Stuart Hall's Three Conceptions of Cultural Identity in Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968) and Nadine Gordimer's *The Pick Up* (2001)

Mai Mohammad Abbas Ouda
Lecturer
English Department
Faculty of Arts-Tanta University

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Abstract:

This study takes Stuart Hall's three conceptions of cultural identity as an approach to Nadine Gordimer's *The Pick Up* and Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather.* Hall differentiates between three different conceptions of identity: those of the (a) Enlightenment subject (b) sociological subject, and (c) post-modern subject. Whereas the Enlightenment subject is built on a perception of the individual as a self-centered, fully integrated essential entity, the sociological subject is built upon the realization that the person is not self-dependent; rather, he/she is shaped through his/her interaction with others. However, due to its continuous interaction with different cultural identities, the self is transformed from a coherent identity into an inconsistent identity. As a result, the postmodern subject evolves, with no definite, essential, or stable form: the subject is presented with a plethora of potential identities with which he/she may temporarily associate. Makhaya's and Julie's narratives reflect Hall's three conceptions of cultural identity. Firstly, both go through the stage of the Enlightenment subject. Makhaya's cultural identity relates to the Black, South African culture. Similarly, Julie's self-centered essential identity is related to her single culture as a white, South African, English-speaking, Christian girl. Both, secondly, become sociological subjects. Makhaya attempts to define himself with his native Black fellow citizens. However, he is repulsed by the traditional false beliefs of his tribe. Likewise, Julie joins a Bohemian social world. However, her new social world becomes full of inconsistencies, since her revolution proves to be eventually insincere. Finally, both complete the transformation into post-modern subjects with new hybrid, contrapuntal, transcultural identities. Makhaya renounces the idealistic 'myth' of a coherent and solid identity and is able to identify with new multicultural identities in Botswana. Julie identifies with Arab, African, and Arabic-speaking Muslim community. Makhaya's and Julie's new post-modern identity is symbolized by their infatuation with the "cosmic oneness" of a pantheistic universe.

مفاهيم ستيوارت هول الثلاثة للهوية الثقافية في رواية بيسي هيد "عندما تجتمع الغيوم الممطرة" و رواية نادين جورديمر "اللقيط"

المستخلص العربي:

تحاول هذه الدراسة تحليل مفاهيم ستيوارت هول الثلاثة للهوية الثقافية في رواية نادين جورديمر " اللقيط" ورواية بيسي هيد "عندما تجتمع الغيوم الممطرة". يتحدث هول عن ثلاثة مفاهيم مختلفة للهوية: "تلك الخاصة بـ (أ) الذات التنويرية (ب) الذات الإجتماعية، و(ج) الذات ما بعد الحداثية . في حين أن الذات التنويرية مبنية على تصور للفرد ككيان جوهري متمحور حول الذات ومتكامل تمامًا، فإن الذات الإجتماعية مبنية على إدراك أن الشخص لا يمكنه الاعتماد فقط على نفسه؛ ولكنه بدلاً من ذلك، يتشكل من خلال تفاعله مع آخرين ذوي الأهمية له. ومع ذلك، نتيجة لاحتكاك الذات بثقافات مختلفة على مدى طويل، تتحول الذات من هوية متماسكة إلى هوية غير متسقة. وهكذا تتطور الذات الى ذات ما بعد الحداثة والتي تتميز بعدم وجود شكل محدد أو أساسي أو ثابت. تتوفر للذات عدد كبير من الهويات المحتملة، والتي يمكن للمرء أن يرتبط بها. تعكس حكايات ماخيا و جولي مفاهيم هول الثلاثة للهوية الثقافية. كلاهما يمر أولاً بمرحلة الذات التنويرية. ترتبط هوية ماخايا الثقافية بالثقافة السود في جنوب إفريقيا. وبالمثل ترتبط هوية جولي الأساسية المتمحورة حول الذات بثقافتها الفردية كفتاة مسيحية بيضاء، جنوب أفريقية، تتحدث الإنجليزية. ثم يتطور كلاهما ليصبحا ذوات اجتماعية. وهكذا يحاول مخايا الانخراط في مجتمعه من المواطنين السود. ومع ذلك، تصدمه المعتقدات التقليدية الخاطئة لقبيلته. وبالمثل تنضم جولي إلى مجتمع بوهيمي. ومع ذلك، فإن عالمها الاجتماعي الجديد يصبح مليء بالتناقضات، بما يثبت أن ثورتها في النهاية غير حقيقية، وأخيرًا، يكمل كلاهما التحول إلى ذوات ما بعد حداثية بهويات جديدة هجينة ومنفتحة لتعدد الثقافات فيتخلى مخايا عن "الأسطورة" المثالية للهوية المتماسكة والصلبة، ويصبح قادرا على التماهي مع الهويات المتعددة الثقافات الجديدة في وطنه الجديد. كذلك تتعاطف جولي مع العرب المسلمين الناطقين بالعربية.وأخيرا يأتي افتتان مخايا وجولي بـ "الوحدة الكونية" للكون كرمز للذات ما بعد الحداثية.

Stuart Hall's Three Conceptions of Cultural Identity in Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968) and Nadine Gordimer's *The Pick Up* (2001)

An eminent critical theorist in postcolonial studies, Stuart Hall (1932-2014) has incorporated ethnic, national, and cultural debates into postmodernist notions of identity. Post-modernist principles challenge the traditional belief in binary oppositions and fixed identities and underline, instead, language and discourse along with the power dynamics in which these are entwined as the foundations of our analysis of cultural occurrences (Habib 750). In his essay, "The Question of Cultural Identity" (1992), Hall differentiates between three different conceptions of identity: "those of the (a) Enlightenment subject (b) sociological subject, and (c) post-modern subject" (275).

According to Hall, the Enlightenment subject is built on a perception of the individual as a self-centered, fully integrated essential entity, bestowed with the faculties of logic, reason, and operation (275). Essentialism is based on trans-historical assumptions. Hall defines essentialism as "that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change" ("Who Needs Identity" 3). This perception is built on a set of common qualities that remain fixed through time. Hall views culture as a set of "shared meanings or shared conceptual maps" wherein people share common origins and ideals with other groups ("The Work of Representation" 18). The self is, thus, constructed through its "'belonging' to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and, above all, national cultures" (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 274). Populations are subsequently divided according to such national cultures being unified through one "common identity" (Smith 11). That is to say, according to this perspective, cultural identity relates to a single, common culture; it becomes unified with other 'selves' with similar ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious history. According to this definition, cultural identity represents the cultural values that depict subjects as "one nation" with stable, permanent, and uninterrupted reference points

regardless of the altering conflicts of real history. The notion of *the nation* in this context refers to a limited entity, inhabiting a specific geographical territory, and including a unique group of people (McLeod 101). It is a form of "oneness" of essence that cancels out all superficial disparities (Hall, "Diaspora" 223). This perception first appears from the individual's birth and continues to be the same during his/her life, a notion that is extremely "individualist" of the subject (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 275).

After the Enlightenment subject comes the sociological subject. This conception articulates the realization that the person is not self-dependent; rather, he/she is shaped through his/her interaction with "significant others." This interaction between *the Self* and *the Others*, contends Hall, gives the subject the cultural meanings of his/her world (275). Although the subject retains an essence, such essence is fashioned and renovated in a continuous dialogue with the various cultural identities of the society: "Identity thus stitches (or, to use a current medical metaphor, 'sutures') the subject into the structure. It stabilizes both subjects and the cultural worlds they inhabit, making both reciprocally more unified and predictable" (275-276). However, throughout its continuous relationship with other cultural identities of outer society, the self is transformed from a coherent, solid identity into an often inconsistent or irreconcilable identity. According to Hall, this disintegration of a solid, distinct, stable *social identity* is referred to as subject "dislocation or de-centering". The subject is, firstly, dislocated from his/herself; then, he/she is once more dislocated from his/her society. This dislocation leads to a state of disorientation: "this set of double displacements—de-centering individuals both from their place in the social and cultural world and from themselves—constitutes a 'crisis of identity' for the individual" (275).

As a result, the postmodern subject evolves, with no definite, essential, or stable form. The non-essentialist view of identity "is historically, not biologically defined" (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 277). Hall adopts this view, claiming that identities are not solid nor homogeneous but fluid and fragmented. This is because "'the self' is constituted out of and by difference . . . [It is] never

whole, never fully closed or 'sutured'" (Hall and Grossberg 145). In other words, post-modern identity "is subject to the 'play' of différance" ("Who Needs Identity" 3). Since Identity functions by means of différance, the process of identification is endlessly being constructed. As a result, Hall discards the solidity of the binary opposition in favor of the fluidity of a dynamic post-modern identity. He contends that identity is never fully developed and is always experiencing continuous adjustments for it is a "process of becoming rather than being" (4). Indeed, the post-modern subject identity becomes liquid, that is, constantly produced and modified in connection to how he/she is rendered in the surrounding cultural structures. Hall argues that a subject develops an idealistic 'myth' of an entirely coherent and solid identity throughout his/her life. Yet, as systems of interpretation and cultural representations proliferate, the subject is presented with a plethora of potential identities with which one may associate at least transitorily (277). Hall describes the post-modern cultural identity. He argues that

> cultural identity . . . is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. (Hall, "Diaspora" 225)

In contrast to unified distinct national characters, Hall refers to the process of migration as "a decentered, diasporic or 'global' rewriting of earlier, nation-centered imperial grand narratives," forming, in return, heterogeneous cultural identities ("Thinking at the Limit" 247). This diasporic identity is "never settled and complete, but is always 'in transition', in translation, marked by an ultimate un-decidability" ("The Logics of Translations" 50). This identity does not adhere to rigid, homogenous concepts of cultural affiliations but instead tries to embrace the new dynamics of similarity and difference which are reshaping the universal culture (58). That is to

say, this diasporic identity makes an effort to alter the structure and pluralize the cultural identities of the old dominating nation-states as well as the entire world (56). Indeed, based upon the post-modernist approach which rejects the binary opposition of the signifier vs. the signified in favor of an infinite deferral of meaning, Hall's post-colonial theory rejects the antagonistic binary opposition of *the Self* vs. *the Other* in favor of a dynamic cross-cultural discourse.

The post-modern subject is synonymous with Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity and Edward Said's contrapuntal vision of identity. Deconstructing *the Self/the Other* dichotomy, Bhabha introduces the emergence of a third, hybrid space: "the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (38). This Third Space confirms that cultural meanings have no essential fixities; it also confirms that even the same symbols may be claimed, transformed, reinterpreted, and then read differently (37).

Like Hall, Bhabha redefines *the Self/ the Other*'s relationship in terms of interdependence. That is to say, an individual's culture is not unified, homogenous, or distinct. Rather, cultures are interwoven and boundaries are blurred. Consequently, the idea of different "nations" itself is reconsidered: nations include antagonistic boundaries, oppressive restrictions, and concepts of legitimacy and illegitimacy. They are imagined as a limited entity, inhabiting a specific geographical territory and including a unique group of people, "'us' rather than 'them'" (McLeod 101). Instead of this solid dichotomy, Bhabha's notion of *hybridity* or *Third Space* attempts to create "new transcultural forms" (Ashcroft et al. 108). In other words, hybridity finds a new liminal position where these different cultures can come together. Neither cultures nor languages are pure, and the Third space exists because each culture inevitably carries linguistic and cultural traces of another culture. The flow of cultural *Third Spaces* is not potential; it is unavoidable.

Within the same argument, Said talks about the exiled as an observable example of the trans-cultural post-modern identity. He argues that cultures, far from being unified, homogeneous, or autonomous things, embrace more 'external' characteristics,

mutations, and deviations than they consciously avoid (*Culture and Imperialism* 15). Consequently, for Said, the experience of exiles is peculiar. Most individuals are primarily conscious of one culture and one home; exiles are familiar with at least two, and this duality of vision gives rise to an understanding of concurrent perspectives, an understanding that is "contrapuntal", to use a musical expression. For an exile, modes of living in a new setting are often contrasted with memories of these things in a previous context. As a result, both the new and old settings feel vivid and real as if occurring together. This type of awareness, Said contends, has a distinct pleasure, especially if the exile becomes aware of additional contrapuntal dissonances that may reduce dogmatic decisions and that may also enhance sympathetic emotions (*Reflections* 186). As Said puts it:

> In the counterpoint of western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work. (*Culture and Imperialism* 59–60)

In Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968) and Nadine Gordimer's *The Pick Up* (2001), Makhaya's and Julie's narratives echo Hall's three conceptions of cultural identity. Both first go through the stage of the Enlightenment subject, then the stage of the sociological subject, and both finally complete the transformation into post-modern subjects with hybrid (as Bhabha puts it) or contrapuntal (as Said names) trans-cultural identity.

In Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather,* Makhaya Maseko is a South African black citizen who escapes the apartheid of South Africa and crosses to the freed country of Botswana so that he may experience the feeling of a liberal living in a free country (Head 4). In South Africa—before managing to flee to Botswana—Makhaya embodies Hall's Enlightenment subject. His cultural identity relates to a single, common culture, that of the Black, South African

heritage. But this heritage is assaulted by apartheid. Defining himself against such racial oppression, Makhaya participates in anti-government revolutionary movements in order to defend his nation. At this stage, the nation is considered for Makhaya, a stable, permanent, and uninterrupted reference point.

In Apartheid South Africa, Makhaya not only experiences material physical imprisonment for he has just got out of jail, but he also experiences different psychological repercussions of apartheid, that is his sweeping feelings of humiliation, oppression, and hatred. In the racial discrimination of that time, a black man was called "boy," "dog" and "kaffir" (10). Makhaya's sense of humiliation becomes evident in his description of the black man and of himself as a black dog. The image is a symbol of the inner exile and estrangement of a whole nation within the borders of its homeland:

> Do you know who I am? I am Makhaya; the Black Dog . . . Life is only torture and torment to me . . . [the black dog] awakens only thrills in the rest of the mankind. He is a child they scold in a shrill voice because they think he will never grow up. They don't want him, either, because they've grown too used to his circus and his antics, and they liked the way he sat on the chair and shivered in fear while they lashed out with the whip. (124-125)

Moreover, Makhaya likens black men to "Frankenstein monsters" who were designed by the whites for their own benefit. Being monsters, black men can never experience independence from their white masters. Their single value lies in being slaves (129). But Makhaya could not bear such humiliation. His manhood and dignity would make him rather "be shot dead than live the living death of humiliation" (120). In addition to humiliation, Makhaya's background experience in South Africa comprises the horrific oppression of "rape, murder, and bloodshed" (120). The violence of the oppressor leads to sweeping emotions of hatred for one's homeland. The oppressed become liable to antagonistic political

thoughts (76). As Makhaya puts it, "violence breeds hatred and hatred breeds violence" (130).

Realizing that he is not self-dependent but rather shaped through his interaction with "significant others" who give him the cultural meanings of his world (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 275), Makhaya, a sociological subject, attempts to define himself with his native Black fellow citizens. The subject, that is Makhaya, is thus "stitch[ed]" or "suture[ed]" into the structure of his tribe (276). However, as Makhaya is dislocated from himself, he is, for the second time, dislocated from his society (275). He is repulsed by the traditional false beliefs of his tribe especially the compliant, conventional type of women in his homeland.

Makhaya suffers also from the crippling traditions and taboos that fetter his tribe and country as a whole. Indeed, Makhaya "felt like moving out of a part of [Africa] that was mentally and spiritually dead through the constant perpetuation of false beliefs" (Head 10). Makhaya is repulsed by these false beliefs. For instance, Makhaya was raised in one of the most traditional and old-fashioned tribes in Africa. The majority of his tribe still dresses in animal skins and bracelets. The African man has ancient lineal traditions that set forth his duties and fidelities. Hence, Makhaya wasn't able to come up with his own peculiar smile and his uniquely creative mind until after his father had passed away (120-121).

The traditional false beliefs include the conventional type of women in Makhaya's homeland. Indeed, Makhaya is resentful of the type of women in his native country. He sees that women of his country are not only oppressed by men but are also exposed to ignorance because of decaying traditions. According to Makhaya, black women are disdained by black men as inferior. For instance, he is annoyed by the family tradition that obliges sisters to address their elder brother as "Buti," meaning, "elder brother." As soon as their father dies, Makhaya allows his sisters to call him by his first name and to treat him as equals: "'why should men be brought up with a false sense of superiority over women? People can respect me if they wish but only if I earn it'" (10). However, Makhaya believes that black women of his tribe are not only the victims of patriarchal

oppression, but they are also immature for they accept such a hierarchy with submission and compliance. That is to say, it is not only men's superiority over women that Makhaya rejects but also women's inferiority and submission. Makhaya describes black women as "dead thing;" he affirms that he would prefer a prostitute to a wife because a prostitute is more self-reliant, sophisticated, and lively. Moreover, according to Makhaya, an ordinary wife in his tribe looks at a man only in terms of his sexual role. Such women internally feel subservient to men that even if they were granted their freedom, they would be reluctant to take it: "even if a door opened somewhere, she couldn't wear this freedom gracefully" (122).

As a consequence of such dislocation from his own society, Makhaya is not able to identify with his own name. This is because the name *Makhaya* is a tribal one; it relates to someone who stays at home, but he never felt harmony and gratification in his own homeland (3). Rather, his homeland was a "jumble of chaotic discord" (1). This discord instills the desire for resistance only in Makhaya's mind for no one else in his tribe seems to share his ambition for freedom (120). Alienated first from himself, then from his society, Makhaya experiences an internal conflict: "This set of double displacements—de-centering individuals both from their place in the social and cultural world and from themselves—constitutes a 'crisis of identity' for the individual" (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 275).

Managing to run away from South Africa, Makhaya settles in the fictional village of Golema Mmidi in Eastern Botswana where he starts to act like Hall's post-modern subject. A new Makhaya is born in Botswana. Renouncing the idealistic 'myth' of a coherent and solid identity, Makhaya is able to accept his new community. He is also able to accept Gilbert, a white man, as his friend. Moreover, instead of his look at women in his homeland, Makhaya is able to recognize a new, potential modern type of woman epitomized in Paulina. Finally, Makhaya's past chaotic discord is replaced by his dynamic effort to develop a farming project in Botswana based on modern scientific knowledge. Thus, "far from being eternally fixed

in some essentialised past," Makhaya's cultural identity is transformed through "the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (Hall, "Diaspora" 225). In the new free community of Bostwana where new power and cultural dynamics come into play, Makhaya adopts a new hybrid cultural identity.

Botswana community as a whole warmly embraces Makhaya and gives him his desired dream of peace which he defines as the "generosity, of soul and mind" (Head 120). It is in this community that Makhaya is able to bring together the chaotic pieces of his life to form a meaningful and orderly whole (118). The human community for Makhaya is symbolized by the exquisite relation between rain and people: when there are no rivers on the land, good people, nonetheless, retain rivers within themselves. Thus, even when there are no clouds in the sky, Makhaya can observe rain clouds forming in the heart of this community (165).

Gilbert is an English agriculturalist who works on developing a farming project in the village; he dreams of a distinguished worldwide pastoral community. Gilbert, as an English man, *adds* to the primitives new scientific Western modes of cultivation. He teaches Makhaya how different cultures may intermingle without losing their own originality. Makhaya overcomes his hatred of the whites and finds out in himself, "a compassion for the whole great drama of human history" (Head 130). Against the disorder and cruelty of the world, Makhaya chooses to withdraw into his own world where there were genuine, intimate individuals who would evoke his intense emotional responses. Makhaya was just startled by the fact that he consistently felt this way with Gilbert (120).

Sebeso Paulina acts as a symbol for the possibility of a change of the decaying traditions from which he is repulsed. Unlike the rest of the black women in his tribe and even in Golema Mmidi, Paulina does not accept the traditional hierarchy of men's superiority to women; she is, rather, one of the powerful domineering characters who play a pivotal role in critical events. She always manages to talk with authority, and her intrinsic moral courage allows her to take the lead in practically any scenario (71). All through her life, Paulina preserved her eagerness, vibrancy, and capability to

undertake any experience (90). Besides, unlike the rest of the black women, Paulina is incapable to be deceitful (89). She is sexually vibrant, and what she most wanted was someone to end her physical frustration, yet mere physicality was meaningless for her without an authentic love relationship (107). Thus, with the independent, strong Paulina, Makhaya again undergoes a transformation of identity. Instead of cherishing his isolation, Makhaya realizes that his quest for identity involves a need to break his seclusion and share the best and worst of life with a lover (67). Contemplating his future life with Paulina, even everyday objects like jars, glasses, and brooms give him comfort to think about as though these objects will "anchor him firmly to the earth" (161).

Makhaya describes Golema Mmidi as a productive and dynamic community that is mainly characterized by action, work, and practical solutions. The work details "are all securely founded on practical, scientific knowledge, schemes that reflected not a fancy or pretty-pretty, but a practical, busy world where people are planning for the future" (Brown 64). Makhaya finds in his ambition for an agrarian utopia that is based upon science a constructive way of defining himself against the ignorance and corruption of apartheid South Africa. Ordered scientific thoughts save the vulnerable Makhaya because it works as the exact opposite of the chaotic discord of his past experience (Head 77). Thus, Makhaya is able to develop a new hybrid identity within a dynamic liberal human community. Despite different impediments, Makhaya determines to change Golema Mmidi. Makhaya's post-modern identity is symbolized by pantheism. Golema Mmidi for Makhaya comes to symbolize the natural as an antithesis to the material symbolized by the protagonist's native homeland. In an internal monologue, Makhaya refers to such discrepancy between the natural vs. the material:

> As far as the eye could see it was only a vast expanse of sand and scrub but somehow bewitchingly beautiful . . . perhaps it was those crazy little birds. Perhaps it was the way the earth has adorned herself for a transient moment in a brief splurge

of gold . . . But whatever it was, he simply and silently decided that all this dryness and bleakness amounted to home and that somehow he had come to the end of a journey. (Head 11)

Julie Summers, the protagonist of Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* starts as an Enlightenment subject. Julie's self-centered essential identity is related to her single common culture that is formed out of one ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious history: she is a white, South African, English-speaking, Christian girl. Nevertheless, Julie rebels against the world of "capitalist fitches" (Meier) of her Western white father in South Africa: she shies away from contact with her parents; she moves into a flat in Johannesburg; she drives a cheap car, and she earns money through her own private business.

Julie then realizes, as a sociological subject, that she is not self-dependent; rather, she is shaped through her dialogue with "significant others" who give her the cultural meanings of her world (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 275). Thus, Julie joins a "liberal, hybrid, pseudo-Bohemian social world of 'The Table,'" an act that "stabilizes [her] and the cultural worlds [she] inhabit[s], making both reciprocally more unified and predictable" (275-276). However, throughout her relationship with the bohemian social world, Julie experiences irreconcilability between her identity and the cultural identities of her group. Indeed, Julie's table community is revolutionary only on a theoretical level; it practically does no action except for sitting on the table: "We were playing at reality; it was a doll's house, the cottage; a game, the EL-AY café" (Gordimer 164).

Moreover, despite being seemingly rebellious, Julie's new social life can be seen as artificial. For instance, Julie occasionally uses her father's Range Rover; she also uses luxurious personal suitcases. These actions denote that Julie's "break with the luxury of her past may be only another sort of luxury she can afford" (Meier). Abdu himself symbolizes for Julie what Hall names "the significant Other" ("Question of Cultural Identity" 275) who embodies the

direct opposite of her bourgeois father. Julie uses this opposition between her father and her pick-up in order to assert her rebellious identity. In other words, Julie takes Abdu merely to verify her supposed independence from her father's life (Meier). Thus, although attempting to rebel against her essential identity in South Africa, Julie's rebellion remains a theoretical, futile, and unrealistic attempt at self-realization.

In the Arab desert, Julie is initiated into her post-modern subject identity. Julie's identity takes no definite, essential, or stable form; it is constantly produced and modified in connection to the surrounding cultural structures (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 277). Thus, the white, South African, English-speaking, Christian girl identifies temporarily with Arab, African, Arabic-speaking, Muslim community. Abdu's Arabic, Eastern family gave Julie warmth, care, and intimacy. Living her life between divorced parents, Julie longs for these sentiments: "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, the. There are . . . things . . . between people here that are important, no, necessary to them" (Gordimer 197). It is the same "generosity, in soul and mind" (Head 120) that touches Makhaya's heart when warmly embraced by Golema Mmidi's community. As a result, Julie happily endorses the community's cultural and religious customs. She reads Koran, studies Arabic, and shares in the house chores (169). Abdu's mother smiles at Julie when she helps in preparing family meals. Abdu's sister, Maryam, continuously encourages her when she tries to speak Arabic (196). Leila, Abdu's niece, becomes attached to Julie (194). Even a silent gesture of a Bedouin girl offers Julie this sense of warmth and constancy: "The encounter without word or gesture became a kind of daily greeting; recognition" (199-200).

In the Arab desert, Julie realizes the fissure between the fruitless theoretical principles of *The Table* in her homeland and the productive, practical, revolutionary Arab community in the desert. In contrast to her ineffective role in the community of *The Table*, Julie now finds a purposeful role within the new Arab community.

Like Makhaya's dynamic community in Golema Mmidi, this Arab community is productive and dynamic; it is characterized by action, work, and practical solutions. In her journey of self-discovery, Julie recognizes, for the first time, her talent for teaching (150). Hence, she starts to teach English to Maryam, to Maryam's employer, to the girls of the neighborhood (142), to some adults who asked for her help, and also to other older boys who needed to learn English in order to be able to go to the capital high school. Julie also realizes she can create learning-play activities for children (195). For the first time, work for Julie is not a transient attempt at minor tedious goals; but rather, a perpetual process of satisfaction (195). In addition, she "combines her communal integration with a strong sense of self-determination and initiative" (Meier). Like Gilbert who adds his western experience to the pastoral project in Golema Mmid, Julie presents some western elements to her Arab community. For instance, the fact that she, a woman, teaches in the Arab community, adds to the patriarchal Arab culture the Western sense of women's agency and independence.

Like Makhaya, Julie's post-modern identity is symbolized by pantheism. The Arabic desert acts as a symbol of the natural as an antithesis to the material symbolized by Julie's homeland. In an internal monologue Julie refers to such discrepancy between the constancy of the natural vs. the temporality of the material:

> The desert. No seasons of bloom and decay. Just the endless turn of night and day. Out of time: and she is gazing- not over it taken into it, for it has no measure of space, features that mark distance from here to there. In a film of haze there is no horizon, the pallor of sand, pink-traced, lilac-luminous with its own color of faint light, has no demarcation from land to air. Sky-haze is indistinguishable from sand-haze . . . the desert is eternity. (Gordimer 172)

Discovering and re-constructing her new hybrid identity, Julie has a dream about green foothills: "she dreamed green" (213). Julie's dream can be interpreted in terms of a psychological warmth and

intimacy that overwhelmed her in her new community. The green is a symbol of her rebirth and the symbol will be materialized in Julie's desire to buy a part of the oasis and make a drill for water to cultivate rice, by which she was fascinated.

Both Makhaya and Julie find salvation in exile in which both are able to identify themselves with nature. Contemplating nature, Makhaya realizes that "it was the way the earth has adorned herself for a transient moment in a brief splurge of gold" (Head 11). Correspondingly, contemplating the desert, Julie realizes that it has "No seasons of bloom and decay . . . the desert is eternity" (Gordimer 172). This connection between nature and utopia is a recurrent theme in both novels. Both writers express their belief in the natural world's purgative effect in contrast to the negative influence of the material world. For Makhaya and Julie, nature becomes a method of salvation from the pressures of an antagonistic world. The salvation through the natural with its pantheistic undertones unites the two protagonists. Taking pantheism as an alternative to traditional religion, Makhaya and Julie discover some sort of divine reassurance that defined their sense of self:

> The numinous and pantheistic landscape is one that most often 'bewitches', and this reinstates the relevance of 'cosmic oneness' that is identified as essential feature of primal religion: 'all things share the same nature and the same interaction one upon another—rocks and forest trees, beasts and serpents, the power of the wind . . . the living, the dead . . . for all are one, all are here all are now. (Brown 67- 68)

This sense of pantheism enables Makhaya to "undo the complexity of hatred and humiliation that had dominated his life for so long" (Head 67) and enables Julie to know her way through "the night-cooled sands into the desert [with] no fear of getting lost" (Gordimer 199). Thus, instead of the material antagonistic binary opposition of *the Self vs. the Other*, Makhaya and Julie accept dynamic cross-

cultural discourse symbolized by their infatuation with the "cosmic oneness" of a pantheistic universe.

This study attempted to analyze Stuart Hall's three conceptions of cultural identity in Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* and Nadine Gordimer's *The Pick Up*. Hall differentiates between three different conceptions of identity: "those of the (a) Enlightenment subject (b) sociological subject, and (c) post-modern subject" ("Question of Cultural Identity" 275). Whereas the Enlightenment subject is built on a perception of the individual as a self-centered, fully integrated essential entity, the sociological subject is built upon the realization that the person is not self-dependent; rather, he/she is shaped through his/her interaction with "significant others" (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 275). However, throughout its constant interaction with other cultural identities, the self is soon transformed from a coherent, solid identity into an inconsistent, irreconcilable identity. As a result, the postmodern subject evolves, with no definite, essential, or stable form: the subject is presented with a plethora of potential identities with which one may associate at least momentarily (277). The post-modern subject is synonymous with Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity and Edward Said's contrapuntal vision of identity.

Makhaya's and Julie's narratives reflect Hall's three conceptions of cultural identity. Both first go through the stage of the Enlightenment subject. Makhaya's cultural identity relates to the Black, South African culture. Defining himself against apartheid, Makhaya defends his nation which, according to him, is a stable, permanent, and uninterrupted reference point. Similarly, Julie's self-centered essential identity is related to her single, common culture as a white, South African, English-speaking, Christian girl. Both then become sociological subjects. Makhaya attempts to define himself with his native Black fellow citizens. However, he is repulsed by the traditional false beliefs of his tribe including the compliant women in his homeland. Likewise, Julie realizes that she is not self-dependent; rather, she is shaped through her dialogue with other cultural identities. Thus, Julie joins the Bohemian social world of "The Table". However, Julie's relationship with her new social

world becomes full of inconsistencies since her revolution proves to be eventually fake. Finally, both complete the transformation into post-modern subjects with new hybrid, contrapuntal, transcultural identities. Makhaya and Julie realize eventually that "identity is a name given to escape sought from that uncertainty" (Bauman 19). Makhaya renounces the idealistic 'myth' of a coherent and solid identity and is able to identify with his new community in Bostwana. He is also able to accept Gilbert, a white man, as his friend and to recognize a new, potential modern type of woman through Paulina. Finally, Makhaya's past chaotic discord is replaced by his dynamic effort to develop a farming project in Botswana based on modern scientific knowledge. In the same way, Julie identifies with Arab, African, and Arabic-speaking, Muslim community. Abdu's Arabic, Eastern family gives Julie warmth, care, and intimacy. Dynamic within her new community, Julie also presents her Arab community with western progressive elements. Makhaya's and Julie's dynamic cross-cultural identity is symbolized by their infatuation with the "cosmic oneness" of a pantheistic universe.

Homeland is "a poignantly invoked presence in most south African exile" (Brown 64). Indeed, the exile gets across what Edward Said names a *rift* when he argues that "exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home; its essential sadness cannot be surmounted" (*Reflections* 173). Nevertheless, Makhaya and Julie are able to surmount this rift by adopting Hall's post-modern subject. For Head and Gordimer, past sufferings of one's homeland can only be discarded by the new trans-cultural experience provided in exile where cultural and ethnic variations create the basis for social integration.

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