

I. Introduction

Nadine Gordimer is a South African writer, political activist and winner of the Nobel Prize in literature 1991 and mostly deals with the moral and psychological tensions of South Africa. Born in Springs, Transvaal, South Africa in 1923 and educated at a convent school, Gordimer's life has been devoted to her writing since her stay at Witwatersrand University. Most of her works concern with the tensions of her racially divided home country South Africa. She was founding member of Congress of South African writers, and even at the height of the apartheid regime, she never considered going into exile. Exploitation and violence created in the society have been depicted in her books for these are consequences of the divided society for Gordimer. For exposing the effects of divided society and communities, conscious about the bad effects and she applies them to majority of black people of the country to liberate themselves from the ditch of psychological tension existing in the mind of the people.

Gordimer began writing quite in early age taking the pathologies and everyday realities of a radically divided society as her subject matter. She still lives in Johannesburg South Africa. Her decision to remain in the country through the years of political repression has reflected her commitment to her subject, to the society and to her vision of post apartheid future.

Gordimer is a novelist cum short-story writer. Gordimer has written numerous novels and short stories. Most of her works deal with the sense of oppression and reconciliation apartheid created in South African society. Her first short story, *Come Again Tomorrow*, was published when she was fifteen, in the liberal Johannesburg magazine *Forum* and during her twenties; her stories appeared in many local magazines. In 1951 the New Yorker took one of her short stories. Her

short story collections include *Face to Face* (1949), *A Soldier's Embrace* (1980) *Something Out There* (1989) and *Jump and Other Stories* (1991). *Loot* (2003), is a collection of ten short stories widely varied in theme and place.

Nadine Gordimer's subject matter has been the effects of apartheid on the lives of South African people and the up-heavels of life in South Africa. She often gives focus to oppressed characters and effects of the oppression on them. Being an ardent opponent of apartheid, her works served to chart over a number of years the changing response to apartheid in South Africa. Her first novel, *The Lying Days* (1953) is based largely on her own life and set in her home town. The novel depicts the life of a white girl, Helen and her growing disaffection towards town life. Her other works at that time include *A World of Strangers* (1958), *Occasion for Loving* (1963) and *The Late Bourgeois World* (1966). In the first two novels, Gordimer focuses on an illicit love affair between a black man and a white woman, and *The Late Bourgeois World* deals with master-servant relations in South African Life.

Gordimer's novels of 1970s like *The Conservationist* (1974) and *Burger's Daughter* (1979)- evoke a broader political and historical totality by making her characters and her novels as her representatives. *The Conservationist* belongs to an over whelming industrial period in the postwar South Africa, a period of accelerated economic growth which changed the face of country and city alike. The characters, images and setting of the novel all reflect South African life in the 1960s and early 1970s, especially life in the expanding industrial conurbation on Witwaterstand reef. Mehring, the white protagonist of the novel, is really a myopic capitalist of colonial mentality who originally purchases the farm for the purpose of seducing Antonia, the owner of the farm. Gordimer observes South Africa's decay largely through the monologues of a wealthy businessman. He cultivates empty affairs with the land he

owns with an eye toward profit and loss. Similarly *Burger's Daughter*, Gordimer presents the evaluation of South African people through the protagonist. Since the novel was written after Soweto uprising, the protagonist of the novel, a daughter, analyzes her relationship to her father, a martyr of antiapartheid movement.

Gordimer's short story writing includes *Six Feet of the Country* (1956), *Not For Publication* (1965) and *Living Stone's Companions* (1971). And in her short stories too, the historical context of racially divided South African Society has become the basis of her writing. In *Oral History from A Soldier's Embrace* (1980), Gordimer chooses a village chief as representative of the oppressors in that society and she eventually depicts the tragic suicide of the oppressor, the tragic end of colonial mentality. The background of the story is the war of independence in Zimbabwe.

Since 1990 Gordimer's focus is writing novels. *None to Accompany me* (1994) tries to depict South African People's search for new selves along with the national transformation into new political and cultural position. By placing the characters amid psychological tensions and conditions, Gordimer gives an outlet to them. In *The House Gun* (1998), Gordimer has explored the complexities of post apartheid South African society and it has been shown through a murder trial. Two white privileged liberals, Heral and Claudia Lindgard, face of the fact that their architect-son Ducan, has killed his friend Carl Jepserson.

Gordimer takes 'New South Africa as point of departure in *The Pickup* (2001). *The Pickup* deals with the problem of race and class, bureaucratic arbitrariness and the connection between the private and the political issues but it lifts these problems from a local or national to global level. Gordimer makes the setting depart from post-apartheid Johannesburg to a conspicuously unmade Arab Country. The interracial

love story between Julie and Abdu picks up Gordimer's theme of self and other on both cultural and individual level, and it widens its scope from the racial opposition between Black and White to the cultural one between 'East' and 'West'. The novel has gained topicality. Only days after the book's publication the happenings of September 11 have put the relationship between Christian and eastern Arabic Islamic cultures in the agenda of political debate. Her latest novel is *Beethoven was One-sixteenth Black* (2007).

None to Accompany Me takes place in a tumultuous South Africa in the final thrown of apartheid, the year when the old life comes to an end'. The upheaval is reflected in the life of the characters like Vera Stark and Sibongile Maquama, especially in that of Vera, a White civil right lawyer who gradually sheds the trappings of her married life in pursuit of a space in existence. Sibongile, a women freedom fighter gets a space in newly formed executive government after facing many threatening conditions in her life. Both characters, during the time of getting upheavals, get traversed by themselves and so they have discovered their final form of company. Tracing Vera's transition along with her country's one, *None to Accompany Me* is a lyrical exploration of radical social change as a possibility of changing oneself.

Vera, a pragmatic wife and mother and chief protagonist of the novel, is Gordimer's complex character. When the novel begins, she has just found an old photograph that she had sent to her husband in Egypt during the Second World War. On it she has written a message by circling Bennet Stark's face that she has found a new man.

Being a lawyer and administrator at the legal foundation, Vera has founded her life work in making blacks reclaim the lost land during apartheid system. And now Bennet seems to be standing in position of role-reversal who has left his

academic ambition _ to be a professor and a sculpture- so that it might help her working toward her career.

Based on her commitment she rose to political prominence, Vera began to drift from her family and particularly from her husband. Since she had already left her first husband while he was in the war then she choose Bennet as her lover, not a spouse. Though she is with Bennet, she has sexual relation with Otto Abarbanel, one of the officials at the foundation. Her relationship with Bennet as lover is based in concept of free sexuality as a part of the life of self. Besides, her son's disintegrating marriage life, her daughter's interest in lesbianism and her appointment to the technical committee on constitutional issues lead her, step by step, toward feeling of estrangement. And the feeling of estrangement ultimately leads her lonely living with her own independent self. Her personal life is always transitory and she feels, it is politics which makes a person transcendent. She prefers politics to personal need, for politics is the art which can make her existence transcendental one.

In dealing with sexual politics and power politics in the novel, Gordimer makes Ben and Vera's lives parallel to the lives of Didymus and Sibongile Maquma who are freedom fighters and have just returned from exiles. Through this family Gordimer has given seismic shifts in the political and sexual landscape. Didymus has spent his life abroad and underground, fighting against apartheid and it's government. But in the new political alignment Didymus is regarded as a tired and politically compromised member of the old guard. Because of Sibongile's political prominence he is relegated to history, his only role is to write history of himself and do the household chores at home. On the other hand, it is Sibongile who wins a seat in the executive government. Sibongile has been depicted as a capable woman for public position.

Though Gordimer has paralleled the story of two families he makes paths of two families diverge. They diverge in the sense that Sibongile endures the marriage life and family and Vera departs herself from marriage life and children too. However they converge in more important ways that both have new possibilities in post-apartheid South Africa. Both Vera and Sibongile have realized initiative traces of their independent lives with their own selves. For Sibongile, the domestic strains and sound marital relationship have become minor issues because there is her spectacular rise to political prominence. And for Vera, marriage failure has become one step along the way to gain independent identity.

While depicting post apartheid South Africa's new possibilities, Gordimer makes Vera and Sibongile's lives parallel to South Africa's development. Vera's political commitments, Sibongile's political prominence and her sense of reconciliation in enduring her family refer change in South Africa after the abolition of apartheid. The movement of their life from submissive and sexual to political beings has liberated Vera and Sibongile. They have learnt to immerse completely themselves in a transcendental cause - political cause. In doing so, they are able to discover their true selves.

As the novel provides glimpses of South African people's lives at both personal and political levels in the new post-revolutionary South Africa, it has gained much responses and criticisms from many critics. The political commitment concerns a lot in this book. When the novel was published in the year of 1994 several critics talked about political and social realities, black empowerment and difficulties in projecting peace in the changing society.

Taking *None to Accompany Me* as one of South Africa's reflections during transitional period Dominic Head, in "Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me*:

Revisionism and Interregnum" opines:

Gordimer's eleventh novel, *None to Accompany Me*, is her first to be set and written after the watershed of February 1990, which saw the release of Nelson Mandela, and the subsequent unbanning of ANC, and this, her first post-apartheid novel seems to be very much a novel of transition. (46)

To him the novel reflects transitional period of post-apartheid South African society. When the apartheid system got abolished, the new law came into existence. But the difficulty, according to Head, lies in practice of the law. People found themselves getting trapped between the principles of law and their experiences. The novel too cannot be remained untouched by these difficulties and tensions. The protagonist of the novel, Vera Stark, a lawyer for legal foundation faced difficulties in making negotiation with black people. While making Tertius Odendall, a Boer farmer who rents land to blacks, understand the purpose of the Foundation and the structure of new South Africa she faced many upheavals. Though Odendall himself was Black, at first he did not become ready to make any compromise with his huge land because the rent would give him huge amount of money. Then only after overcoming the psychological and political tensions Vera became able to make him realize about the necessity of South African society and about his responsibility to make compromise on his material property.

Similarly, Carlyl Philips in his article *Beat of History* believes that the novel reflects the changing South African Society for an established fact that the arrival of change is caused by abolition of apartheid. He states that the novel concerns "those

moment taking place in changing South Africa..."(37). It presents changes in the lives of South African people along with the national transformation. He opines:

In *None to Accompany Me*, far from "Stealing the loves of black" something of which Gordimer never has been guilty. She tries to show us how the lives of black people have been changed by transformations in South Africa, and in this she is largely successful. Still, even here, Gordimer has a tendency to overstate her case, and we all too often find her drifting aimlessly in the shallow pool of cultural speculation.

(36)

Change in South African people especially that of Black people are the immediate outcome of anti-apartheid movement. The black people now can live life of freedom. There is no obligation for them to live being segregated in society for the new law has legally abolished ways of segregation. And they can use government facilities as white people do now and used to do in the past. In the novel the change in racial treatment has been depicted through the characters like Didymus and Sibongile- the returnees from exiles. Sibongile, after crossing some psychological and familial tensions, gets a place in politics of South Africa. She has been elected as one of the members in the executive government. A Black woman's presence in the government shows that change in black people's lives. It is a remarkable change because there was rare possibility in the past for Black women to get place in public positions.

In relation to questioning the existing way of segregation and the change in South Africa Michiko Katukani compares this book with Gordimer's another novel *The House Gun*. He says that Gordimer, in both novels, "suggests that she has yet to come to terms artistically, with the dismantling of apartheid and her country's drastically altered social landscape" (71). Gordimer, by presenting the decay of

apartheid, has contributed a lot in projecting equality and avoiding segregation. "(H)er description of political scene in *None to Accompany Me* felt oddly generic and her efforts to grapple with post-apartheid relatives in *The House Gun* are often equally forced". Vera, in *None to Accompany Me*, explores her role beyond her submissive and sexual identity. The urging of her self makes her existence independent. In making her existence independent one she questions previously assigned roles and accepts national and political needs as her utmost responsibilities. Similarly in *House Gun*, Gordimer makes Herald and Claudia Lingdard, face the fact that their architect-son, Duncan, has killed his friend Carl Jespersen. Like Vera Lindgard couples "are forced to question everything they once took for granted. Who their son is, how they raised him, what sort of values they believe he holds". Difference in their belief lies in their attitudes toward their present state of acceptance while they have adapted change in the society they live.

Another critic, Isidore Diala in "*Mandela Myth and Black Empowerment in None to Accompany Me*", opines that the novel reinforces the 'Mandela Myth'. Many "circumstances that nurtured the myth" explored in the novel are instances of the reinforcement. According to him:

None to Accompany Me raises questions about the possibilities of rewriting history by the previously exclude in a way that avoids the old orthodoxies and chauvinism. In this regard, the roles of Didymus and Sibongile Maquma, returnee activists, are illustrative and focal. (136)

The book has depicted the picture of history redrawn after the entry of new law into South African society. In the past, majority of the people of South Africa were ruled by Whites, the power of government was in the hand of white people and they would exclude Black from the main stream of history. Sibongile and Didymu's presence in

national politics has shown an established fact that even Black people are capable to handle the nation when they get constitutional places of the nation. Sibongile's "appearance in the government avoids the old orthodoxies and chauvinism"(135). She has become representative of both Black people and South African women. Gordimer, in the novel, "privilege (s) and locate (s) Mandela's significance in province of politics" (137). The novel, at one hand, fulfills the dreams and needs of Black people to be treated equally because both Whites and Blacks are living in the same society. Now power has been transferred into the hands of majority people. History of new South Africa has been the real history which does not exclude any community and it is unbiased to both Blacks and Whites.

Taking the novel as a means of portraying bitter realities happened after dismantling of apartheid in South Africa Julie Wheelwright in *After the Fall* says that Gordimer shows negative consequences: "she explores the painful consequences of its dismantling" (38). He regards the relationship among South African people in the past as true and faithful ones and it is new South Africa which has brought coldness in the relationships: "Gordimer's cast of former comrades in the resistance movement, with their instinct for secrecy and suspicion, find that their hard won access to power forces change on their most intimate relationships" (17). The intimate relationships have got difficulties because the abolition of apartheid made people redefine their previous identities. As Sibongile got a place in newly formed government her relation with her husband no longer remained warm. It is the same cause that confined Didymus within household chores and made him feel inferior. But Melanie Kaye-kantrowitz, in *On the Edge of Change*, says that the novel is a journey into new home. Gordimer has illustrated the journey through the title and parts of the book themselves:

The Book's title, and those of its three parts- *Baggage, Transit, Arrivals*-establish the metaphor or "journey" and its implied partner, "home"- hardly alien themes to Gordimer. People in the novel are always seen taking journeys: They leave home to escape prison or stifling provincialism (as Gordimer did herself), to create new homes.

(80)

To him, the characters of the novel take journey into new homes. The journey is the outcome of change in South Africa. Vera, the protagonist of the novel, left her lover-husband because of her powerful treatment of free sexuality. She abandoned her children too because of her realization of political and national needs: "Vera moves unaccompanied into her life's next stage"(82) which is her new home. At the end of the novel, she is with Zeph Rapulana, Vera's Black friend at his home. Since she has already left previous home, she has created Rapulana's home as her new home.

Eric Anderson, in "Reinventing Notions of National Identity", believes that Gordimer "has offered a constructive approach to possibly thinking of South African national identity" (74). Gordimer, as a South African citizen, actively worked against racism. She makes her characters, in the novel, explore the new national identity. Vera makes her political commitment to socially restructure South Africa. Similarly Didymus and Sibongile are no longer submissive being; rather they have become able to live freely. Anderson opines: "the characters are captured in a state of transformation where they must renegotiate their own sense of national identity"(36). Through the novel, Gordimer renders redefined, true and new identity of South Africa which has been attained with the abandonment of old regime and old identity.

Different literary critics have viewed this novel from different point of views. The present study is going to concentrate on female's independent new selves. Especially Vera, the protagonist of the novel and Sibongile explore their selves when they rose to political prominence. They are empowered and then proved themselves independent human beings in new South Africa. The study will be based on the textual analysis of *None to Accompany Me* supported by the theoretical tools deriving insights from the feminist discourses.

II. Feminism: An Overview

Feminism is a movement of social and political transformation that addresses a sense of human existence which is devoid of sexual biasness. It often concerns gender equality and freedom in order to explore female role and space at political, cultural and social level of society. It seeks independent female identity in the male dominated society.

Feminism assumes that women have been excluded or marginalized from the mainstream of society and it is because of men that they have been oppressed. So feminist thinkers regard feminism as somehow different from the mainstream: as innovative, inventive and rebellious. Beasley points out that the point of view of feminist writers is that the western thought is patriarchal and its authority needs to be questioned (Beasley 3). Beasley has collected some definitions from some dictionaries and other related books which are as follows:

Dictionaries usually define it as the advocacy of women's rights based on a belief in the equality of the sexes, and in its broadest use the word refers to everyone who is aware of and seeking to end women's subordination in anyway and for any reason. Feminism originates in the perception that there is something wrong with the society's treatment of women (*Encyclopedia of Feminism, 1987*) (Beasley 27).

The penguin dictionary of Sociology defines feminism as a doctrine asserting that women are systematically overlooked in modern society and advocating equal opportunities for men and women (Beasley 27). E. Porter defines feminism as a perspective that seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex (Beasley 27). R Delmer says:

It is certainly possible to construct a baseline definition of feminism ...

Many should agree that at the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remained negated and unsatisfied and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change...in the social, economic and political order (Beasley 27-28)

In the society women have been overlooked in such a way that the overlooking itself is a kind of rule. It is often because of hegemonic nature of men patriarchy pervades in the society. Since men have been remained in powerful positions, they have not paid much attention to needs of women and patronize men's own need. And this tendency has been practiced for centuries and centuries of human civilization.

Women have been regarded as inferior and passive human creature since the beginning of human civilization whereas men have been taken as rational, active and superior beings. Since most of the rulers of the states were men in the past, they placed women to inferior ranks of society and the tendency of taking women as means to fulfill men's need pervaded most of the disciplines in society. As a result women didn't get their independent identity. The discrimination could not remain untouched in literature too. As Mary Poovey, in *Difference of Women's Studies: The Examples of Literary Criticism*, believes in imaginative literature men privileges themselves by othering women. She asserts, “(A)n other was to focus attention on the stereotypes and attitudes formulated in writing by men that reinforced the devaluation of women's lives, such as those depicting women as angels or whores”(136).

The views of intellectuals and philosophers whose mind was filled with the stereotypical identity of women got handed down the posterity along with the different periods of human history. In Greek civilization, Aristotle, a great

philosopher, defined women as "incomplete men" from which statement most of his followers took his overlooking thought about women and they continued ill treatment toward women. His another statement justifies his neglecting tendency towards women "female is female by the virtue of a certain lack of qualities" (34). Women were regarded as insignificant, invisible and worthless being in patriarchal society. The beginning of human civilization people made some rules and regulations which created a hierarchy between men and women. Along with the practice of the rules, the hierarchy became a kind of ideology which was male- created and remained constant in the society. As a result, women began to be defined as means to be consumed; not as human beings. Women were deprived of the rights of human beings. They occupied almost no space in cultural, political, economic or social level as well as in literary disciplines. Hence it is nothing but patriarchy and male chauvinism that makes women inferior and secondary.

Patriarchy represents all kinds of suppression done upon women. It is a created system that elevates men to power holding positions. As men are the rulers in the society, they assign themselves in the positions through which they can define women. And men think that it is only possible by excluding women from important and decision making affairs of the society. The practice of this hierarchy limits women to their identity as being of sexual needs to be fulfilled by men. To a feminist, it is sexual rather than domestic exploitation within the family that lengthens the life of hegemonic tendency of patriarchal society. Some feminist think that patriarchy is made up of male violence on women sexuality. Men always think themselves in higher ranks and try to justify themselves by under evaluating women's identity. In this concern of male hegemonic nature, Simon de Beauvoir in her book *Second Sex* opines, "He is to be measured by his acts... if one considers a woman in her

immanent presence ,her inward self, one can say absolutely nothing about her, she falls short of having any qualifications” (Beauvoir,998).

Patriarchal society has enabled men to hold most of powerful positions in the society for they take themselves for granted as transcendent and as having authority to define women. The hierarchy often shows men as ruler and women as beings to be ruled, men as human being or ‘subject’ and women as “negative object” as if men are there to use women as object of need. Again in this respect of created hierarchy between men and women Beauvoir criticizes it as male-made myth against women that myth is near more than mirage which vanishes as well as draws one to look at it. She claims:

The myth of a woman is a luxury .It can appear only if man escapes from the urgent demands of his needs; the more relationships are concretely lived the less they are idealized. The Fellah of ancient Egypt, the Bedouin peasant, the artisan of the Middle Ages, the worker of today has in requirements of work and poverty relations with his particular woman companion which are too definite for her to be embellished with an aura either auspicious or inauspicious. The epochs and the social classes that have been marked by the leisure to dream have been the ones to set along with luxury there was utility; these dreams were irresistibly guided by interests. Surely most of the myths had roots in the spontaneous attitude of man toward his own existence and toward the world around him. But going beyond experience toward the transcendent, idea was deliberately used by patriarchal society for purposes of self-justifications; through the myths this society imposed its laws and customs upon individuals in a picturesque

way, effective manner; it is under a mythical form that the group – imperative is indoctrinated into each conscience.(999)

There is no natural law that makes subordination of women in society. It is not natural feminine characteristics of women that make themselves inferior and secondary to men. Rather the subordination is imposed upon women by strong environmental forces of social tradition under the purposeful control of men. Most of the roles are the stereotypical definition of women as non-man simply because of her lack of identifying male organs of male power. It is men who keep women aloof from realizing their independent identity. Hence it is denigration and subordination of women done by men themselves which gave rise to feminist thought in western civilization.

Activists in the movement feminism are anxious to see how far the patriarchal society has misrepresented women for the ages or contributed to imposing on them a falsely limited notion of their role and they want to be independent. The marginalization or exclusion of women has been remained the central concern of feminist thought. The feminists who talk about subverting female identity have put women in equal rank to male ones. The activists began to raise their voice against male domination. To raise the voice of female and to justify the natural selection of organs, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar insist, "Is a pen a metaphorical penis?" From this assertion they express their protesting voice against the writings written by men which undermine women's voice in imaginative literature. Writing is not an area of doing from which women have been excluded or they have not been successful in gaining as much equality as men have.

Most of the feminists have argued that the main stream thought is bias toward women and they call for change in the varieties of issues of society at social,

economic, political and cultural level. The mainstream thought makes women lack freedom. They have asserted that the patriarchal ideology excludes, marginalizes and trivializes the women and their potential capabilities. Feminist writing includes feminist voices against the subordination that prevents women from realizing their independent identity. Feminist writing tries to wipe out the ideological oppression of women by men. In this respect M.H. Abrahams in his book, *A Glossary of Literary Term*, presents some issues included within feminist writing. He states:

Since 1969 there has been an explosion of feminist writings without parallel in previous critical innovations, in a movement that as Elaine Showalter has remarked, displays the urgency and excitement of a religious awakening. This current criticism, in America, England, France and other countries, is not a unitary theory or procedure. It manifests, among those who practice it, a great variety of critical vantage points and procedures, including adaptations of *psychoanalytic, Marxist, and diverse Post Structuralist* theories, and its vitality is signaled by the vigor (sometimes even rancor) of the debates within the ranks of professed feminists themselves. The various feminisms, however, shared certain assumptions and concepts that underlie the diverse ways that individual critics explore the factor of sexual difference and privilege in the production, the form and content, the reception and the critical analysis and evaluation of works of literature. (89)

He thinks all kinds of feminism aim to explore female self in society and in literature as well. Feminist believe, “Western Society is pervasively patriarchal” (89). Another form of feminism Gynocriticism includes the female experiences in specific way.

Among them Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar and Elaine Showalter are main figures.

Gynocriticism deals with the issues like women as writers, the history, themes, genre and structure of writing produced by women. In exploring women space and self, it is said that the origin of revolting voice against patriarchal ideology goes to seventeenth century female critic Mary Woolstoncraft. Her famous essay, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) proves herself as the first feminist thinker. She asserts:

There are many follies, in some degree, peculiar to women: Sins against reason of commission: as well as of Omission: but all flowing from ignorance of prejudice, I shall only point out such as appear to be particularly injurious to their moral character and in animadverting on them. I wish especially to prove that the weakness of mind and body, which men have endeavored, impelled by various motives to perpetuate, prevents their discharging the peculiar duty of their sex: for when weakness of body won't permit them to suckle their children, and weakness of mind makes them spoil their tempers women in a natural state. (396)

Woolstoncraft appeals to understand the essence of the discrimination and to realize the potential abilities of women. She blames men as the most responsible factors in remaining women backward. She advocates that the repressed condition of women is because of lack of sufficient training and women neglecting tendency of the society in educational sectors. Women don't have fewer potentialities than men. She claims that women should be free to use their own abilities so as to receive as much as opportunities in politics and education as men have been doing.

We find critical blow upon patriarchal structure of the society in women voices raised by Virginia Woolf in her writing. *A Room of One's Own* points out

women's rage against men which is an out come of men's underestimation of women that brings misunderstanding between two sexes. She advocates, "She must shut herself up in a room in the country to write and been torn a sunder by bitterness and scruples, though her husband was of the kindest and their married life perfection" (819). Like the above mentioned lines, Woolf's writing asserts that women don't have sufficient space to use their own independent competence. Rather women are captured by creating false notion that they are not capable of exploring something remarkable in the society. In *A Room of One's own*, the 'Room' refers freedom in concern of women's identity which women lack. Women don't have a room to express their own feelings rather they are captured in the "Concentration Camp". Woolf advocates "radical changes" that erase suppressed values of then society "shaped by men" (817). She imagines a society which remains devoid of primary and secondary creatures.

Simon de Beauvoir, a feminist critic of the twentieth century through *Second Sex* presents herself as one of the pioneers of modern feminism as she primarily focuses on Sartreian notion of existentialism (just reversed opinion of that of Rene Descartes: existence precedes the essence) (Critical Theory 998). Her *Second Sex* is the narrative of women's existential otherness. Basically she attacks the attitude of the scholars and writers who believe that women are a 'privileged other'. Clarifying the otherness she opines:

The other is particularly defined according to the manner in which the one chooses to set himself up. Everyman asserts his freedom and transcendence but they do not all give these work the same sense. For Montherlant transcendence is a situation. He is the transcendent, he soars into the sky of heroes; women crouches in earth, beneath his feet.

It amuses him to measure the distance that separates him from her; from time to time he raises her up to him, takes her and then throws her back; never does he lower himself down to his realm of slimy shadows. [...] A woman is lost, where are the women? "The women of today aren't woman at all!" we have seen what these mysterious slogans mean. In men's eye-and for the legion of women who see through men's eye – it is not enough to have a woman's body not to assume the female function as mistress or mother in order to be a "true woman". In sexuality and maternity woman as subject can claim autonomy; but to be the 'true woman' she must accept herself as the other. (994 – 1000)

A mark of otherness is one's inability to shape one's psychological, social and cultural identity. Beauvoir accuses men for their belief that transcendence can only be attained by men. Men project women as an inherently demure creature and men as powerful and virile so that latter can achieve transcendence. There is ambivalence in man's nature toward women for at one hand he calls woman a Muse, Goddess or Beatrice and he associates her with demon, death, cruel stepmother on the other. Women have been projected as 'other' subordinate being. Beauvoir rejects the otherness of women and gives proper reason for equality. The othering mystifies women's qualities and pushes them into isolation. The myth is utilized by men for their own purposeful mission is a means to look at women as being of luxury to be consumed. The myth is a mirage into which man makes his purposeful valuations. Finally Beauvoir realizes the bondage obstructing a woman's free path so it is difficult for them to accept their status as autonomous individuals and other womanly destiny. Yet Beauvoir believes that when men realize the situation woman will be a

full human being, an independent human being. Feminist thinkers, like Beauvoir, expect emancipation of women from all kind of oppressions and constraints. Their view focuses, in one way or other, on the urgency of ending the prejudice and discrimination between male and female.

Advocating the women's own independent identity feminist movement has taken its' impetus from other different movements raising the voice of emancipation. Among these contributing movements civil rights movement is the main one. In *The Difference of Women's Studies :The Example of Literary Criticism* Mary Poovey writes:

This historical specificity matters because, just as the oppressions generated by the intersection of such determinants of difference vary according the exact nature of mutual articulation, so too do the opportunities for resistance to those oppressions. Because the women's movement in the United States was able to borrow emancipatory rhetoric from the civil rights movement, women as a group were able to initiate a new set of claims for "emancipation".(*Feminism in the Academy, 151*)

Women's movement took inspirations from civil rights movements and I got a remarkable standpoint in attaining the 'emancipation' from all forms of oppression done upon women by men's overlooking tendency toward women. Black feminists began to appear in the society questioning the against male-centred tendency and asserting women independent identity as civil rights movement and liberation movement paved way to them to form an autonomous black movement of 1970s in the United States. We can find many associations established at that time to add something to women's movement. For example Oberlin College of women's

educational movement was established in 1833, American Woman Suffrage Association fought strongly for women's emancipation from the oppression they faced.

Feminist writing covers a broader scope and embraces variety of aspects in relation to humanity. Despite the fact that its primary focus is on the issues of women, several dimensions have been shown ranging from liberal attitudes and the demand equal rights for sexes to the radical ones voicing out the extreme ideology that tends to theoretically turn the patriarchy up and down. Some thinkers have adopted liberal feminism and some radical one. While along side these other feminist thinkers have developed their affiliation to certain theoretical backgrounds, they include political feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, poststructuralist feminism etc. Yet their aim too calls for women's own identity in society.

Radical feminism, established as a feminist criticism, is a revolutionary stream in respect to women's issues which remains hostile to patriarchy. It posits specificity to womanhood rather than assimilating into the field of activity associated with men. The notion of sexual oppression is intimately connected with a strong emphasis on the sisterhood of women. Chris Beasley reports Johnson as defining it as "one of the basic tenets of radical feminism is that any woman..... has more in common with any other women regardless of class, race, age, ethnic group nationality than any woman has with any man" (*Beasley* 54). It encourages some degree of separatism from men because it recommends putting women first making them a primary concern. Radical feminists, like Showalter, demand an expression of female sexuality in literature which will burst through the bonds of male logic with a poetic power that defines the tyranny of logocentric meaning. Besides sexual oppression, radical feminists often view other forms of power for example, unequal power relation within

capitalism as derived from patriarchy. They think that at least sexual is the primary oppression. Radical feminist writing aims to counter women's supposedly natural, biological inferiority and subordination within patriarchal society by asserting their at least equal status in relation to men. After Showalter, this radical notion got nourished by her followers: Kate Millet, Carolyn Helbrun and Judith Fellerly, D.H. Lawrence, Norman Mailor and others.

Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1977) signifies a significant point in feminist writing on literature. The acting out of the roles in the unequal relation of domination and subordination is what Millet calls 'sexual politics'. The book displays the enforcement of power relation with sexual difference in relation to the power mechanism in society:

She analyzes the western social arrangement and institution as covert ways of manipulating power so as to establish and perpetuate the dominance of men and the subordination of women. In her books she attacks the ale bias in Freud's psychoanalysis and also analyzed selected passage by D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailor as revealing the ways in which the authors in their fictional fanacies, aggrandize their aggressive phallic serves and degrade women as submissive sexual objects. (Qtd. In M.H. Abrahams)

As these lines refer, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* shows that it is men who enjoy power to constrain women. Since there is a fact that women have been excluded from the exercise of political power the feminist analysis of politics, therefore, is necessary. Millet opposed the gender discrimination and studied institutions in which women have been still underrepresented.

It is with Millet's *Sexual Politics* modern feminist writing began. And in the earlier phase, the emphasis was often political in the sense that the writers were expressing anger of injustice and were engaged in raising women's political awareness of their oppression by men. They believe that politics has been dominated by masculine to express their identity implicitly or explicitly. The writing asserts the need of avoiding gender discrimination and that of allowing women to take free breath as man do in the society.

Another call for radical changes in women's identity came from French feminism with prominent figures like Julia Kristeva, Helen Cixious and Irigary. It concerns feminine writing from the position of women and accept Lacan's account of language/culture as a masculine order but do not accept his positive affirmation of masculine order as equivalent to civilization or sociality. The feminist thinkers, like Julia Kristeva and Helen Cixious, question the assumption that feminity can only be seen from the point of view of phallic culture. They are radical in nature and have made deconstructive reading of society from the perspective of Derridian philosophy of centre and margin. *An Handbook of Critical Approach to Literature* mentions:

French feminists who follow Lacan, Particularly Helen Cixious, propose a utopian place, a primeral female space which is free of symbolic order sex roles. Otherness and the law of the father and in which the self is still linked with that Cixious calls the voice of the Mother. (204)

French feminism disrupts the unities of western discourse pointing to its silences. It is a deconstruction of male-centred thinking and takes languages as the medium of women's oppression. In her famous essay, "The Laugh of Medusa" Cixious calls for women to put their 'bodies' into their writing. She says, "A women's body with its

1000 and one thresholds of ordour. . . will make the old single-grooved mother tongue never berate with more than one language” (Sheldon 151). This statement amplifies a call for independence and necessity of rejecting the male way of writing.

Another prominent French feminist philosopher, Julia Kristeva describes a Mother-centred realm of expression as the semiotic as opposed to the symbolic law of the father. Lacanian critics want to theorize about women’s relationship to language and signification. She opposes phallogentrism with images derived from women’s corporeal experiences. By questioning the overlooked femininity she prefers to see women too have independent position in realizing necessity of the time.

With the development of varieties of feminist views in exploring independent female space in society, many strains of feminism appeared in 1970s depending upon their different orientations. That is to say ‘feminism’ gave way to ‘feminisms’ in the 70s. Among these strands of the broad movement feminism radical feminism (sometimes called cultural feminism), liberal feminism, materialist feminism, Marxist feminism lesbian feminism, socialist feminism are some which, through displaying different forms of oppression of women, have encouraged women in realizing their own independent identity and by subverting the pre-existing hierarchy between, masculinity and femininity these strands have contributed the underlining purpose of the feminist movement. Most of these approaches do not necessarily represent discrete ideologies or political organization for they have declared ‘party-line’. Yet many feminist thinkers embrace the amalgamation of feminism and one of the other streams of thought. The development of feminism has come through different phase of history. For example, many women working for leftist policies in 1960s came to the feminist movement with Marxist or ethnic political roots combining a radical feminist position with a Marxist one.

Developed in the western feminist world in 1960s and 1970s Marxist feminism embraces Marxism and it aims to dissent capitalism for the establishment of equality between men and women. The activity of women within nineteenth century radical and socialist movement was principally for women's right to work and to be treated fairly and equally to men. Karl Marx points out that the consciousness is the product of being which is determined by the socio-economic conditions of the society. And Marxist feminist thinkers find unequal distribution of capital as the main factor of under evaluation of women's position in the society. They interpret issues like sexual harassment of female workers at factories and offices, under payment of women, limited employment of women in high income-generating positions etc. and they define women position in relation to the socio-economic realities. K.K. Ruthven points out that it is Marxism that co-relates feminism for both concern a lot about the oppressed condition of women in society. He finds Marx and Engles project husbands and wives in equal to bourgeoisie and proletariat respectively. He claims, "Marx and Engles opine that the first class oppression coincides with that of female sex by male, thus legitimating the family equation of husband with the bourgeoisie and wives with the proletariat" (29).

Thus, Marxist feminism places women as proletariats and men as bourgeois and has proposed to wage a war against the capitalism which is source of oppression of women in the society. It wants disruption of the socioeconomic structure and aims to configure a new one which will institute equal opportunity to both the sexes and economic hierarchy would be dismantled. Marxist feminists have attacked the prevailing capitalistic system of the west and have advocated a revolutionary approach in which the overthrow of capitalism is viewed as the necessary precondition in dismantling the male privilege.

After all, feminism as a broad and united movement embraces a revolutionary stand point from which women can prove themselves independent human being in the male dominated society. All of the feminist thinkers have a belief that patriarchy as a male created discourse and rule to define women is always beneficial to men. And by realizing this male-centre tendency of the society feminists joined their hand, have began to resist against male hegemonic limitations and have shown women's inherent potentialities not less powerful than that of men so that a woman lives as a true and independent human being in the society.

To sum up, my study of feminism especially redefinitions and reconceptualizations of women explored by radical nature of feminism have helped me to generate arguments and justify the protagonist of Gordimer's novel *None to Accompany Me*, Vera Stark and another character Sibogile's behaviors as the means in transforming themselves into new selves in post-Apartheid Africa. Along with the possible changes in South Africa just after the abolition of apartheid, these women characters find themselves being trapped between their familial affairs and political affairs .And Vera has come to learn how to shuck her personal ties and immerse herself completely in a political cause that is transcendental to her. Similarly, Sibongile chooses political prominence at the cost of her domestic affairs and that of sound marital relationship so that she finds herself as an independent woman. In doing so both women are able - or think they are able - to discover their true and independent selves. Through these characters Gordimer explores a perspective of women's roles and struggles to make them independent within South Africa's national transformation during the period of dramatic change in political power from white dominance to the first democratically elected government. The movement feminism has given us a perspective to analyze the novel in scrupulous manner. It has

enabled us to understand the female psyche and their decision to bring about new possibilities in both personal and political lives within new South Africa so that women will live with their independent selves. The application of the approach feminism on the novel will be discussed in next chapter.

III. Desire for Independent Female Selves in *None to Accompany Me*

In *None to Accompany Me* women characters especially Vera Stark and Sibongile Maquama, after realizing hegemonic tendency of patriarchy toward women, have headed their lives toward independent ones. Sacrifice and awareness enable them realize their true potentialities. They have accepted an established fact that political commitment is the noble cause that transcends one's life. The political prominence they made has proved them as women of independent selves.

The novel carries the theme of transformation of women from the state of dominated to that of new self which is articulated through the characters like Vera and Sibongile. At the first part of the novel, Gordimer presents secondary and subordinate images of Vera and Sibongile which become the basic causes of their further resisting steps. As they realize unpleasant truths about their roles in South African society they think that changing political circumstance with abolition of apartheid system demands personal independency too. The situation demands radical change among South African people and so they decide to make their positions independent, self decisive and respecting ones. Now they prefer their political existence to traditional existence of being sexual objects and good housewives. It is because they think that they can help other people reexamine their lives and can help uplift the status of South African people. They see it possible by keeping themselves at political standpoints, not at home only. Sibongile makes her position in the emergent government and has become "something beyond his woman" (239) that is a resisting strip against the patriarchal prejudice about women. In more radical way Vera, after making her journey into the state of awareness, takes "the personal life as transitory". The novel portrays the internal journey of these women characters from submissive sexual object to the state of empowerment and finally to the state of independency.

They passed much part of their lives in the patriarchal society and they experienced that patriarchy subordinates females as inferior beings to males. But their experiences within patriarchy have brought realization and have provided sense of empowerment to them. Vera prefers politics to personal or familial life for she stands herself as a human being who has right of being self decisive and self-dependent. The beginning of the novel itself asserts realization of existing undue definition of women in the society and resistance against that. The novel begins with Vera's betrayal of her husband, who was away in the military. The betrayal itself is one of the initial steps to change her own treatment of sexuality and also to prefer political existence to her personal or familial needs directed and assigned by the patriarchal society. For her "...[T]he evidence of personal life was around her, but her sense was of the personal life as transitory, it is the political life that is transcendent, like art" (313). Similarly, after gaining empowerment Sibongile "gets an image distinct from intimate one" (302), the distinct image is her own independent self.

Sexism and Violence

In a patriarchal society women are treated as inferior and subordinated being and males as superior. Men are always "father of the family"(19) who is responsible and authentic authorial of family whereas women are confined within households and they have to accept men as their protectors. They are supposed to be the creatures possessed by men and to serve them which thinking often causes sexual violence upon women. And men always try to make the tendency exist as Kate Millets in *Sexual Politics* states that women are subordinated to men and men always try to save the tradition so that the mechanism of power relation too makes them superior(57). The family structure itself, in the patriarchal society, is the basic unit of power relation to constrain women.

In *None to Accompany Me* there is picture of women confined within domesticity and treated as inferior being because of overlooking tradition of men. Vera and Sibongile could not use their own understanding and knowledge during their living because their roles were confined by the norms and values of patriarchal society. As Vera, a lawyer for the foundation, gives birth to her second child, she could not be able to go to the foundation which aims to make Black people reclaim their land, rather it is domesticity that makes her "stay at home taking care of baby with the tender emotional fervor" (18). Vera has been confined and limited within the responsibility of child-caring as if it was only her responsibility: "Vera left her promising position in a prosperous level firm after her second child was born" (17). She has to take the responsibility of child caring because her husband, Bennet Stark, is the "father of a family" (19) who has been in work paying little concern to the home. Bennet, being authorial member of the family, has been presented as a job-holder who always has to give continuity to his profession where as Vera has to put her profession as secondary one and domestic tasks as foremost responsibility. She takes leave from the foundation in order to bring up her second child, Annick.

Vera accepts herself as a sexual object to be consumed in accordance with man's wishes: "sometimes even after he had gone he used to wake from first sleep and feel her sole sliding down his naked leg" (7). The sexual act depends on male's wish. Woman should accept the sexual act at whatever time 'he' wants. There is no choice for women whether to be involved voluntarily or forcefully. Her husband believes that he has possessed her as he has done to material goods. The woman, for him, is nothing more than a mere body and she should not think anything beyond her husband's body and that of her as if she can never imagine something artistic and creative: "Ben had crated Vera for himself as body, a torso without a head...It had no

identity beyond body, and so the body that was Vera, that Ben could not live without (228). The lines refer to the identity of a woman which is just a flesh and exists only to make sexual game with her husband. The metaphor "a torso without a head" conveys the status of Vera's identity that she cannot use her intellect anymore because she has no creative faculty in her mind.

It is believed that Vera just thinks about physical fulfillment her body demands. Her body is a kind of trunk to work at something as machine does without cognitive faculty. At one meeting with Bennet both husband and the wife drank alcohol but Vera has been presented as a being to be attracted toward male figure present there. The alcohol touches her but again she cannot tolerate the emotional feelings: "She could not stop it from reaching him from her, as the soap smell of his shirt came from him to her" (09). She becomes unable to tolerate "the feelings her body urged to her" (09) at the moment. And now it is Bennet who takes the glass out of her hand and put it down behind him. He took her against his chest. Vera has been presented in such a way that Bennet understands her emotional feeling: "he understood that the passions she roused and they share might find unexplained outlets of emotion through her; he would soothe her gently, unquestionably" (11). As a husband Bennet overestimates her feelings and emotions.

As far as there is the concern of males' preoccupied thinking and their treatment about women, Sibongile's initial position fructifies a woman's portrait with minor and subordinated roles in the family. Even though she begins to drive herself off to the political scenario of South African society, she cannot remain self-decisive person. As both of them return from their missions of the day time, her husband thinks that "she (was) is as familiar as his own body" (125) and so asks "how it was: something for women" (125). It is because Sibongile is his property and he has the

right to ask about something she has done or something he wants to know. He thinks that there is no necessity of telling something to her for she accepts and enjoys what he enjoys. The matter of his mission does not concern her because he is supreme and powerful and she is submissive one. But he has to think about her feelings and willing "as he himself has felt when he returned from his mission about which she could not have asked, how was it" (125). Again she has presented herself as if woman was always hungry for sex, as a woman having sexual instincts to be fulfilled by her husband and as a woman who appeals for sexual intercourse without knowing whether the man has desire for it: "She slept suddenly, with snorting indrawn breath. This body beside him invaded the whole bed, lolled against him" (125). Her body lies in the bed in relaxed way as if she was hungry and in hurry to be used by him. Though his own felt no stir of desire for it" (125) she presents herself in ready position to be possessed or used by him.

Gordimer has shown the vivid picture of sensual world - a global issue about women's identity. As Vera's husband returns from war with a belief that Vera is still in his possession, Vera does not make any mind making of sexual act. But the husband has past confidences that she becomes ready for the act if he wants to do: "the out fit has not been yet demobilized ... as if it was some form of affected fancy dress" (08). The husband did not change the outfit for he has understood the female submission that he could fulfill her emotions at any moment. He has already known the fact Vera has made the understanding between them as an inappropriate one. Still he has desire to behave and treat her as a sexual object to be used even at a single moment. Vera has decided their divorce and has sent photograph for her lover ringing a circle around the head of the lover so that he would be clear about her decision.

Even here Vera has been presented as a female character whose decision has been overlooked by under evaluating behavior of male figure or husband.

Overlooking women's intention men always want to make legacy of sexual world which is apparent in the gap between Vera's attempts to avoid sensation in an inappropriate state. After his return from Belgium, they stayed in a single room and there was "nothing of their boy-girl affair" (08) for both of them have already entered into their adulthood. Being an adult woman, Vera does not intend to make any act like that of their state of ecstasy in the past. But here Gordimer has given image of fascinating being to Bennet in the sense that woman always gets attracted by her spouse. The image brings sensation in her. She has "warmth of the flesh releasing the smell of a clean, creases shirt" (09) that has been a means of bringing sensual world into existence. On the other hand Vera "could not believe the sensation this was bringing her." These words themselves convey the submissive character of a woman for the fascinating smell and body of the husband that has brought the sensation voluntarily to her though she does not believe on this. It is because of her preoccupation of myth prevalent in patriarchal society that cannot help without feeling sexual sensation as they stay around male figures. To avoid this social preoccupation she goes to other room but as she returns there happens the repetition of a woman's submissive behavior.

Vera has not understood the exploitation and submission of man's behavior toward a woman yet and so she accepts herself being subordinated being. She is submissive, passive and sensual to her husband:

He took the glass out of her hand and put it down behind him. They stood, arms helpless at their sides, looking each other in restless

contradiction. He took her against his chest, her face pressed into the odors of the shirt. (09)

Here Gordimer, through Vera's inability to stand with dignity, depicts the woman's lack of credibility to make their position something beyond beast-like submissive. As Vera's husband begins to do sexual act or tries to bring sensation on her, she accepts it without giving any regard to her previous resisting attempt. She does not tell anything to him about her actual intention that when she has made sexual relation with him now that is her betrayal to her present lover. Being a woman again she cannot resist the sensual appeal of the man because her understanding is full of social myth about women's position and she cannot remain aloof from that submissive character of women. She has lack of awareness about women's exploitation and so follows the submissive way and submissive role of women that woman is to bear her husband's treatment toward her without making any resistance. As he takes her against his chest like a puppet, she becomes 'helpless'.

In the same way, Sibongile has been portrayed as a woman who has obligation to do domestic tasks as if there was nobody around to replace her role:

Sibongile has the compulsion to leave nothing half-done. The most trivial task, before she leaves the house in the morning. She goes from room to room, putting things in place, fitting new batteries in the cassette player Mpho has left empty, sorting the disorderly files Didymus piled on the kitchen table, as if these tasks will otherwise never be completed. (288)

Sibongile has been confined within domestic tasks like cleaning rooms and putting the goods in right order are her duties and so she does not get enough time to drive off into the field beyond home. Her husband Didymus seems indifferent toward

domesticity for he piles on the files disorderly and it is she who has to put the files in order. This shows confinement of women neglecting their potential capabilities. Despite the fact about limitations put on women, Sibongile has been selected as a member of a new executive committee. And even after then Didymus does not believe on her ability whether she can deal in the field properly or not. "He fears (ed) the effect of failure on a person with such high confidence in an expectation of herself" (78). Though Sibongile has confidences about her mission in the communities, pre-thinking about women makes him fear about her work. He feels "that even her obvious indocile femininity would count against her" (78).

Besides when Sibongile has been dealing with the conventions of ceremony and protocol from different cultures her husband's hegemonic and oppressive nature has got place in his mind. It is because he always wants her to live in restrictions created by low assumption of patriarchal thought:

[...] in his mind he walked across the room and pulled her away, punched the face...and slapped the woman who tolerated his touch. Slapped Sibongile. As if Sibongile were a woman craven as the man an would accept restriction on her actions, as if he, Didymus, belonged to the tradition of men who took it as their right to hit their women. (39)

It is clear that the condition of a woman has no freedom to use her own intellect, even for the welfare of the community which demands peace and prosperous South Africa with the help of personnel like Sibongile. Rather the husband believes that wife should walk on the way he shows. Didymus wants her "accept restriction or her actions" as rules to be followed by women even if they present themselves standing in public concern. He gets upset when she uses her own intellect without the permission

of her husband as if the hegemonic nature was his right and acceptance was her foremost responsibility. This sort of prevention on women's capability has been apparent in case of Vera too when she wants to go to Oupa (one of her official friends) to know about his treatment in the hospital. She "knew the way but her husband absolutely restricted her" (209). Despite the fact that she sees necessity to reach at Oupa's home, she could not ahead herself toward the destination for she is a woman to live under the restrictions of the male figure in the family.

In the case of Vera the explanation of sensual feelings between Vera and Bennet has shown overlooking tendency of men. The definition of women by men assumes that even men can know the experience and feelings of women. What kind of feeling a woman does have gets presumed by men for the tradition has been saved by the society itself.

As Vera leaves her remarkable position in her office only because the duty toward her daughter has come in front of her life, she keeps herself away from the foundation. After her stay at home, she begins to think her public profession and responsibility which is beyond the confined identity. But again she faces the extension of sexual hegemony over woman. After giving birth to the child she has become a sexual animal to fulfill man's purpose. It is misconception that women feel fresh sexual sensation after the gap created by birth of a child:

There could have been a biological explanation for the string resurgence of eroticism between Bennet and her . . .that after giving birth women experience fresh sexual initiatives and responses . . . the feast of sex begun as a picnic in the mountains again preoccupied her . . . and she could be conscious of the curve of his genitals enticing under his jeans. (19)

Actually Vera has occupied her mind about her public task to work for the welfare of black community whereas her male figure has reset the under evaluated identity of woman, that is basically sexual one. The birth of the child has added responsibilities in her life. A kind of conflict or confusion has been undergoing into her mind about whether to leave the foundation completely or to enter into that public profession again. But to her husband the condition has become a festival where he can celebrate the "feast of sex"(139). For him this is the time of feast because after some gap he can play with her, he can be able to use her body as the means of getting erotic enjoy. The feast had begun when both of them were said to be in love in the mountains. This fact of feast also shows that Bennet has not respected her as a capable woman to be his life partner beginning. Their first lovemaking itself becomes the opening of feast to Bennet, whereas one form of undermining women's identity to Vera. Vera after giving birth to second child and even after her staying with him for more than twelve years, has not understood her husband's preoccupied thinking of the relation with her as only the way of celebrating the sex-festival and probably so she follows some undue theories that assert the explanation of women's feeling without thinking women's initiatives, emotions and their potential desire to be someone beyond wife and mother. Identity of Vera has been restricted from heading toward the identity of real sentiments, feelings and thinking.

The identity of Vera has been so much undervalued that her own characteristics and personality have been tried to be kept away from herself. At the beginning of the novel there is Vera's decision to give divorce to her first husband, who was in war in Belgium, and to start new life with her lover Bennet. Actually this happening itself is her initiative step of her own treatment of free sexuality. Yet she has been depicted as a woman who cannot deny sexual relation with her ex-husband.

She has already given divorce to him. It is because "Vera is a sexy bitch"(275). Being woman is the main factor which, though indirectly, compels her to take part in 'the feast of sex ' despite her initiatives of new life. As her compulsion and the definition as a sexy bitch lead her toward confusion which makes her identity and personality more anonymous to herself in relation to her child. Since she has already begun to live with Bennet and 'the feast of sex' too has begun she becomes pregnant and gives birth to her first child, Ivan. But her compulsive sexual act with her first husband brings problem now in her right to know the biological father of Ivan. Her lack of power to deny having sex with him "makes her so confused that he has never known, whether her first child, Ivan is the son of her divorced husband or of Bennet stark, her love of whom was ringed indelibly on a photograph" (17).

Patriarchal thought presented with Vera makes conscious about the identity of her first child which is related to that of her own. Here her husband Bennet is far away from this confusion for he is male figure in the family who does not necessarily pay attention to the identity crisis his wife has been facing. He is father and Ivan is his favorite child because he undermines Vera's personality and the feast of sex has been enough for him in the family. Besides he is always confident that "... the naked torso of Vera is anonymous female body to anyone other than himself"(19). His wife should be obedient to himself only and her body should not have any relation beyond that of his own for he know every traits of his wife which are anonymous to others. His mind is filled up with patriarchal misconception that the naked torso of Vera' is his own possession.

Undermining women's potentialities that are remarkable to society and to their own lives has become the initial points of the journey of Vera and Siborgile into their selfhood. During first part of their journey, they are not taken as capable beings;

rather they are restricted to do what their inner intention and necessities urge to them: “Vera, after long stay at home, because of birth of her second child, Annick, wants going back to works for it has become necessity to her. But Bennet looks at her tenderly, patiently and gets upset” (20) because he does not want her go back to work until he allows to do so. This is the example of male's restriction upon women's intention.

In case of Sibongile too, restrictions of patriarchal thought upon woman has been apparent. When she begins to give speech in public, her husband feels uneasy. Her husband has been depicted as a person who is " familiar with the way things were done, always had been done, must be done; he could sense how others would feel towards a personality like Sibongile's; and a woman's" (18). He doesn't believe that Sibongile could do her duty as well as any other person could do. Rather he makes suspect on her ability and so he has taken himself as a knowing person about woman. Even after Sibongile's better doing in the executive government and in her dealing with people in term of projecting peace in the society in which apartheid has just been abolished with new form of law, he undermines her understanding and says " she is a woman, after all, she could understand revolution but she did not understand war"(129). This is one of the instances of underestimation about women's understanding.

The initial stage of Vera stark and Sibougile’s journey into their independent female selves is full of patriarchal definition of women's identity. They are hardly seen taking decisive roles in the family and in respect of social affair too. Rather their identity is either belonged to their own spouse or husband as sexual objects or to the domestic tasks given to them by patriarchal thinking. They are shown hiding their identity for there is rare possibility to know the true meaning of their real sentiments,

feelings and intentions. They are depicted living under undue circumstances only because there is patriarchy or hegemonic male-centered thought and penis in short. Their male partners assume them as their possession, put restrictions upon their actions and doing and confine them within limited territory that the society has made for them for the centuries. They are submissive and dominated characters because there is penis. "(t)he penis is a gun like the gun held to head; its discharge is a discharge of bullets"(111).

Woman Empowerment

As there is submissive and alienated role of women in living of Vera and Sibongile in *None to Accompany Me* Gordimer has forwarded them toward getting empowered along with their initial stage of realizing women's identity. Gordimer presents a definite shift of perspective in what her work represents female characters. The novel explores both Black and White women's empowerment within South Africa's national transformation during the period of dramatic change in political power from White dominance to the first democratically elected government. Along with Vera's necessities to involve in the Foundation and the extension of her familial or personal necessities after being mother of two children, she gets trapped between personal and public needs. So "she has a need to redefine" (276) herself to make her status a remarkable one. Similarly, Sibongile Maquma, who has returned with her husband and daughter from their political exile, joins the preparation process for a new government. She becomes a more active member in politics: "Home for her was the politics of home"(78) she thinks politics of her own country as her home to settle herself.

By presenting Vera's decision to leave her first husband at the beginning of the novel, Gordimer seems to be empowering her for she has taken her decisive role in

discarding the person with whom she doesn't like to stay from that day. Vera has been shown sending a photograph of her new lover to her first husband: "this is the image of the man who is my lover. I'm in love with him, I'm sleeping with this man standing beside me; there, I've been open with you"(04). Here Gordimer has proved Vera's power of treating free sexuality as one of the characteristics of Vera. Vera is no more a passive being, rather a woman of clear and definite thinking. She is different from traditional and patriarchal image of a woman for she is very open with her husband while telling her intention without any hesitation, not asking for his reactions. Besides after getting married with Bennet Stark, her new lover-husband with her initiatives of free sexuality, she gives birth to a son with her own image. This image too can be taken as symbol of Vera's potentialities which are generally expected to be existing in a man, not in a woman. It is something beyond patriarchal thought that a son usually is born with characteristic and image of his father but here, Gordimer has given a kind of shock to the thought by presenting men's qualities in women:

The baby was born strong and healthy. His mother's gaze during his gestation had been so concentrated on his father that he might have been expected to be imprinted with his father's Celtic or Semitic beauty: but he came out favoring his mother. Exactly from his infant days: in Vera's image, alone. (11)

Something beyond patriarchal expectation of the child to be imprinted with father's characteristics, the son is born with that of mother. It is a kind of resisting value in the society and is a way of feeling equality with general concept of male characteristics. It shows that it is not only father's role in transforming the characteristics rather that of mother too is equally important and even more obvious. Vera now begins to think herself not only a vessel to produce children in accordance with patriarchal

expectation but also " a being of own defined concept that ... she too can do something like the expectation of the society from men" (113) or can do something the society assumes having possessed by men only.

As Vera makes starting points of her political existence she makes such a position that it has been very difficult to imagine the foundation doing better without her role. This is an instance of women empowerment in the works of official and public relations of society because: "...although she has refused to take the executive directorship which has been offered to her, preferring not to spend time on administration, no one can imagine the foundation running without her"(12). She has been provided the responsibility of the Black communities to restore to in the village. Now the Foundation's success has become synonymous to the identity of Vera herself for she has become a capable and publicly responsible woman who has been doing her best in restoring the communities taken up and allotted by Whites from them. Such kind of image in society she gained has been resulted neither from support of her husband nor from charity, rather she has made it herself alone which helps her to prove herself a socially responsible person.

In concern of Sibongile too, she has been a busy woman not in domestic tasks at this moment rather in official tasks which is different and a new initiative in getting women empowered. And since she has already experienced the feeling of being exploited, she doesn't like to behave like a male exploiter in the office though she is in handling position in her office. She is now doing better attempts for creating a better society in the Black community which is now in a transitional phase along with the abolition of apartheid system in South Africa. Now she has began to keep her away from confined and traditional set of roles:

Home was set up; but she did not have time to do the daily tasks that would maintain it; it was Didymus who took the shopping list she scribbled in bed at night who drove Mpho to and from her modern dance class. to the dentist it was he who called the plumber and reported the telephone out of order. (74-75)

Role reversal comes to exist in the society with the end of male hegemonic tendency to undermine women's capability and to think their one as superior. Usually home is setup for woman for it has been given to them since the beginning of civilization that a woman can't have ability to drive off the works outside the home. But as a woman gets engaged in tasks outside the home, she cannot be able to do all the domestic tasks. And male figure like Didymus here, has assigned himself to do domestic ones because previously he had been superior even without being engaged and busy so much. Didymus has begun to take shopping lists and to drive their daughter Mpho to the class for it has been a kind of necessity and an outcome of women empowerment. In their dark days in exile, he had become superior despite the fact that both were freedom fighter only because he was male. Now as Sibongile begins to do better than himself, it has made her think of herself something getting rid of traditionally assigned works, that are domestic actually: "his working day was less crowded than hers" (75). This shows a woman like Sibougile does not have less capabilities and potentialities than a man or her husband. Rather it is Didymus who is passive and dull at behavior and it is not a woman who lacks understanding only because she lacks penis. Rather Sibongile's behavior and outcome of her behavior are very impressive and remarkable one once she gets opportunity: " she would be snatching up files, briefcase, keys in the morning while he was dipping bread in coffee, changing back and forth from local news broadcasts to the BBC "(75). Power actually does not make

the assignment gets done, rather one has to pay commitment to the institutional tasks to establish peace in a society of transitional phase. This fact has been presented by Sibongile , a woman for she has "the will to work harder and more efficiently" (74).

Sibongile "has battery of command in her offices" (74), not a woman of submissive and fragile characteristics, by which she has been able to reconcile the communities as a member of executive committee. When she has been dealing with the people of the communities, she has a power of tolerating their lack of understanding and doing in concern of restoring the faithful society in new South Africa. She comes to face "the assistants whose poor education and lack of skills she was attempting to tolerate while disciplining and training them" (74). Still she has power to tolerate because it is her experience since the patriarchal society and it's under estimating tendency have made her to do so for the decades. She doesn't like to be exploiter like a man in male- dominating society:

I don't want to be told I behave like an exploiter just so someone can go on sitting around filing her nails or someone who was once detained thinks he's for ever entitled to disappear two hours for lunch.

Comrades employed here are expected to have the will to work harder, not less then they would for some white boss. This is not sheltered employment. (74)

Being aware and experienced one about the feelings of being exploited, Sibongile doesn't want to exploit the workers in her office, attempting to prove herself as a right leader of the community or government. Despite the fact that the assistants and trainees in the offices haven't developed their aptitude, she doesn't make them harassed. It has already been known to her being dominated and she has knowledge and experience of unexpressed pain when one gets harassed and exploited. Unlike

men-headed offices at then society, she doesn't believe that the head or leader of a institute must always dominate the workers of lower ranks and trainees, like men usually do to women workers if the women get opportunity in the tasks beyond family and home. Rather she believes in "will to work harder". Workers are not beings to be ruled always by seniors but the task can be accomplished by creating a sense of co-operation between or among the workers. Sibongile, proving herself as a good and co-operative leader, has implemented this fact. She doesn't behave with the workers as if they have been sheltered there in the name of employment. Gordimer has depicted her as a good power-holder, despite being a woman of male-headed family, who seems to be creating the better society than that of other's attempts in the past.

Gordimer's sense of woman empowerment has been explicitly apparent in his treatment of sexuality which is given to us through Vera and Sibongile again especially through Vera. In this stage of their journey into new selves, they have already begun to treat the sense of sex, especially in concern of women, as a matter something different from that of their own experience when they were nothing more than sexual objects of fulfilling men's purpose. Vera, undergoing into her awareness of previous life in the society, " feels resentment with the evidence of what, when she was a child, her mother termed behavior" (60). Vera begins to take the submissive and fragile characteristics of women given by then society as only illusive to create male superiority in the society. At that moment too, a woman usually is not expected to have sex according to their own desire and necessities. But here, Gordimer has presented her as a woman character treating free sexuality as one of the initial steps to to build up the sense of equality in the society and to establish sense of sexually unbiased society. By choosing Bennet as her lover, while her husband was fighting in war, she has already begun something resisting way of treating sexuality because it

was opposite to what the then society would expect her having sexual relationship only with her husband being loyal and obedient to him. And now with getting along with Otto Abarnabel, an official in the Foundation , some kind of sexual feelings arouses in her and she doesn't hesitate to do sexual act with him. She accomplishes the act even without thinking it as a betrayal to Bennet because her mind is gradually getting filled with an unfaithful sense in the relation between Bennet and her. Still she doesn't leave love-making with Bennet again because of her new concept of free sexuality:

Vera continued to make love with her husband, even if she felt she had the delicacy not to initiate it. She thought of it as part a strategy, both to have her lover and not to hurt him , Ben; for the credo she had anyone was permitted her , was her right , so long as no one was hurt.

(129)

Vera has empowered herself with free sexuality. Gordimer has shown her a woman with a belief that sex is not always crime rather a instincts to get fulfilled by using least harmful ways and freely at the necessary condition. Bennet is her lover, and being his beloved she doesn't want to hurt him too, for sexual relation is the least necessity for both of them. She doesn't think that the relation with Bennet will be that of long lasting and forever and so thinks that if it becomes the relationship of spouse that may bring some hindrances in her struggles to get her political existence that will be independent one to herself. In this sense her sexual act with Otto is not a betrayal to him, though it might be in Bennet's sense. Rather it is one part of strategy to be independent woman. She has collected the experience of being dependent one for some past years and she thinks moving with other's expectations always disturb further way. And now "what had disturbed her as a mimesis of past was the beginning

of some new capability in her, something in the chemistry of human contact that she is only now ready for "(123). Similarly about the traditional concept of sex, in Sibongile's concern, has been changed to some extent along with her presentation of aptitude she has made out of her own experience. Unlike previous time, Sibongile too doesn't seem to be ready for sexual act whenever her husband would make the appeal for she now thinks herself as a social being, not only a sexual being possessed by her husband. As she has already made beginning of overtaking him in political and official affairs, he remains no longer in centre. And "when Didymus did make the approaches of love making Sibongile felt no response" (133). She has been provided the power of rejecting her husband's appeals and approaches of treating her as sexual object. It has been possible by means of empowering herself.

In this way, Gordimer illustrates women's power of getting empowered and that of being able to have resisting voice to male spouses. Vera and Sibongile, are seen doing their attempts to prove women's capabilities as more powerful than that of male's underestimation in the society. And they have empowered themselves at both public and personal levels. Vera seems to be favoring the foundation's best accomplishment through her leading power at public affairs. And it is through free sexuality at her personal level because she believes that Bennet has done mistake by making her as spouse discarding his necessities: "Ben made a great mistake Choice...he gives up everything he needed, in exchange for what he wants" (233) because at that moment he didn't realize that she could use her own treatment about sexuality. And Sibongile makes her understanding dignified and remarkable by proving herself as a capable power holder for "among the possible new comers of freedom fighters Sibongile gets nominated" (93) and also through creating sound contradiction in the domestic and familial tasks. And this sense of empowerment

gradually paves way to transform their positions into standing ones and ultimately leads them toward beings of independent female selves at both political and personal level.

Toward Independent Selves

As Gordimer has already presented Vera and Sibongile gaining woman empowerment, we find a fact that in *None to Accompany Me* the liberation movement is no longer a masculine achievement only. The novel presents a perspective of achievement in women's political role and struggles within the progression of an emergent nation that has come out of a trapping between her personal and social or public needs. Adopting woman empowerment and free sexuality she now prefers public need that is making political existence, demand of her inner self. And now with her living of her own self she has presented herself as an independent woman who has power of decision making about her life. She lives "alone in the house with her own self" (194). She would not get any chance to think about her independency if she tried to make her distressed life better. Rather discarding the personal and familial needs, she feels herself as an independent woman. Now she feels in every room the house retained the life lived there" (293) that is to say she has retained her own life in new form and with new characteristics. Similarly as Sibongile "is elected as a member of the central executive of the post apartheid movement ...her parts have been changed" (93). She gets an independent identity, beyond traditional one. And with her political independency, there is reorganization of her relationship with her husband which had been in silence since the beginning of her marital life it was because of lacking clear and independent perspective. Now the possibilities, fulfillments and dangers of her new power significantly enable her to live with her inner self.

Gordimer has clearly shown that the women too are able to handle political struggle and also can provide solution to the struggle along with the redefinition of their own lives as part of new transformation of nation.

Now Sibongile being quite different from her traditional identity of learning and enjoying households has been seen learning and enjoying politics. Her recent change at political level too seems to have enabled her at personal or familial level. And the change in her role displays the prejudice and pre thinking of her husband, Didymus about women role in the society: "Sibongile is enjoying herself, enjoying the learning of being politician as if he were a prize fighter coming forward in defeat to embrace the victor " (95-96). Her bitter experiences of the period, when she was an exile with her husband and other freedom fighters, are the initiatives of her rise in politics of South Africa and the extension of those initiatives have become her true identity and her independent way of life. She realizes that "she has a position to think about her life and the lives of the returnees" (193). She is no more a being possessed by her husband, rather she is so much confident about their relationship that she thinks it is not good to take concern on the affair of his own. She has come to the fact that concentration on own necessities of self leads to the right point for she now finds that her husband , who had a belief of giving unnecessary burden to his wife, has become history, his journey of politics has almost come to the end because of his own overestimating tendency . In Vera's question about Didymus, Sibongile replies: "he is supposed to be researching. Don't ask me I go to work. I don't know what time he gets round to shaving and so on "(132). It is her dignified voice after accepting herself as an independent woman.

When Sibongile proves herself as a woman of independent self her husband "has become history rather than a living man" (132) which is the consequence of

women independence and the bitter tragedy of dominating nature of a man. In previous living with her husband too, Sibongile had sense of silent contradiction with her husband but could not get outlet for her lack of awareness in her living. Now she believes they were the initiatives of her independency. Her sense of being righteous has abolished the male-centred tendency in life of both national politics and family as she asserts:

He does think he's history. He is copping out because he's not centre stage anymore, he sees himself as history and history stops with him ... my part has changed, his part has changed. He's still a living man who has work to do even though it can't be what he'd choose". (133)

Sibongile's assertion gives sense of role reversal which is the outcome of a woman's search of her true self and her victory over patriarchal misconception about women's capability. The pre thinking of her husband about herself has become matter of history instead of making existence in the new society of South Africa. In other words, he has become 'history' because of her rise and her better accomplishment at national politics. Her part, assigned traditionally, has changed and now it involves around national politics. There is a change in his part too which is a kind of reconciliation after the emergent understanding of her self. He has to accept himself doing the works that he does not want to make choice for he has no option now. His roles are limited in minor tasks but it is not because of a woman's hegemonic nature to exploit him taking revenge of the past, rather a sense of reconciliation because "his working days are less crowded than hers" (15). To Sibongile, the assumption that male figure is always 'centre' is nothing more than a misconception because her husband is not at the centre anymore. And now as a confident and independent woman, she does not feel regretion toward her past life in which she lived being

inferior despite having some silences between him and her. Rather she states that "(t)he old silences that were necessary between him and her" (24) are the actual initiatives by which she have headed herself further and have been able to make her living as that of a woman with self. The living with self has been the achievement of her struggles in both national politics and home politics.

Vera has made the journey of self. Now she asserts that the personal need has become something hindering on her way to political existence in new South African society and so "(s)he has left home... the passing away of the old regimes makes the abandonment of personal life also possible" (314-315). Vera has contributed a lot in projecting peace in post apartheid South Africa. She has become successful in remaking the old regime, which was very bias and boastful, pass away from the society. And along with the abolition of undue practice in the society, there is end of old understanding about women in her personal life too. Vera makes treatment of free sexuality and prefers political existence to personal one which is an arrival of a new change and a living with self in the society.

Vera has accepted Bennet only as a lover not a spouse because she had accepted her first sexual intercourse with him itself as a moment of free sexuality since her husband was in war at that time. It is Vera's realization now: "I can't live with someone who can't live without me" (310). It is her resisting sense to the patriarchal beliefs that a woman is vocation for the man. Leaving Bennet, she has become free, she has been able to use her independent understanding whether it is at political level or at personal level. In state of freedom only, one can live with his/her self which fact has been true now in Vera's life. She realizes her sexual relationship with Otto Abarbanel when Bennet was living with her as the urging of her true self not binded by so called woman's morality. It is her personal spirit that makes her do

the act with a person who is official at the Foundation, not her husband or spouse. She believes that her treatment of sexuality is her own concern alone and no interference is necessary for feeling regression toward the act. Sexual freedom is one part of her true identity that is belonged to nobody else than herself. After all the act is her own private being:

What had happened in the three hours interim was something that concerned her alone, her sexuality, a private constant in her being the color of eyes, the shape of nose, and the nature of personal spirit that never could belong to anyone than the self. (68)

It is Vera's true being that does not regret to the sexuality she treats. It is because her being is now related to nobody than the self. Rather it is one of the ways heading toward the independent female self: "Now Vera saw herself in that doorway. She lay beside Ben that night with a sense of pride and freedom rather than betrayal" (63). She does not think her relationship with the person beyond her spouse as a betrayal to him because "Bennet was other man for her" (61). Vera has taken her decision that only surest way to live independently is to abandon the personal ties and to sink into the national politics which is current demand of the nation and that of other women exploited in the society. She is alone in the sense that change in understanding and awareness can occur only when one is alone, away from containment in the shape of self outlined by another" (135). The changes have been appeared now in Vera's sense of national necessity and she has become aware about the women's status in the family, like that of her one. She has understood politics and so she wants to make it a transcendental identity of herself. And the identity has come to existing position by her awareness of women's confinement within domestic and sexual arena which ultimately gives outlet of independent identity to her.

Treating familial need as temporary resolutions of her life, Vera has entered into the world of her self that is not always attached to the physical fulfillment, rather belongs to the self in spiritual sense. She takes out the ring Bennet had placed on her finger and "her finger is naked, free" (203). The naked finger refers the existence of freedom in her life. There is no necessity to be confined by her relation with Bennet. Bennet had placed the ring on her finger thinking that it would become a tie between him and her and he could be able to make legacy of his domination and exploitation over her body and over her understanding. But she has developed her own understanding and so she does not want to limit herself within that confined identity. Rather the realization has taken place in her mind that Bennet was living under illusion when he took her as his possession. She has given this clear understanding in her talking with Ivan:

One can't belong to someone else. It's lovemaking gives illusion. You may long to, but you can't ... you see, Ben made a great mistake. Choice, he gave up everything he needed in exchange for what he wanted. I love him but it's hard to remember how much I was in love with him.... I can't live in the past.(317)

The lines project Vera's realization and awareness of her previous living with Bennet and her assertion of further life. The act of love-making which Bennet did with her has become living of illusion for her; it is beyond the real life one has to live. This is another shocking to patriarchal tendency of abandoning important necessities of life for making woman a choice. Ben abandoned possibility of being sculpture despite his better doing at that field. It is because Vera was his vocation. Now to Vera it was his own mistake for she never made him leave the profession and she never left her political need during her living with Bennet, though the living with him was her

choice too. She does not like to give preference to the relation because she does have a understanding that "physical fulfillment is a temporary withdrawal from the world, a sealing off from threat and demand" (18). She realized know that if she felt satisfaction at that moment with his ambitious beginning of the relation, then she would never able to understand her need and the demand her true self urges to her. The demand has been now fulfilled now with her abandonment of the domestic ties, with the family and with her existence in social necessities of new South Africa.

Vera doesn't need any commitments of the family for "there are no urgencies of family demands, love entanglements, waiting to be taken up, for a woman like her" (208). Vera has left the family getting distressed by the domestic demands to make better. She believes that her daughter's interest in lesbianism is also related to her own self, the matter of being critical toward her has become useless to her. Her son Ivan has taken his own way in field of banking and marketing consultancy. Vera's marriage life has become failure to Bennet, but not to her. "Ben believes their marriage was a failure. Vera sees it a stage ahead on her way along with others, many and different" (306). It is the failure that makes Vera aware about her inferior identity of past life and about new independent identity. She has treated loneliness as a frustrating condition of life because awareness is possible in alone and the awareness leads her to life of self, not that of flesh or body alone. She asserts that the loneliness is one of the agents that teach how to live of own self. She has developed the understanding that "everyone ends up moving alone toward the self" (206). She ends undue identity and has made a broadened one which exists forever, not for particular lifespan like that of physical fulfillment. She has renewed her identity. "Vera walked there and took up her way" (324). Her heading strip is her present independent living which is transcendental and life of her self.

In this way, both Vera and Sibongile have achieved their goal- new and independent identity- because they have undone the past. They have placed themselves in new stand point looking through which they find their true identity; different from what has been assumed for years and years. They are now living with their selves which had been restricted from coming into existence and which is now in reverse form: "(s)o it's some sort of historical process in reverse we are in. The future becomes undoing the past" (261). The gap between their past and present living has been justified as the period of struggle in getting into present standpoint. Both of them, treating themselves as independent and self-decisive beings, have accepted their political existence as the existence of their own selves. The present living has become synonymous to the moment of post apartheid new South Africa and their concern is new South African society. It is because they have become aware that "this is the year when the old life comes to the end" (297) and new life has begun which is new, independent and after all the life of new self.

IV. Conclusion

Through the present novel, Gordimer projects how the undue definition of women makes her central female characters prove themselves as independent human beings. As women have been victims of the patriarchal social system around the world Vera and Sibongile are the same. And now they have begun campaign to realize true identity of women by resisting and undoing traditional roles assigned by the male centred tendency. In relation to the heroine of Gordimer in the present novel, Vera finds herself drawn away from a life animated by sexual and domestic imperatives into a more rarefied world defined solely by social responsibilities. And in the same way Sibongile makes a political prominence at the cost of her sound marital relationship.

None to Accompany Me, the present novel, shows how patriarchy gives subordinate role to female which ultimately paves way to independent existence. Vera Stark, a white legal aid attorney representing the Black community, has put her political works and existence ahead of her family. It is her own awareness of political need that enables her to reexamine her life. She leaves her first husband in war time for a handsome lover named Ben, then married Ben and leaves him too in the final and independent days of her life. At first she gets distressed by her daughter's interest in lesbianism and her son's disintegrating marriage life but later she takes their decision as urging of their own selves. And rather than clinging to the security of a flawed life, Vera finds that the rapidly changing political situation encourages radical personal change. The changing political situation is the condition of South Africa after abolition of apartheid system along with which she transforms herself into a being beyond housewife and sexual object. Vera has gained a new visibility on the

political scene, a development that places even greater strain on her marriage and her family.

Gordimer examines Black women's struggle - the courageous fight they put up against a racist and sexist society - and shifts their growth toward their independent selves. And it is through depiction of Sibongile, Gordimer has accomplished the task. Sibongile is a freedom fighter of apartheid movement whose participation in the movement became a source of inspiration to realize the sexist assignments assigned for women in a patriarchal society. Now she learns how to immerse herself completely in a political cause. She does not give any continuity to the domestic tasks she has been doing with her submissive and subordinated existence in the family. Rather she takes part in national politics and proves herself as one of the leading persons and a social worker. She presents herself in an increasingly visible public position that is beyond her confined identity. Her husband, who used to treat her as his possession, has been relegated to history. Though both are freedom fighters it is Sibongile who gets a position in the newly formed government. And his hegemonic nature does not prevent her from gaining that position because she has used her true potentialities and her performance has become better than his one. She has been "undoing the past"(117) for the fact that she shifts her role from domestic territories into national arena which is the outcome of both apartheid and feminist movements she fought. In doing so, she has become able to discover her true self - an independent self of a woman.

Gordimer, in *None to Accompany Me* shows it is only through their consistent efforts of resistance against the male centered society, Vera and Sibongile have gained their independent identity. Their self-esteemed strips - political commitments as more remarkable necessities than their personal needs - are the only means by

which they gained their true identity. Gordimer has depicted them as the characters whose political commitments are simultaneously sincere and self serving. The novel parallels South Africa's transformation into post-apartheid society with these characters's shift from state of submissive and subordinated one into state of freedom and independency. So the novel proves to be a powerful weapon in the war against female submission and subordination. Vera and Sibongile are presented as self-sacrificing and visionary women who put the demand of nation as a noble cause before their personal needs.

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