citizenship in the West is clear from the outset by the narrator's description of his job in the capital of post-Apartheid South Africa, as we can see from the very setting where he is first characterized. Right in the beginning of the novel when Julie sees him at the garage, Gordimer's narrator sets the scene: "vehicles as helpless, harmless victims upon hydraulic lifts, tools on benches, water dispenser, plastic cups and take-away food boxes, radio chattering, a man lying on his back half-under the belly of a car" (7). Vehicles are compared to the illegal immigrants who work at the garage as they are mere helpless, harmless victims, easily manipulated. This is the narrator's hierarchical inversion: people are the victims of cars, but here the cars are anthropomorphized with bellies. Abdu is introduced without a face, literally under the "belly" of a car, the victimization of which renders him less relevant than a machine. He is at the garage, an immigrant whose work is exploited because of his illegal status in the country. He is under a car and just emerges when asked. Abdu is the strange element who is not welcome, but is needed to do the work Westerners do not want to do. However, he was there because he wanted to. He was aware of the work he was doing as he had a university degree in his hometown. His illegal status in Johannesburg coerced him in terms of work and even socially. "He was hesitant, after all, did he really know this girl, her gossiping friends, the loud careless forum of the EL-AY Café; but the desire to confide in her overcame him" (17). So, the issue was not just to confide in a person, but to confide in a person whose class was the one which oppressed him. In other words, Gordimer's narrator describes Abdu as a person aware of his condition in relation to Julie's: he does not feel comfortable with her friends (as they are called gossiping), but he desires to know more about Julie. His hesitation was not just about the person Julie was, but mainly because of the person she represented. And taking into consideration that Julie was part of The Table, it is likely that Abdu was hesitant in relation to her as she is part of those people whom he despises. Moreover, there is no evidence in the book that Abdu has a friend in the city. He seems to know just his workmates and his boss – who despises him. Thus he is able to speak and be heard in his hometown, where he is an upper-middle class man with a degree in economics, such a degree is

useless in Johannesburg, for he is silenced by his illegal situation in the country.

Although Abdu shows difficulties in expressing his ideas through a language that is not familiar to him, he is really willing to do so, whereas his feelings are, in the beginning of his relationship with Julie, still a site of resistance. After making love with her, “he knows that at least he gave complete satisfaction. He resists residue feelings of tenderness towards this girl. That temptation” (28). It seems that, when Abdu chooses to be with Julie, he is also choosing the side he wants to be part of – the ones who can choose. It is important to keep in mind that Abdu is in South Africa for social and economic purposes, so Julie here represents not just a personal temptation, but also political. His social condition in South Africa makes him reluctant, because he does not want to be totally vulnerable. In other words, he is aware that being an illegal immigrant is an imposed social condition he cannot escape, but resisting the temptation of a lover (and one from the social level he desires to achieve) is something he is still able to choose. And when he decides to be with her, he gains an identity. The identity of a lover: “in the evening he steps from his only identity, *here*, into a disguise, the nobody Abdu – he cannot ask himself, such questions are luxuries he can’t afford” (31). Abdu is the shadow Western society refuses to see, but he becomes a “somebody” when it comes to a single individual, in this case Julie. *Somebody* is the exact word used by his boss when he decides to give a piece of advice to Julie: “don’t get me wrong. For your own good, you’re a nice girl, a somebody, I can see. He’s not for you, he’s not really even allowed to be in the country. I give him a job, poor devil” (32). The use of “somebody” for both Julie and Abdu, but having just the opposite meaning shows narrative irony, building a critique of global citizenship: whereas for Abdu, he was regarded as somebody as a form to hide his name/identity in the dinner event, for Julie, somebody meant that she was in a higher position.

Abdu may be a “nobody” in Johannesburg, but he is “somebody” in his hometown – in the same way as Julie is in the West. And he is somebody not just for his family who cares about him and always welcomes him back, but by the people in his hometown as he has a university degree and a privileged position in his poor village (as will be seen in Chapter 3). The problem is that Abdu desires to be “somebody” in the West, changing his image of illegal citizen in the developed countries where he tries to reach social and economical status. Abdu is in a state of in-betweenness in which his denial towards his Eastern culture and current class in the West is in conflict with a historical

discourse of globalization which makes him unable to achieve the status of a global citizen. In other words, Abdu wants to be part of the group of Western wealthy people, but his condition in the West as an illegal Eastern immigrant denies him the access to the global citizenship he desires.

Differently from Abdu, Julie has many choices regarding work. These choices are not just related to her economic power, but to her family influences:

I wanted to be a lawyer, really, I had these great ambitions when I was at school – there was a lawyer aunt in the family, I once went to hear her cross-examine in that wonderful black pleated gown and white bib. But with various other things on the way... I quit law after only two years. Then it was languages... and somehow I've landed up working as a PRO and fundraiser, benefit dinners, celebrity concerts, visiting pop groups. (11)

From this passage, it is visible how Julie has a notorious trajectory of work choices. And it is also representative of the fact that all the professions she chose were related to power, rights, social status, and the privilege of speaking and being heard.

2.3. Family

Although Julie is not willing to visit her father, Abdu insists on meeting him as they have been together for some time. Against her will, she consents, but she does not call on her father Nigel Ackroyd Summers: she waits for his next Sunday lunch invitation and says she will bring someone along (39). In the passage in which Julie and Abdu go to her father's dinner, she sees a black couple among the guests – an unusual situation for her father's standards. However, her Someone was still an ignored piece of existence among her father's milieu:

for her, their lives were always in control, these people – talk around her, 'buying into futures' (whatever that might be) was a mastery they took, from the immediate present, of what was to come: the future, of which any control for the Someone beside her did not exist. The emanation of his presence, bodily warmth and breath, was merely a haze which hid him from them; their reality did not know of his existence. (42)

It is important to highlight that this is Julie's point of view, told by Gordimer's narrator. Since the beginning of this passage, Julie seems to be in command, regarding their visit to her father's house, in order to protect her lover. She seems to be defensive towards Abdu's reaction concerning her background, because that is the life she wants to hide. She seems to feel embarrassed/guilty for her social and economic status – as it happened when she borrowed her father's car when hers broke. Throughout this entire event, Abdu is depicted as a mere shadow behind Julie: "the young foreigner (coloured, or whatever he is) moves from Nigel Summer's daughter's protection into the general exchange" (46). The description in parenthesis suggests irrelevance as it depicts Abdu as being not white and not even black. The narrator shows that, despite Julie's "shame," her solidarity is ironically not strong enough. Abdu becomes a stranger to her. On the other hand, he is left on his own to become acquainted with the unfamiliar reality he is so anxious to join. At this moment, Julie also becomes a stranger to him. It seems that he perceives in that situation the chance to know more about the environment he desires to be part of. But it is interesting to notice that Abdu does not try to engage in their business conversation, but to take advantage of something that might be interesting for him – taking into account the higher position in which Julie's father's friends are. For instance, he asks "Was it easy to get entry?" (46) to one of the guests. The narrator's ironic tone suggests that he is so insignificant that it does not even matter "what" he is and that such a question, revealing his attempt to socialize, is actually received as a sign of his inadequacy among the elite:

nobody must laugh at this: the idea that a man of such means and standing would not be an asset to any country. The executive director of a world-wide website network, kindly, only smiles, gives a brief assuring movement, the chin and lower lip pursing, at the naivety. (46-7)

Gordimer's narrator's irony reinforces Abdu being viewed by the guests as an inferior person who needs the protection of someone like Julie. When Gordimer's narrator affirms that "nobody must laugh at this," she ironically states that class is more important than race in this case, and that nobody is allowed to doubt the executive director's social status. Such man "kindly" smiles at Abdu's question portraying a false kindness and modesty which will be revealed with a "brief assuring movement" and "the chin and lower lip pursing" that both signal his feeling of superiority and despise towards Abdu. Thus, respect here is

determined by social, economic and cultural status. However, it seems that Abdu's "naivety" disturbs the man, "the executive", and that his smile is not kindness but an effort to show – though briefly – an "assuring movement". For a moment, race threatens to shake the social ladder. Is the man's global citizenship stable? Abdu shows more perceptiveness than he is granted: "the foreigner looks back from a no-entry cave of black eyes: - I don't mean you. I mean your driver" (47). His low status impeded his entrance in the inaccessible realm ("no-entry cave") of the elite. Then, the executive leaves the question to the black lawyer Mr. Hamilton Motsamai. "The voice was raised for the benefit of the compliment to reach the ears of Mr Motsamai but he was too centred in other animated company to hear it above his own bass" (47). So, Abdu is not properly answered and he is silenced, once again, in this conversation, leaving the impression of the naïve stranger, a friend of Nigel Summer's daughter. This passage portrays that the place of speaking is directly related to economic conditions: Abdu's global citizenship is denied not only as he is deprived of access to resident status but also as his meanings are overrun through silencing and – in the event of his speech – arbitrary misunderstanding.

The asymmetries do not seem to be restricted to Julie and Abdu, but also to Julie and her father. He asks directly and only for her: "You're all right?" and Gordimer's narrator continues describing that "in the moment that would instantly seem as if it never happened, there was in her returning gaze, for him only, the understanding that she was asking the same: about him, her father, that there was between them this question to be shared, to be asked of him, his life, too" (49). This passage seems to show a conflict in the narrator's characterization of Julie, because it is dubious the understanding of "him" being whether the father or Abdu. In the beginning of the excerpt, it seems that the focus is on Abdu – "her returning gaze, for him only" – but, then, in the moment that "her father" is the referent for "him", there is a shift in the stream of reading: does Julie have a question to be shared with her father or with Abdu? Or even with both? This crisis may reflect Julie's being in-between her Western family and her Eastern boyfriend.

2.4. Home (or a Place to Live?)

Towards the end of the dinner scene, the narrator describes the group talking about location and relocation. They say that a couple they know is 'relocating', and the narrator ironically provides a dictionary entry regarding *locate* as "to discover the exact locality of a person or thing; to enter, take possession of" (47). This definition is ironic,

however, in the context of the couple – Mr. Summer’s friends – moving within the privileges of global citizenship. Unlike Abdu, who is seeking the unsanctioned freedom to cross borders, the “relocating” couple is actually escaping legal accountability for their crime of murder. Thus, “relocation” as a fancy term, functions euphemistically. The narrator’s tone of irony, therefore, can be understood to make the euphemism and to critique asymmetric relations imposed by what now becomes clear as another euphemism: “global citizenship” – a euphemism for social inequality, masked by the egalitarian ideal of globalization. No wonder, then, that the narrator highlights the greater access to mobility enjoyed by a “thing” – a social position, for example – over a “self”: “to discover the exact location of a ‘thing’ is a simple matter of factual research. To discover the exact location of a person: where to locate the self?” (47), however, is a much more complex question which both Abdu and Julie are pursuing in different ways. In other words, the tone of irony used by the narrator shows that a word can be defined – as in the example given by the dictionary entry –, but when it is contextualized – as how “to discover the exact location of a person” – the meanings of the word become complex. Specially when taking into account that both Julie and Abdu are displaced and in need to locate themselves.

In the case of Abdu, although he has his family support in the East, he wants to locate himself in an upper social, economic, and cultural reality where he is not accepted; such impossibility is depicted through the dinner event in which his speech is constantly despised by Julie’s father and his wealthy friends. And, on the contrary of what Julie may think, Abdu does not have a bad opinion of her father’s acquaintances and calls them “interesting” as they are the people who have the global access he wishes to gain one day. Regarding this issue, in “Post-Apartheid Johannesburg and Global Mobility in Nadine Gordimer’s *The Pickup* and Phaswane Mpe’s *Welcome to our Hillbrow*” (2006), Emma Hunt reminds us that Gordimer draws attention to the necessity of recovering “a sense of specific space”. This is because “increasing deterritorialization means that there is no place to ground a sense of self” (104). Relocating is what Abdu is trying to do, but in his reality, such relocating seems to be just a fake, actually a further dislocation or deprivation of a sense of self – for the places where he struggles to ground himself are still the domain of an exclusionary global citizenship, marked by power relations which define him as an illegal immigrant. Abdu’s hope is based on the color of the other: “Only the lawyer Motsamai, among them, is the exception. He was here; he is here; a possession of self. Perhaps. Lawyer with the triumph of famous

cases behind him, turned financier, what he has become must be what he wishes to be” (48). But desire is a feeling that hesitates and, at times, it seems that Abdu’s dreams are so distant that he accommodates to merely struggling for an unachievable position, thus for a nowhere place. In other words, he keeps himself busy in order to avoid thinking about his current underprivileged condition, exiled from global citizenship, or about going back to his hometown where he is definitely not willing to live.

Julie, on the other hand, is able to choose where to be a global citizen. And when it comes to grounding herself in a place, she does not care about her Western family,⁶ even with the strong attempts of her father, who tries to persuade her not to go to the East with arguments against Abdu, who is being deported, and his country:

And now you come here without any warning and simply tell us you are leaving in a week’s time for one of the worst, poorest and most backward of Third World countries, following a man who’s been living here illegally, getting yourself deported – yes, from your own country, thrown out along with him, someone no-one knows anything at all about, someone from God knows what kind of background. (98)

And he continues stating that Abdu’s country is dangerous and full of religious conflicts, in which women are treated as slaves, something abominable to a girl who praises freedom as Julie does. However, she does not seem to care about his opinion – most likely because she has nothing to lose in relocation: considering freedom, Julie, as a tourist, can be at home wherever she might want to live. At the moment, Julie seems willing to change her life from everything she has done until that moment. “Stupidity” and “madness,” in Abdu’s words (95), but a different enterprise in her view: “devotion. Is it not natural to be loved? To accept a blessing. She knows *something*. Even if it comes out of ignorance, innocence of reality” (96). Gordimer’s narrator shows here Julie’s conflict, because her enterprise is not just about love. It is a necessity of changing, even when she knows she cannot change her reality – that is why the innocence.

⁶ Although there seems to be no difference, in this regard, between Julie and Abdu, Julie is still the one who can have access to whatever she wants and ask for help whenever she needs – and she does ask for her uncle’s help when she finds it necessary.

CHAPTER III
DISPLACEMENT IN THE EAST: RESTRICTIONS OF AN
ISLAND X VASTNESS OF THE DESERT

The following chapter turns now to a discussion of the characterization of Abdu/Ibrahim and Julie Summers in the East. I will keep my analysis of the protagonists' displacement in focus and add a hypothesis to verify if the change in their place of location also influenced each other's displacement. The first significant change for Abdu happens right in the beginning of the couple's arrival in the East, where he assumes his name of birth: Ibrahim ibn Musa (109), whereas Julie struggles in order to construct her own identity in the new place and tries to detach herself from the image of tourist pointed out to her by Abdu/Ibrahim since her arrival there.

I refer to the fact that Gordimer's narrator describes their arrival as Julie discovering a new meaning of home and family. Everything is new and different from everything she has ever seen. And Julie seems to be really keen to discover this new land and be part of it. "So that was what home was. She was aware of this with an intrigued detachment. (...) offering herself in an emotional knowledge: if she was strangely new to them, she was also strangely new to herself" (117). It seems that she is starting this new life in that very moment: she acknowledges his country as home before even knowing it – and without considering Johannesburg as home. When they arrive in Abdu/Ibrahim's country, Julie has the feeling that she is truly seeing her lover for the first time. She can call him by his real name – keeping in mind that this may be her desire, but not his. Moreover, she hardly believes that she is really there with him. "She was suddenly exhilarated and laughed, feeling for the hand of this new being, I'm here! I'm here! What she meant: can you believe it? I'm with you" (110). The narrator paraphrases Julie in this passage as a way to reinforce her characterization as tourist. In *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Caran Kaplan states that "this fantasy of escape (often expressed in sexual metaphors) brought two powerful discourses into proximity: the exoticization of the past in another location or country and the exoticization of another gender, race, or culture" (45). For Julie, Abdu/Ibrahim is the new being, but for him, he just went back to his roots. By contrast, Julie can be considered the new being, because she is there and what is unbelievable is that she has left the West – where he wanted to be – to go to his hometown. By moving to another place, she saw Abdu/Ibrahim and, consequently, herself with a different

perspective. From the narrative point of view, this passage reinforces the depiction of Julie as a tourist and of Abdu/Ibrahim as the exiled. Regarding his family, they seemed to be such a referential of home for her that she was described by the narrator as being strange to herself once his family found her strange. In the introduction of *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, Angelika Bammer affirms that in the postmodern era, fragmented identities hide in the margins and/or in the other the problem of one's self. In this sense, Julie seeks to ground her new life in the place and in the people where Abdu/Ibrahim comes from. She wants to forget her past life by trying to construct a different one – and one that seems the opposite from what she had before.

In the East, Abdu/Ibrahim refuses his family's support, and is barred by the bureaucracy whenever he tries to get out of his country of birth – which, significantly, is not even named in the novel, disturbing the reader by suggesting its normative unspoken irrelevance. While Johannesburg had been described in details: the cars, the city, the working class, the wealthy class, the choices of people who live there; Abdu/Ibrahim's remote hometown makes part of an abstract "East" with people who, mostly, seem to be destined to live a miserable life and, at the same time, seem exotic – specially when the narrator describes Julie's view – a place that can contrast to "the West" as "the Rest". Johannesburg is the place of opportunities, while Abdu/Ibrahim's unnamed hometown is dirty and remote – there is not even a bathroom and "water's like gold in her country" (122). It is a contrast which Abdu/Ibrahim is aware, but Julie still fantasizes as her tourist eagerness show. In "The Question of Cultural Identity," Stuart Hall affirms that "since there is an uneven direction to the flow, and since unequal relations of cultural power between "the West" and "the Rest" persist, globalization – though by definition something which affects the whole globe – may appear to be essentially a western phenomenon" (625). The remoteness of an abstract East in relation to a central West emphasizes even more the contrast between Abdu/Ibrahim and Julie. For example, he hardly understands the reasons why Julie decides to go with him to his hometown. For him, she is the typical Western tourist. "Those people in the village he is aware see her as something they never have, a tourist" (131-2). This is to say that people in Abdu/Ibrahim's village noticed that Julie was there because she wanted to – while her displacement in the West was related to her shame of privilege, her displacement in the East was something different, a new adventure. Perhaps her exhilaration – as the narrator characterizes her feeling upon arrival in the East – can be understood in terms of her freedom from

shame. Julie wants to know more about his hometown, but she does not live that reality, that is why their trip can be considered more an adventure than an experience for Julie. It is no wonder, in this contact, that “Julie could not understand the hostility in him at such times” (137): in this passage, the narrator describes Julie as in doubt whether Abdu/Ibrahim was hostile because he felt sorry for being back and failing before his mother or if it was because of her “tourism” in his country. Julie’s conflict here is more related to her dream of escaping than to her concern in relation to Abdu/Ibrahim and this is symbolized by her doubt, because, in fact, she knows that he did not want to return to his hometown, but her feelings – of guilty now – are going to follow her throughout their stay in the East. Julie has to deal with a new lover – a husband now – and, for the first time, with lack of money, although she discovers most important values for her related to family and self-knowledge.

3.1. Language

In both the East and the West, language means physical mobility to Abdu/Ibrahim. In the East, he is the one in charge of talking to the officials in the airport, ordering their first coffee in the town, and directing the taxi driver to his village, while Julie stays as an observer of a new land to be discovered. Language in the East seems to be for Abdu/Ibrahim a tool giving him power to be equal in relation to the others, on the contrary of his subaltern life in the West, where he felt hemmed in because of his poor English – however, his language is, ironically, not even named. When they leave the aircraft, Gordimer’s narrator describes Abdu/Ibrahim as “very efficient, speaking his own language, making enquiries, engaging in exchanges of colloquial ease with those he approached. He retrieved the elegant suitcase and the canvas bag, and shouted to grab the door of a taxi before the others could get to it” (110). It is interesting to notice that language provides Abdu/Ibrahim with a sense of superiority in relation to Julie. She wants to know the city, but he refuses by saying that it is a dirty place. Even when she argues that she comes from Africa, Abdu/Ibrahim answers impatiently that she is not aware of the reality of that place. He communicates with the people inside and in the outskirts of the airport and decides what is good or not for Julie.

Indeed, Abdu/Ibrahim does not treat his place as *where*, but as *what*. He sees the reality of his place of birth just from his negative perspective as he feels sorry that Julie is looking at his homeland without really knowing her opinion about it: “he is ashamed and at the

same time angrily resentful that she is seeing it (over again, he sees her), it will be an image of his country, his people, *what he comes from*, what he really is – like the name he has come back to be rightfully known by” (133). Everything seems to be a weight he has to carry, not just the country, but also the people and even his name. The narrator is again emphasizing in parenthesis that this is what he thinks is passing in Julie’s mind. In *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Caren Kaplan, following Benedict Anderson, argues that “all communities are imagined and therefore cannot be judged on the level of whether or not they are more false or genuine. Rather, Anderson suggests, communities can be distinguished ‘by the style in which they are imagined’” (30). Kaplan discusses the imaginary community in the context of exile, that is why it is plausible the feeling of Abdu/Ibrahim regarding his hometown: while Julie imagines his community in a positive way, he dislikes it as he is the exiled – he is forced to go back to his country as he is deported from the developed countries where he wants to stay.

When they arrive in Abdu/Ibrahim’s house, although Julie did not understand his family’s language, she does not seem to mind such an obstacle as she feels the welcome greetings coming from his relatives.

He was presenting her to his father. The man made a speech of welcome, drawn back from the two of them, she felt his attention, he was addressing her, and she opened herself into it while the son, her husband, gave nervous pressures of some sort of impatience or disapproval on her arm as he translated. *Speak English, speak English*. The interruption was not heeded. – He can speak a little. At least to greet you. (118)

From this passage, it can be noticed that Abdu/Ibrahim was still rooted on the idea of English language being superior to his own, whereas Julie could understand the message of his father’s speech even not being able to understand the words contained in it. She was feeling comfortable in being welcomed, while Abdu/Ibrahim was irritated because he wanted his father to speak English with her. Thus, Abdu/Ibrahim is characterized as being ashamed of his Eastern cultural background. In the West, he thought Julie did not present him to her family because she was ashamed of him and, in this passage, it seems that he is again feeling shame for himself and also for his family and his place. Abdu/Ibrahim’s father, on the other hand, does not heed to his interruption and his plea to speak in English. But why speak another

language in one's own country? In some places, such as Paris, people refuse to speak English alleging they are in their territory, so they have the right to speak their language. The problem with Abdu/Ibrahim, from such a perspective, is that he puts himself in a lower position in relation to Julie, on the contrary of his family who does not mind if she can understand their language or not. What is interesting to realize is Julie's reaction as "she jerked her arm against the restraining hand, in dismissal; the hoarse flow and guttural hum of the language reached her on a wave-length of meaning other than verbal" (118). Considering such reaction, Julie was positioning herself as the independent person she wants to be in relation to her husband and, mainly, feeling for the first time glimpses of family affection that will increase during her stay in Abdu/Ibrahim's home.

Moreover, Julie realizes once more how language is an obstacle – not greater than his – in order to get into Abdu/Ibrahim's realm and be minimally familiar to the place where she is going to live. She gets to know one of Abdu/Ibrahim's sisters who could speak a bit of English and, consequently, have a small talk with her. When Julie states that she would like his sister to show her the village, she answers that her brother will do that. This reply portrays the women's subalternity in that place. "The two young women looked at one another in deep incomprehensibility, each unable to imagine the life of the other; smiling. It was perhaps right then that she made the decision: I have to learn the language" (121). By using the expression "right then," it seems that Gordimer's narrator is being ironic towards Julie's decision and by extension towards her self-characterization as "not a tourist". If Julie's wish was to know the place and be closer to the family she liked, then she was aware of the importance of learning their language: she had already realized their difficulties in speaking English when she was introduced to them. Besides, she knew she could not count on Abdu/Ibrahim if she desired to know that new land. When Abdu/Ibrahim says that his village is not visited by tourists, Julie replies "I'm not a tourist" (125) and furthermore she reaffirms her will: "I want to know" (126). For Caren Kaplan, tourism is "a product of the rise of consumer culture, leisure, and technological innovation" (27). In this sense, Julie fits Kaplan's characterization of the tourist – taking into account her escapist obsession with the desert, and her inconsistent efforts to learn "his" language – as she consumes rather than participates in family life. Another aspect is that curiosity, rather than engagement and involvement, is what guides her will to be shown the village.

Finally, her option to make money there is a product of technological innovation and on her privilege as global citizen.

While Abdu/Ibrahim refuses to speak his own language with Julie, she tries to find ways to learn it. His argument is that they are not going to spend enough time in his village, so there is no need to learn his language. Then, Julie decides to teach English to Maryam, some young people in the neighborhood, Maryam's boss and her lady friends. This seemed to be a way of not just learning the language, but having something to do there. Regarding this wish of Julie to become a teacher in Abdu/Ibrahim's village, Gordimer's narrator ironically questions:

What on earth qualified her to teach! On the other hand, what else did she have? What use were her supposed skills, here; who needed promotion hype? She was like one who has to settle for the underbelly of a car. The books in the elegant suitcase were bedside bibles constantly turned to, by now, read and re-read; she agreed – but in exchange for lessons in *their* language. Why sit among his people as a deaf-mute? (143)

It is interesting to notice how Julie is thus compared to an immigrant in a developed country as she cannot have the same profession she had in her hometown. In the sentence “she was like one who has to settle for the underbelly of a car,” the metaphor refers to Abdu/Ibrahim's underpaid job as an illegal resident in Johannesburg, yet a qualified engineer in his country. Julie is portrayed by the narrator as the displaced immigrant who has to settle for less, but in her case the metaphor is ironic because she is neither an unwelcome foreigner nor an illegal resident. Besides, she has the choice of exchange. She is the global citizen with real access. In “Global Citizenship – Towards a Definition,” Taso G. Lagos, following Bart van Steenberg, states that the technical term citizen is not limited to his/her relationship to the state as “the global citizen represents a more wholistic version: you choose where you work, live or play, and therefore are not tied down to your land of birth” (4). In this regard, Julie, as explained before, wants to detach herself from her life in Johannesburg and also has the privilege to place herself among the native people, on the contrary of Abdu/Ibrahim in her country who could never put himself in as his place was always marked as out.

One relevant aspect that links the two characters is the fact that they both want to speak each other's language to feel part of each other's world. On one had, Julie affirms: “talk to me. You'll see. *We*

must use your language together...” (151), stating that language could be a link between them. This suggests her desire to construct herself as being on his side – the side of otherness which he refuses – although her friends in the West called him her pickup, Julie’s desire for his otherness rather than for him reveals that she is the pickup, on the back of his supposedly unproblematic, homogeneous (desert-like) culture. On the other hand, Abdu/Ibrahim affirms: “we must talk English. I need to speak English. I must speak English with you if I am going to get a decent job anywhere. I can be able to study some more there. Only with English” (152). Abdu/Ibrahim also wanted to speak her language (as eagerly as she wanted to speak his), but he clearly has an interest to acquire English in order to have better opportunities in other countries, to get out of his village and have access to what Julie already has: money, permission to go wherever he wants, better work conditions, among others.

Furthermore, when it comes to learning each other’s language, it seems that such an effort is pointless, specially for Abdu/Ibrahim, as Julie’s privilege renders her, though unwillingly, an image of a natural born tourist. By natural born tourist, I mean a person who has always had access to global citizenship. Indeed Julie’s effort to take on his language and family roles seems pointless to him, for instance when she says that his mother wants a child from him. He thinks that “she has not said it, but he sees, he knows, she is suddenly taken with the idea. Another adventure” (169). In other words, Abdu/Ibrahim thinks that Julie cannot share his life of restrictions as long as she lives in a realm of possibilities. For him, a child in the East would be an obstacle to his main objective – which is living in a developed country. Regarding this issue of privilege, in “The Problem of Cultural Self-Representation,” Gayatri Spivak explains that “one ought not to patronize the oppressed. And that’s where this line leaves us. Unlearning one’s privileged discourse (...) seems to me that one’s practice is very dependent upon one’s positionality, one’s situation” (57). Privilege cannot be denied, although privileged discourse can be resisted from within privilege. To resist privileged discourses such as those of authenticity, knowing, etc, requires not patronizing the other into a fixed identity. Abdu/Ibrahim may be aware that unlearning privilege is, actually, another privilege – “another adventure” (169) – when it is a matter of choice. He is the one who has things to lose, whereas Julie is the holder of choices.

Finally, communication between Julie and Abdu/Ibrahim seems to be based on what they think about each other as well as on images of what they desire. When he gets the visas to the United States, she

refuses to leave his town “saying both at once: the unsaid (that stored image is love) and what has been said, I’m not going back” (253). They are so immersed in their own projects that their love became a stored image. Abdu/Ibrahim wants to leave his hometown, but he cannot understand that this is not Julie’s desire. Julie, on the other hand, cannot comprehend why Abdu/Ibrahim is so eager to live in countries that will only despise his presence. She has to state clearly that she wants to stay where they are. The unsaid thing is their trapped love – in a stored image. Again, they both show that they do not know each other. In the introduction of *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, Angelika Bammer affirms that

our sense of identity is ineluctably, it seems, marked by the peculiarly postmodern geography of identity: both here *and* there and neither here *nor* there at one and the same time. It is in this sense and for this reason that marginality and otherness increasingly figure as the predominant affirmative signifiers of (postmodern) identity. Indeed, it would appear, almost by definition, that to “be” in postmodern sense is somehow to be an Other: displaced. (xii)

Both Julie and Abdu/Ibrahim are in search of being this Other. They are “here *and* there” and “neither here *nor* there”: Julie as a tourist, Abdu/Ibrahim as an exiled. Although he gets the visa to the U.S., he runs the risk of being deported again. Julie can go back to her country or go anywhere she wants. And it is in this peculiar “postmodern geography of identity” that they find themselves displaced.

3.2. Work

When Abdu/Ibrahim gets back to his country of birth, he starts working again for his Uncle in his vehicle repair workshop, without knowing that he would be invited, later, to be its manager. However, he is not interested in staying there. Actually, whenever he has time-off, he tries to get his papers ready in the consulates of the capital. His only interest is to get out of his village. “Ibrahim has declined the offer to take charge of his Uncle’s workshop. The chance of a lifetime” (186). Abdu/Ibrahim refused the major prospect he could have in his hometown. His Uncle (always mentioned in capital letter, suggesting his superiority in relation to the other members of the family, the one who decides the family matters) did not have male heirs and “the son-in-law and prospective son-in-laws of the educated daughters are not interested in learning the business by dirtying their hands – they want to have

government positions. Sitting on their backsides in air-conditioned offices in the capital” (185). This clearly shows that, even in a poor place, choice is granted to high-class people. So, when Abdu/Ibrahim declined the offer of his Uncle Yaqub, he was also giving himself the chance of choosing. Thus he is not the only one who refuses to “dirty his hands” in the East in order to hold a higher position – of cleanliness. And such a refusal to inherit his Uncle’s job in the workshop is portrayed as “the chance of a lifetime” – but his relatives also refused the chance. Their choice signals a value shift, from man-labor power within the family to network structures of power beyond the family, possibly beyond the East. The significance of these refusals is that they challenge any fixed identification of the East with authenticist values. Julie reprehended him for his attitude, saying he could have done that in the meantime. However, for Abdu/Ibrahim, meantime meant “permanent residence” (186).

On the other hand, Julie does not mind settling down – even if just for some time – in his village. She started teaching English to Maryam and Maryam’s lady bosses, which significantly portrays her power of autonomy as well as social status.

Strange; she had never worked like this before, without reservations of self, always had been merely trying out this and that, always conscious that she could move on, any time, to something else, not expecting satisfaction, looking on at herself, half-amusedly, as an ant scurrying god knows where. (195)

In other words, it can be perceived by the narrator’s description that Julie is content with her privileged situation. Living and working in the East means not *unlearning privilege* but enjoying the privilege of being qualified and giving satisfaction: as an English teacher, she pursued more, “she had been able to persuade – flatter – the local school principal to let girls join the classes although it was more than unlikely their families would allow them to leave home” (195). Julie had merely been “scurrying on” in the West, while now she felt like doing the opposite she was doing in the West and this is significant considering that she was trying to detach herself from what she had been. She is no longer “scurrying on”. Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that Julie desires to be different from her family and friends. This is to say that she wants to be at the top of the social ladder – a top which she did not expect to reach in the West. Displacement thus allows Julie to enjoy privilege under the cover of non-privilege. Aesthetically or seemingly at

the margins of privilege, Julie can enjoy her *cultural capital*⁷ without reservations. This is to say that her dream of escape renders her the false image of being a traveler – when, actually, she is a tourist. She experiences in the East the privileges she feels guilty to live in the West.

Moreover, from the moment Julie begins reflecting in the desert (see section 3.4. below), she starts dreaming green. Her dreams signal her wish to plant rice in the East. This idea of planting comes after her walks in the desert. Before she is supposed to go to the USA with Abdu/Ibrahim, Maryam suggests that Julie is given the day to know the country in a better way. Abdu/Ibrahim's father has to do business, so Julie and Maryam go with him. Once they are on Mr. Muhammad Aboulkanim's land, the father "asked whether, once business was over, they could show Abdu/Ibrahim's wife how rice grows 'in our dry country'" (209). When they are all returning, Maryam translates to Julie what her father and Mr. Aboulkanim are saying: they must either buy one part of Mr. Aboulkanim's land or look for water to grow rice or whatever they want if they have the money (213). Money is a huge obstacle in this issue and Julie starts wondering why she hadn't learned more about it. This is the point that it can be noticed the insignificance of money for Julie as she always had it easily. She even thinks about the money she will inherit from her father. If she gets it now, then it can be done. She thinks about writing to someone, a lawyer maybe. "No, to Archie. Yes, always it's to Archie" (213). Julie is used to having help in all her difficult moments. She always has a choice or a way out. And it is interesting to notice that she needs the other to sustain her own needs. She has her father, her uncle Archie, Abdu/Ibrahim, even being a tourist in the East, she has Maryam. Julie is not self-sufficient. When she tells her lover about her idea to buy a rice concession, he remembers her plans: "once it was an agency for actors in Cape Town, now rice in an oasis, another adventure to hear from her, from her rich girl's ignorance, innocence" (216). Abdu/Ibrahim is so aware of Julie's choices that, for him, all her ideas are adventures of a spoiled girl. However, for Julie, "water is change; and the desert doesn't. So when you see the two together, the water field of rice growing, and it's in the desert – there's a span of life right there – like ours – and there's *existence* beyond any span" (214). In this passage, Julie tries to convince Abdu/Ibrahim about

⁷ According to Chris Barker in *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, for Pierre Bourdieu, "cultural capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange that includes the accumulated cultural knowledge that confers power and status. For example, education and/or the ability to talk knowledgeably about high culture has traditionally been a form of cultural capital associated with the middle classes" (37).

a possible business in his country. She seems to compare water and desert in relation to her and her husband's condition: being opposite and trying to reach existence. Abdu/Ibrahim is the water which wants to change, whereas Julie is the desert who will remain in her own natural born condition of privileged.

When Abdu/Ibrahim gets the visas to go to the USA, he immediately thinks about how he can get a job there. Although, Julie's mother lives there and Julie herself has her acquaintances in America, Abdu/Ibrahim is aware that their position is different from what he will probably perform once he is in the USA. He wonders about his networking:

the brother-in-law of a cousin had been in the United States successfully (that means legally) for six years. The family had lost touch with the man but through the months of asking everyone who might have heard where he was, in the days of sitting it out in coffee stalls, nights in the backroom bars in the streets where she had seen the bloated body of a dead sheep, he had been slowly gathering the information he was after. He had been able to get in touch with this cousin's brother-in-law (...) He was janitor in a large apartment block. (223-4)

It is visible the Abdu/Ibrahim's persistence in his objectives of going to a developed country. Gordimer's narrator describes his view of success in such countries as being at least a legal citizen – something that he has never gotten in the countries he had been. He plans to get out of there, even if this means to have a sub job – such as a janitor, like his cousin's brother-in-law – in the West.

Since Abdu/Ibrahim gets the visas, he keeps talking about work chances. He knows it will be hard in the beginning, but he desires to have a chance of ascension in the West. He states: "people where I come from make it, there, even if not so high as that, they're in computers, in communications, that's where the world is!" (227). It is interesting to notice that he places technology and communications as the main doors to the world as they are the means of how globalization spreads. Abdu/Ibrahim is aware that he is marginalized from the process of globalization, but his only chance to enter in such realm is to start working – even as "a scurrying ant" – in such areas. In "Culture and Citizenship: An Introduction," Nick Stevenson states that citizens are those who are able to claim their rights (7). The author, following Nick Crossley, affirms that "to be a citizen means that one is capable of acting

both autonomously and responsibly. That is the ‘rights’ of citizenship are conditional upon ‘common attributes’ like taking the ‘attitude of the other’” (7). The problem is that, in the West, Abdu/Ibrahim does not have – and cannot claim – the right to these common attributes.

3.3. Family

When Abdu/Ibrahim first sees his family, his first idea is of failure. His parents are the typical poor couple with lots of children – who help supporting the whole family. As an elder son, he expected to bring good prospects back home, but it is Julie who brings money for both of them while they are in his hometown. “She’ll have enough to pay for her food and mine, while she’s there. That’s what I, their son, bring back to provide for their old age for my sisters and their children’s future, and for my young brother who is hoping to follow a path – away – opened by his elder” (114). In the West, Abdu/Ibrahim’s view as narrator was mainly focused on grounding himself as a person able to have access. And this desire could be perceived by the way he admired Julie’s family and her father’s friends, and despised Julie’s friends at The Table. In the East, Abdu/Ibrahim’s view is concerned in getting out of his country. He seems to feel guilty for being there instead of reaching social and economic status in a developed country in order to help his family.

Two members of Abdu/Ibrahim’s family have a strong influence in all his family: his mother and his uncle. Gordimer’s narrator characterizes her as “the presence of this house” (119), whereas his uncle is always regarded with a capital letter (Uncle): “the Uncle’s house has everything to the limit of the material ambitions that are possible to fulfill in this place” (128). This is to say that while his mother is linked to the idea of emotional ties, his uncle represents the financial power. Abdu/Ibrahim’s strong connection with his mother portrays that, in the East, he wants to show his mother that he is capable of doing great things – have world access and show her the advantages of living in it. Thus he disregards his uncle’s favors – he keeps going to the capital, trying to get a visa, when he is not working in his uncle’s repair workshop; besides, he refuses his uncle’s offer to make him the manager of his business: he wants to be the representative of power himself even making such a choice – which was a choice made by his mother for him – showing that his objective is really to go to a developed country. Abdu/Ibrahim is concerned about his family, but he wants to help them in his own way: being able to have access in the West.

But if Julie had a close relationship with Maryam, the opposite happened to Khadija, Abdu/Ibrahim's sister-in-law: the frustrated character who weeps when the others are not near or complains for having married a son of the house who is missing at the oil fields. She seems to be apart from the family as the narrator does not show that she has any close conversation with anyone. In the end of the story, when Abdu/Ibrahim goes to the USA and Julie decides to stay, Khadija goes to Julie's lean-to, embraces her and affirms, in Arabic, that Abdu/Ibrahim will come back. She projects in Julie her wish to have her man back from the oil fields. Here, an analogy can be made: Khadija's husband went to the oil fields while Abdu/Ibrahim is going to the USA: both are going to places where the money is supposed to be. Julie stays in the village and thinks about the rice fields. She goes in the opposite direction of Abdu/Ibrahim and his brother, but she is historically already part of places that have money, so she can return whenever she wants. In "The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Toward a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," when Craig Calhoun relates cosmopolitanism as the project of capitalism, he argues that

such cosmopolitanism often joins elites across national borders while ordinary people live in local communities. This is not simply because common folk are less sympathetic to diversity – a self-serving notion of elites. It is also because the class structuring of public life excludes many workers and others. (890)

While Julie has "full membership" in this elite able to cross borders, Abdu/Ibrahim is the excluded one, though he refuses to live in his local community and desires to have access to such cosmopolitan structure.

A visible contradiction in Julie's behavior in relation to her expectations in entering Abdu/Ibrahim's family realm is that she does not respect their culture. During the Ramadan period, when intimacies between men and women are forbidden, Julie cannot resist to the temptation of being alone with her husband and disregards the Muslim customs by seeking sexual relationship with Abdu/Ibrahim during daylight (155). The narrator describes Abdu/Ibrahim in doubt whether or not Julie knew about the taboo, but then, the narrator shifts to Julie's thoughts and describes her as being aware that sexual acts were forbidden during the religious days. Such behavior depicts her lack of effort in really trying to make part of that community. Again, Julie is the one who can choose what to do whenever she wants. On the other hand, Abdu/Ibrahim just goes to the lean-to in order to get some rest. When he

finds Julie inside, he talks to her and lays down. He does not touch her. She touches him first, then they look at each other and make love. After that, they wash themselves and Abdu/Ibrahim silently dresses up and leave. From this love scene in which he breaks an important rule of his religion, it can be perceived that for Julie, such rule is not that relevant – as she did not try to stop and remind him about his traditions – whereas Abdu/Ibrahim accepts his “disgrace” in silence, resigned. Calhoun affirms that “modern cosmopolitanism took shape largely in opposition to traditional religion and more generally to deeply rooted political identities. Against the force of universal reason, the claims of traditional culture and communities were deemed to have little standing” (883). From this perspective, Julie reinforces her image as the cosmopolitan as she does not mind about religion and tradition, even finding in Abdu/Ibrahim’s family a resort from her life in the West.

Furthermore, when Julie decides to stay in the Eastern village, Abdu/Ibrahim’s “brothers Ahmad and Daood listen to him in disbelief, a woman does what her husband says” (255). As Julie has been living in his hometown for some months, she is perfectly aware about the patriarchal culture she is in (she was even alerted about this by her own father) and, even though, she does what she wants as her class and, mainly, the place where she comes from allows her that – her class is not that different from Abdu/Ibrahim’s, but the place where each one comes from is decisive in terms of privilege because it provides her with global citizenship. Julie knows that Abdu/Ibrahim would suffer with his family and community judgment, but she does what she thinks is right, no matter what his culture dictates. In other words, her challenge of gender hierarchy in the East is only possible because of her Western class privilege or global citizenship.

On the contrary of Julie, Abdu/Ibrahim’s mother was very indulgent when hiding her son’s secret of breaking a Ramadan rule. She was aware that her son made love to his wife, but was afraid of how her son would be treated by the strict men of the family, specially her brother, Uncle Yaqub. According to Gordimer’s narrator, Abdu/Ibrahim’s mother thought that “if he is disgraced, nothing will stop him. He will leave. She will lose him again” (158). This is to say that she prefers to remain silent than to lose her son again to the world. She protects her son above her own traditions and beliefs.

When Abdu/Ibrahim refuses to manage his Uncle Yaqub’s business, Julie starts wondering about what she had learned about him and his family since she arrived in the East. They are in bed, after

Abdu/Ibrahim had declined his uncle's offer, and when he says to Julie that she thought he would take it, she answers:

I don't know what I thought. Yes or no. Because there's so much I don't know – about you. I've found that out. Since we've been home here. You must understand, I've never lived in a family before, just made substitutes out of other people, ties, I suppose – though I didn't realize that, either, then. (187)

From this speech, it seems that Julie's refusal to accept her own privileges also characterizes her displacement. For instance, first, she calls Abdu/Ibrahim's village "home," but she does not respect the customs of such home (as the Ramadan episode). Second, she affirms "you must understand," imposing her opinion, but not trying to understand Abdu/Ibrahim's reasons for leaving that home. Third, she states that she has never lived in a family before, making just substitutes for them, but it was her choice to leave her father's house and "adopt" The Table as a family. Thus she completes her idea supposing they were "ties"; this is to say that she was not even sure whether or not The Table could be considered her "family" in the West. Finally, she concludes that she "didn't realize that, either, then". The question is: does she realize that she was making "just substitutes out of other people"? The fact that Julie does not "adopt" Abdu/Ibrahim's family as hers just reinforces her characterization as a tourist.

The only sight of Julie's family in the East is when her mother writes to her and later helps Abdu/Ibrahim to get a visa to the USA. Julie's mother writes: "*my crazy girl, I can imagine your papa's horror... you're like me, I'm afraid, you just can't restrict yourself to tidy emotions! But don't forget, darling, if it doesn't work you can always get out*" (143). Such idea depicts the eternal idea of choice Julie has. Besides, the "tidy emotions" reinforce the image of tourist Julie holds. Abdu/Ibrahim is totally aware of such condition and that is why he keeps thinking that, for Julie, going to his country is just one more adventure.

When Abdu/Ibrahim gets the visas to go to the USA, some family issues come to the couple's mind. He wants Julie to ask her father for their airplane tickets, which is immediately refused. Furthermore, he asks her to stay with her mother as soon as they get to the USA as it will be more comfortable for her (until he settles down in an American city). Abdu/Ibrahim does not understand that Julie does not have the same relationship he has with his family. His idea of family is rooted in his

own (which is united and helpful) and, for him, Julie has the advantage of having a family that has money. To exemplify that, when Julie raises the possibility of getting money to buy rice concessions in Abdu/Ibrahim's country, he thinks this is an absurd idea. However, for him, it is perfectly normal to get money in order to go to the USA. Abdu/Ibrahim knows what he wants and focuses on that, whereas Julie has money and choices, characteristics which places her in a privileged position.

3.4. Home (or a Place to Live?)

The construction of an Eastern home for Julie and Abdu/Ibrahim is practically the opposite. The image each character has about home is also a strong element which contributes to their own displacements. Gordimer's narrator describes Julie as "that girl, that woman had lived all her life in the eyes of black people, where she comes from, but never had had from them this kind of consciousness of self: so that was what home was" (117). In this passage, the narrator ironically describes Julie being a girl and then corrects to woman. This irony implies that Julie still does not know what home is. She refuses her Western home, but does not make part of Abdu/Ibrahim's one. Caren Kaplan argues that

these melancholic lamentations can be read as constructions; that is, while distance and difference are desired and achieved, similarity and connection are subsumed. In modernity, it is often a notion of the 'past' that is believed to be lost, as well as notions of territorial blankness and ownership. (71)

For Julie and Abdu/Ibrahim, the idea of home is a construction. For both of them, home is not necessarily the place where their family is, but the place where they want to be part of. Abdu/Ibrahim does not consider his birthplace a real home, whereas for Julie, everything in the East is new and exciting, "for him nothing is changed. It is all as it was; everything he had believed he could get away from" (114). This is to say that, for Abdu/Ibrahim, the idea of home was more than denial, it was linked to distaste, somewhere he does not want to be. That is exactly why he keeps trying to get away from his country from the first day he went to the capital "to apply for visas for emigration to those endowed countries of the world he had not yet entered and been deported from. Australia, Canada, the USA, anywhere, out of the reproach of this dirty place that was his" (137-8), according to Gordimer's narrator – when aligned with Abdu/Ibrahim's point of view (but not with Julie's). Abdu/Ibrahim's

idea of his village just reinforces the dichotomy West/East in parallel with clean/dirty. He associates the West as central and the East as “the Rest,” the place he chooses to run away from. He is sure that his place of birth is not where he wants to be, whereas Julie is in conflict as she seems to belong nowhere.

In this search of moving, bureaucracy is a recurrent theme in the couple’s stay in the East. As Abdu/Ibrahim keeps trying to get out of his country, Julie is a favorable apparatus in relation to his objectives as she is a “citizen of a fellow Commonwealth country” (147), according to the narrator. That is why he always carries her whenever he goes to a consulate. He first tries Canberra, capital of Australia, and when he gets a refusal, he feels guilty for that. Then, he tries Perth, another Australian city, but bureaucracy denied him again the entry to Australia. “Julie was confusedly angry. Apparently with the Australians; with herself for not having been able to ‘do anything’ for him that – in fact, in contradiction – would have been unlikely to have made any difference” (148). In other words, despite her privileges as a Western citizen, Julie did not extend them to Abdu/Ibrahim, who is excluded from global citizenship. Apparently because it was not interesting to her as she had never tried to help him getting his visa through their marriage. Although she makes company to him, it is always Abdu/Ibrahim who talks to the people in the consulates and embassies. The narrator never describes Julie helping his lover using her Western cosmopolitan privilege in order to convince the authorities to give him a visa. Regarding this privilege, Craig Calhoun makes a discussion about capitalist cosmopolitans affirming that “their passports bear stamps of many countries, but they are still passports and good cosmopolitans know which ones get them past inspectors at borders and airports” (887). Julie is the one able to cross borders without facing bureaucracy whereas Abdu/Ibrahim has to deal with it whenever he wants to enter in a developed country. The result of this constant bureaucracy to be faced is an inevitably frustration. According to Gordimer’s narrator, Julie and Abdu/Ibrahim avoid talking about consulates issue, because they do not want to attract bad luck. “Why raise her hopes. Why answer questions about what he was ready to resort to, to get them out of this place. Just do it. Whatever it might be. Any day he might find the elegant suitcase packed” (162). Gordimer’s narrator builds Abdu/Ibrahim’s view of Julie as if one day she will feel the same as he does in relation to his poor village.

If, for Abdu/Ibrahim, the East is the site of bureaucracy, for Julie it means an escape from asymmetrical history, a vastness of possibilities, an escape which is represented by the desert. “Its

immensity has put a stop to the houses, the people: go no farther with your belching cars, your bleary lights in the majesty of darkness, your street vendors and broadcast babble; go no further in your aspirations (167)". For Julie, the desert means a challenge she is not used to facing. A state of suspension in the middle of a crowd. Somewhere people fear to enter, because of its mystery, the unknown. Being a tourist – and the one with high access – Julie wishes to go further in such realm of unknown as entrance for her is never denied. Indeed, she is attained to a strong desire of timeless existence, which is also linked to the desert. The relationship she develops with such place makes her inactive, craving for purity.

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 (...) the desert is eternity. What could/would thrust this back into time? Water (...) Water is a lost memory: memory the passing proof of time's existence. Ice to cover the sands and melt them back into time with its own melting, over millennia. Drinking an ice age; after the ages when all life-juices had dried away to purity – only that which is inactive can attain purity; detachment from the greedy stirring of growth. Eternity is purity; what lasts is not alive. (172)

The desert is gazed by Julie and it seems that it serves as a mirror for her, who also has no measure of space in her world of free access. But free access does not make her free from asymmetry. For Caren Kaplan, while the "dark continent" signals Africa's imbrication in imperial modern culture's self-construction, the blinding white spaces of the desert present another opportunity for Euro-American inventions of the Self (...) the philosophical/literary trek across the desert leads to a celebration of the figure of the nomad – the one who can track a path through a seemingly illogical space without succumbing to nation-state and/or bourgeois organization and mastery. The desert symbolizes the site of critical and individual emancipation in Euro-American modernity; the nomad represents a subject position that offers an idealized model of movement based on perpetual displacement. (66)

It seems that Julie finds in the desert a way to justify alienation. She tries to deny the bourgeois system she is in, but she cannot live outside it – she asks for money to buy their passports to the USA, she thinks about her father's money to get the rice concessions – so the desert is her escape. She is a mere mortal, she cannot have eternity as the desert does. It seems that the conflict in which Julie is – refusing her Western cultural background, but at the same time, being a mere tourist in Abdu/Ibrahim's hometown – leaves her with no choice, but staring at the desert

When Abdu/Ibrahim decides to go to the USA and Julie decides to stay in the East, he does not comprehend her reasons as, for him, the West is her home. He questions: "what are you talking? What is it. You are not going to America. That's what you say. You are not going to your home. That is what you say" (253). As a tourist, Julie can choose where her home is in the moment she wants to be, whereas Abdu/Ibrahim is an exiled in the sense that he wants to be a citizen of the West, but he is denied such access.

Thus I confirm my hypothesis that the movement from West to East affects the characters' asymmetrical displacement as Julie is significantly characterized as a tourist and Abdu/Ibrahim as an exiled. In the East, Abdu/Ibrahim's wish of upward mobility in the West is emphasized – his refusal to take charge of his uncle's car workshop and his perseverance to get a visa even facing the bureaucracy in the embassies and consulates – as well as Julie's alienation regarding a new family, a new home – even not learning Abdu/Ibrahim's unnamed language and breaking a rule of his religion – and her escapism in relation to the desert.

CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION – IN-BETWEENESS IN *THE PICKUP*

Having written *The Pickup* in a post-apartheid period, Nadine Gordimer subtly offers to the readers a critique of the egalitarian narrative of globalization which was strengthened after the regime. In this novel, the author shows that segregation and discrimination – not just in terms of race, but also of class – do not end when borders are crossed. In this sense, the characterization of Abdu/Ibrahim – as an illegal black immigrant from a poor country – in post-apartheid Johannesburg emphasizes that Julie's world remains inaccessible to him, as the reader can see from the social events they attend together: both at The Table and at the dinner gathering in her father's house. Moreover, as we have seen, his boss discriminates him when talking to Julie.

It seems that the characters Gordimer describes in South Africa are still linked to this historical idea of discrimination, but Abdu/Ibrahim belongs to a structure that goes beyond the post-apartheid situation: his condition is more closely linked to the context of globalization. In "Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue," Fredric Jameson explains that globalization took a different side: instead of unifying, it reinforced differences. "Globalization has meant a decentering and a proliferation of differences. You see how this view grasps the arrival of globalization exactly the opposite way from the pessimistic one, for which it meant unification and standardization" (66). And such demystification of the phenomenon of globalization is of major importance in my research as it explains the asymmetrical displacement between the two main characters of Gordimer's novel.

The critique Gordimer offers is that, after years of political struggle, the uncertainties of a post-apartheid reality led South Africans to a state of suspension that came, meanwhile, with an asymmetrical displacement between black and white, poor and rich, male and female. The ambiguities that surrounded the new era of globalization made people urge to recover their sense of a specific space, which in displacement does not exist: thus the split existence of the characters in Gordimer's work.

This interrelation between displacement and cultural identity is a relevant aspect of the novel: in a globalized world a feeling of loss regarding one's own place and self-direction seems to be increasingly present. In "The Question of Cultural Identity," Stuart Hall affirms that
 everywhere, cultural identities are emerging
 which are not fixed, but poised, in *transition*,

between different positions; which draw on different cultural traditions at the same time; and which are the product of those complicated cross-overs and cultural mixes which are increasingly common in a globalized world. (629)

In the novel, the identification Abdu/Ibrahim had with Western culture as well as Julie had, in part, with Eastern values and the characters' constant border crossing are related to Hall's debate as Abdu/Ibrahim is the illegal immigrant in the West whereas Julie is the tourist in the East. Abdu/Ibrahim is an exiled in the sense that he is not accepted in the West – although he is aware of his chances in the East and his family's affection. And Julie experiences displacement as *she tries to deny her class privileges*. This is the “double consciousness”⁸ of Julie. In “The Whiteness Question,” Linda Alcoff explains that

for white, double consciousness requires an ever-present acknowledgment of the historical legacy of white identity construction in the persistent structures of inequality and exploitation, as well as a newly awakened memory of the many white traitors to white privilege who have struggled to contribute to the building of an inclusive human community. (223)

Julie is aware of her privilege, but although she tries to deny, she makes use of it whenever she needs some help – as when she asks her uncle Archie for money when Abdu/Ibrahim gets the visa to the United States. It seems that she is in this state of in-betweenness in which she is conscious of her privilege and tries to deny it by defying her father – when she goes to the East –, but at the same time she cannot let go this privilege, not just because of its historicity – she is fully accepted in Abdu/Ibrahim's community, people speak her language to talk to her instead of the other way around –, but because she is dependant on it – she is not self-sufficient as she is always recurring to her father, Abdu/Ibrahim and her uncle. Julie experiences a certain *fantasy of escape* which, according to Caren Kaplan, “(often expressed in sexual metaphors) brought two powerful discourses into proximity: the exoticization of the past in another location or country and the

⁸ Alcoff borrows from W.E.B. DuBois's concept of “double consciousness” defined, in *The Souls of Black Folk*, as “this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (2). This condition of double consciousness allows Du Bois to make a model of black identity in which African-American exile represents the condition of a black person being aware of white privilege.

exoticization of another gender, race, or culture” (45). It seems that Julie wants to detach herself from her life in the West by imagining herself part of another family and country, but she does not do that practically: there is an exoticization of this imagined life which is her way of escape from her own reality.

But if Julie is in the upper position, the asymmetry between the main characters is notorious when compared to the lower position of Abdu/Ibrahim. One of the ways to perceive his subalternity is by the absence of language. In “Dog Words,” Angelika Bammer claims that

when two languages meet, one of them is necessarily linked to animality. Speak like me or you are an animal. I would have to speak from a position of strength in order to speak in this way, otherwise I would be considered an animal. There is no way that we can speak of conflict in this case: for a conflict to arise the two opponents must be on equal, or at least comparable, footing. (xxvii)

In other words, in a given society, there is always a predominant language which will rule. In the case of the West, English is the language in question. Thus, Abdu/Ibrahim feels forced to speak it if he wants to be part of the Western society. The problem with Abdu/Ibrahim is that, even speaking the language and having a university degree, he is not on equal terms if compared to middle-class Western citizens. This is to say that he is not in the “position of strength” which Bammer is referring to. Therefore, there is no conflict as Abdu/Ibrahim is the Eastern “animal”. I would like to state two things regarding location and silencing. The former is related to a displaced identity and the need for self-grounding, which in Abdu/Ibrahim’s case refers to a strong wish of social and economic ascension. In “Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition,” Homi Bhabha argues that Fanon’s work is remembered not just because of transformation of man and society, but because of the ambivalences and contradictions within them (Self x Other). Bhabha argues that Fanon’s resistance to such order made him split and displaced, taking him to the edge. It is interesting how the author depicts the colonial subject being determined from without, in other words, being out (or what Fanon suggested, being expelled). Bhabha describes three conditions in the process of identification in the analytic of desire in which the first is existing by the existence of the other, a certain dream of inversion of roles, a desire of occupying the place of the other; the second is the

place of identification, a space of splitting as it is located in the tension between demand and desire (fantasy of taking master's position and, at the same time, keeping a place in slave's revenge); the third is being an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image (image is a problematic concept, but in the Abdu/Ibrahim's case, it can be revealing as it is the presence of the absence). Abdu/Ibrahim is externally silenced by his own condition, but, on the other hand, being aware of stereotype, he wants to resist to it. That is to say that, inwards, such awareness makes his wish of being a global citizen even stronger. Regarding silencing, I would affirm that the impossibility of being heard, related to Abdu/Ibrahim's lower place of speaking, demands from him strategies such as avoiding the tendency of letting Julie speaking on his behalf and take more effective actions such as trying to speak with her. In "The Problem of Speaking for Others," following Gayatri Spivak, Linda Alcoff states that "we should strive to create whatever possible conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking with and to rather than speaking for others. Often the possibility of dialogue is left unexplored or inadequately pursued by more privileged persons" (111). In other words, if Abdu/Ibrahim keeps hiding himself from his own reality – denying his hometown and eagerly trying to be part of the West – he will be destined to be silenced and, therefore, fulfill the role of what Frantz Fanon said in "The Fact of Blackness": "yesterday, awakening to the world, I saw the sky turn upon itself utterly and wholly. I wanted to rise, but the disemboweled silence fell back upon me, its wings paralyzed. Without responsibility, straddling Nothingness and Infinity, I began to weep" (140). In other words, this individual had the feeling, wanted to rise, but surrendered to cry. Abdu/Ibrahim, in an anxiety of ascension, fails the struggle. It is important to emphasize that Abdu/Ibrahim does not fail the struggle to claim his global citizenship: throughout the novel, he keeps trying to get his visa to a developed country and in the end he goes to the United States. Nevertheless, it can be said that Abdu/Ibrahim fails the struggle to have a voice in the West: when he is in Johannesburg, Julie is the one who helps him. Besides, he gets the visa to the United States because Julie's mother helps him. In this sense, his silences are perceived more as submission than as resistance.

Abdu/Ibrahim, who is banned from global citizenship by the exclusionary ideologies of authenticity and exoticism, can be considered "both here and there and neither here nor there" (xii), according to Angelika Bammer in "Dog Words". And in this in-betweenness, he develops a conflicting identity in which he is displaced.

For instance, for him, the West is Julie's home, but this idea contradicts his conception of home as for him home is where he wants to be. In other words, his phrasing contradicts his own point of view of "one's place" as a construction – as discussed in section 2.4. It is interesting to notice that Abdu/Ibrahim in-betweenness is different from Julie's, because if he were in her place, he would not be displaced – he would just be in the West. Nonetheless, throughout the novel, he is both in the West and in the East, but the fact he is not allowed to live permanently in the West and denies his life in the East places him as Bammer states: "both here and there and neither here nor there" (xii). His "nowhere" space is a consequence of the asymmetrical global citizenship established.

Julie, in an anxiety of detaching herself of her historical western privilege, fails in constructing a new identity. It seemed that, in the beginning of the novel, she wanted to know herself better by trying to understand and assimilate the culture of the other – as shown in section 2.1. However, when considering Abdu/Ibrahim as Other, Julie also obliterates his subjectivity and commits what Gayatri Spivak calls *epistemic violence*⁹: she gives him a voice in her father's dinner and such action – even done for his protection – ironically silences him. Moreover, in the passage Julie goes to the garage in the beginning of the novel, Gordimer's narrator describes Abdu/Ibrahim as follows: "the legs and lower body wriggled down at the sound of her apologetic voice and the man emerged" (7). It is important to emphasize that apologetic here shows the way their relationship will be developed throughout the novel as well as Julie's conflict in relation to her own privilege as a global citizen. That is why that in "Going all the Way: Eros and Polis in the Novels of Nadine Gordimer," Thomas Knipp states that in Gordimer's novels "the journey outward is also a journey inward, because, for her, the discovery of the other (i.e., the male, the black) is also the discovery of the self" (40). In *The Pickup*, Gordimer seems to problematize Julie's difficulties in her journey inward as she fails in her journey outward: Julie does not assimilate the Eastern culture and finds in the desert a place of self-alienation. Kaplan affirms that

the theorist defines the west as a mystified reflection of Europe in the mirroring space of the desert. And the philosophical pleasures of the

⁹ In "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Spivak states that "the clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity" (76).

desert are available only to the subject who can emulate nomadism, who appears to be unattached, and who has an unquestioned power and ability to deterritorialize. (74)

Nonetheless, Julie alienates herself in the sense that she goes into the desert to reinforce her western power: it is there that she has the idea of planting rice in the dry country. She wanted to be different from her family in South Africa and it seems that she also wants to be different from Abdu/Ibrahim's family as she demands power and does not seem to care about anyone's opinion – she does not even ask her husband or people who lived in that place all their lives in this new enterprise she has in mind. Regarding the desert's issue – see section 3.4. –, Emma Hunt's claim in "Post-Apartheid Johannesburg and Global Mobility in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to our Hillbrow*" is valid as for her the desert is the space of neutrality. The desert is the resort Julie finds from the western world she feels guilty to be part of and the eastern culture she has the privilege of observing – not assimilating.

At last, there is a question regarding the title: who is the pickup? Who picks up who? For Julie's friends and her father, Abdu/Ibrahim is her pickup. This is the Western value: the person in power is the one able to choose. Nonetheless, Abdu/Ibrahim is the character who is sure regarding what he desires and, in this sense, Julie fits the kind of person whose world he wants to be part of. What is ironic in this pickup game is that none of them really stays with the other: in the end of the novel, Julie stays in the East and Abdu/Ibrahim goes back to the West, a fact that shows that their way of picking up is, in fact, more related to a reflection of their own desires. Personally, I believe that Abdu/Ibrahim is the one who really picks up as he is totally aware about what he wants, whereas Julie stays in the desert staring at her own conflict regarding her global citizenship privileges – as discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

To conclude, I would like to state that Gordimer's novel potentializes a critique to euphoric globalization in the sense that globalization reinforces asymmetry between people. The characters Gordimer constructs are separated by historical, geographical and cultural perspectives, but they intersect. And in this intersection, it can be perceived what Mary Louise Pratt defines as "contact zone". In the introduction of *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Pratt refers to the term "contact zone" as "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically

separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (6). Gordimer takes this concept and gives it us back as a problem: does Abdu/Ibrahim – the coerced person, the real exiled – make part of globalization? Does he experience it as Julie does? By analyzing Abdu/Ibrahim’s character, it can be seen that the phenomenon of globalization is perceived in the book as an aestheticized ideal. In this sense, in “Where the Banalities are Enacted: The Everyday in Gordimer’s Novels,” Susan Pearsall argues that “in protest against aestheticized politics, Gordimer proposes a form of ‘heroism’ that rests on subjective disharmony and self-division, elements of a genuine democratic politics” (115). Julie, in her desire of alienation, aestheticizes politics whereas Abdu/Ibrahim, in his struggle to be part of the western world, politicizes aesthetics. The way each of the characters experiences globalization throughout the novel portrays the great asymmetry between them. The heroism in the novel seems to be in the fact that both characters are aware of their self-condition – that is why the “subjective disharmony and self-division”. It seems that in order to think about a “genuine democratic politics” it is necessary to destabilize aestheticized politics. These conclusions make us reflect that Gordimer herself is questioning her white western place in this globalized world. That the feeling of displacement within the story and, most of all, reflecting our reality is a symptom of this nowhere citizenship which portrays the asymmetries of globalization.

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