

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the social relationships and racism issues in Nadine Gordimer's The Lying Days, I come to some conclusions based on my analysis on social conflicts in Helen's life. The conflicts in the novel can be related to the setting of time in South Africa, the country where Helen lives and which has applied the segregation system between particularly two races in South Africa. Her mother and her father are one of the victims of the system themselves because they come from the different generation from Helen's. For some people who live in the Apartheid system, the way they think and act is dictated by the society at that particular time. Even though Helen lives in a country with issues regarding the racial skin color, she tries to follow her heart and tries to find a man that she loves.

There are several problems that lead the main character, Helen, into several social conflicts. The initial conflict occurs when Helen is not in agreement with her mother about expressing her opinion about going to university. The problem lies within the exercise of Helen's existentialism. She actually wants the idea and decision of going to university to be originally hers and independent of what her mother thinks that seems to be intimidating her. However, she agrees with her mother and her idea about the better future condition when having a

university degree. In this way she pays respect to her mother's opinion, while disregarding her own.

Another conflict happens between Helen and her mother. Her mother disagrees with Helen's relationship with Joel Aaron, a Jewish man who lives down at the Concession store in the native area. Her mother's disagreement is simply because Joel is a Jew. Helen has tried to explain but her explanation only enrages her mother because her mother disagrees with her boyfriend's belief and status of citizenship.

Another conflict regarding the restriction in the house is whether to bring her friends to come to her house and that is prohibited as well as having a native person in the house. Bringing natives to their house which is in the middle of white people community is not appropriate. Therefore Helen tries to persuade her mother to allow Mary Seswayo, a native who is her college friend, to live with them for a while. Her mother thinks that it is wrong for having the presence of native people at their house. Her father also feels that it will not be good for his career at his workplace because the mining site is dominated by white colored workers, especially at the internal management. For them it is not proper and against the law.

Two other conflicts are between Helen and her parents about honesty and living with a man who is not her husband. Helen practically thinks that it is all right to stay with a man whom she really knows in order to take care of him in his sickness but she has to conceal this fact since she knows her parents would disagree. Upon knowing the fact her parents feel really offended by her behavior and ask her to leave.

Another important conflict is between Helen and Joel. For the first time in her life, she meets a man who know her deeply and always watches over her, not as a stalker or a stranger, but simply because they come from the same town and school. The conflict happens because Joel is a Jew and her parents do not approve of their relationship. Therefore Helen and Joel decide that they will only be best friends although deep down inside they love each other.

The last social conflict involves Helen and her parents again in relation to opinions about Charles Bessemer. Her parents show their approval of the man being Helen's lover for his promising future and his being white. Helen disagrees with them and she goes against them and does not have the relationship with the man.

Her parents always make a different decision if the man or her friends were native or Jewish. All of these conflicts occur because of the way the people think that people should live in boundaries and that is the segregation based on skin colour, by then they have certain kind of right based on it and each skin colors is different. By applying this kind of system and behaviour based on the system that white people have higher influence and superiority over the native people that are the majority in South Africa.

All of these conflicts happen in the middle of the nation's disorder; there are riots regarding the Apartheid system applied by the government, which influence Helen's social conflicts. She begins to think that there is nothing wrong with the differences of skin colour. She is not bothered by that and she has no

classification of people based on the way of people at that time nor thinks that people should be differentiated by their skin colour.

I also learn that discrimination on races is inhumane since people cannot select their skin color before they are born. The skin color is God's gift and I believe that the gift is good and people should not make certain skin colors inferior to others. Finally I agree with Martin Luther King Junior of America who says that we should not judge people from the color of the skin but from the content of the character. This way we appreciate people's inner traits and merits.