



**CHAPTER I**  
**PROTEST: THEORETICAL**  
**PERSPECTIVES**

# Chapter I

## Protest: Theoretical Perspectives

### Introduction:

Protest is the formal declaration in writing or speech, expressing the strong objection or it is disapproval on certain acts, issues or things. While living in the society man has to face various types of discrimination which are based on race, class, caste, gender etc. leads to protest. Protest is one of the characteristics which are inherent in man. The basic elements of protest are a consciousness regarding fundamental rights, a tendency to struggle and a sense of independence and liberty. The impulse to resent leads man to protest. While protesting, man tries to get rid of the unjust prevailing acts. It is inherent in human nature to rebel, protest and dissent. Man tries to bring reform, a socio-political change and to give his people the right of equality, justice and liberty.

An *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines Protest as “the expression of strong disagreement with or opposition to something; a statement or action that shows this” (Hornby 1213). Whereas *Encarta World English Dictionary* defines Protest as “to express strong disapproval of or disagreement with something, or to refuse, to obey or accept something often by making a formal statement or taking action in public” (Roony 1512).

Protest can be expressed through many different forms, from individual statements to mass demonstrations. Protesters may organize a protest as a way of publicly making their opinions in an attempt to influence public opinion or government policy or they may undertake direct action in an attempt to directly perform desired changes. Narendra Mohan, an important Indian critic while arguing the dimensions of protest, states that, “Protest is the

awareness that arises when man confronts an unjust inhuman situation, and decides to get rid of it by way of raising of his voice against it and acting to remove it” (Mohan 16). He further says, “Protest is not ideological in its orientation, but is, essentially activist” (16).

### **1.1 Types / Forms of Protest:**

There are two types of protest a) violent protest b) non-violent protest. Violent protest is done by such acts as stone throwing, shooting, shouting slogans etc. An *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* defines violence as, “Violent behaviour that is intended to hurt or kill sb” (Hornby 1704). In other words violence is to harm someone physically. Violence is human nature. Violence is an extreme form of aggression, such as assault, rape or murder. Violent action involves doing harmful injury to a human being or to non-human being. In this connection, P. R. Rajgopal observes, “Exploitation in any form, social or economic, is yet another angle to violence. Treating people in a manner which is contrary to the accepted norms of human dignity too is a form of violence” (Rajgopal 4-5).

Collective violence is committed to advance a particular social agenda includes, for example, crimes of hate committed by organized groups, terrorist acts and mob violence. Political violence includes war and related violent conflicts, state violence and similar acts carried out by larger groups. Violence occurs in many different forms under a variety of reasons like social, psychological, economical, cultural and historical.

Non-violent protest is effective than violent protest. Mahatma Gandhiji, who fought for the independence of India, laid great stress upon truth and non-violence. His science of Satyagraha was originally developed in South Africa; he launched a non-violent struggle to secure the basic human rights for Indians. In the process of the political movements he develops his unique theory of Satyagraha which is an improvement over the earlier theory of passive resistance. Gandhiji believes that truth and non-violence are the two sides of the same

coin. Truth cannot be different from justice because truth is no truth if it is not based on justice. And injustice in a matter is ultimately decided by conscience but this conscience is a conscience of a conscientious individual. Dr. Ravindra Kumar comments about Gandhiji,

Gandhi based his deeds or action and thoughts on non-violence. Considering it a religion and also the law of human race, he is of the strong opinion that non-violence is the only means to establish peace . . .It is a permanent part of human temperament. This is why we could advance and progress. Otherwise, man would always go through constant tortures resulting, into the absolute removal of existence mankind from the earth (Kumar 50).

Non-violence means non-killing but it really means that we should not offend anyone by speech, thought and action. For one who follows non-violence can not have any enemy. Our social organizations and relations are based upon non-violence because throughout history man is trying to tame the brute in him. Non-violence is a soul force and it is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but is a positive state of love of doing well to evil-doers. But this does not mean that helping the evil-doer to continue to do wrong or tolerating it by passive acceptance. Passive resistance is not a weapon of the weak but it is the weapon of the strong. Man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister. Courage, truthfulness and self-control are necessary to undertake passive resistance. The resister suffers and through self- suffering and sacrifice, he uses his soul force to convert the opponent, but converting him to the side of justice and truth. It educates our heart to conquer hatred by love, untruth by truth and violence by self-suffering. 'Non-violence' refers to actions which do not by themselves cause physical harm to humans, whereas 'violence' refers to those which do. Non-violence is the peaceful rebellion against the government. There are two different types of non-violent resistance.

1. **Philosophical Non-violence:** Those who are philosophically non-violent, they try to love their enemies and try to avoid doing any form of violence in all aspects of their lives. They try to oppose injustice and winning over one's enemies through love and redemptive suffering.

2. **Tactical Non-violence:** Those who are tactical non-violent use non-violent resistance as a tool for building political power in demonstrations and as a political strategy to achieve specific goals. Non-violence is the effective way to accomplish goals through political means. Those who are tactical non-violent do not believe that redemptive suffering can convert racist and segregationists to a new outlook of interracial brotherly love. They focus on building political movements to win legislation and change social values that will force government to alter their behaviour through disruptive non-violent tactics such as sit-in, boycott etc. Tactical exponents of non-violent action use campaigns in order to achieve a particular goal within an existing social framework; their aim is reform.

Direct action includes strikes, sit-ins, boycotts, demonstrations, disruptive picketing. It seeks to refute a system's power and act on changes, instead of appealing for them. The issue of protest arises when open challenges to existing social structures are made by members and supporters of weaker groups in society such as workers, women and minorities. Some forms of protest are as follows:

- Public demonstrations or political rally.
- Boycott – It is a group's refusal to have commercial dealings with some organization in protest against its policies.
- Protest March – It is historically common form of non-violent action by groups of people.

- Picketing – It is a form of protest in which people gather together outside a place of work or location where an event is taking place. This is done in an attempt to discourage others from working. It can also be done to draw public attention to a cause.
- Die-ins – It is a form of protest where participants imitate being dead. In the simplest form of die-in, protesters simply lie-down on the ground and pretend to be dead, sometimes covering themselves with signs or banners.
- Hunger strikes - A hunger strike is a method of non-violent resistance in which participants fast as an act of political protest, or to provoke feelings of guilt in others, usually with the objective to achieve a specific goal, such as a policy change. Fasting was used as a method of protesting injustice in the society.

Harsh legal penalties can be used to repress protest. Police monitoring and occasional attacks on demonstrators have become a common-place in many countries. The military is brought when the police are insufficient, most notably to break strikes.

## **1.2 Aspects of Protest:**

The concept of protest changes according to different aspects. So it is important to understand all the aspects and the diversity of protest literature. Richard Clutterback comments about the importance of protest as, “Protest is necessary to maintain a fair rare of change in the face of entrenched interests in any society – both to further the will of the majority and to attain equity for minorities” (Clutterback11). There can be social protest, political protest, cultural protest, domestic protest etc. The basic theme of social protest is the search for principles of social order and justice and of the legitimating of the center in general and the ruling groups in particular in terms of some non- traditional values, acceptable to broader strata and to some extent shared and even created by them. Second theme is search

for new common symbols in which various groups of the society could find some sense of personal and collective identity.

The root of social protest is in the feeling of being expelled from existing positions and values. The feeling of losing place in the society paves the way for social protest. They demand restoration of traditional order and values. The third major theme of protest is focused around the possibility of attaining full expression of human and cultural creativity, of the personal dignity and of true and pure interpersonal relation. It is surrounded by the specialized and distinguished frameworks attendant on modernization and the complex division of labour. While talking about cultural protest Eisenstadt states,

The major themes that developed in this sphere throughout different stages of modernization were those of traditionalism as against more autonomous forces of cultural creativity, and of the relation of both of these to the possibility of erosion of cultural creativity and standards (Eisenstadt 34).

People withdraw from involvement in a social system which has imposed injustice on them. Various developments have made effect on the field of the family and cultivate tension between the generations, to an extent probably unprecedented in any other society. They have also created various forms of delinquency, crime and vagrancy. The process of modernization weakens the long established values and traditions and of their representatives. Transiting regimes were considered to be any country that had experienced either political protest or liberalization reforms.

Political protest outbreaks when regime faces a crisis of legitimacy. Regime transition is a complex process with multiple phases. It is difficult to capture their information as a whole. The leaders take people to the streets to express political concern, to demonstrate that they lack confidence that existing government institutions are capable of responding to

popular demands. Political protesters withdraw the permission to be governed and proclaim that although the state may remain dominant it has lost supremacy. Political protest breaks out more frequently in some African countries than any other. The first protests broke out in the urbanized countries Africa. Where six out of ten persons lived in towns and where politically motivated protest stretched back several decades through the Soweto uprising of 1976 to the Sharpeville massacre of 1960.

Political protest often began as mass reactions against authorization austerity but there was little evidence of a methodical linkage between the actual implementation of structural adjustment programs and subsequent street demonstrations. By the 1990s, however, African political leaders discovered that they could no longer court external support simply by professing Marxism-Leninism or anticommunism. In order to obtain development assistance they henceforth had to show willingness to observe human rights practices efficient honest governance and hold genuinely competitive elections. South Africa's crisis is for more than simply a conflict about race or power or even human rights. The release of Nelson Mandela from a South African jail in February 1990 received much wider attention across the continent and was celebrated by official media as the final nails in the coffin of colonialism in Africa. Nelson Mandela is the significant anti-apartheid activist in South Africa. He protested against the ruling National Party's apartheid laws after 1948. He moved around South Africa signing up volunteers who were prepared to break apartheid laws. Initially, the ANC was committed to non-violent struggle to end apartheid. In 1956 Mandela and 155 other ANC activists were captured and put on trial accused of treason. Meanwhile, in March 1960, police at Sharpeville killed sixty-nine black South Africans at a peaceful protest against the pass laws; the nation went into a kind of political shock. Both the ANC and the PAC decided that there was a need for armed action to face this brutality.



During the political period in the late 1960s, a new generation of outspoken African, Indian and Coloured students began to shape a persistent influence within South Africa in what became known as the Black Consciousness Movement. As Mark Uhlig remarks about the word 'black', "In its terminology, "black" was defined not as a term for all those suffering from white racial oppression, thus encompassing Africans, Indians and Colourds" (Uhlig 118). The ANC symbolizes the historic struggle for equality. Other movements and organizations have risen and fallen, but it has endured.

### **1.3 Protestant Movement:**

Commonly people who do not like certain things usually protest or talk against them. There are very few people in the history who tried to make a religious revolution. One person who did it was a German reformer named Martin Luther (1483–1546). The Protestant Reformation was a major 16th century European movement started by Luther and it has given the special meaning to the term 'protest'.

The aim of this movement was to reform the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Martin Luther did not agree with the powers given to the Pope. He said the Pope is not God's representative on Earth and should not be treated as God's representative. Martin Luther became very unhappy and troubled. He believed that Church leaders must stop granting people indulgences, which is forgiveness for sins in return for gifts of money to the Church. In 1517, Luther posted the 95 Theses for an educational debate on indulgences on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg. These theses were Latin propositions contrasting the manner in which indulgences were being sold in order to raise money for the building of Saint Peter's in Rome. Luther's Theses, which were against the use of indulgences, were based on the idea that Christianity is basically an idea of the human race and had nothing to do with the heaven or hell. Luther's movement came to be called the Protestant Reformation

or simply the Reformation. From his own time to the present he has been a symbol of Protestantism.

#### 1.4 Protest and Dissent:

Dissent is a sentiment or philosophy of non-agreement or opposition to a prevailing idea or government's policies. Dissent is important in the society because it leads to protest. Protest is usually associated with the groups that are outside the mainstream that lack inside connections with the wielders of power. Protest is often 'against' something or other. It is an attempt to stop a policy or practice which would otherwise go ahead unquestioned. Dissent and protest are part of the formative processes of a movement and reform is the ideology and consequences of a movement. Dissent is an expression of dissatisfaction with the existing situation and registers disagreement. Protest is a formal declaration of dissent and it stand for a more confirmed state of resistance and conflict. And reform refers to one of the responses to alter the existing situation.

Protest takes place in the society when efforts are made to change and transform the society. (Black South African writers write about various themes like black consciousness, migration, racial discrimination, colonial, post-colonial identity crisis, restlessness, alienation etc. The theme of violence is prominent in black South African literature. Violence is human nature and it is a form of protest in literature. But peaceful protest is powerful than violent protest. Frustration, inner and outer conflicts lead to breakdown of organized human behaviours. Violence occurs in a variety of forms such as domestic, social, psychological, economical, cultural, historical and political. In some political systems dissent is with the reference in Wikipedia:

. . .dissent may be formally expressed by way of opposition politics, while politically repressive regimes may prohibit any form of dissent, leading to suppression of dissent and the encouragement of social or political activism.

Individuals who do not conform or support the policies of certain states have been described as "dissidents." Several thinkers have argued that a healthy society needs not only to protect, but also to encourage dissent.

Dissent and protest emerged out of the modern situations that generated processes of disorganization and dislocation. Dissent and protest is linked with the search for human values, and social reforms. Dissenting and protesting mood is at the basis of all social reforms.

### **1.5 Reform and Revolution:**

Reform goes along with in slow and gradual change. It is not only the medium but also the weapon of change. The object of reform is to redevelop society. Dissenting attitude and mood is at the bottom of reform. Narendra Mohan while discussing about protest and reform movement comments,

The seed of reform is always buried under the social structure of a country, and with the change of time and sense of values, that seed germinates and grows demolishing the existing corrupt and degenerated social practices and institutions (Mohan 39-40).

Reforms eliminate the corrupt social practices and institutions and uphold certain positive values. The idea of Protest is different from the idea of Revolution. Protest is individual at the same time collective. But revolution is not individual affair it is essentially connected with the masses. The famous American medievalist Norman Cantor states the difference between the protest and revolution as, "Protest is an attack on the prevailing system in an intellectual or organized way. Viewed against this is revolution which is a

sickness in a society, a breakdown of the social order, general demonstration and civil war” (Cantor 2).

✓ Revolutionary movements have more chances to success. Dissent and protest form part of the formative processes of a movement, while reform refers to the ideology and consequences of a movement. Revolution is different from rebellion. Rebellion is the refusal to be treated as an object and to be reduced to simple historical terms, whereas revolution functions within the limits of history.

Reform is an essential part of the development of society in affecting social change and transformation. Modernity is a new awareness which gave rise to the sense of inquiry and questioning about the basic human rights and injustice in the society. Reform eliminates the corrupt social practices and advocates certain positive values. Thus, reform is a very significant factor in the rise of protest. Protest can be done through Passive action or Direct action. Passive protest includes displaying sign, petitions and passive picketing. Passive protest is appealing for change within a system of government. This simply means that a message is conveyed and gains attention without disturbing a system.

### **1.6 Protest and Literature:**

There is close relation between protest and literature. Protest is deeply rooted in human nature and it reflects also in social behaviour and functioning. Protest in literature is more of anticipation than an expression of a society. ‘Avant- garde’ is the product of such thinking. Avant-garde is a small self-conscious group of artists and authors who deliberately undertake to revolt against the tradition. They set out to create ever new artistic forms and styles and to introduce till now neglected and sometimes forbidden subject matters. The prominent aim of avant-garde artists is to shock the sensibilities of the conventional reader and challenge the norms and pieties of the dominant bourgeois culture. They violate the accepted conventions and proprieties and protested against the established order. Karl Marx

(1818-1883), his social theory is based on class conflict. He connects it to the development of technology on the one hand and the resultant changes in the production of goods, and services and relation among social classes on the other.

There are innumerable writers in whose writing we can find realistic portrayal of contemporary social situation. In South Africa Nadine Gordimer, Alan Paton, Alex la Guma, Peter Abrahams, J. M. Coetzee, Zakes Mda etc. are a few important writers whose writings often studied for their social environment. Literature is not only a product of society but also produces society. Literature is both influenced by society and influences society. Literature is a form of expression and it tries to instruct people. In short, protest is inherent in human nature and when man becomes aware of the injustice towards him by the dominant group in the society he does protest. The protest is for justice, liberty and equality in the society and writers reflect it through their writing. According to Shashi Deshpande, “. . .Literature can be means of social protest” (Deshpande 31). The novelist protests through the protagonist who becomes the mouthpiece, not only of the author but of those masses who do not have courage to express it. We can say that by presenting man’s inhumanity to man a novel attempts to humanize the human beings.

### **1.7 Protest and South African Novel in English:**

Protest literature in South Africa functioned to inspire resistance against the apartheid government. The degree of protest depends on the depths of involvement and commitment is one of the aims of literature. South Africa is known for its diversity in culture, language, and religious beliefs. The country consists of the four provinces of South Africa. These four provinces are the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. South Africa is also ethnically diverse containing ethnic groups like Xhosa, Zulu, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga, Swazi, Ndebele, Venda. Each ethnic group has its own

language. The native languages of South Africa are Xhosa, Zulu, Pedi (Northern Sotho), Sesotho (Southern Sotho), Tswana, Tsonga, Swazi, Venda and many other languages. Afrikaans is the dominant and distinctive language in South Africa. It developed from the speech of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch settlers in this region, containing many words of English, French and Malay origin. English is the most commonly spoken language in official and commercial public life in South Africa. Although 79.6% of the population is Black, this category is neither culturally nor linguistically homogeneous.

Racial segregation in South Africa began in colonial times but apartheid as an official policy was introduced in 1948 when the National Party won the election and came to power. Its primary effort was to keep racial segregation. And for this reason new legislation classified the African population into four groups: Black, White, Coloured and Indian. And residential areas were segregated by forced removals. This segregation policy of South African government is later known as Apartheid. As *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines apartheid as "the former political system in South Africa in which only white people had full political rights and other people, especially black people, were forced to live away from white people, go to separate school etc" (Hornby 58). This policy lasted in South Africa until 1992.

National Party strengthened the implementation of racial segregation which began under Dutch and British colonial rule. The government systematically classified the people into different groups and regulated existing segregationist laws. It developed rights and limitations for each such as pass laws and residential restrictions. The white minority controlled the black majority.

Comparing to the First World Western Nations, the white minority enjoyed the highest standard of living in all Africa, and black majority remained disadvantaged by every

standard of living including income, education, housing etc. Since the 1940s racial discrimination and apartheid policy has been attracting international attention. South Africa's racist system and apartheid laws violate the basic principles of justice and it also violates the universally recognized human rights. The non-white population of South Africa was adversely affected by this apartheid policy and racial discrimination. Its object was to monopolize black people and keep them away from an opportunity for self-expression in any field, and treat them like a slave of a white people.

From 1958, Blacks were deprived of their citizenship legally becoming citizens of ten tribally based and nominally self-governing Bantustans (tribal homelands) four of which became nominally independent states. Blacks were supposed to live in their homelands and set up business there. Ten homelands were created in different parts of the country. They covered 13% of the total land area of the country. The homelands were relatively small and economically unproductive areas of the country and it contained bare land which was unfertile for agriculture. And these homelands consisted of small and scattered pieces of land. In this connection S.C. Saxena remarks,

The Blacks in South Africa have been assigned to one or the other of these homelands, while in the rest of South Africa, which is regarded as white man's territory, they are like foreigners. So Blacks have become foreigners in the land of their birth! (Saxena 402).

The government segregated education medical care and other public services and provided black people with services greatly inferior those of whites. The education system in black schools was designed to prepare blacks as a labouring class. As S. C. Saxena observes,

Although there were thousands of discriminatory laws on the statute books of South Africa, four of them were regarded as the "pillars" of apartheid. They

were (a) the Pass Laws; (b) the Group Areas Act; (c) the Population Registration Act; and (d) the two Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 (Saxena 393-394).

Blacks were not allowed on the streets of towns in Cape colony and Natal after dark. According to Pass Laws a person above 16 had to carry their passes at all times, which contains all of his personal information like his name, his residential address, his ethnic classification etc. Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd is considered the most influential politician in the growth of apartheid.

The Group Areas Act of 1950 separated racial groups geographically. The Population Registration Act (1950) divided the South Africa into separate groups according to race and colour. The Act classified the population into white, coloured and Native categories and introduced identity cards for all persons above 18 specifying their racial group. The two Land Acts- the Native Land act of 1913 and the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 are important for the development of apartheid system. Blacks were provided small lands, poor in quality, and scattered throughout the country. The Separate Amenities Act was passed in 1953. It created separate entrances for Blacks and Whites in all public places, separate beaches, separate railway compartments on trains, separate buses, separate benches in the parks, separate hospitals, schools and universities. Signboards such as "whites only" were posted in the public places. Marriages between Blacks and Whites were illegal under the Immorality Act of 1927.

In South Africa wages and living conditions of workers reflected the true nature of apartheid system. The wages paid to Black workers were extremely poor in comparison to the whites. The racist government realized that if Blacks were given higher education they would start asking for jobs that were reserved exclusively for whites. Apartheid also had a great



impact on women and children. Women had to suffer racial as being Black and gender discrimination as a woman. Children left in the homelands had to suffer greatly and grow up without the love of their parents.

The challenge to this system of apartheid began with the founding of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912. Later the United Nations Organization, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) joined the efforts to wipe out apartheid policy in South Africa. The ANC's struggle emerged as the leader of black resistance in South Africa. ANC made long and determined efforts to fight against apartheid and racial discrimination imposed upon black majority by the white minority. In 1913 ANC organized the struggle of African people against the infamous pass-laws. During the twenties, the ANC organized strikes by African workers who were made to work under detestable conditions. It also struggled for inferior Bantu Education System. At first ANC adhered the peaceful method of struggle for 37 years but racist regime remained impassive and brought more discriminatory laws. But finally ANC launched its armed struggle in 1961. The most important point came in the history of ANC was struggle after the Sharpeville Massacre on 21 March 1960. Nelson Mandela was the great leader of ANC who was sent to prison for his involvement in armed struggle in 1961. Nelson Mandela in his struggle in South Africa under apartheid was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's theory of Satyagraha. Gandhi fought for Independence of India and protested against British Empire. For this he advocates Civil Disobedience method. Civil Disobedience is the active, professed refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of a government. It is one form of civil non-violent resistance.

South Africa has different ethnic groups as well as different languages. A writer had a little option in choosing a language for their writing. Fortunately or unfortunately, because of colonial regime, English and French became major languages for communication in South

Africa. If a writer chose his native language for writing, he limits the number of readers. In order to secure more readers writers prefer to write in English.

The white dominated society in South Africa has a major influence on the writers. Apartheid, racial discrimination, white domination form the background of many novels in South Africa. In Afrikaans literature the prose work is dominated by E. Leroux (1922) and the writers like Andre Brink (b.1935), Uys Krige (b.1910) are openly critical about apartheid. Other writers such as J. M. Coetzee have written all their major work in the English language although they are of Afrikaner descent.

*The Story of an African Farm (1883)* is the first successful novel by white writer, Olive Schreiner (1862-1920) born in South Africa, who also happened to be a woman. It is the founding text of the colonial experience, which was published in 1883. It tells the story of several characters representing aspects of South African society of its day. The story is set in the middle to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Olive Schreiner contributed to the development of South African literature by presenting female experience in a colonial society and disturbing traditional gender models. She deals not only with woman's issues and marriage but also with politics, race and labour relations. The novel is set in the barren landscape of the Great Karro farm in South Africa.

The first novel by black South African is Solomon Plaatje's *Mhudi* which was published in 1930. Like Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* it shows the impact of the European arrival on the traditional society. The story follows the flight of the Tswana people during and after their military encounter with Zulus under Shaka, the Zulu conqueror of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Plaatje also wrote *Native Life in South Africa (1916)*, attacking the Natives Land Act of 1913 which declared that only certain areas of the country could be owned by natives. These areas totaled only 10% of the entire land mass of the Union.

There was a trend in literature to comment on South Africa's racial problems. John Dube (b.1870), who wrote the first novel in Zulu language, *Insila kaShaka* (1930). R R R Dhlomo (b.1901) wrote the first published novel in English by black – *An African Tragedy* (1928). The next generation of black writers who were born in 1920s followed the model of the Dhlomos and their educational background reflects urban life, particularly Sophiatown in Johannesburg. The writers who belonged to this generation include Peter Abrahams (b.1919), Ezekiel Mphahlele (b.1919), Dennis Brutus (b.1924), Alfred Hutchinson (b.1924), Noni Jabavu (b.1920), Alex la Guma (b.1925), Bloke Modisane (b.1923), Can Themba (b.1924), Todd Matshikiza (b.1924), James Matthews (b.1929), Cosmo Pieterse (b.1930), Mazisi Kunene (b.1930), Richard Rive (b.1931), Arthur Maimane (b.1932), and a little later, Lewis Nkosi (b.1936) and Nat Nakasa (b.1937).

The sixties in South Africa was a very difficult time. It was the decade of the outcome of Sharpsville Massacre (1959). In this massacre the ANC and PAC activists were mowed down by police for their mass protest against the pass laws. Other writers who have dominated English writing in South Africa with its distinguished tradition of liberalism are Doris Lessing (b.1919) of Zimbabwe, Nadine Gordimer (b.1923) and Alan Paton (b.1903) etc.

Nadine Gordimer, the Nobel Prize winner for literature in 1991, is a well-known white South African novelist. Gordimer's fiction covers the period from the late forties to the late eighties. About South African writers Nadine Gordimer comments,

. . .the South African novelist has begun to create literature at a time in a world history when the community . . . is on the decline, . . .he has grown up in a society where 78 per cent of the population is cut off from the normal cultural influences – libraries, art galleries, theatres and concerts – by the colour bar,

and the existing substance of culture is consequently pitifully thin. Along with the South African Poet, painter and composer, the novelist has begun to be creative in uncreative circumstances (Gordimer 36).

Nadine Gordimer writes about white minority in the novels such as *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966), *The Conservationist* (1974). In her first novel *The Lying Days* (1953) the protagonist Helen Shaw tries to contribute the black's struggle for freedom. Gordimer discusses in this novel the political climate of South Africa and the changes brought about by the government such as petty apartheid, prohibition of mixed marriages. The events of Sharpeville Massacre, Soweto and Black Consciousness Movement form the background in the novel *The Burger's Daughter* (1979). The novel's setting is in the history of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Rosa, daughter of Lionel Burger, a white Afrikaner anti-apartheid activist, who has been arrested and standing trial for treason. Rosa was only twelve years old when Sharpeville Massacre occurred. She joins the French branch of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Her other novels are *A World of Strangers*(1958), *Occasion for Loving* (1963), *A Guest of Honour* (1970), *A Sport of Nature* (1987), *My Son's Story* (1990), *None to Accompany Me* (1999). In *The Conservationist* the white protagonist is a colour conscious Afrikaner. The title is ironic and suggests Mehring's desire to conserve the barren, unproductive farm at the cost of Zulus who depend on it for nourishment. This novel symbolically points the future defeat of white powers in South Africa. Africa is viewed in this novel as a land entirely belonging to the blacks. Gordimer writes harshly of the entombed white minority in novels such as *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966). Her short story collections such as *Some Monday for Sure* (1976) etc. define black frustrations.

The first novel to reveal the morality South Africa is built on colour is Sarah Gertrude Millin's *God's Stepchildren* (1924). In this novel a colour issue becomes a moral issue. The magazines are important in establishing black writing in South Africa. She tries to present in

her novels the world of native people and the predicament of coloured people in South Africa. *Drum* is the most formative magazine where many black South African writers at first published their work here. Ezekiel Mphahlele was the Literary Editor in 1956.

Peter Abrahams is also the most important South African novelist. Peter Abrahams like other writers in South Africa holds up to mock the violence committed in the name of apartheid. In this connection James Trevor remarks, "Abrahams began writing a decade before Achebe and although nearly all his works are dominated by South African themes, his characters tend to be contrived and, for contemporary taste, unconvincing" (Trevor 70).

His novel *Mine Boy*, which was published in 1946, is the representative of South African novels in English. The main character in this novel is Xuma, who has arrived in the Malay Camp section of Johannesburg. The novel deals with the story of Xuma's experience to life in Johannesburg and his work as a leader of one of the group of work in a gold mine. The novel concentrates on the life in Johannesburg and urbanization. Blacks, Colours and Whites are all in the novel. It pictures the misery of the disadvantaged, deprived people in the threatening shadow of apartheid. The novel was published in the same year when a large miners' strike was violently suppressed by Smuts' government. *Mine Boy* depicts the life in black areas and the problems of rural people in a depressed urban environment.

Peter Abrahams' *Wild Conquest* (1951) is the novel which tries to go back to the beginning of the great moral dilemma of black and white. Peter Abrahams has written autobiographies such as *Return to Goli* (1953) and *Tell Freedom* (1954). His first four works show his understanding of South African racial situation. His novels *Song of the City* (1945) and *Mine Boy* (1946) are about the black people's flow to the cities from the country. In *The Path of Thunder* (1948) the focus is upon issues of paternity and love across the colour line. *A Wreath for Udomo* (1956) is the study of a modern African political leader rise to power and

his betrayal. In this connection Claude Wautheir remarks, "... The South African writer, with his *Mine Boy*, *Tell Freedom* and *The Path of Thunder*, is in many ways the Richard Wright of Southern Africa" (Wautheir 159).

In South Africa racial discrimination and apartheid have provided setting for large number of novels in English.

✓ Doris Lessing has occupied a significant place in South African literature. Her novels show protest against apartheid. She tries to solve the racial dilemma and political and religious problems which affect to mould the life of men and women. Her novel *The Grass is Singing* (1950) is a classic study in Africa's black-white relations which also echoes Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*. The three main characters in this novel are Dick Turner, Mary Turner and their Black servant, Moses. The novel depicts Lessing's concern about social, political, economic structures, the problem of women existing in a male dominated world and also the vital relationship between White masters and the Black African servants. The heroine of the novel is Mary, married with Dick Turner who compels his wife to drift closer to black servant Moses. Mary finds emotional satisfaction from Moses but they had to discontinue their relationship because of the problem of apartheid. Apartheid regime strictly prohibited the relationship between two races. A woman's loneliness in man's world is the basic problem in *The Grass is Singing*. Her other novels *Martha Quest* (1952), *A Proper Marriage* (1954), *Going Home* (1957) also reflect themes like generation gap, apartheid, man-woman relationship and her commitment to protest against racialism. The constant themes in her novels are racialism, generation gap, woman's liberation and sexual maladjustment etc. Other writers who protest against apartheid are Athol Fugard, Alfred Hutchinson and Arthur Nortje. Nortje in his novels focuses upon the problems of a man who seeks to protest against apartheid.

J. M. Coetzee is the white South African novelist who won Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003. Coetzee was born in 1940 in Cape Town. His parents are of Afrikaner descent. *Disgrace (1999)* is the first post-apartheid novel by J.M. Coetzee. In this novel Lucy is the daughter of David Lurie. David Lurie is an Afrikaner professor of literature who expelled from his university post for sexually abusing a female student. Then he went to live with a daughter who has set up a farm in the countryside. During their stay, Lucy is raped by three black youths. Then she finds herself pregnant and refuses to abort the child and also refuses to leave the farm. In this critical condition she accepts the marriage proposal of her black farm assistant Petrus and stay back in the farm. The novel denies all the old assumptions. J. M. Coetzee's novels *Life and Times of Michael K. (1983)* and *Disgrace (1999)* won him twice Booker Prize.

Ezekiel Mphahlele (b.1919) was born in Pretoria. Mphahlele was exiled in 1957 for protesting against the Bantu Education Act which provides separate education at the school level. His most important work is the autobiography *Down Second Avenue (1959)*. It reflects not only racial tensions but also domestic pressures within the Mphahlele's household. In a situation of racial polarization Mphahlele has refused to adopt a racial stance. As a secretary of the African National Congress he attended the first All-African Peoples' Conference held in Accra in December 1958 where he vigorously defended the notion of a multiracial society in South Africa, and he has argued that negritude, despite its role in French Africa, has tended to falsify reality. He is also known for his novel *The Wanderers (1971)* which is about exile and the consequence of rootlessness. His writing is dominated by alienation and the experiences during his self-imposed exile from South Africa and his return in 1977.

Alex la Guma uses the same theme of apartheid as other writers in South Africa used in their novels. Then what distinguishes him as a true novelist? In this regard Lewis Nkosi says,

...He has the artist's eye for the interesting detail; his stories and novels are sagging under the weight of real people waging a bloody contest with the forces of oppression; and credibly they celebrate their few moments of victory in sex, cheap Cape wine and stupid fights. The rooms they inhabit smell of decay, urine and sweat; they share them with 'roaches, fleas, bugs, lice. Their only triumph is that they are human – superlatively human; and this is their sole claim upon our imagination (Nkosi 116).

Alex la Guma suffered greatly from apartheid since his exile. His first and best-known novel *A Walk in the Night* (1962) was banned in South Africa. His novel *A Walk in the Night* shows the life of crime to which slum residents are driven. In *And a Threefold Cord* (1964) La Guma describes life in a Cape Town slum in all its immorality, with prostitution, alcoholism, violence, famine, unemployment, and illness accepted as part of daily life for the inhabitants. His next novel *The Stone Country* (1967) examines conditions in the South African prison system; the hierarchical social system, racial segregation, and acceptance of brutality toward blacks make the prison a microcosm of South Africa as a whole. La Guma's most highly regarded novel, *In the Fog of the Seasons' End* (1972), is also his most autobiographical, concerning itself with the South African resistance movement. His final work of published fiction, *Time of the Butcherbird* (1979), is his most metaphorical, unfolding the history of an Afrikaaner family as represented by a white racist landowner whose eventual death at the hands of a black activist is portrayed as fully justified. His short story collection *A Glass of Wine* (1960) where the hopeless love of a white boy and a coloured girl could eloquently but silently state the evil of South Africa's Immorality Act.

Mazisi Kunene (b.1930) also played a vital part in ANC and the Anti-Apartheid movements in Britain. The novels of Enver Carim deal with a new black and political consciousness. His novel *The Golden City* (1969) is a vivid celebration of life in



Johannesburg. Other novel *A Dream Deffered* (1973) insights into aspects of black-white relations, particularly the violence done to white perception by the role of oppressor.

The woman novelist Bessie Head (b.1937) assumed a dominant position in South African literature. Her works include: *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968), *Maru* (1971), *A Question of Power* (1974), *Serowe: Village of the Rain-Wind* (1981) etc. Bessie Head's work emphasized the value of ordinary life and humble people, was more in touch with the trend in African writing. In her first novel *When Rain Clouds Gather*, Bessie Head explores the complex tensions within the protagonist and the process of adjustment to a new life. In *Maru* she deals with the experience of being racial outsider in Botswana. Most of her writing took place when she was in exile in Botswana. Her novels deal with the themes like racial hatred, corrupting power and authority, together with political and spiritual exile. While dealing with these themes, Head highlights that oppression was already existent in the structure of the traditional African society, it did not come with the arrival of the white man. Her novels are powerful for struggle, adaptation and survival. While talking about his first novel *When Rain Clouds Gather* Bessie Head remarks,

It is my only truly South African work, reflecting a black South African viewpoint. The central character in the novel, a black South African refugee, is almost insipid, a guileless, simple-hearted simpleton. But that is a true reflection of the black South African personality. We are an oppressed people who have been stripped bare of every human right (20-6).

Dennis Brutus (b.1924) is the most important black South African writer. Dennis Brutus was arrested for his political activities. He left South Africa in 1966. He worked for SANROC (South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee) and the International Defense and Aid Fund. His collection of verse include *Letters to Martha* (1968), *Sirens, Knuckles, Boots* (1963), *A Simple Lust* (1973) and *A Stubborn Hope* (1978).

Several influential black poets became prominent in the 1970s such as Mongane Wally Serote, whose famous work, *No Baby Must Weep* (1975), gives insight into the everyday life of South Africans under apartheid. Another famous black novelist is Zakes Mda. His novel *The Heart of Redness* (2000) won the 2001 Commonwealth Writers' Prize. His novel *Ways of Dying* (1995) explores the theme of violence. The writers own experience of exile, alienation, suffering and violence enrich the themes of his novels. Zakes Mda's latest novel *Black Diamond* (2009) is a satire on contemporary South African life, it contains a large cast of characters, including a convict out for revenge, the magistrate who sent him to jail, and the bodyguard hired to protect him.

Other prominent novels by South African writers are Andre Brink's *Rumours of Rain* (1978) and *A Dry White Season* (1979). Throughout his novels he reports and analyzes the harshest aspects of South African society. Brink's novel *Looking on Darkness* (1974) was banned and *A Chain of Voices* (1982) uses sexual relations between blacks and whites as a touchstone. Richard Rive's novel *Buckingham Palace District Six* (1986) depicts life and characters in District Six during the 1950s and 60s, and shows their responses to the devastating removals under the Group Areas Act. William Plomer is white South African novelist whose novel *Turbott Wolfe* (1926) deals with the highly sensitive issue of inter-racial love, though it is hardly a roistering sexual chronicle. He openly discusses about political and racial situation in South Africa. Miriam Tlali was the first black woman who has produced a novel, *Muriel at the Metropolitan* (1975) which is also known as *Between Two Worlds*.

Alan Paton, the prominent novelist in South Africa has confronted the horrors of apartheid in South Africa. We find in his novels the sympathetic treatment of the exploitation of nonwhites by the privileged ruling class and its tragic effects on the South African society and the exploited. His novels such as *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948), *Too Late the*

*Phalarope* (1953), and *Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful* (1981) show protest against apartheid, racial prejudice and the oppression of black people.

Prison, rough treatment and racial humiliation are constant themes of the African protest novels. South Africa was greatly exploited by the colonial powers. South African people had to live under the laws imposed by colonialist and had to face the crisis of values generated by the colonial politics. With the advent of colonialism people confronted new values and habits which always did not fit into their cultural background. The South African writers draw their attention to the world faced by their people. They use fiction as a form and English as a language in order to reach to the wide number of readers all over the world. Exploitation of the African peasant or worker under the colonial system has also provided the subject for several novels. All South African novelist efforts to concentrate on the racial situation, the inhuman life imposed upon the people by Europeans. South African literature depicts the crisis and contradictions faced by the people. ✓ The South African novel expresses their resentment against the corruption and they protest against the racialist regime. Its main themes are protest against inequality, protest against social injustice towards the blacks and protests against the way the political system prevents the individual from realizing themselves.