Chapter-V

The Struggle Goes On

Nadine Gordimer’s fictional narratives are an excursion through time. The political evolution of her country is the heart of her writing. Gordimer’s 1994 novel, *None to Accompany Me* is written during the phase of the transition to a long awaited freedom. It was written and is positioned during the time of main political and social change after Nelson Mandela’s liberation from the life of a prisoner in February 1990 and before independent elections in May 1994. The novel provides a connection with the preceding era and gives an account of the story of a woman’s life right from the Second World War until 1994 when the novel was first published. *None to Accompany Me* comes to pass in a riotous South Africa in the concluding throw of apartheid when the old life finally terminates. The year 1990 marked the beginning of the move to a racism free administration in South Africa.

Like other novels of Gordimer, *None to Accompany Me* also carries with it the events of its historical time. The early nineties remained characterized with a destabilized economy, and township violence. However, during this time all imprisoned ANC leaders were released from various jails. The government also lifted political ban on its opponents, legalizing the ANC, the PAC, and other organizations. Despite various measures violence among political rivals, and delinquent and jobless youth scourged the whole country, signifying that the handing over of power to a newly elected government is not going to be an easy task for the whites. The assassination of a young leader that happens in the novel recapitulates the assassination of captivating ANC youth leader Chris Hane in 1992. The novel’s narrative offers tribute to his bravery. Thurston says:

His presence carried the peculiar authority of the guerrilla past in working for peace. If men like him wanted it, who could doubt that it was attainable? If a man like him was there to convince his young followers, could they fail to listen to him?. (128)
The novel develops over a number of years, captures the occurring of the early nineties and the formation of fresh political governance in South Africa liberated from the clutches of apartheid. During this period various historic events took place: the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, the arrangement of several non-racial land policies, the arrival of exiles, the commencement of significant conciliation between the ANC and the government of National party with an agenda of forming a provisional constitution. In a way, this novel may be regarded as politically extravagant.

After all the years with their guns and their armies, after all the thousands they’ve killed, all the laws they’ve made, all the millions they’ve robbed of land and chased about the country to take it for themselves, they had to let Mandela out of jail and sit down and bargain with him…. They must know they can’t win!. (263)

The novel traces the issue of responsibility and struggle where matters of race also intervene rather than guide the characters of the story. It talks of hope and quandary of post-apartheid South Africa as it struggles to switch from an embittered history of racism to a democratic, cohesive and committed multiracial society.

In the novel, protagonist Vera Stark, a white civil rights lawyer, is chosen to be in the Technical Committee on Constitutional issues, the committee is assigned the charge for drafting the new constitution. None to Accompany Me is certainly replete with various themes like: the private and the political life of characters, the role of sexuality, the position of whites in a newly independent country of South Africa, and the importance of race relations. None to Accompany Me is essentially different from Gordimer’s previous works because of its changeover type as commented by her, who states, “all novelists are in effect writing one book … looking at [similar] themes from a different angle and from a different stage of knowledge of life” (Bazin & Seymour 583). The political transition that forms the setting of the novel is resonated in the personal transition of the protagonist, who can be seen as the alter ego of the novelist. None to Accompany Me brings out a situation, which Chapman posits, “the balance of the public and the private has shifted towards the private-the freer civil space-in a manner reminiscent of
Gordimer’s novels of the 1950s. *None to Accompany Me*, in fact, suggests a path back to the early Gordimer” (395).

Gordimer’s novel focuses on Vera Stark, a white lawyer who is completely dedicated in her struggle against discrimination and injustice meted out to the black people in South Africa. The whites like Vera who are anti-apartheid in their society came together with the blacks in the establishment of a new South Africa.

There were her Legal Foundation colleagues, of course; and white men and women who had been active in campaign against detention without trial, forced removals of communities, franchise that excluded blacks; student leaders … who had supported striking workers; a couple of black militant clergymen and an Afrikaner domineer excommunicated for his heresy in condemning segregation; a black doctor who hid and treated young militants injured in street battles with the police and army; black community leaders who had led boycotts. (5)

Through Vera, Gordimer envisages the appearance of a multiracial and multicultural society in her country. In her legal foundation, Vera Stark, the central character is involved in resolving matters of disputes related to land ownership and resettlement claims. Thurston remarks:

The novel takes on, as well, concerns that will dominate the new nation if liberation is to be real: issues of land redistribution and housing, constitutional guarantees of equity and freedom, and political machinations concomitant with black empowerment and power sharing. (129)

The novel centers around two families: Vera and Bennet Stark along with their adult children, Ivan and Annick, and Didymus and Sibongile (Sally) Maqoma and their teenager daughter, Mpho. Before going into exile and losing contact with each other, both the families maintained good friendship in the early days of political activism. After twenty years of staying away from each other they are reunited to experience a new South Africa of 1990s. The novel produces a number of social realities in the upsurge to the 1994 elections. Focus is on the return from exile of a black family, the Maqomas,
whose coming in the city of Johannesburg is placed against a background of prolong fighting for the rehabilitation of several blacks. Didymus Maqoma, who has performed an imperative role in the ANC leadership in exile, is sidelined from the active politics in the shuffle for new leadership positions, while Sibongile Maqoma, the encouraging, obedient wife during Didy’s life-threatening international missions and certain other important activities in exile, moves up to a prominent position as the stylish and emphatic head of the placement bureau for reverting of unemployed exiles. The couple came face to face with some preliminary difficulty in conforming to the change in political circumstances, but after discovering Sibongile’s name on a political hit list, Didy’s skill to survive in a perilous environment gives comfort to the family and the couple accept the exchange of roles with grace and pioneer the process of reintegration into the great echelon of the political field. Sally soon becomes a rising star, whereas Didy is left far behind and this disparity between them becomes gradually more evident. Brahimi observes, “Yet, with regard to Didy, the novelist also makes a political observation on the difficulties that blacks may face when adjusting to their victory” (51).

Gordimer places her interest in the issue where a black man has put his life in jeopardy in the fight against the white rule, is unable to carve a place in the newly formed black government. Didymus, who is a man of strong character, is depressed because of his own understanding: he feels that as “one of the old guard” (71) he is no longer needed in the present. The political path that his country adopts gives a set back to his revolutionary beliefs, leaving him in a bitter and pensive mood. He feels that, “After more than three hundred and fifty years of victimization by one white power after another, I should feel ‘victimized’ by a normal process within my own liberation movement?” (268). Although Maqoma’s story forms an essential part, but the novel preponderates on Vera’s relation to the existing political situation in the country. The novel examines Vera reverting to her past, for she perceives, “It’s some sort of historical process in reverse we’re in. The future becomes undoing the past” (261). She steadily discards the confinement of her married life in order to be involved in the pursuit of a big social change in her country.
None to Accompany Me draws attention to a momentous segment in the late 1980s and the early 1990’s South Africa when African activists came together to get freedom for themselves from the atrocious rule of white minority, sacrificing their lives and personal identities for their community and country’s interest in general. Gordimer’s novel gives an opportunity to raise questions regarding the position of South Africa within Africa. In None to Accompany Me, the three sections titled, ‘Baggage,’ ‘Transit,’ and ‘Arrivals,’ keeps the story moving from the past into the present and into the future. The plot of the novel contains numerous political situations and events from the past and present that influence the lives of various characters that define their future for them. The relationships between the characters show how their past and present existence determines their struggle to be free from their white masters.

As a senior member of a legal foundation, Vera dedicates herself for the rights of the blacks in South Africa. Although, she turns down “to take the executive directorship” which is put forward to her yet she “is a fixture at the Legal Foundation” (11). Subsequently, she fails to say no to the title of Deputy Director of the legal foundation where she has to work with the “Technical Committee on Constitutional Issues” (262) at the culmination of racial segregation in South Africa. The novel is intertwined with Vera’s analysis of “forty-five” (4) years of her personal relationship and her public involvement as a lawyer in the development towards representing blacks and providing justice to them. When her husband, a soldier in army was stationed in Egypt during the war, she in his absence came in contact with Bennet Stark who works in the English department at the university and develops a love-affair with him. While remaining in an affair with Ben, she once happens to sleep with her former husband. That is why she does not know “whether her first child, Ivan, is the son of her divorced husband or of Bennet Stark” (16). She gives up her “war-time job” (9) as a secretary, takes up a part-time law study programme at the university where she provides her services for a legal foundation which “came into existence in response to the plight of black communities who had become so much baggage, to be taken up and put down according to a logic of separation of black people from the proximity of white people” (11). Her serious involvement with the fight against the forced removal of black communities and negotiation of land redistribution claims takes her away from her family life and responsibilities which
becomes increasingly alien to her. She is tired of fighting claims for the rich and now switches her attention to the general cause of black community. According to Du Bois, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line, - the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men…” (41). Vera’s active association with politics starts when the passage adopted by the ANC moves away from the policy adopted by the whites to a more powerful force in the country.

The novel is subjected to a number of discussions determined to give details of economic or land policy, corruption in office, federalism, and the educational crisis in South Africa. There is a well-endorsed scene of a right-wing confrontation over the land issue, and crime in the white community, which can be seen as a post-apartheid obsession in a robbery scene that involved the central characters. Gordimer being a mouthpiece of majority of population in South Africa reflects the traumatic transitional phase after gaining freedom from the minority white rulers after a prolonged period of oppression and suppression.

Vera Stark’s connection in public domain alienates her from her husband, and her aloofness from two children is connected with her responsibility as a South African towards a life beyond family. Vera’s sympathy with her husband and several communities is seen as a part of her political struggle.

Vera was a gentile atheist gratified by the idea that her lover was a Jew, orphaned by racism, without a name that was his own-this linked him with the open, daily purpose of her life, the files of displaced communities on her desk and, before her on the other side of it, day after day, the faces of those who had been made wanderers because they were decreed the wrong race. (61)

Vera’s decision to cast off her emotional attachment with Ben indicates her shedding off the customs of her stereotype society in order to give a way for the creation of a new South Africa. The title of the novel is taken from a verse written by Basho, a seventeenth-century Japanese poet, “None to Accompany Me on this path: Nightfall in Autumn” (n. pag.).There has been a marked change in the lives of South Africans where
both the whites and the blacks have been through a period of shift towards the formation of a new social and political set-up.

Vera moves far in a new kind of relationship with a black man, Zeph Rapulana. Gordimer through Vera comprehends that, “perhaps the passing away of the old regime makes the abandonment of an old personal life also possible” (280). Gordimer sees Vera’s firmness on sharing a home with a black man in the novel as a change that has come with the end of the apartheid system. She has been of great strength in creating a new and equal society for people of every class and race. “The class difference set by white privilege had been rather less than was usual between whites and blacks” (36).

None to Accompany Me deals with two issues in the political history of South Africa. Firstly, it concentrates upon the whites’ territorial segregation of the African land through consecutive Acts. As discussed earlier in the previous chapter, the brutal policies of the white regime, which included The Group Areas Act of 1950, enforced residential apartheid on the blacks, leading to the allotment of better areas to the whites. The Land Act of 1954 entailed a belt of five hundred yards between any black quarter and the white town, thus creating an enslaved labour force. Secondly, the blacks were given the permission to live in these areas only as expatriate. In the novel, Vera deals with a case in which an Afrikaner is trying hard to free his property from the black squatters. He turns down the offer to hold any kind of discussion over the matter with Vera and Zeph Rapulana, “the squatter camp leader” (277). He immediately calls those black intruders to leave his land, else he is “going to burn down their rubbish” (23) because:

[He] decided to move with the times; whatever they might be. What the government had done, was doing, could not be undone by one Afrikaner alone. Fighting its betrayal of the white farmer was something for which political action would be found … farmers would have to-in the businessmen’s way of speaking—‘diversify resources,’ yes, that’s it, get up to the tricks that make those people rich. He applied to the Provincial Administration for permission to establish a black township on one of his holdings. He would convert the farm into cash as a
landlord; he would divide it into plots for rent to blacks. He was going to turn their invasion to profit. (21)

Even, on a previous meeting, Vera with her young clerk, Oupa, visits the Afrikaans’s farmer, Odendaal, regarding the rights of squatters encamped on his land but the meeting results in nothing. Tertius Odendaal, who is an opponent to Vera in a land rights case, is an obstinate person who attempts to meddle with the social and political changes that are changing the face of the nation. He treats the blacks as thieves and has put an electrified fence around his kraal to protect his Holsteins from them. “Even the old president had dumped blacks too near white farms” (20). During this time Vera, who is a white, develops an insightful and intimate relationship with Zeph, a black ex-teacher and spokesperson for the squatters. Together they work on many political matters and it is Zeph’s prudence and bargaining skills, which takes to the boardrooms of several financial companies. He is dedicated to the service of his black people and claims that:

I’m just a schoolmaster who’s trying to educate them to diversify their excess profits into enterprises that will benefit our people whose labour made those profits. That’s all. Cheap bonds for housing, technical training instead of casinos, backing for blacks to get into setting up our own financial institutions - and the right kind of co-operation to make sure we don’t fail while we’re gaining experience. (229)

Zeph has a house for his family in Odensville, the retrieved squatter camp, and acquires for himself a house in a decently affluent suburb previously occupied by the whites only which now are available for the blacks also, shows that the South African society is turning liberal towards the non-whites as well. The early years of 1990s gave boost to the spirit of conciliation that sometimes becomes difficult to achieve because of uncompromising nature of a mixture of classes.

Didymus, who is now considered as useless by the new government cannot comprehend how “If sincerity calls all compromise into question, what … when first he came home and was still on the National Executive, wining and dining … what then was the whole philosophy, the business – yes - that’s what it is-of negotiation about?” (206).
The power relations have affected the human values, attitudes, and action. Didymus despite his sincerity and compromise lives between the past memory of an activist, full of passion and the uncertainty of a new epoch. After achieving success in many political battles, he arrives to his home country only to face ethical altercation with his own political bequest. He is faced with a sense of guilty conscience for those people who were tormented by the movement on the grounds of suspicion that they are traitors during the years of political struggle that haunts him in the present time. Whatever the solidity of the process of pacification, the novel like *The Lying Days* discloses:

> Boundaries are changed, ideologies merge, sects, religious and philosophical, create new idols out of combinations of belief, scientific discoveries link cause and effect between the disparate, ethnically jumbled territorial names make a nationality out of many-tongued peoples of different religions, a style of beauty comes out of the clash between domination and resistance. (45)

Didymus is also faced with the tension of his sixteen-year-old daughter, Mpho, born in England is more of an English teenager than she is a black South African. After coming to South Africa she has started to learn to speak an African language. She is socially talented, a school girl who “combined the style of vogue with the assertion of Africa” (45). However, her getting pregnant by the young married clerk, Oupa, who works in Vera Stark’s office, makes her parents angry who pressurize her into an abortion by paying no attention to the remonstration of her Alexandra township grandmother who believes that abortions are what white people do and their culture does not give consent for abortion.

The novel reiterates the occupation of the South African land by the white minority. The racist policies gained an unusual importance in determining and enlightening international understanding of the racial inequality in South Africa. Vera sells her house and decides to live in a property, which is in possession of a black man, brings to the picture the black man’s intrinsic right of land ownership in the country of South Africa.

The tenant. The designation, for the public, suited her well … between Zeph Rapulana and Mrs. Stark, linking their present arrangement to Odensville, the
matter of land, over which they had come to begin to know one another. It was a consequence in which there were loyalties but no dependencies, in which there was feeling caught in no recognized category, having no need to be questioned. (285)

The ‘empty houses’ in the white suburbs have a lot to put across to Vera. These houses stand as witness to many untold stories in the past as well as the present:

FOR SALE. ON SHOW. Are these suburban museums, exhibiting a way of life that is ended? Is that why the once house-proud occupants are leaving? Or as they flee do they really have to fear for their lives - in the Constitution, Bill of Rights, decrees that are going to change life? (215-16)

Vera Stark has continued to live in that house despite the Sharpeville massacre in the 1960s, the black student uprising of 1976 and now the present assassinations when Vera also gets a bullet wound. All these happenings did not even scare the inhabitants of the white suburbs until the situation became uncontrolled which forced them to seek shelter in new areas away from the disturbance created by the blacks. It was enormously difficult for black Africans to voice their pain and suffering in a society puzzled with oppression and unequal economic and educational chance. According to Gordimer, every writer uses the lives of the people to present the prevailing condition of the country. However, it is observed that the white writers often paint a dehumanizing picture of the blacks by depicting their behaviour as primitive. She is different in her conduct of the blacks and through her fiction she stands firm against the oppressors and endeavors to bring order out of chaos and makes the world aware of the deplorable condition, which her country has been through. The novel brings to the surface the most difficult task: transition. The change from the racially dominated state to a free one and the struggle which went in order to achieve the much awaited freedom from an autocratic rule of the whites. None to Accompany Me is an examination of the transition from a revolution to responsibility. The novel suggests an urgent need to maintain a relationship with both the political and personal demands of people and events that take place in a turbulent country.
None to Accompany Me gives penetration into the functions of organizations like Legal Foundation where Vera works, which is engrossed in the service of providing support to the organization of democratic, land policies and the difficulties of the squatters. Characters like Vera, Sibongile, and Zeph embarks on a kind of secular advancement and become a national accessory of the story, as they are the seeker of the truth. They have the guts to challenge the political and social system of the country. Gordimer’s novel is at bottom, the struggle of the middle class proletariat society who wants the end of the revolutionary climate with a new kind of a feeling of liberation. As Lukacs says that there is a “reflection of man’s plight in bourgeois society and of his helpless enslavement…” (49).

Vera’s dedication towards the cause of the people makes her well respected at her Legal Foundation; “no one can imagine the foundation running without her” (11). During the course of the novel she examines her increasing sense of allegiance and commitment to the work and the people of her country. Reading the “newspaper headlines announcing arrests, trials, bans, finally the outlawing of political movements” (17) shows that the road to peace in South Africa is tough. None to Accompany Me is clearly a novel of transition, a turning point for the country, the blacks, the whites, the women, and for the characters in the story. The novel has a three-part structure, the titles which foster the theme of transition: ‘Baggage’ is what the country has taken from its past struggle, ‘Transit’ the process of coming to terms with the actions and their repercussions on the South African society, and finally ‘Arrivals’ which indicates a selection of a feasible destination. The issue is now of less importance that how the white community will find a place and a new position in the society, and how every black and white will find a way to fit in a changed society.

From a historical point of view, Gordimer’s novel centers on the period when the collapse of apartheid in the country is just round the corner, it is also seen as a moment when exiles were gradually returning to their sweet home and preparations were being carried out on a large scale for the establishment of a new political regime. In the words of Brahimi, “The novel provides the reader with an extremely accurate, first-hand
testimony of this historical watershed, particularly in the pivotal year of 1990, which provided fertile ground for upheaval in both black and white communities” (50).

Apart from the issue of territorial segregation, *None to Accompany Me* also investigates beyond the white man’s predicament, into the consequences of displacement faced by the black people in South Africa. After returning back from exile in England, Sibongile, the rising black figure in the political circuits of the country, finds it difficult to put up with the momentary displacement from one room to the other until she finds a suitable residence for her family:

> I can’t live like this, I can tell you.-
> Sibo, you’ve lived much worse. It didn’t kill us.
> At the beginning, years ago, yes. It was necessary. In Dar, in Botswana. But now!
> My God! I’m not running for my life. I’m not running from anybody anymore,
> I’m not grateful for a bit of shelter, political asylum…. This’s not for you and me. (42)

Away from being excluded from the radical transformation of South African politics, Vera’s work on various Constitutional Issues play a substantial role in defining the modus operandi of the new political governance. Her life is devoted to powerful political happenings where much of her is at stake, she could not feel anything apart from political pressure and fear as she clearly feels that, “Politics affects and is evolved endlessly through future generations - the way people are going to live, the way they think further. She had no illusion about politics; about her part in it” (271). There is a clear focus on the relationships between the blacks and the whites in this indeterminate time where blacks are taking revenge from whites by occupying their land. The black Africans demonstrated a free mind and declined to accept their susceptible position in society where they are judged on the basis of race, which also determined their standard of living, and eventually their destiny. Brahimi questions, “will the whites be capable of changing in order to get through the difficult period that awaits them?” (50).

In *None to Accompany Me*, a specific account involves Oupa, Vera Stark’s young clerk. This young man after spending time in prison because of some trifling crime is
exalted to be shifting into a white suburban area. But instead of moving himself in that house he gives that house as a shelter to a less privileged family than him and the place eventually depreciates. Even Vera who at one time used that place herself can hardly recognize it. Thus, it would be an exaggerated statement to say that all blacks are occupying the houses, which belonged to the whites, whereas, the actual fact is that only the affluent blacks are able to become the owner of the houses in the white suburbs. It can be said that the way the blacks are marking their respective territories is a proof of their longstanding experience of oppression and marginalization in their own country. It is unfair to see Oupa as a rancorous black eager to throw the whites out of their homes, in fact; he is a poor boy who meets his tragic death without meeting the basic comforts, leaving his wife and children in an appalling condition with a hope of seeing good days. Brahimi indicates:

Gordimer does not portray the blacks slowly moving into areas formerly reserved for whites as expropriation, because the latter have left of their own volition; nor does she present it as a takeover by the blacks, because they themselves do not seem to view this as a victory. (54)

Gordimer does not see the association between the whites and the blacks from a racial standpoint; however, she does not renounce the fact that after a long period of servitude this novel comes out as a victory for the blacks. She also calls attention to the formation of a new society where the blacks suffer defeat as well as grow, and not merely take revenge in a paroxysm of victory. The epigraph by Marcel Proust in the beginning of the novel says, “We must never be afraid to go too far, for truth lies beyond” (n. pag.). She cites that the search for truth is a difficult process but elaborates in one of her works that the truth “lies beyond” and a writer should not be afraid of going far in its exploration, “[Not] too far for the accepted norms of loyalty to the regimes, the societies, the mores, the politics of the countries whose earth, nevertheless, they feel between bare toes, flesh of the flesh” (43).

The novel brings clear images of “little power struggles going on even among people too desperately busy trying to survive, to have the energy” (24). There are empty
streets and empty buses going from the township to the city. The city in the 1990s is occupied by black people who were enthusiastic to break away from their township existence. There was growing tension between tenant-laborers and white farmers, which had come into limelight along with that of removal of old squatters. A few of the white farmers had shot dead a person who has won a case against them. The foundation took some serious steps to “publish some sort of ‘crisis’ paper in addition to the report, urging that a drastic revision of property and land laws was necessary to forestall disaster in the growing conflict between white and black over access to land” (144). The situation is getting out of control where “No arsenal of repressive laws, no army, no police can stabilize the situation.... No laws, no army, no police force can protect white farmers from the need and right of people desperate to find a place to live” (145). Sadly, the blacks have to move “into the shell of middle-class life without the means or habits that give it any advantage” (163). When Vera and her black colleague, Oupa, are attacked and robbed on an empty dirt road, the massiveness of the sky and the emptiness of the country road draw attention to defenselessness of human beings.

Gordimer produces the cultural entity even in this novel where the Dutch settlers in the history of South Africa made an attempt to create a white country for themselves in black South Africa. They tried to influence the native culture and did not realize that in this process they are destroying the native black’s identity, which forced many blacks to leave their own country and seek political asylum in some other countries with different culture. Gordimer produces the effect of dislocation through Didymus and Sibongile’s daughter Mpho’s personality. “Out of her mother came a perky London English. She could not speak an African language, neither the Zulu of her mother nor the Xhosa of her father” (45-46). Sibongile is in distress, as she being a rising political figure could not find a suitable home in South Africa after her return from exile along with her husband and daughter:

Going out across a yard to a toilet used by everyone round about! Heaven knows what she might pick up there! A return to a level of life to which Sibongile, Didymus, had been condemned when they were their child’s age - what did a
sixteen-year-old born in exile know of what it was like when there was no choice? (47)

The novel explores the relation between politics and the way people lead their lives in a politically challenged South African living. It clearly traces the life of white and black families, the Starks, and the Maqomas. Sibongile’s elevation to political prominence caused eclipse to Didymus’s political career is an evidence of the unpredictable and explosive political fabric of South African state. Even after the establishment of first non-racial government in 1994, the country is still facing acute housing shortage; the black community is still pushed to live in overcrowded apartments in the ramshackle villages. Gordimer harbors on false impression about the political and social differences facing the new government. The novel clearly registers the instability of governance in the country and unpredictability as factor determining the course of lives of the people. Oupa’s life reflects the same picture. Studying at night to become a lawyer, he at an earlier time spent four years on Robben Island as a political prisoner. He tells Vera of the deep sense of feeling of brotherhood he had for his comrades in prison. This is the story of his generation of people who have been in prison and shares the “brutality and heedless insult of walls and warders” (14). However, he is perplexed by the fact that:

But you suddenly hate someone, you can hardly keep your hands off his throat— and it’s over nothing, a piece of string to tie your shoe…. And the same two people, when we were on hunger strike, we’d do anything for each other…. I can’t think it was me … degradation in suffering the lack of humanity in others, to bring to life. She didn’t console, didn’t assure him that that individual, that self, no longer existed. - It was you. (14)

Later when Vera and Oupa are attacked and Oupa suffers serious injuries, his fatally wounded body is attached, naked, to life-support machines in the hospital, Vera condemns the humiliation suffered by the blacks despite the freedom given to their country from the white domination. At the hospital Oupa is set aside at the mercy of the medical staff where “he was kept naked because every bodily change, every function had
to be monitored all the time” (185). After becoming a target of aggression, there is paucity of a proper treatment in the hospital for a black coloured skin. Vera witnesses the “horrible metamorphosis revealed by Intensive care” (191), which fills her heart with pity, and she weeps for him. Oupa’s body “did not feel vulnerable in his nakedness because fever glowed him like coal” (185), but despite various efforts by the medical team he could not be saved and at the end he succumbs to his injuries and dies. On hearing about his death, Vera in a deep regret speaks about the mayhem that has engulfed the entire country where, “the violence that was always there, pushing people out into the veld, beating them up at police stations, and the gangster violence that’s taking the opportunities of change, now, that’s killed Oupa Sejake” (198-99). Vera different from her community shows some humanity and attends the “ritual of the funeral without understanding any comfort it could bring to the wife” (191). There was concern for Oupa’s family who sacrificed his life for a cause. She comprehends their tradition without words and without any understanding of it. With the dearth of a strong and efficient political structure the citizens of the country are taking up sadistic modes of making themselves heard by the government, which has turned deaf to their demands.

Violence has always been an integral part of the South African society. Similarly, after the end of the apartheid era it still persists, pushing people out into the veld, innocent blacks are being beaten up at the police stations and then there is the “gangster violence that’s taking the opportunities of change” (199). It is high time the people of the country must realize that change will not come through indulgence in violent activities but through possible political reforms. Thurston mentions, “[T]he negotiation of Oupa’s subjectivity, his many selves, emphasizes the fragmentedness and unknowableness of each person, reminding us that truth is always partial and relative. Oupa’s history is rewritten in death at the funeral, but it is a reduction of a complex person in a relative universe” (135).

The breaking away of old prejudices has its own impact on the political surroundings of South Africa. The Legal Foundation is dedicated to its service in a society with insecurity all around, characterized by the fall of racial oppression that is both challenging and exceedingly insecure for the people. Zeph Rapulana confronts the
non-complaint right over land occupation. *None to Accompany Me*, in the public domain as well as in the private domain, is about the culmination of the rigid old structure of rule by the whites over the blacks. However, there is still a section of the white population that is reluctant to accept the air of change which is coming with formation of a new democratic government by the non-whites who until now have worked under the subordination of the white regime. Apart from the political symbol of a white privileged person, Vera finds satisfaction in a subsidiary role in a black man’s country where she as a human being is empowered to go beyond considerations of colour. While Vera’s lesbian daughter, Annick, finds individuality by breaking the bourgeois codes and in her own way, Vera also does the same by rejoicing her freedom. *None to Accompany Me* dares to confront several racially and politically embedded evils that have become practically too accepted in the ferocious but morally foreseeable landscape of South Africa.

Another couple in the novel, Sally is completely a paradox of Didymus; she is efficient in resolving both personal problems and those related to her country with extraordinary brilliance. Another character in the novel, Zeph Rapulana, also takes the responsibility of his country’s betterment. He belongs to a whole new generation of black male politicians who will play a fundamental role in giving a right political direction to the country. Vera herself is impressed by the determination that Zeph shows in meeting head on with Tertius Odendaal. As a matter of fact, Zeph Rapulana is seen more like the squatters’ leader than a medium of negotiation between the blacks and the whites. The outcome of his efforts brings a positive result for the blacks, which eventually win their case against Odendaal. After the success, Rapulana acquires a cottage in the suburbs, which was previously inhabited by the whites. His growth in the political arena is unobtrusive which is extremely positive for the blacks in general and for Rapulana in particular. According to Brahimi, “One of Zeph’s main qualities is to be around when he is needed the most; this is how he eventually accompanies Vera to the funeral of her young colleague just when she has none to accompany her, hence the book’s title” (52). This shows that Rapulana is symbolically above all in the formation of the new country, remaining behind the scenes, researching into various institutions that will be imperative for the exercise of power in the near future. He is active within the framework of the
Technical Commission in order to respond more proficiently to the powerful call of politics, and the promise of power. Gordimer is showcasing the massive transformation in black and white relations under the new regime. In a simplify way the start of the 1990s marks the initiation of the revolutionary moment when the blacks finally take over from the whites in South Africa which is clearly merged in the novel *None to Accompany Me*. In the words of Lukacs:

Classes that successfully carried out revolutions in earlier societies had their task made easier subjectively by this very fact of the discrepancy between their own class-consciousness and the objective economic set-up, i.e., by their very unawareness of their own function in the process of change. They had only to use the power at their disposal to enforce their immediate interests while the social import of their actions was hidden from them and left to the ‘ruse of reason’ of the course of events. (71)

Gordimer’s manner of writing is full of many scathing tones that she employs to look at the dramatic turn around. Like, at a certain point during a party, a black woman who is married to a white is heard saying, “Don’t you know I’m his passport? I’m his credentials as a white foreigner. Because he can produce me, it means he’s on the right side. That gets him in everywhere” (129). Gordimer like her former novel, *Occasion for Loving* discusses the level of western education which is difficult to attain where black students coming from an altogether different background finds it difficult to adjust with the present education system.

[T]eaching a curriculum devised for the level of general education and western cultural background of white students, difficult to attain for the black students who satisfied entrance standards nominally but came from township schools where boycotts were their history thesis, running battles with the police their epic poetry, and economic theory that of a home where there wasn’t enough money for bus fare, let alone books. (26)

The children of the blacks were denied schooling at the right age and the result of which is that they have started the education at the ripe age and are now called as pupils.
Eighteen, nineteen, sometimes more than twenty years old, and that’s part of what’s gone so terribly wrong in our times. If the parents weren’t too poor to keep them in school when they’re small, if there had been enough schools to take them all in at the right age, as white children start their schooling … if they’d really had the chance to be children like other children-they wouldn’t be young men and women treated like children now. (231)

On several occasions in the novel, Gordimer talks of “the power of being white has been extrasensory” which feels like “a secret ability to bend metal by looking at it” (97). They can come back to their predominant nature. Thus, it is not right to say that after coming to power, the pressing action of the blacks will be to take retribution on the whites. On the other hand, what can be perceived is that many blacks are still preoccupied with the fear that it will ultimately lead to anger and vengeance, where wise and responsible blacks find themselves giving solution of this problem without any assurance of success. Therefore, Zeph Rapulana hold talks with the Afrikaner farmer, Tertius Odendaal, in terms which the latter sees as being indistinct, even insulting, but which actually bear testimony to a black man’s honest effort of appeasement, “Meneer Odendaal, don’t be afraid. We won’t harm you. Not you or your wife and children” (23). There is an anticipated danger that such words may appear to Odendaal like an intolerable humiliation. In this novel, Gordimer observes the fact that “whites are unacceptably and inappropriately holding on to their former positions; they are still protected by the power inherent in the prejudice that they once used to victimize others” (Brahimi 53).

None to Accompany Me is an evidence of the white man’s panic of losing control over the blacks as a major concern in South Africa.

The novel exposes the internal struggle of people to create a new, transformed nation and culture. The idea of a nation and home to the people of South Africa is examined well in the novel and its real connotation is seen in the emotional attachment of each individual character. When returning exiles arrive at their airport they were received with excitement and celebration. The entire atmosphere had a look of carnival, “Home: that quiet word: a spectacle, a theatre, a pyrotechnic display of emotion for those who come from wars, banishment, exile, who have forgotten what home was, or suffered not
being able to forget” (41). But there is a contradiction in the idea of South Africa as home with the reality of home for many people. Sibongile’s bourgeois notions are seen when she is locking her car against any theft and is shocked to find out that the woman, who is a street cleaner, returns her greeting, turns out to be her mother’s cousin that reminds Sibongile of the “connections and responsibilities to the disenfranchised for whom the country is also home” (Thurston 137). To build a nation which could be called a perfect home for its denizens is a difficult task. The land reforms throughout the country are different. The white farmer who thinks with the introduction of land reforms he will lose his fishing retreat needs to understand that “without reform tenant-labourers are losing the mealies and millet they have worked the land for, everyday, for generations?” (145). The bridging of the gap between the black and the white race will require a lot of efforts. Timothy Brennan states that:

The idea of nationhood is not only a political plea, but a formal binding together of disparate elements. And out of the multiplicities of culture, race, and political structures, grows also a repeated dialectic of uniformity and specificity: of world culture and national culture, of family and people. (62)

Mpho, the Maqoma’s daughter is seen as a crossbreed resolve to the task of building a nation which the country of South Africa is facing.

Mpho was a resolution - in a time when this had not yet been achieved by governments, conferences, negotiations, mass action and international monitoring or intervention - of the struggle for power in the country which was hers, and yet where, because of that power struggle, she had not been born. (45)

Vera and Zeph understand that a new and a strong nation building must be a collaborative effort, which requires the need for people to believe in a new, and peace loving nation. It is essential to accept that:

Elections and the first government in which everyone would have a vote would stop the AK-47s and petrol bombs, defeat the swastika wearers, accommodate the kinglets clinging to the knobkerrries of ethnic power, master the company at the
Drommedaries; no purpose in giving satisfaction to prophets of doom by discussing with them the failure of the mechanisms of democracy, of elections ‘free and fair’, in other countries of the continent. (262)

Gordimer through her fictional narrative points out the various obstructions, which are lying in the route of forming a strong nation with a novice government. According to her, literature also plays a crucial role in the making of a nation. Numerous features like race, culture, geography, tradition, language, etc. come together and determine the future course of action of a government of any country. Gordimer calls upon the power of the people from all races to contribute in making South Africa a strong nation that is free from the disease of class prejudice. She aims at attacking the innate evils in the society of South Africa. “None to Accompany Me tackles the national model obliquely through a critique of the two families, the Maqomas and the Starks” (Thurston 138). She streamlines several patterns to advocate new national forms that stretch out the limits of one’s imagination. She even strives to question the inherent patriarchy within the country. There is a political power modification in the Maqoma family to Sibongile. Didymus sees his wife’s self-confidence that will come as a threat to others. However, he is apprehensive about Sibongile’s political judgment; he can’t assist “putting in a word when this seems appropriate” (71). When he talks privately with the old comrade he says that it is the devotion to the political scuffle in South Africa which keeps Didy and Sally together, despite Sally’s raise and Didy’s fall in politics.

Didymus in a discussion calls to mind the foregoing decades of discrimination done to the blacks, where one of his friends says that, “we’ve made many compromises with the past. We’ve swallowed the stone of many indignities” (207). The writer through her character, Didy tries to say that in order to serve the people of this country; it is requisite to convince them of a good and honest rule during elections in a free South Africa. It is mentioned firmly in the new constitution that the administrators “will not take up with power what the previous regime has taken” (208). The new government has included the delegates of different skin, instead of all blacks as for them colour and race count for nothing whereas white administration never tolerated the blacks as equal to them. The early years of 1990 witnessed not only the abolition of the laws of segregation
but also those laws and customs which opine that only white people have the permission to live in some of the congenial areas of the country. Now the latest law preaches that anybody irrespective of colour and race, who can afford to buy the property, can live in any part of South Africa. Over the decades the white man never took the black man seriously.

In the former novels, Gordimer draws attention to the political situation which exists as an open peril that limits the lives of human beings, black and white, in the form of unreasonable priviledge, constraint, pass cards, arrests of cross-racial couples, all can be seen as useless acts of nuisance. The characters in her novels live their lives in the gloominess of politics, expressing a pungent desire of change that may come in the far future. In *None to Accompany Me*, the time of change has finally arrived their way; politics does bring some positive amendment through the pages. There is no longer a concealed force: the blacks and the whites will decide the course of their lives on their own without any intervention by the government of the whites. After years of submission where “oppression and an exploitation that knows no bounds and scorns every human dignity” (Lukacs90), there freedom has finally emerged.

But the Maqomas, both politically active, even then had open confidence that they would be among those who would destroy white priviledge sooner or later, and pragmatically made use, as of right-and this was recognized unembarrassedly by the Starks - of the advantages the white couple had. (36)

With this unexpected freedom, the people of South Africa are for the first time coming across with their own responsibilities and inadequacies. Gordimer does not illustrate a peaceful transition as the country faces black violence. Vera and Oupa become the victims of violence while investigating the land crisis and are beaten badly. She sacrifices the interests of her family in her struggle for black rights that leads her and Ben to enjoy “breaking the law of segregation” (36).

The poor blacks that are worst hit by the racism are determined to take revenge from the whites. “No violence is more frightening than the violence of revenge, because it is something that what the victim stands for brings upon him” (99-100). Of all the
violence touched upon by Gordimer in this novel, rape is the most terrifying act of violence committed by blacks against whites. Rape is used as the most easily available of all weapons, part of a man’s body. “The rape has nothing to do with desire; the penis is a gun like the gun held to a head, its discharge is a discharge of bullets” (100). Gordimer brings to light the phantasmagorical fear of the rape of white women by black men, which in reality is a hideous crime. This act by the blacks shows their frustration and anger against the whites. Even Odendaal threatens the Foundation’s lawyers that he will bring the AWB to evict the blacks from his land. Looking at the present political situation, “the Government surely doesn’t want too many press reports of blacks forced out of their homes” (101).

None to Accompany Me portrays the women as a strong agent of change in the political structure of the country. Vera, Sibongile and the several nameless black wives have played a vital role in giving a new shape to their country. The novel unwraps the contemporary family structure, providing open-endedness with new leeway for the family, the diverse classes in the society, and the nation. This open-endedness calls for a commitment from all the South Africans towards the nation building. Vera, as a white South African, finds herself through her divestment of her personal and her economic assets acquired from a privileged white system on the one hand, and her endeavor in the humanitarian political work on the other, “she had no thought, no space in herself for anything else” (145). Vera, in the novel, tells Zeph that there should be a sense of belief in all the South Africans that they can rectify the follies perpetrated during the apartheid era, Zeph replies, “A piece here, a piece there. It’s all broken up. You do what you, can I do what I can. That’s it” (231). These broken pieces can be put together in an entirely new and resourceful way. Every person in the country must search for his or her independent way to serve the nation; the discovery rests with the younger generation, like Mpho and Annie. Thurston states, “The novel implies that cultural and racial interfusion will increasingly take place…. For such national integration to be healthy and harmonious, all issues of equity must be addressed” (143).

None to Accompany Me acquaints the reader with many poor blacks that have stepped up the social ladder. Sibongile Maqoma certainly has no scruple about behaving
like an upper class lady for whom a hooligan is a hooligan, irrespective of whether he is black or white. She gets enrage upon finding out that her sixteen-year-old daughter, Mpho, is carrying Oupa’s child. Mpho is a young girl whereas Oupa is a married man. Sibongile’s anger is driven by the fact that he is a wicked person and does not feel any kind of sympathy for him. Even though she is herself a black but she speaks in a contemptuous manner about this black young man. If she herself was not black, then one might accuse her of racial attack on another person. She is antipathetic to Oupa’s mistake of deflowering her daughter. Sibongile also detests poverty and filth, which she finds in a shabby hotel booked for the repatriates. As Brahimi expresses:

Marx recognized in bourgeois society and which are continually present: the divide between the rich and the poor, the have-nots. One cannot speak about the blacks in the New South Africa without acknowledging that this society also functions along the same lines. (56)

The departing of the erstwhile administration as anticipated changed the relationship between the black majority and the white liberals who have been their companions in the struggle against dominion on the basis of race, class, and culture. Vera’s friendship with a black leader can be seen as rejection of class and race barrier, which divides the people of South Africa and with this, comes the acceptance that eventually there is a future for even sympathetic whites in the lately liberated country of South Africa. Gordimer in her present novel also brings to spotlight the quandary of the Jews, who have been “dispersed all over, so long” (60) and were “orphaned by racism” (61). The whites feel that even after the setting up of a new independent government, their power will not be questioned, and in a way, “the blacks have been flattered into talking like white gentlemen, they’re nicely tamed” (69). For the black people, “there’s a code between us and them, we’ve discarded our Africanness, our blackness is hidden under the suit-and-tie outfit, it’s not going to jump out at them and demand! Not yet” (69).

The whole social fabric of South African society is influenced by the race, which forms an important structure of apartheid. Gordimer’s None to Accompany Me looks into
the meaning of freedom on both national and personal level. Her novels deal with the inter-connection of race and class that shaped the different periods of South African history and politics. She scrutinizes the racial order, which is deeply rooted in the politics of the European government in the region. The white governance has always backed the politics of racial segregation and dominance, which are indivisible from the society. The end of old structure and the establishment of a new state open the possibility for the emergence of a new nation, uncontrolled by racism, regional division, and other malevolencies.

The excitement of freedom and the probability of a new future are continuously kept at equilibrium. In this context the novel is itself loaded with power struggle, infidelity, and jeopardy:

Proposals to the Technical Committee on Constitutional Issues come from all groups and formations. And the groupings scarcely can be defined with any accuracy from week to week. Wild alliances clot suddenly in the political bloodstream, are announced, break up, flow in and out of negotiations. Everyone wants their own future arranged around them, everyone has plans for a structure of laws to contain their ideal existence. (280)

However, the race and other social divisions do not disappear, in fact, they can be seen in Odendaal’s outlook towards white and black negotiators like, Vera Stark and Zeph Rapulana. There is no change in the perspective of the white farmer who is different from the people of his race, regardless of independence gained by the country; race is still a crucial issue in the lives of the people. The nation is in pursuit of more than just a political power in order to run a country. None to Accompany Me represents the confidence of the new black bourgeois that has gained power after a long cycle of hardships. Once the blacks have approach to authority the condition of people like Oupa, will improve whereas, Sibongile Maqoma does not represent lenient attitude towards blacks, for she believes that a “rifffraft will always be rifffraft” (Brahimi 56). She chooses the white model; those who have financial resources can lead a most comfortable life. Brahimi avers:
Gordimer seems to be saying ‘enough’ to revolutionary illusions, which have now deserted her; it is time to look straight at the black bourgeoisie, who are as fascinating to the novelist’s pen as the white bourgeoisie were to novelists for about two centuries. (56)

The black world is not dead; it has its meaning which needs to be understood. A Marxist holds the opinion that when someone chases the bourgeoisie out of the door, he will enter through the window. In South African society and other racially knocked countries, the bourgeoisie have a black colour and life is difficult for them as they are forcibly confined to the periphery of the society. There is no denying the fact that blacks have experienced significant changes from the beginning of the apartheid rule till its culmination and now it is interesting to see that the country is under control of the black people like the Maqomas who have recently entered the country after serving a long stretch of exile period. The black world is undergoing a rearrangement of roles and functions in the newly formed government that will see the emergence of younger comrades also. Zeph Rapulana is one of the beneficiaries of the new regime. Gordimer makes her character as a forewarning against extrapolating the opposition between the have and the have-nots. His promotion from former squatter leader to sizeable position of an expert in the affairs of government shows his influence in the politics of South Africa. Nonetheless, his rise to such a prominent stature has some how overshadowed the role of Vera Stark as a white who is dedicated to the service of the nation.

With the development of society and state politics there has been a substantial change in the family relations also. None to Accompany Me delves into the lives of another couple, one white and another black. There is another couple, created in a secondary role, this couple is of two white women who adopt a black child and form a family. All these families are perhaps linked in a definite way and play their part in bringing the societal changes that are creating a wave. The novel reflects how the family values change rapidly in a society that is itself undergoing such a drastic political transition for “family, class and local loyalty all support each other; and if one of these decays, the others will suffer also” (Swingewood 7). For the black couple, Didy and Sally, the novelist exhibits that the new situation in politics could have adverse
repercussions for them. Gordimer proposes to demonstrate that even strong couples like the Maqomas, who have given quite a lot of time working towards bringing a political change, are also going through a storm in their relationship. The novel makes an attempt to display lies and betrayal within the family, which are parallel to those, widespread in the world of politics.

South Africa took a long time than other African countries to arrange itself for the elimination of traditional hierarchies after the fall of apartheid. The changes, which came within the white couple at work, show some minor difference, they are not directly linked with the political transformation, though they are not inclusively different from it as well. Amidst this great political transition there comes the failure of the white couple, as Vera ultimately separates from her husband, Ben, after spending much of their life together. Ben’s economic insecurity and his love for Vera to dictate his decisions in life create tension between them. Vera tells her son, Ivan:

You see, Ben made a great mistake. Choice…- He gave up everything he needed, in exchange for what he wanted. The sculpture. Even an academic career - all right…. He put it all on me…. The whole weight of his life. That love he had. I love him but it’s hard to remember how much I was in love with him. (198)

An important realization in the novel is that in South Africa old system of atrocious regime has been replaced by new ones, thus leading to a new way of thinking. Vera and Zeph, together experience not only their new relationship but also the political exaltation of 1990, which acts as a medium in creating a new bond between them. The novelist also returns to her consideration of cross-racial relationship, which was earlier seen as a taboo in *Occasion for Loving*. Now cross-racial couples have found place under new regime where they can meet freely and do not have to fear any more from the ruthless laws passed against the mixed couples during the white administration. Yet she sees a discrepancy in herself and in her relationship with Zeph also:

[W]hat had disturbed her as a mimesis of the past was the beginning of some new capability in her, something in the chemistry of human contact that she was only now ready for. This country black man whose life apart from his place in the
Odensville case she knew nothing … already had this capability. That was why he was able to claim her with what was neither a sexual caress nor an impersonal handshake such as they customarily exchanged…. There was between them a level of knowledge of one another, tranquil, not very deep, but quite apart from those relationships complicated and profound, tangled in their beings, from which each came to it, a level that was neither sexually intuitive nor that of friendship.

(109)

In *None to Accompany Me*, Gordimer’s leaving out of racial expression is important because here a relationship between couples of diverse races is seen with a fresh radiance. As the South African country moves on after the dismantling of apartheid, she imagines the future of the nation and its citizens to be bright. There is also an investigation of spatial control which gives information in it’s “separation of urban and rural space, for we recognize urban space as the area of power” (Head 47). Thurston holds:

The integrative vision toward which *None to Accompany Me* moves is sought not only on the personal and political fronts but also on the cultural. Aesthetically speaking, this novel-while open-ended in its many paths towards resolution – is not as formally experimental as *A Sport of Nature* or *My Son’s Story*. Striving to put the broken pieces of the past together in a new way, Gordimer manipulates time. (143)

Gordimer rebukes the exclusiveness of culture, which is practiced in the area of architecture in which instead of being grounded on social and political subject, considers it from a formal point of view. The social outcomes of such exclusiveness are the destitution and deprivation of the under-classes. It is the European superior culture, which reduced the black people to penury who are now speaking out of the squatter camps. Vera links art with politics and declares the two as remarkable where both are evolutionary. The novel implies the individual’s acquiesance to a political life, the national, and self-integration as all move on the same path. *None to Accompany Me* also underlines the killings of the innocent people, irrespective of their race where the newly established
government is not able to restrict this carnage by exercising its control. One reason of this pandemonium is that the victims are whites so the hue and cry is also more.

[C]owardly murder of innocent people, commented a government spokesman; savagery due to the government losing control of blacks, according to the white right-wing. And the whole outcry merely because the victims were white, stated the Movement’s rival organization, neither confirming nor denying responsibility for the attack (131)

Vera on the contrary does not support the view that, “we were blacks and whites would make much difference if the object is to create terror” (133). Highlighting the failure of the present government to deal with aggression, Vera suggests that all kinds of conciliations between the two races should stop, not with the purpose of reassuring whites in order to win their votes when the time arrives. Zeph speaks of the killings in the squatter camp:

When I heard that APLA man on the radio saying there’s outrage only because this time whites were killed, I agreed with him. He shocked people they see him as racist…but we can’t say it because we’re not racist, we can’t say it because we have to demonstrate we don’t stereotype, we don’t use racial categories in the worth of human life. Killings are killings. Death is death. Blood and wine mix. All we can produce is this cover-up. (135)

Also Gordimer exhibits the rise to the power of a black female by displacing the white female from her position. Even for white South African females, in 1994, physical intimacy is no more a politically correct way of entering into the black world. Many blacks have started to get their esteem from their friends and professionals from the same as well as distinguished races. They are no more restricted to lower positions in the society. The whites have begun to grasp that the time for the blacks has finally arrived in the game of power. It is the white not the black which is at the fringe in 1994 elections. Nevertheless, Vera is given a big role of helping the Technical Committee to frame a new constitution for the recently independent South Africa.
The white farmers who have treated blacks savagely over the years have now “abandoned their farms and moved to town during the years when they feared for their security from groups of black guerrillas infiltrating from over the border...now trying to sell their farms before blacks reclaimed land under a majority government” (169). The white population is experiencing discomfort in a society, which henceforth will be dominated by the black majority who led the life of slavery. Lukacs states that, “The slaves subjected to the exploitation, therefore, stood outside what was thought of as ‘human’ society and even the greatest and noblest thinkers of the time were unable to consider their fate as that of human beings” (90).

Vera is divided between her private white life and her public black one. Like Ann in *Occasion for Loving*, Vera has also dared to cross the colour bar and forms a relationship with a black man who is making progress in the politics of the country, unlike, Gideon Shibalo whose career is wrecked by the spiteful white regime. Vera in the end of the novel concludes that the personal life in the country is ‘transitory’ whereas the political life is ‘transcendent’ and she has decided to immerse herself in the creation of a just and equal society for all the races and the classes. Every law that has set her apart from the blacks is no more in rule. The government will run by the free choice of the people and there would be equal remuneration for the blacks as well as the whites without any disparity on the basis of colour or gender. Yet, it is difficult to avoid racism by saying that a black is not black and a white is not white.

The novel discloses that even after the downfall of racist government and ANC’s rise to power, it was still hard to acquire and even make use of the country’s land available to them. The post-apartheid South Africa looked ineffective and frail. The presence of white skin in South Africa is still considered by most of the blacks as the continuation of a division between rich whites and poor blacks. In *None to Accompany Me*, Gordimer has acquired a new visibility on the political scene that gives a special course to her writing. She advocates that a politically strong South Africa can bestow liberation and authority to the blacks. Now there would be “No longer any segregation of black and white sick and injured” (175-76).
The newly appointed representative of the people speaks of the importance of his companions “in the struggle of the past, now sharing the heavy responsibility of the future, and bringing to it the same courage and dedication we roused in ourselves when we were fighting the evil of the regime” (207). The government shows its intention of serving the nation with keen devotion. It also admits that, “if we’re going to ask our people to put trust in a new constitution we have first to put our lives on the table to vow integrity we have to swear publicly” (208). In the South African context, the segregation laws of apartheid controlled the regime’s racial policies. There is bewilderment in the whole atmosphere.

That landscape was not innocent. There were shootings along the highways and roads everyday, attacks like the one that had killed Oupa, shots in the cross-fire between rival political groups, ambushes by gangs representing themselves as revolutionaries. (221)

In such a country there is a constant threat to the lives of many national leaders. Sibongile Maqoma is also on a hit list, there have been one or two abusive calls ever since she has taken the charge of a multi-party commission negotiation talks. There is a note lying under her door, which calls her “a black bitch who should keep her cunt out of politics… you were listed to be murdered!” (234). In such a situation it becomes the duty of every single citizen to maintain peace and work towards the formation of a politically, socially, and culturally stable nation. As Gordimer in the novel says, “When every old distinction of privilege is defeated and abolished, there comes an aristocracy of those in danger. All feel diminished, outclassed, in their company. The Island is ours” (259). In all the novels of Gordimer, the people rebel against the apartheid and defy the laws enforced by the white regime.

The rise of a black bourgeoisie does not only provide satisfaction, but is also seen as a source of acrimony for the insistent activists, as is verified by Didymus. In fact,

In None to Accompany Me it is a question which applies to the whole of South African society. Even though entire groups are acquiring a legitimacy previously
denied to them, society will not necessarily evolve in the direction of individuals’ greater freedom, as claimed by certain revolutionary statements. (Brahimi 67)

After a prolong period of perplexity there finally arrives the tone of positivity and progress which is undeniable, but there are some waning in revolutionary standards within the operation of the new state is only to be expected. There is a forceful desire of both races and individuals to be accepted as legitimate thus taking the appearance of a surprising assortment of audacity and fondness to the old model. When there is a strong existence of the previous foundations of a society, then it becomes difficult to say who is pressing forward and towards which direction. Gordimer in a very subtle manner expresses the extremes and puzzlement encountered in the setting up of the new state. In her fiction, “one would expect to find stories illustrating the way in which blacks and whites are led to deceive each other because of the underground struggle that puts them on opposing sides” (Brahimi 162).

In this story, a specific kind of terrorism is severely, even fiercely condemned. Yet, above all, the story establishes the incomparable partition between those who have genuine feelings towards the nation and those who over look all other circumstances in preference of what they call political ideas. The violation between these two philosophies creates victims like Vera, who inspires the sad thoughts of affright and compassion. Gordimer’s novel also faces some criticism from the critics. Thurston puts forward, “None to Accompany Me is constrained by a self-consciousness of purpose, both literary and political, that tends to distance the reader from the lives of the characters, making it perhaps less compelling than her earlier work” (144).

Nonetheless, Gordimer’s remarkable narrative power cannot be ignored; it is her artistic abilities that facilitate her to introduce the reader with the political revulsion’s of South Africa. None to Accompany Me places a society still stalked by the violence of the past when the country is entering into the new future. The novel stands between eras; it goes beyond its present to check out the possibilities of a new structure and unequal relationships that could incarnate a nation of greater fairness and accord. Despite the novel’s concentration on the issue of racism, this was at the pinnacle of its crisis when
Gordimer wrote this book about two decades ago – and which continue to influence its readers even today. It is also imperative to acknowledge that South African society is a dynamic and pliant society with an idiosyncratic historical aptitude for transformation, as is witnessed by the struggle of its people against racism and by the impervious spirit of fight of its main leaders, such as Nelson Mandela.