

Allegories of the perils of segregation used as political strategy in once upon a...

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



The writers Nadine Gordimer and Salman Rushdie both use allegory in their works. Nadine Gordimer wrote the short story, "Once Upon a Time", which talks about racial segregation in South Africa. Salman Rushdie wrote the novel, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, which talks about the importance of stories. Both "Once Upon a Time", by Nadine Gordimer, and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, by Salman Rushdie use allegory to prove the danger of a governing body separating its citizens. In "Once Upon a Time", Nadine Gordimer conveys that separating people by race causes people to fear, distrust, and be angry with each other. In the story, there is a white-only suburb, closed off from the non-whites. However, the suburb is not closed off completely from the non-whites. Non-whites could come into the suburb if they wanted to be housemaids or gardeners. The story focuses on a family that lived in the white suburb. This family was living soundly in the suburb, as did every white in the suburb. However, outside the suburb, in the non-white areas, life was anything but comfortable. The story says that there were buses being burned, cars stoned, and children shot in the non-white area. Because of the poor conditions in the non-white area, there was rioting. This rioting is caused because the non-whites found it unfair that the whites were living comfortably in their suburb, while they were living in poor conditions in their area. "And buses were being burned, cars stoned, and schoolchildren shot by the police in those quarters out of sight and hearing of the suburb...The riots were suppressed, but there were many burglaries in the suburb..." (Gordimer, 13). From this passage, one sees that the non-whites were living in bad conditions, and they did riot. Some even sneaked in the suburb on the intention of stealing items belonging to the whites. This

excerpt from the story proves the non-whites were living in an abysmal state. Furthermore, this passage proves that separating people by race causes anger because the non-whites rioted, and stole from the whites out of anger. Later in the story, it says that because of the many burglaries, the whites began to fear the non-whites, and began installing security devices. “ When the man and wife, and little boy, took the pet dog for its walk round the neighborhood streets, they no longer paused to admire this show of roses or that perfect lawn; these were hidden behind an array of different varieties of security fences, walls, and devices” (Gordimer, 15). From this passage, the readers see that the whites clearly feared the non-whites, and further isolated themselves from the non-whites. Even though they were already isolated from the non-whites because the suburb was closed off from the non-white area, the whites wanted to distance themselves even further by installing these security devices. This action was taken because of fear and distrust. So this piece of text proves that separating people causes fear and distrust. Towards the end of the story, it says that when the family always saw the security devices every time they walked around in the neighborhood. The husband and wife began to study each of the security devices. “ The husband and wife found themselves comparing the possible effectiveness of each style against its appearance.” (Gordimer, 15) From this passage, the readers see that even the family were beginning to get influenced by this fear of the non-whites, even though the story never says that family’s house was broken into. This proves that the separation causes fear.

In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Salman Rushdie reveals that separation of citizens causes the separated groups to negatively view each other and cannot interact with each other and get a better understanding of each other. Separation of citizens also causes the divided citizens to live different lifestyles of each other, and hinders interaction. In the novel, there is a sad city, whose inhabitants are so sad that they have forgotten the name of the city. In the sad city, there is one happy fellow named Haroun, whose father is the famous storyteller, Rashid Khalifa. However, Haroun's happiness turns into sadness because Soraya, his mother, runs away, and Rashid lost his ability to tell stories. To set thing straight, Haroun convinces a water genie he ran into to take Haroun to the source of stories, the Sea of Stories, located on the earth's second moon, Kahani. Haroun notices something strange on Kahani. " Thanks to the genius of the Eggheads at P2C2E House... the rotation of Kahani has been brought under control. As a result, the Land of Gup is bathed in endless sunshine, while over in Chup it's always the middle of the night. In between the two lies the Twilight strip, in which, at the Grand Comptroller's command, Guppees long ago constructed an unbreakable (and also invisible) wall of force" (Rushdie, 80). From this passage, one sees that since the rotation of Kahani had been controlled, Guppees lived in permanent sunshine, and the Chupwalas lived in permanent darkness. This statement is symbolic of how when two groups are separated, they live completely different lifestyles. This statement proves that separating citizens is dangerous because it causes the separated groups to live in different societies or lifestyles, and hence cannot interact with each other freely. Separation is also harmful because it causes people to

misunderstand each other. Later in the story, Haroun finds out that there is trouble in the city of Gup. The princess Batcheat had been kidnapped by a group of Chupwalas, who are inhabitants of Chup. These Chupwalas followed a cult-master named Khattam-Shud, who wants to poison the Sea of Stories. Prince Bolo, Batcheat's fiancée, declares war on Chup, and leads his army into Chup. Once entering Chup, Haroun, Rashid, Prince Bolo, and a few others spy on a Chupwala named Mudra. "The Shadow Warrior...managed to croak out a few words, 'Murder' it said, 'Spock obi New Year.' So it's murder he plans, cried Bolo, putting his hands on the hilt of his sword...Rashid smacked his forehead...He's been talking to us fluently the whole time." (Rushdie, 130). From this passage, one sees that Bolo misunderstood Mudra, and thought that he was a threat, even though the Shadow Warrior just wanted to communicate. The reason why Bolo misunderstood Mudra because Bolo never had any previous interaction with Chupwalas, so he took something as innocent as communication as a threat. This passage proves that separation is harmful because it causes people to misunderstand each other. This excerpt from the story also proves that separation causes the separated groups to negatively view each other, just as how Bolo thought Mudra was a threat. When the separation of citizens has ended, there will be peace. Towards the end of the story, Prince Bolo's army had already teamed up with Mudra, and Prince Bolo, Mudra, Rashid, and a few others has defeated the army of Khattam-shud. The group enters Chup City, while Haroun and his group, who split from the main group, stopped the poisoning of the ocean. The Chupwalas called the Guppees the liberators, and Batcheat had been rescued. "Peace broke out. The new government of the Land of

Chup, headed by Mudra, announced its desire for a long and lasting peace with Chup, a peace Night and Day, Speech and Silence, would no longer be separated into Zones by Twilight Strips and Walls of Force" (Rushdie, 191). From this section, one sees that the new government of Chup wanted to make peace with Chup, regardless of differences. The deeper meaning of this statement is when the separation of people ends, people can better understand each other and get along. This statement proves that separation of people causes people to not get a better understanding of each other. Only when the separation of people has ended can people interact with each other.