

**CROSS-CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP IN NADINE GORDIMER'S  
*THE PICKUP***

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Women are doubly empowered and have to struggle a lot to prove their identity with both men and women. The outcome of the creator or leader in women is packed down by both genders. When a controversy emerges, there come delinquent situations between women and men. Behind a successful woman there must be a lot of struggles, failures and bitter experiences. This is only because of gender discrimination. The hardness makes a few women to achieve highness in life. Women in all categories are not only suppressed by the opposite gender, but also by both genders and society too. It is not eradicated even in the well developed nations, where women are treated equally. There must be a change in the view of society.

The theme is dealt in every literature. Nadine Gordimer exercises cross culture in her later novel, The Pickup. The novel sets in the liberal post-apartheid Johannesburg and shifts to a conspicuously unnamed Arab country in the second part of the novel. Julie, a daughter of high investment banker, loves Abdu, a car mechanic, encounters many transformations. The other themes in the novel are 'the otherness', displacement, economic exile and migration.

The two central characters enact both metaphorically and literally. Julie Summers comes from a well off white family, and Abdu (later known as Ibrahim Ibn Musa), an illegal immigrant in Johannesburg from some remote unnamed Saudi Arabian country, completely change their roles in the second part of the novel. In Johannesburg, Julie, a rich girl with money and power, evades all for her love. But when Abdu is refused to stay on in South Africa by the Government, Julie decides to return to Abdu's homeland by marrying him without the knowledge of her father. The empowering decision becomes a turning point in the life of Julie. Ironically Julie as an insider wants to go out and Abdu as an outsider wants to be in the country. She knows nothing about the new place. As a stubborn natured girl, Julie finds a place for herself that she has never experienced in her own place, Johannesburg.

Julie experiences positive things in her life by seeing happiness in every incident whatever she encounters. Julie makes her place in the new environment. Slowly she adapts and learns how to be a migrant in an Islamic Arab society. Her life in Johannesburg is an unproductive existence but in the desert village, she discovers herself as teacher, as sister and one of the members in Ibrahim's family. Julie feels a spiritual growth in herself and she loves it than material privileges, which she accustomed in Johannesburg. She reflects Ibrahim's family as her home and her father's as a house. The deliberate transcultural effect in Julie makes her to adapt the cross cultural exchanges. She never heeds the words of Ibrahim and his father about her life style in the desert. Ibrahim argues that there is nothing for her in his country, but Julie

says that in Johannesburg there is nothing for her without Ibrahim. Julie is determined to experience the new culture. She surprised, “Where to locate the self?” she describes her love and sex with Abdu as “the kind of love-making that is another country, a country of its own, not yours or mine” (96).

On the other hand Ibrahim always wants to escape from his village to the wider world like Australia, Canada and United States. He is continuously applying for visas to all Western countries. For him it is hard to understand how and why Julie chooses his place, which he is trying to escape. She has so many choices to opt, but she sees Ibrahim as her oriental prince while her Johannesburg friends describe him as a grease-monkey. Julie wins over the love of Ibrahim’s mother who understands that Julie is the one who brings him home at last.

Julie refuses to go with Ibrahim and stays there because she has found a home herself and she refuses to see Ibrahim degraded in America, where he would lose his self-respect without necessarily gaining much material reward. Julie feels that there is no home for Ibrahim to be had as a migrant worker in America, that in spite of the corruption and aridity of his homeland, it is home. Here Julie shows her responsibility than specificities of place. When Ibrahim is ready to go America, Julie realizes that she must give up the metaphorical country and retain there within her adopted family. Julie is ready to lead a life in Ibrahim’s village, where women must do as men tell them.

Even women in the modern society are secretaries or wives of powerful men and acquire fulfillment by consuming rather than creating. Ibrahim’s mother is a dominant figure in the household, where women have to handle vital and rewarding roles. With the surprising end of the novel Julie is considered as a rare figure and enjoys the transcultural element which is degraded to her level that is only because of her love with Ibrahim. Gordimer ends the novel ambiguously, with a lot of questions unanswered. Why does Julie refuse to go with Ibrahim? Will Julie stay in the desert? Will Ibrahim come back? Will he go to America or change his mind at the last moment? The final questions raised in the minds of readers are met with silence and stimulate the novelists in them.

The Pickup is unusual among Gordimer’s works for the fact that its protagonist does not return to South Africa at the end of the novel. After the problem of apartheid, Gordimer can create a protagonist who leaves South Africa willingly. Julie in the novel transforms herself with the new culture, family and language. She enjoys her life in the desert. But Ibrahim in the Western country may lose himself. Desire and responsibility continuously come into conflict with each other.

#### Source:

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#### References:

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