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From Burger's Daughter to Rosa Burger: The Vision of an Independent Self in Nadine

Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter*

Abstract

Nadine Gordimer's writing emerges from the backdrop of imperially controlled South Africa. Her novel *Burger's Daughter* (1974) focuses on the protagonist's quest for an autonomous self and an independent identity. The title of the novel indicates that Rosa the central female character has no independent existence and is defined in relation to her father. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) states that "women are positioned as the 'other' in relation to the concept of 'self' which has been colonized by patriarchy", Rosa is alienated because she is a 'woman'. As the novel has a colonial setting Rosa becomes the symbol of the stifling effects of colonization and patriarchy. Rosa's life is dictated by her anti-apartheid activist father, Lionel Burger and she is ostracized from the white society because she is

Burger's daughter. Her place in African society is no way different from that of the black Negro and she too feels ostracized from the civilized white society for her father's anti-apartheid activities. Initially Rosa is not a fervent supporter of anti-apartheid but she cannot shake off the expectations placed on her because she is Burger's daughter. The role of women in society is constructed in the patriarchal imagination and Rosa is expected to submit to patriarchy and follow the path of her father politically and as well as socially.

The paper explores the struggle of the protagonist to crave an identity of her own wherein she is recognised as an individual and not labeled as 'Burger's daughter'.

Keywords: patriarch, identity, self, other, woman