

**Telling The Apartheid Story: A Postcolonial Study of Violence in Alex La
Guma's *A Walk in the Night* and *The Stone Country***

BY

**SAMEERAH HASSAN MUHAMMAD
SPS/12/MEN/00030**

FEBRUARY, 2016

TITLE PAGE

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
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ENGLISH (LITERATURE)**

FEBRUARY, 2016

DECLARATION

I Sameerah Hassan Muhammad, hereby, declare that this study entitled “Telling the Apartheid Story: A Postcolonial Study of Violence in Alex La Guma’s *A Walk in The Night* and *The Stone Country*” is my effort under the supervision of Prof. Isma’ila A. Tsiga of the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bayero University, Kano. All materials used have been duly acknowledged by means of references.

Sameerah Hassan Muhammad
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Date

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that this research project was approved as part of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in English (Literature), Department of English and Literary Studies, Faculty of Art and Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my father, Alhaji Hassan Muhammad (mni); and my mother Hajiya Jamilah Alwan Naif, for their love, care and commitment in promoting my personal development.

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Abstract

This thesis is on the two works of Alex La Guma's, *A Walk in The Night* and *The Stone Country*. Alex La Guma's a coloured writer from South Africa is famous for his writing against the apartheid regime. The criticisms of his work like others have been dominated by the theme of violence and racial discrimination under the apartheid regime. This study principally focuses on the use of postcolonial theory and Fanonian theory of social violence to bring out the experiences of both the black and white. The research work is testing the theories on the themes of social and psychological violence in black South Africa under apartheid regime. It is an attempt to demonstrate the impact of racial segregation of the apartheid system on the psychology of the black and white in South African. The apartheid system inflicted psychological injury on both the black and the white. As we can see how a close look at the texts reveals that the whites are also affected. The racial segregation and brutal treatment they face from the white minority was what made them react with violence and turn to it as a source of relief. Under colonial administration, the objective of material oppression involves the subjective realm. That is, colonised subject is made to feel inferior (The colonisation of the mind). As a result, the native feels that wearing the white mask (culture) is the only way of dealing with psychological inadequacy.

CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTS AND CONTEXTS

1.0 Introduction

Alexander La Guma (1925-85), South African short-story writer and novelist, was born to a "coloured "(mixed-race) family in Cape town. His parents were active in left wing politics and the labour movement, and La Guma grew up conscious of the political and socioeconomic implications of South Africa's separatist policies. He did not begin writing fiction until after he turned thirty. He wrote five novels, over a dozen short stories and many political essays. He was repeatedly harassed by the South African government as a result of his political activities, and immigrated to England in 1966. Most of his works, fiction and non-fiction, deals with South African subjects, focusing on the conflict between the races. Throughout his works, he stresses the importance of collective action and the need to care for others (Field,2010).

His stories depict his curiosity about the poverty, despair, oppression and hopes of humanity combines with a deep concern about their suffering and affliction that inhabit the minutest detail of the fictional environment: the physical state of buildings, the smells that emanate from them and the lives caught up in this environment. His first short story, *Nocturne* (1957), reveals his ability to capture atmosphere, speech, and the surface meaning of the situation he depicts. It is a straightforward narrative of a young man planning a robbery, who is disturbed by classical music streaming in from outside that blends the event, scene, effective inner dialogue and the moral aim, making a point about the social environment, status, transcendence and the South Africa's racist ugliness. La Guma considered his task, in a way, as being similar to there an African of storyteller who records events as narrated to him and fashions a narrative that is moral and entertaining.

In his first novel, *A Walk in the Night* (1962), La Guma describes the political and social existence of the "coloured people" of the District Six slum in Cape Town. He examines the life of the district through the actions of four characters during the course of one night. He focuses on the decay and despair of the slum, whose residents are frequently too absorbed by their own miserable state to react to it, and, thus, suffer alone. In doing so, he explores the connection between rights and responsibilities through the unfolding of his characters' decisions and actions. In the *Fog of the Season's End* (1972), his autobiographical novel, La Guma, however, describes the South African struggles through characters who are involved in political resistance, unlike the lonely victims of his earlier works. Although, the main character, Beukes, has reached the conclusion that collective action is essential to solving the problems of the black South Africans. The author uses flashbacks to reveal the squalor and despair which are the source of the political movement. The characters overcome the isolation and disconnectedness, which plague the subjects in his earlier works, in an attempt to work together towards achieving their goal.

Throughout his fictional writings about the condition of black South African, La Guma explores the tension between human rights and social responsibility, which against the backdrop of the nation's separatist policies. The moral development of his characters is closely tied with their potential to improve their country's future.

Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* and *The Stone Country* portray the lives of non-white South Africans during the colonial or specifically apartheid era. *A Walk in the Night*, for instance, tells the story of Willie Boy, a character who is caught up in a ghetto life. The novel is set in Cape Town's District Six in one night in the late 1960s. This is the place where the coloured people

live and which is dominated by violence and dirtiness. In relation to the content of this novel, Mphahlele (1985: 31) opines that the central character 'Willie Boy' is;

A drifter, and there is something almost mindless about him; eventually he is chased by the police for a crime he hasn't committed, and he's gunned down. The orchestration here is through the portrayal of life in the ghetto, where a man has no control over his own destiny, like Willie Boy, who cannot do anything about it. In a novel like that setting makes the character that is a big thing. In fact the major character in this novel is the ghetto, District Six itself, rather than Willie Boy, who is a sacrificial lamb, as it were.

The story begins when Michael Adonis jumps down from a truck into the chaos of the city traffic, occasioned by workers returning home at the end of the day. He develops a growing anger, having been fired from his job at the sheet metal factory for swearing at a white foreman, who accuses him of being lazy when he request for permission to go to the bathroom. He walks through a ghetto of prostitutes, gangsters and thugs and stops at a Portuguese café where he meets Willie Boy, an acquaintance who listens and laments his resentful anger for losing the job.

The text's primary theme may be the deterioration of life under the policy of apartheid regime. Moreover, the narrative depicts how the majority moderate coloured and blacks lose their humanity and dignity in apartheid's refusal to rehabilitate the decay in urban slums. Because the violence is abstract and random in its nature, the perpetrators seem vague victims who turn on each other. To purge their anger for their powerless and miserable life, the black South African fathers beat their wives for beating the children, who grow up to mug defenseless old men. In the narrative, Michael struggles to develop a sense of dignity and illusion for power which is subject to the wind of apartheid policy, which is also subsequently capable of causing brutal acts and rage that manifest without a reason or warning.

The text examines the condition of South African prison system; the hierarchical social system; racial segregation and brutality against the black majority. The novel is set in the 'prison', where different kinds of convicts are brought together, for the different crimes they have committed. As the title suggest, the narrative does not only depict the dilemma of South Africans, but the loss of sense of humanity which is as a result of violence, segregation, oppression and alienation they face. In the apartheid regime, George finds himself behind the great walls of jail beneath the mountain of Cape Town. He is there for political reason, but the other prisoners commit one crime or another, which the social and economic deprivation of the apartheid regime causes. The prisoners have brought with them the violence of Cape Town's District Six and are willing to kill one another over leadership in the prison; attempt to commit suicide and die in their bid to escape.

Apartheid, while it lasted in South Africa, represented a conflict of great proportions. In fact, such a conflict was unprecedented in human history. As expected under such circumstances, violence was quite an issue in every facet of the society's life. Being a record of the people's activities, beliefs and philosophy, the nation's literature produced during the period, therefore, reflects the violence that affected the people. After all, as literary critics have frequently explained, genuine literature is but a true account of its society of origin. It is out of this consideration that this study examines the violence in the two primary texts *A Walk in the Night* and *The Stone Country*, employing the Fanonian theory and concept of violence as both aggression and a process of decolonisation. Indeed, at the centre of all the social violence in South Africa was apartheid, the political state policy of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party, which ruled South Africa from 1948 to 1994.

1.1 A Brief on Apartheid: A Background Study

“Apartheid” literally means “apartness”, the state of being apart, “separateness” or “separation”; and in the South African context, it means racial distinction (La Guma, 1972:23). ”.

Pronounced ‘apart-hate’, the word is Afrikaans, the South African language which was derived from Dutch for apartness or separation. The man who brought the word to the world’s attention in its political sense was Dr. Daniel François Malan, leader of the National Party in the South African general election of 1948. His party’s victory and its retention of power for nearly half a century brought about the introduction of apartheid, not just as the government’s overriding policy, but as the means – they repeatedly said – of saving western civilisation from extinction by black hordes (Lapping, 1986:xiii).

The racial conflict that aroused worldwide interest in South Africa had its roots in the series of decisions pressed upon a reluctant group of Merchant Princes by one man, Jan Van Riebeeck. On his way back to Netherlands in 1648, his ship called at the Cape of Good Hope, a watering place increasingly used by the (VOCs) Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, the Dutch East India Company, trader-privateers and also by some British and French ships. In the 1490s the first white men to sail past the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, had called it the cape of storms and when van Riebeeck arrived there he saw a Dutch ship that a storm had recently beached. Its crew had stayed camped on their cargo, some of which Van Riebeeck helped to transfer to his own ship (Lapping, 1986:1). The following year two crew members of the beached vessel returned to the Netherlands and suggested that the VOC should set up a permanent staging post at the cape. The cape a small bay and few miles of hinterland was then inhabited by two closely related peoples, the Khoi-Khoi and San, who were collectively referred to as the Khoi-San (Lapping,1986:2).

By the end of eighteenth century, however, the Dutch settlers had multiplied to some 20, 000 Afrikaners, employing 26, 000 slaves and some 13, 000 Khokhoi (Lapping, 1986:3). To prevent the slaves from fleeing or using force against their masters, punishments of unimaginable cruelty were imposed. This was the age when a sailor found guilty of malpractice on the company ship, a free, Whiteman could receive 200 lashes or be keelhauled thrown overboard and dragged by the rope beneath the keel and up the other side alive, if he was lucky. Criminal justice in Europe was still barbaric. The almost Godlike or diabolical authority of a master over his slaves was merely the most extreme way society kept order. It made the Cape farmers, even more than the gentlemen of the Carolinas and Georgia, immune to the liberation ideas of the time. Anybody coming from Europe to tell the Afrikaners how slaves or black people should be treated was asking for trouble (Lapping, 1986:8).

After the French Revolution, the army of France swept over the Netherlands. The Dutch could no longer protect their colonies. To prevent these from falling into French control, the British, with Dutch consent, occupied the Cape and the Dutch East Indies. The British later paid the Dutch six million pounds and kept the Cape (Lapping1986:9). The discovery of an unusual stone in 1866 which turned out to be diamond in a farm in the North Cape colony, changed the status of the area even though, it was unclear to whom the land belonged. The Afrikaner trekkers to whom the British had given back charge of their own independent republics, the Orange Free State to the East and the Transvaal to the North, both claimed the area. Then, as now, diamond mining is an extraordinary business. A few diamonds removed from the digging can radically change a person's entire life. Nobody was allowed to leave the mines without being searched.

Later on, an area was made for the labourers to live within the mines enclosed compound to prevent them from stealing the stone.

At first the blacks came from the native kingdoms far and near to make their fortunes at the mines, but the whites who managed the mines combined to squeeze them out. Blacks who had worked on the land of Transvaal Afrikaners saw the chance the diamond mines had created to run their own farms for profit. After the discovery of gold and diamonds, came the Boer War, which many socialists in both Britain and South Africa argued had been launched by Britain on behalf of a few Jews millionaire (Lapping, 1986:34). Two of the most successful Boer war guerilla leaders, Smuts and his commander-in-chief, General Louis Botha, led a movement for 'conciliation'. Botha had been impressed by the millions of pounds Milner had obtained from the British Treasury to revive the South African economy. Since the discovery of diamonds, Britain had tried to bring their two states into a Federation with Natal and the Cape. So long as the federal proposal meant rule by the British crown, the Afrikaner republics rejected it.

The creation of the union of South Africa was quickly followed by the launching of two political movements. One was the African National Congress, the other was the Afrikaner National Party. By the end of the 19th century, the black clans and states of Southern Africa had been defeated in war. The rest had wisely entered into protection agreements with Britain, leaving them subject to four governments, two British and two Afrikaner. The constitutions of Transvaal and the Orange Free State by contrast discriminate openly, the black South Africans there, to the extent that they would never be allowed to vote. To bring all the separate and often rival South African peoples into a single nationalist movement required time, hard work, luck and external provocation. The first nationalist resistance organisation to make a notable impact, had nothing to do with

Africans. It was created by a genius from India, MK Gandhi (Lapping 1986:49). Ghandhi, had arrived in South Africa when the whites in Natal were threatened by the success of Indian businessmen. He proved to be a professional lawyer and an outstanding political leader, particularly by briefing the press in his effort to make sure news of his campaign had reached London and Delhi, from where he repeatedly received support.

Economic causes of the rise of apartheid complemented political and ideological. The mine factories and farms all depended on cheap black labour. As a result, white-owned businesses accumulated huge profits by supporting a government that denied blacks the vote and paid them artificially low wages. In addition to capitalist employers, white factory workers and World War II veterans voted for apartheid in 1948 to protect their economic advantages and to oppose black urbanisation and social welfare. Furthermore, many white families benefited from the work of black domestic servants who provided childcare and house care. In order to enforce the supply of cheap black labour, the apartheid regime introduced a pass, “work permit” which was more restrictive; it was a criminal offense for Afrikaans to move about without a pass and residency depended upon a pass. Despite its apparent inflexibility, apartheid was subject to various political and economic interests in the white community which underwent changes, and when confronted with black resistance, it attempted, unsuccessfully, to reform itself(*Graham, 1986:70*).

The 1950s can be described as the era of “petty apartheid” when the nationalists passed many new racist laws similar to Jim Crows in the United States of America, in order to enforce a racially separate and unequal social order. The 1953 Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, for instance, imposed segregation on all public facilities, including post offices, beaches, stadia, park & toilets, cemeteries, and buses and trains as well. Two pillars of apartheid became law in 1950;

the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas. The former classified all South Africans as members of white, black, coloured or Indian racial groups. Because racial identities were (and are) historically and socially constructed in South Africa; the government created Racial Classification Board to officially determine every person's "race". The absurdity of this system is exemplified by the story of Vic Wilkinson, who was alternatively classified as coloured, then white, and finally back to coloured again (*Graham, 1986:70*). The Group Area Act imposed strict residential and racial segregation. Apartheid social engineering irreparably damaged countless of families, communities and livelihoods, as the government forcibly removed blacks to African, coloured, or Indian "townships" (also known as locations) on the outskirts of cities and towns. In the process of enforcing this plan, the South African government destroyed vibrant, racially mixed neighborhoods, such as Sophia town in Johannesburg and District Six in Cape Town. Township residents tried to rebuild their lives despite inadequate housing, material poverty and, for Africans, the constant threat of arrest for not carrying a pass book (Peter,2002).

The impact of apartheid on black education was profound. Verwoerd's 1953 Bantu Education Act established an inferior education system for the black South Africans based on a curriculum intended to produce manual labourers and obedient subjects. Similar discriminatory education laws were also imposed on coloured people and Indians, who had lost the right to vote in 1956. The government denied funding of mission schools that rejected Bantu Educational, leading to the closure of many of the best schools for the Africans. In higher education sector, the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 prevented black students from attending "white" universities (except with government permission) and created separate and unequal institutions for Africans, coloureds and Indians, respectively. The apartheid government also undermined intellectual and cultural life through intense censorship of books, movies, radio and television

programmes. Censorship reached absurd proportions, exemplified by the banning of the children's book *Black Beauty* and the tardy introduction of television in 1976. After that date, government-controlled broadcast media regularly disseminated apartheid propaganda. Educational ties with the rest of the world gradually diminished as countries applied a cultural boycott to South Africa.

In the 1960's the pursuit of white domination led to a new policy of "Grand Apartheid". As a massive social engineering project, Grand Apartheid ethnically defined "Batusans" (or Homeland) out of the "Tribal Reserves" carved out by the 1913 Land Act. Between 1960 and 1985, approximately 3.5 million Africans were forcibly removed to alleged "homelands". These rural dumping grounds functioned as reservoirs of cheap black labour for white employers, but the apartheid regime also envisioned them as "independent" territories that would ensure the denial of South African citizenship to millions of Africans. Some of these territories, such as Bophuthatswana, comprised dozens of isolated pieces of territory with no common frontier, situated in the most unproductive regions of the country. Batusans were inhibited largely by poverty-stricken women and children since the men migrated annually to work in South African cities and towns, and the white farms as well. Generally, government approved "tribal" leaders ruled over the Bantusans in violent and corrupt fashion, with the full support of the South African government, which was responsible for their entire budget and provided military assistance. Indeed, Transkie (1976) accepted "independence" from South Africa, although no foreign government recognised it.

In spite of the white minority's enormous financial, political and military power, it never gained absolute control over South Africans. In reality, the daily suffering and humiliations brought

about by apartheid and brutal repression of human and civil rights did not prevent millions of black (and even some white) men, women, and youths from defiantly challenging the apartheid laws. Pass laws were designed to control the movement of Africans under apartheid regime. These laws evolve from regulations imposed by the Dutch and British in the 18th and 19th century slave economy of the Cape colony. In the 19th Century new pass laws were enacted for the purpose of ensuring a reliable supply of cheap, docile African labour for the gold and diamond mines. In 1952, the government enacted an even more rigid law that required all African males over the age of 16 to carry a “Reference Book” (in place of the previous pass book) that contained personal information and employment history.

1.2 Post-Colonial Theory

The post-colonial theory enters these texts through a specific critical lens, or a specific way of reading a text. That critical lens, post-colonial theory or post-colonialism, asks the reader to analyze and explain the effects that colonization and imperialism, or the extension of power into other nations, have on people and nations.

Said's ‘Orientalism’ (1978) is considered the foundational work on which post-colonial theory developed. Said, then, could be considered the 'father' of post-colonialism. His work, including 'Orientalism', focused on exploring and questioning the artificial boundaries, or the stereotypical boundaries, that have been drawn between the East and West, specifically as they relate to the Middle East. In doing this, Said focused specifically on our stereotypes of Middle-Easterners; however, these same ideas can be extended to include how we view all 'others.' This is the 'us'- 'other' mentality that many colonizers take with them into a new country. Such simple

generalizations lead to misconceptions and miscommunications, which are often the basis of post-colonial analysis.

Post-colonial literary theory re-examines colonial literature, especially concentrating upon the social discourse, between the colonizer and the colonized, that shaped and produced the literature. In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Saïd analyzed the fiction of Honoré de Balzac, Charles Baudelaire, and Lautréamont (Isidore-Lucien Ducasse), and explored how they were influenced, and how they helped to shape the societal fantasy of European racial superiority. Post-colonial fiction writers deal with the traditional colonial discourse, either by modifying or by subverting it, or both.

1.3 Definition and Forms of Violence

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation", although the group acknowledges that the inclusion of "the use of power" in its definition expands on the conventional meaning of the word. This definition involves intentionality with the committing of the act itself, irrespective of the outcome it produces. However, generally, anything that is excited in an injurious or damaging way may be described as violent even if not meant to be violence (by a person and against a person).

Violence exists on a continuum ranging from subtle, hurtful acts to those more noticeable and physically harmful. This broad view of violence is necessary when we are talking about schools where children have little or no power to remove themselves if they find the climate uncomfortable or threatening. Students are a captive audience; they cannot get up and leave. So

as we explore how to create a safe school climate, keep in mind that violence is physical force, emotional torment, social isolation, and abuse of power designed to intimidate, dominate, or inflict pain on another person.

Domestic Violence: The South African Domestic Violence Act of 1998 defines domestic violence as: “physical abuse; sexual abuse; economic abuse; intimidation harassment; stalking; damage of property; entry into the complainant’s residence; or any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards a complainant, where such conducts harms, or may cause immediate harm to, the safety, health or wellbeing of the complainant.” Most people who suffer from the domestic violence do not even know what it is; they believe it can only be called that once act of physical violence have been proven. It is one of the most prevalent act in the country.

Sexual Violence: This can be referred to the use of force or manipulation to get someone to engage in unwanted sexual activity without one’s consent. The high rate of rape and other forms of sexual violence in South Africa has sparked a concern and outrage, leading to law reforms, parliamentary debate, marches and campaign. It has also led to a range of policy intervention intended to reduce the number of people who fall victim to the crimes.

Political Violence: The policy of apartheid had vested power and privilege of the white minority for decades. This in turn embodied one of the most damaging contemporary system of political violence. Racial classification, as formalised by apartheid, split the South Africa population into four major groups: white, coloured, Indian, and black African. Furthermore, the national party government under its policy of separate development, created tribal homelands for each African group. Jenkins (2000:23) described apartheid as system comprising two ideological themes of white supremacy that attempted to grantee racial peace and maintain a pure white race. The first

theme was segregation as a means of domination. The second was segregation as trusteeship, which allowed the black Africans to express themselves.

Racial Violence: Racial violence differs from other forms of violence in that the root causes are to do with assumption of superiority and dislike of other people who are deemed to be inferior because of their religious identity, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin or descent and because of their appearance and physical characteristics such as colour, language and dress. These are natural and normal attributes, and any attack on them is an attack of the very core of one's essence as a human being and as a member of the human race. Racial be pushing, spitting, name-calling, teasing, or practical jokes, in more serious cases it involves physical assault, arson, stabbing, rape, murder, attempted murder, massacres and genocide.

Psychological Violence: While physical violence is easier to recognize, other forms of violence are equally damaging. There is a growing body of evidence that persistent low-level harassment affects the health and wellbeing of people subjected to it. It leaves physical and psychological scars which are passed on from person to person in the community and remembered by generations to come. Living in fear because one belongs to a race or a group of people who are subjected to violence and constant harassment is a major cause of resistance which often paints an identity with the negative images and labels they are given.

1.4 Violence in Colonial South Africa

This study tries to set out an agenda for historical research into the origin of unusually high violent crimes levels in South Africa. It argues that there have been few attempts to link historical research on crime explicitly to the contemporary crisis. The study also reviews the levels of violent crimes in the country. The apartheid legacy paradigm while essential to the discussion is inadequate for a number of reasons, specific indigenous cultural and social

practices needs to be incorporated more systematically into future research. The research(er) maintains that two areas of the discussion on crime need urgent historical attention, inequality and youth socialisation. It also suggested that historians need to do more comparative work with countries that have experiences similar political and economic trajectories in order to understand which dimensions of the criminal legacy are specific to South Africa.

The normalisation of violence, which has appeared to be seen as a necessary and justified means of resolving conflict and legitimising sexual harassment against women. The reliance on a criminal justice system mired many issues, including inefficiency and corruption. A subculture of violence and criminality, ranging from individual criminals rape or rob to informal groups or move formalised gangs. Those involved in the subculture are engaged in criminal careers and commonly use light fire arms, with the exception of Cape Town where knife violence is more prevalent. Credibility within this subculture is related to the readiness to resort to extreme violence.

The vulnerability of young people therefore, was linked to the inadequate child care and poor youth socialization systems. As a result of poverty, unstable living arrangements and being brought up with inconsistent and uncaring parenting some South African children were exposed to risk factor which enhanced the chances of becoming criminals and violent.

1.5 Violence in Post-Colonial South Africa

According to the American Psychological Association, violence is an extreme form of aggression such as assault, rape or murder. Violence has many causes, including frustration, exposure to violent media, violence in the home or neighborhood and a tendency to see other people's actions as hostile, even when they are not. The frustration may lead to misdirected

aggression, and mistrust a close cousin of hostility (Hughes, 1975:10) and other provocations and environmental factors like heat and overcrowding. The World Health Organisation considers violence as the intentional “use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation (WHO, 2015)”. This definition involves the intentionality of committing the act itself, irrespective of the outcome it may result. According WHO (2015), crime is a prominent issue in South Africa. Violent crimes such as murder and rape were common in the country.

The term “post-colonialism” according to rigid etymology is frequently misunderstood as a concept, which means the time after colonialism has ceased or the time following the politically determined Independence Day, when a country formally breaks away from its governance by another state (Helen and Joanne, 1996:20). Post-colonialism (or often postcolonialism), deals with the effects of colonisation on cultures and societies. As originally used by historians, after the Second World War in terms such as the “post-colonial state”, post-colonialism had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period.

Violence is a common factor in decolonisation. It is seen quite simply as the replacing of a certain “species” of men by another “species” of men (Fanon 1986:24). Decolonisation is the melting of two forces opposed to each other by their very nature that, in fact, owe their originality to that sort of substantification, which results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies and their first encounter was marked by violence (Fanon, 1986:161-35). Decolonisation according to de Moraes-Favias and Barbar (1990:41), is the “process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms. This includes dismantling the cultural forces

that had maintained the colonialist power that often remained even after political independence was achieved”.

1.6 Fanon’s View Point on Violence

Frantz Fanon was born in the French colony of Martinique on July 20, 1925. His family occupied a social position within Martinican society that could reasonably qualify them as part of the black bourgeoisie; Frantz’s father, Casimir Fanon, was a customs inspector and his mother, Eléanore Médélice, owned a hardware store in downtown Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique. Members of this social stratum tended to strive for assimilation and identification with the white French culture. Fanon was raised in this environment, learning France’s history as his own, until his high school years when he first encountered the philosophy of negritude, taught to him by Aimé Césaire, Martinique’s other renowned critic of European colonisation. Politicised, and torn between the assimilationism of Martinique’s middle class and the preoccupation with racial identity that negritude promoted, Fanon left the colony in 1943, at the age of 18, to fight with the Free French forces in the waning days of World War II. (David M., 2002)

After the war, he stayed in France to study Psychiatry and Medicine at the university in Lyons. Here, he encountered bafflingly simplistic anti-black racism so different from the complex, class-permeated distinctions of shades of lightness and darkness one found in the Caribbean which would so enrage him that he was inspired to write “An Essay for the Disalienation of Blacks,” the piece of writing that would eventually become *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (1952). It was here too that he began to explore the Marxist and existentialist ideas that would inform the

radical departure from the assimilation-négritude dichotomy that *Peau Noire*'s anti-racist humanism inaugurates.

His famous works concerning colonialism and decolonisation include *The Wretched of the Earth* (1952) *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). His famous chapter in *The Wretched of the Earth* "Concerning Violence" analyses the violence that ruled over the ordering of the colonial world; and which had ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social norms. Fanon indicted colonialist countries for using force to exploit raw materials and labour from colonised countries. In their attempt to justify their actions, colonialist stereotyped natives as savages and viewed them as precolonial barbarians. Colonialist proclaimed that European culture was the ideal for natives to emulate use violence and divide and conquer strategies to keep the natives down. Fanon advocated violence against the settlers as the way for colonised people to regain their sense of self-respect. Although he was a psychiatrist, Fanon did not show that such violence would be psychologically liberating. Instead, he cited cases in which such violence led to psychological degeneration. Even if anticolonial violence was the only way to regain a sense of self-respect, however, such violence would not be automatically justifiable. Rape is not justifiable even if it appears to be the only way for a person to gain a feeling of self-respect. Thus, it is a mistake to think that Fanon has adequately justified terrorist attack on the innocent. Fanon encouraged the colonised to reject the dehumanising domination of Western culture. He claimed that the Western culture corrupted the leaders of the decolonised state, making them put their own interests above the interests of the native people (Fanon, 1952: 70).

Fanon exposes the methods of control the Western world used to hold down colonies. Fanon calls for a radical break with colonial culture, rejecting a hypocritical European humanism for a

pure revolutionary consciousness. He exalts violence as a necessary pre-condition for this rapture. Chi Bornfree, (2004) analyses that Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) starts with a dialectical analysis on violence that simplifies decolonisation into a "raw, repressed and reckless state in the lives and consciousness of colonised men and women (Fanon, 1961:4)". Thus, the quest for change from the state of the colonised to the decolonised is a fight that engages the raw animalistic instincts of humanity.

As a clinical psychiatrist by training, Fanon's social theory is clearly influenced by his study of human behaviour. He supports much of his understanding on the usage of violence by interrogating both the motives of the colonised and the coloniser:

The supremacy of white values is stated with such violence, the victorious confrontation of these colonised is impregnated with aggressiveness, that as a counter measure the colonised rightly makes a mockery of them whenever they are mentioned. In the colonial context the colonist only quits undermining the colonised once the latter have proclaimed loud and clear that white values reign supreme (7)

The concept of cultural imperialism better articulated in Fanon's earlier work, *Black Skin, White Mask* (1952), is used here to illustrate how the "other" (as he dubs the coloniser) violently imposes his cultural values on the colonised. For the purpose of understanding the violent tendencies of the "other", the above quote is reflective of the persistent, arrogant and aggressive behaviour of the coloniser, who replaces previous cultural practices with the laughable substitutes.

As a general rule, colonialism according to Fanon (1952) welcomes this godsend system with open arms, transforms these 'blind mouths' into spokesmen, and in two minutes endows them with independence, on condition that they restore order (79).

1.7 Violence as Freedom

Violent crime has become a way of life and death in post-apartheid Johannesburg. Gilbert A. Lethwaite (1997:18)

The policy of apartheid and racial discrimination is the root cause of violence in South Africa, which has not changed much since the apartheid era. According to the Johannesburg based Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), South Africa's current high rate of violent crime was just as related to economic and social marginalisation as it was during the 1980s. What has changed is the context. During the apartheid regime, any act that rendered a township ungovernable would be considered criminal and was perceived by the community as forms political protest. Simpson (1984: 117) believes that apartheid as a policy of the minority whites in South Africa, was an effort to develop a veritable strategy to turn the tide of the violence, CSVR has been analysing the causes, extent and the sustained pattern of violence. Although the government downplayed the statistics and denied that South Africa was the crime capital of the world, according to Matzopoulos of the University of Cape Town, this post-apartheid country still has one of the highest murder rates. There were 22,000 people slain in 2000; more were killed in car accidents, and for rape, robbery, high jack and burglary crime (Richard, 1997: 87)

Matzopoulos (1999:20), assesses the effectiveness of South Africa's efforts to upgrade its urban centres, to include interventions; to modify the urban environment and public spaces; provide services to victims of violence and, the direct involvement of affected communities in addressing the violence. The scholar links the South Africa's unusual high level of interpersonal violence and crimes to the income inequality and poverty. It is notable that South Africa is not only one of the most violent countries in the world, but also one of the countries in the world that has not

been distributing its income equally among its citizens. Recent evidence confirms that homicide which accounts for 13%, and is second to HIV/AIDs, particularly in destroying the lives of the majority blacks in South Africa (Richard, 1997: 87).

Another issue concerning violence in South Africa is the recent xenophobic attacks on the foreigners. According to Webster Dictionary edition 2010 xenophobia is defined as an irrational fear or hatred of foreigners of anything foreign or strange. Gumede (2015:50) assert that the wave of deadly attacks against foreigners of African descent that has shamed South Africa, and the astonishingly tardy response by the government has multiple causes. These simmer under the surface, and from time to time explode violently. Failure to honestly acknowledge and approach the underlying societal problems may be the major contributing factor of violence. As the xenophobic attacks spread like the wild fire; instead of sending the army to the affected communities, the government remained mute and refuse to take action. The leaders claimed it was not xenophobic; it was made up of “isolated” incidents. South Africa is a deeply violent society and it must own up to that in order to better deal with the reality. The culture of violence had its roots in the violence of colonialism and apartheid and the oppressed people respond through violence.

As one of the developing nations in terms of science and technology, South Africa is still a country where different communities are often deeply intolerant of others. Apartheid has not only left the legacy of white–against–black racism; it has by forcefully ghettoising ethnic groups, left a legacy of not only interracial group or colour prejudice, but also prejudice against Africans from outside the country.

As a result, the black and white South Africans are deeply suspicious of Africans from North of the Limpopo. African immigrants are violently attacked because perpetrators believe the police will not persecute them with the same zeal because the victims are foreigners, not “like them”.

1.8 Statement of the Problem

Violence has been the only tool that the majority black South Africans have used to respond against the damages of the apartheid regime. The few policies of the apartheid regime had been the causative agents of the black man’s dilemma and frustration on the land which belong to him. The black people had chosen to violate the few policies of the apartheid regime, which the minority whites saw as crime, and claimed their land. Actually, it was the system which drove them to ghetto life, and life motivated them to commit one crime or another in order to survive. The central problem of this dissertation, therefore, is to test the Fanonian view point on violence alongside the postcolonial theory, in order to bring out the social, political and psychological violence experienced by the black and other coloured people of South Africa during the apartheid era as depicted in La Guma’s text, ‘*A Walk in the Night*’ (1962) and *The Stone Country* (1967). The study shall also look at the racial discrimination under apartheid regime which draws the world attention in general, as captured by the two primary texts. The study will also confirm whether violence is a reliable and effective tool, for the black and coloured South Africans, for achieving freedom.

1.9 Research Questions

- i. How the apartheid system affects the lives of blacks and other coloured people in South Africa?
- ii. How does the violence affect the lives of South Africans in general?

- iii. How does the primary author capture the story of violence in the two primary texts?
- iv. How do the two texts in the light of post-colonial theory, justify the argument of Fanon concerning colonial violence?
- v. How does violence bring freedom among the non-whites of South Africa?

1.10 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim is to use the post colonial theory to demonstrate the impact of racial segregation of the Apartheid system on the psychology of the black South African in the two works.

- i. To explore in detail how the nature of the apartheid system affected majority black and coloured people of South Africa.
- ii. To find out the impact of violence on the lives of the oppressed South Africans.
- iii. To uncover how the author frames his narratives to capture the violence in South Africans.
- iv. To assess how the two texts, in the light of postcolonial theory, justify Fanon's argument on violence.
- v. To confirm how the act of violence sets the non-white South Africans free from harassment and oppression.

1.11 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is limited to the two primary texts written by, Alex La Guma, which are titled *A Walk in the Night*(1962) and *The Stone Country*(1967). These texts are chosen because they portray the social political and psychological lives of the black South Africans. The research would tell the apartheid story from the postcolonial perspective and from it, assess the impact of violence on the lives of the majority black and other non-white South Africans. This research however, intends to investigate the impact of the apartheid regime and its experience on the

coloured people, specifically the black South Africans. Thus, re-reading of the two texts using the Fanonian theory of social violence in the South African context and its impact on the black South Africans, is the scope of this dissertation.

1.12 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this research is to study the two primary texts *A Walk in the Night* (1962) and *The Stone Country* (1967) analyse the kind of violence depicted and how it affects the lives of black South Africa. The research has employed Postcolonial theory in line with Fanonian theory of violence to bring out or analyse the kind of violence that the black South Africans are drawn into by the apartheid regime; both in districts six and prison. The research intends to open doors to other researchers to look at the various forms of violence as they are represented and/or explored in the contemporary South African fiction. Different forms of violence could be examined which could lead to a better understanding of these issues and could raise further questions for consideration. It is significant to examine and confirm whether xenophobic and aggressive attitude of the non-white South Africans are connected to the apartheid regime/policy. It is also significant to reintroduce La Guma as one of the many black South Africans who sacrifices their lives to emancipating or liberating the black and other coloured South Africans from bondage. Therefore, the study will serve as academic reference point to students in particular, because they will find it very resourceful in their undertaking i.e. it will serve as guidance for future researchers especially those writing on the apartheid story. The study will also be significant to researchers interested in the area of apartheid story.

1.13 Theoretical Framework

The study is based on two theories mutually complementing each other, the Post-colonial theory and the Fanonian theory. The Post-colonial theory whose chief theorists among others include Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Spivak Gayatri Chakravoti was influenced by such philosophers as Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Derrida Foucault and Lacan and many more others. Many discursive priorities, positions, and descriptions form the basis of concern for the Post-colonial theory. The word “post” is not a signifier for a particular historical event or period but it signifies sublation and *critique*. This means that “post-colonial” *critique* stands for a theoretical, analytical, and political *resistance* to colonialism and imperialism in all their forms, such as the case in various discourses of the South African Apartheid. But at the same time , the “post” sometimes stands for a historical marker for the period after official decolonization, and as an indicator of the ensuing changes in intellectual approaches such as Post-structuralism and Deconstruction especially in the reading and interpretation of non-Western cultural practices, institutions, and reading formations after 1945 (the beginning of the decline of old style colonialism). The theory is sometimes referred to as a theoretical and practical-political position in *opposition* to the oppressive conditions of the legacies of colonialism and imperialism, and the conditions of post-coloniality (the historical facts of de-colonization and the realities of the new global context of economic and political domination). By implication here, the theory may be said to be in used to determine the practical-political position of the “Blacks” and the “coloured” South Africans in opposition to the oppressive tendencies imposed on them by the “whites” who represent the western imperialists.

It is with this background therefore, Edward Said in his work *Orientalism* (1978), though he does not use the term Post-colonial, put the crucial text of the Post-colonial theory as a *discourse* by

which European culture was able to manage—even produce— the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively in the Post-Enlightenment period. Said argues that the Orient was produced by Orientalism as a figment of the Western imagination for the purposes of imperial control and domination.

Said in another work, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) holds that imperialism has been energized by western culture (formal colonial empires and control of the resources of people by a colonizing country). With this, it may be argued that the oppression of the “black” and the “coloured” South Africans by the western imperialists finds a justifiable basis in the European culture. Here, Said demonstrates how knowledge and fantasy about non-European lands and peoples have marked a large part of Western culture in all its forms: literature, music, philosophy, etc. He also describes how the same (Europe, the West) has “constructed” the other (the savage, the primitive, the non-European, etc: the “Black” and the “coloured south Africans also inclusive”) as a mysterious and duplicitous “Other”, which acted as a means of stabilizing and affirming the identity of the imperialist power (the same; a theme later taken up by Homi Bhabha from a Lacanian and Fanonian position).

Bhabha (1994:72) contradicts Said about the totalizing hegemony of Orientalism. For Bhabha, then, orientalist discourse is both knowledge and a fantasy of the other; both conscious knowledge of, and the desire for, the colonial subject. In the same vein, colonial discourse is “a static system of ‘synchronic essentialism’, a knowledge of signifiers of stability”, but which is continually under threat from historical and narrative movements and other markers and signs of instability, such as linguistic items, and the dream work (the unconscious; a concept taken from Freud). The upshot of Bhabha’s appreciative critique of Said is that colonial discourse is formed

relationally, that is, both the colonizer and the colonized are implicated in each other, that colonial identity is unstable, agonized, and constantly changing, that there could be no unified self for both the colonizer and the colonized, and finally, that cultural difference is not absolute but shifting and multivalent (a view taken from Lacan). This could be argued relation to this work that both the whites and the South African “blacks”, “coloured” are implicated in each other in colonial discourse and that cultural difference between them is not absolute but is relational. Again, according to Bhabha, “subjects are always disproportionately placed in opposition or domination”(ibid). For Bhabha, this makes it difficult to conceive of domination as consisting of a relationship in which the dominator and the dominated are implicated. Now this perspective in this study allows the questioning of the alleged claim of a single intention of the colonizer (the south African “whites”) and the dominance of the colonized (the “blacks” and the “coloured”). Bhabha’s arguments here resembles what Spivak’s position on the Post-colonial discourse in most of her writings which include *Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism* and *Theory in the Margin: Coetzee’s Foe Reading Defoe’s Crusoe/Roxana* though she rejected the term “Post-colonial”. In one of her recent works, *Ethics, Subalternity, and the Critique of Post-colonial Reason*, she described the “non European” (the “Other”, savages”) as the “subaltern” (voiceless), a position very similar to Franz Fanon’s. The tenement of post-colonial theory can be summarized as to what Ngugi (1997) argues

“That post-colonialism is “absolutely and only congruent with overt resistance and opposition to anti-colonialisms and that independence has often simply meant the installation of the neo-colonial form of government by the local elite”.

Yet, critics argue that the designation of post-colonialism in covering the whole period from the moment of colonisation allows us to view such continuation of control even whilst we record the various moments of resistance, in which political independence is clearly the most crucial

Franz Fanon was influenced by thinkers like Marx, Jean Paul, Gustav Jung, etc. In *Black Skin, White Mask*, Fanon studied the psychology of racism and dehumanization inherent in situations of colonial domination. Fanon applied historical interpretations and the concomitant underlying social indictment to combat the oppression of black people. He applied Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic theory to explain the dependency and inadequacy that black people experience in a white world or rather in the hands of whites. In what he describes as “the Negro and the Psycho-pathology”(1967:201), he examines these inadequacy and dependency that the black people experience, especially in the periods of colonization. These among others, he argues created the problems of decolonization.

Fanon who was a political radical argues in *the Wretched of the Earth* that the solution to the recurrent problems of decolonization can only be realized through a violent uprising of the masses. Fanon arrives at this conclusion by defining colonial society as a Manichaeian, or compartmentalized, society-a world divided in two. The good is pitted against the bad; the white against the dark; the rich against the poor; the indigenous against the foreigner; the ruling class against the others; evil "niggers" and "towel-heads" against humane whites, the case that is best exemplified by the South African apartheid context.

This lurking division of the population creates a tension that cannot be ignored. True decolonization, therefore, will eradicate this devilish dichotomy and create a society where "the last shall be first" (2-5). However, because colonialism is only made possible through extreme violence and intimidation, Fanon reasons that violence is the only language that a colonialist society understands: "colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body endowed with reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence" (23). This

has undoubtedly vindicated the thematic focus of the apartheid stories as discourse about violence and writers like Alex Laguma and their works could be studied in relation to issues relating to violence since violence, to some extent means freedom or is the only means to freedom.

Fanon ridicules the notion of formal independence granted through peaceful handovers and more moderate means. Negotiation is no substitute for capitulation, and does not bring about effective decolonization. The result of such a path to decolonization is simply a cloaked form of the former colonialism. Prior to decolonization, the "mother country" realizes the inevitability of "freedom," and thus drains most of the "capital and technicians and encircling the young nation with an apparatus of economic pressure" (54). The young, independent nation, therefore, is obliged to keep the economic channels established by the colonial regime (56). The national bourgeoisie, in their incomplete and inorganic state, do not have the means to provide either capital or sophisticated economic guidance to the new country, and must therefore rely on colonial financiers' loans and advice, which all aim at forcing the new nation to remain dependent on its former colonizer just as it was during the colonial period (56-60).

It is only through a violent insurrection aimed at destroying everything touched by colonialism that a new species of man will be created. With this, the fanonian theory suggests that crime or violence in the context of South African apartheid became a tool for survival. The religious and tribal divisions created and exacerbated by the colonists will deteriorate as the urgency of unity is realized by the masses; unity by all means and in every course. The individualism espoused by the colonists will succumb to the quest of the colonized for communalism. It is through this struggle that a new national culture will be defined-not a culture defined by European norms; nor

a culture that harkens back to indigenous traditions of pre-colonial times-for this culture is forever lost, reactionary, and has been ruined and degraded in the psyche of the colonized through the phenomena of colonial racism and exceptionalism. This is the only way by which racism, oppression and discrimination will be brought to an end. The colonized must move forward to change the colonial order and the decay and poverty it caused.

The Postcolonial theory is a critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are still, colonies of other countries. It also examines ways in which the literature of the colonial powers is used to justify colonialism, through presenting images of the colonised as being inferior to the coloniser. Fanon (1961:200) describes the psychological trauma which the colonial subject suffers as a result of the encounter between the coloniser and the colonised:

Colonialism is a systematic negation of the other person and further determination to deny the other person all the attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly, in reality, who am I?"

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The writing of Alex La Guma is concerned with the violence in South Africa. The two primary texts under study, *A Walk in the Night* (1962) and *The Stone Country* portray not only physical, but also psychological violence against the blacks in South Africa. The post-colonial theory will be used alongside the Fanonian theory on violence to explain the type of violence portrayed in the two primary texts. The key to understanding the novels of Alex La Guma, which are the subject of this dissertation, lies in a fair understanding of the history of black writing in English in South Africa. This is because it has become quite impossible to say anything about the black South Africans without reference to how the country's entire way of life had been transformed by the system of apartheid, a concept which expresses the South African reality. The effects of apartheid were so far reaching and all-encompassing that, while it lasted, no aspect of South African life was immune to it. It, therefore, becomes impossible to comment on any concern of South African literature without first establishing the history of black writing in South Africa. Barnett (1983:9) asserts that "Black creative writing in South Africa began in the middle of the nineteenth century with the missionaries whose primary purpose was to establish reading, rather than by, the black man".

2.1 Review of Related Literature

This chapter reviews some related literature on *A Walk in the Night* and *The Stone Country*, from different point of views. *A Walk in the Night* is La Guma's first long prose fiction. It is part of his transition from journalism into fiction; in fact, because of its shortness, many critics refer to it as

a novella that brought information in the literary form about the injustices of apartheid regime to a wide audience. Yusuf (2001:68) suggests that the novella is about the problems of limited political understanding. He further points out that La Guma “develops a range of overarching themes introduced in an opening chapter that explores the issue of writing and resistance in the context of South Africa.”

The study will first review La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night* (1962) and examine some vices and its attachment to colonialism, like racial oppression, segregation, violence, and poverty in South Africa. Oppression is the act of oppressing, the imposition of unreasonable burden, either in taxes or services, through excessively rigorous government severity source. Racial oppression, however, could mean, “The severity or misery imposed on a particular group of people with the same biological features by another group or specie of mankind”. Racial oppression in South Africa began during colonialism as a result of racism, which is the belief that the white race was superior to the other non-white races. During the colonial period, racism was widespread and caused many problems. The whites, who believed that they were superior, exercised all forms of discrimination, segregation, colonialism, slavery and even genocide (mass killing), in their colonies because of their military powers. Colonialism had caused disorderliness and death of many innocent people. One of the ailments was hard poverty. Poverty during the apartheid regime ruined the lives of many black South Africans. In La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night*, Willieboy’s poverty causes him trouble, when he goes to Adonis’s house to see if he can get some money from his pay-off. As a result he is arrested for the murder of the old man, Doughty. Joe’s upbringing affects him so much and turns him into a beggar. The unlawful murder of Willieboy by constable Raalt is a typical example of racial violence in the country.

Racial oppression in the text is illustrated through Michael Adonis's sack from service by the white officials. The whites set apart from the coloured people to live in the hot tenements, while they separately live in a very comfortable environment. All these are caused by colonialism, when the white oppressors came to Africa and some other parts of the world, mainly to colonise the people. They ruled African states and treated the indigenous people as slaves, because they believed they were inferior, and left them with their predicament. For this, the research studies *A Walk in the Night* and from it examines the impact of colonialism on black and other coloured South Africans. Nazureth (1982: 9) in Linfors (1985: 45) asserts that South Africans taught the world to deal with their immediate environment and not to try to escape from it. He further argues that La Guma's style of writing is journalistic, but the author actually selects his details very carefully and has a kind of counterpoint underneath, as evidenced by the ubiquitous image of the cockroach in *A Walk in the Night*. When the cockroach comes to perform his act again, as the rat does, in one of Richard Wright's novels, it is not journalistic anymore. It carries significance as well, because when you stamp on that cockroach, you are no longer merely stamping on a cockroach; you are stamping on something that has found a way of surviving (Linfors, 1985:36).

Nkosi (1983:137) however, asserts that:

If Alex La Guma tills the same apartheid plot, which the other writers have so exhaustively worked up, what distinguishes him as a true novelist is his enthusiasm for life as it is lived. He has the artist's eyes for the interesting detail; his stories and novels are sagging under the real weight of real people waging a bloody contest with the forces of oppression; and credibly they celebrate their few moments of victory in sex; cheap cape wine and stupid fights. The rooms they inhabit smell of decay, urine and sweat; they share them with 'roaches, fleas, bugs lice'. Their only triumph is that they are human – superlatively human; and this is their sole claim upon our imagination.

On the other hand, Abraham (1985:49) describes the text as a land of narrative which reveals the black and other coloured South Africans struggling to liberate themselves from the apartheid regime:

The coloured communities were still discovering themselves in relation to the general struggle against racism in South Africa. They were working, enduring and in this way they were experiencing this walking in the night until such time as they found themselves and were prepared to be citizens of a society to which they wanted to make a contribution I tried to create a picture a people struggling to see the light, to see the dawn, to see new other than their experiences in this confined community.

On his part Bridllid (2002:15) points out that *A Walk in the Night* was in a way “a restoring voice, which had always been suppressed by the apartheid government”.

The Stone Country on the other hand, is built around the social, political, psychological and economic life of people under the apartheid regime, in South Africa. To fully comprehend the novel, one needs to briefly study the prison literature in the country. The South African novelists attempt to diagnose the social, moral, psychological and economic problems of the country through the symbol of prison. Bayo Ogunjimi (1988:78) asserts that the inhabitants of the country are suffocated in the dark ocean of a “dungeon wall and wave like a living grave”. The gloomy situation in the novel is similar to that in Zwelonke’s *Robben Island* (1973), which like other novels, treats prison as the picture of the “twentieth century man forced back to the cave (Ogunjimi, 1988: 78)”. Here, the prison is principally a seductive acumen for economic exploitation. In the prison, human beings are victimised, intimidated and subjected to various oppressive gangrenes of the oppressing classes. In fact, the oppressed classes in the country are denied the freedom pronounced by man and Nature. This is the picture which the prison literature attempts to portray. At this juncture, La Guma’s *The Stone Country*, Donald Wood’s *Biko* (1979) and Zwenloke’s *Robben Island* provide “a geographical image of what South Africa

is (Ogunjimi, 1988:78). We are presented with a social formation where human psyche, nerves and physique are mutilated by forces beyond man's control.

The artist himself is a victim of this mutilation. Because works are subjected to censorship and the South African artist becomes a prisoner in his own homeland. In fact, in prison literature, the prisoner is created to be engaged in strenuous, tedious and hard labour under the strict supervision of the well-armed prison guards. This is incontrovertible in *The Stone Country*. In the novel, the white guards keep order, control, bully and scourge and brutalise the blacks. Hence, more than any other literary work in South African literature where colonialism is treated, the instances of apartheid policy and other oppressive situations in the novel are revealed. This is why Coetzee (1982: 17-23) considers the novel as "a microcosm of the South African society." Alienation, which is a socio-political and socio-economic weapon of relegating a group to a nonentity, seems to provide the pervasive background to all the events.

The guard-prisoner relationship in the prison also depicts this obnoxious philosophy. The motif for economic domination is the basis for alienation, and it leads to frustration, mistrust and doubt about social justice. The frustration and mistrust result aggression, hatred and hostility. This is probably why the black South Africans are still aggressive and hostile not only against the strangers including their fellow blacks, but also against themselves. The narrator's description of the prison condition in the novel concisely summarises the experiences of blacks in anywhere African.

The heat in the cell was solid: As Yusuf the Turk would have said you could reach out in front of your face, grasp a handful of heat fling it at the wall and it would stick. With over forty prisoners locked up in the middle of summer, the smell of sweat was heavy and cloying as the smell of death. The heat seemed packed in between the bodies of the men, like layers of cotton wool. (60).

Apart from this horrible physical condition reflected in the novel, the type of food for the prisoners is also a sign of alienation. The food, which consists of mush, slabs of bread and jam and mugs of bitter coffee, is always cold to the point of building mushroom. In fact, most of the time, the breakfast of the day is usually the leftovers of yesterday's food. This is why Coetzee (1988:17) comments that the novel specifically develops "a metaphor of South Africa as a prison in which prisoner and jailer are bound to each other by Hegelian chains". The prison situation in socio-political context could be described in the following:

Against the wall the prisoners were crowded together, shuffling, muttering and behind the counter uniformed clerks and two white trustees were writing examining piles of forms or paging through huge books. Behind George Adams other prisoners were coming in crowding him into the jam ahead (20).

In the narrative, the atrocities of the whites against the blacks could further be delineated in the following:

The fat guard was shouting the inevitable, fall in, fall, and everybody was moving towards the gate to collect the lunch, the toughs pushing their way to the front to get the beans and rice while the food was still warm. You had hardly eaten the breakfast, when they serve the lunch. By two thirty in the afternoon the supper had been served, and everybody had been locked up with their slabs of bread and jam and mugs of bitter coffee (69).

Again, the physical division within the prison yard is an implacable explication of the philosophy of alienation. For instance, there is the white section, administrative block, the hard labour section and isolation section. In the white section, the white prisoners are kept in their section, while the remand section is the place where the 'blacks' are locked. This is the picture painted in the text:

When he had inspected the white prisoners he headed for the coloured Remand section, and stopping by George Adams he had said, "Well what's this? The fat guard who had come out of the Remand yard, saluted and said, "This one has been giving lots of

trouble, Major (112).

Also, this is the section where coloured and blacks, are intimidated. On the other hand, the isolation section represents the comfortable residential apartments for the whites. Cultural alienation, which at the best is the devaluation of and at the worst, the destruction of another people's culture and replaced by a 'superior' one, the imperial powers, was a common phenomenon in the colonial period.

The novel is a true description of the South African social reality as it explains the import of 'the stone country':

A world without beauty; a lunar barrenness of stone and steel and nailed doors. In this world no trees grew, and the only shade was found in the shadow of cliffs of walls, the only perfume it knew came from night soil buckets and drains (18).

The mixed and disjointed language of expression of the characters in the novel is a product of cultural alienation. The following conversation between two natives actually reflects their level of social alienation "What are you a Kaffir?... "Ja George Adams told him... government? Some of your Pals were released on bail yesterday. (24).

The incoherence and disjointedness that characterise the communication pattern of the characters in the novel attests to the existence of the cultural alienation. These characters only communicate "through an obscene tongue called kitchen-Kaffir, which developed from the master servant relationship between the Boers and their black workers (Heywood, 1976:20). In Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* (1948), the communal link symbolised by the lovely road that runs into the hill, soon falls a victim of cultural alienation. As depicted in that novel the destruction of the cultural values is visible. The narrator cries because of the disintegration of societal values as he laments about the broken tribe, the law and the custom.

Just like *A Walk in the Night* (1968), economic alienation and exploitation of the blacks by the whites is the driving force for other forms of alienation. Economic alienation is simply the ego-centric economic philosophy, whereby a superior power makes a powerless group economically impotent. Since the prison is a source of cheap labour, the white colonial lords see its establishment as imperative; they also make sure that it is filled with inmates. This is the picture revealed in *The Stone Country*.

These inmates serve the whites free, or, at best, are given stipends as wages. On this, the narrator says:

It was funny how one could become bored with a weekend, George Adams was thinking. You worked all week, and when Saturday and Sunday came, you had plans for a really restful weekend. You found you wanted to go back to work (112).

This suggests that the politics of labour policies engender alienation and ideological contradictions, which in turn create class distinction are noticeable in any class literature. In this literature, race and class compartmentalisation could be used to explain the role of alienation in social structure. With this compartmentalisation, there emerged a people who protest against the oppressive system. Also, South African literature, which is characterised by protest and conflict, criticises this class differentiation based on economic status and racism. La Guma's criticism is best explained through character portraiture of the members of the lower and the upper estates.

The earliest work which was published in English was by John Knox Bokwe, Ntsikana, *The Story of an African Convert*. The first novel in English by a black writer was *An African Tragedy*, by R. R. R. Dhlomo. As a teacher and a journalist of wide experience, he was used to writing in English, and undoubtedly, wanted to reach the same readership he addressed through the press. Dhlomo has sometimes been criticised for being too strongly influenced by English

literature in his writings. It was never Dhlomo's aim to Westernise African literature or to discard his African heritage. Yet he also advocates study comparing 'African life and literature with Greek, Hebrew and Egyptian life and literature and the translation of shakespeare and Attic Drama (Bernett,1983:13):

Art is an understanding and expressing the feeling and experience around you", he wrote, an artist must come out of himself and enter into the general emotion, thought and opinion of the people. He must express not only himself, but the thought and people.

The rise of written forms of literature among black South Africans coincided with the African acquisition of Western education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Western education inspired writings and what Benson (1966:19), refers to as "eccentric or unacceptably romantic concern of the writers of the early period". The black South African literature has been closely tied to the socio-economic and political developments of the country. This has often accorded that literature has the distinctive quality of transmitting important issues of the day, as well as imbuing them with a fictional life of their own. Furthermore, the intractable nature of the South African situation did not make things easy for the writers. The situation was such that it demanded immediate attention of the creative writers when it did not allow them to shy away from the social relevance of their works. Mphahlele (?) considered the role of the artist in this situation as a dual one. At one level he has to act as a political man, and that means literately think and act. At another level, one has to practice the art and craft of interpreting his world through images and symbols (Benson 1966:20)

In addition to this, black writers have contended the apartheid-induced constraints at two levels: first as members of a deprived group and then as writers. Legislations, like the Suppression of Communism Act, the Entertainment and Publications Bill or a choice from many similar 'laws'

could be invoked to either ban a part or the complete work of a writer, thereby depriving his/her South African audience access to such works. It is a fact that countless of writers had been driven into exile by strangulating the literary and social atmosphere at home. It is, however, significant to note that going into exile did not usually diminish the influence of the South African background in their writings. Despite the condition in which they operated, black South African writers had produced literary works in various genres, celebrating the enduring human spirit that enabled their characters to keep their heads above the putrid water of apartheid. The paradoxical situation above has been noted as being fundamental to the rise and popularity of black creative writing. To the extent that the black South African social situation constitutes a handicap to artistic creativity that have proved the greatest influence in black literary development (Benson 1966:21).

Thus, writers, from R.R.R Dhlomo and Mphahlele, to Alex La Guma, have evoked the black South African experience through the suggestive power of their prose. Alex La Guma, whose two novels constitute the primary narratives for this research work published his short stories mainly during the 1960s in *The Black Orpheus*; and the best of these, together with several previously unpublished stories and the novel *A Walk in the Night*, appeared under the title of the novel (subtitled 'and Other Stories') in 1967. Barnett (1983:196) observes that:

'La Guma's stories tend to be more earthy and direct. And most of his successful stories are the sketches of the people in District six whom he brings to life with a directness of approach, and a skill in construction of the plots in which they feature, unequalled by any of the other writers at that time.

Barnett also argues that La Guma's concept of the system needs some explanation, as she feels his membership in the African Communist Party in his youthfulness still makes him a Marxist. In his fiction, she observe the characters support is most often Marxist, but they are pitted against a

regime of white victimisation against all blacks, rather than capitalist domination over all workers regardless of their skin colour. Although La Guma does not believe in thinking in colour, he makes it clear in his fiction that the conflict is not entirely identical with the class struggle (1983:132).

Amala (1998:35), in her article *Realism in Alex La Guma's A Walk in the Night*, observes that La Guma's *A Walk in the Night*, tends to be "aesthetically distinctive for its implicit adoption of a realistic epistemology." Mkhize (1987:8) maintains that *A Walk in the Night* was written "with a predominantly critical realist tradition". La Guma's work meets Hugh Holman (1999:54)'s definition of a realistic novel as a type of novel that places a strong emphasis on the truthful representation of the actual world. From the vintage of literature, La Guma's prose fiction according to Amala is a triumph which found the most apt expression of "realism" as the truthful representation of contemporary life in the South African society. George Lukas asserts that "realism embodies an objective approach to the social world and that realistic fiction provides a convincing picture of historical change." Jaji (2008:97) argues that La Guma "confronts not only the reality of the then apartheid South Africa in all its excruciating starkness, but also the challenges of recreating the life of the haunted black." He also thinks that

The problem was how a certain majority group of people with limited chances in life continue to maintain their basic humanity and at the same time fighting the regime despite the massive and sophisticated wherewithal on the part of the then powerful establishment to exterminate any opposition.

Jaji argues that this is an important aspect of La Guma's literary contribution in the protest and war against racism because in South Africa which reality had a more direct bearing on fiction." Jaji (2008:98) opines that the novel is not just a literary artifact, but "an instrument of fighting against injustice and socio-political inequality." He further argues that there is a consistent

progression from an almost total lack of political consciousness towards a complete attainment of class-consciousness in the novel. For instance, in *A Walk in the Night*, Michael Adonis, Willie Boy and Joe do not see themselves as victims of white dominated class. In *The Time of the Butcherbird*, shilling Muterile and Mna-Taw (2002:62), appreciate the need for a collective action and personal sacrifice, while a much conscious character is George Adams in *The Stone Country*; whose presence and behaviour in the prison has so much influenced the inmates that one clearly observes the increasing awareness and conscientisation of the characters along class lines. Jaji also observes that some of the characters, like Yusuf, the Turk, Solly, Gus and Koppe, have either understood fully or are on the path of realising the social class issue as one of the major reasons for their suffering. The characters as being hounded by poverty, unemployment, violence and dehumanisation, they are frightened and constantly moved, always on the run, as criminals, even before they commit any crime; because of their race and class status. The irony however is that they run away from one crime only to fall into another.

In spite of the harsh social condition, however, the characters in La Guma's novels strive to exist as decent human beings. Michael Adonis is moved to join Foxy's gang not out of any criminal tendency, but for fear of being exposed to the police. Joe goes back to the sea because he vows never to fall into his father's shoes. Despite the violence that characterises Willie Boy's life, the reader sympathises with him and condemns Raalt for letting him die. La Guma seems to suggest that it is injustice that permeates the social and political system, inevitably producing these otherwise good-natured people.

Jaji (2008:89) also observes that the damaging effect of the society is "not restricted to the coloured or black characters alone or even the Kaffirs in the slum", but also transcends racial

lines or colour. Constable Raalt for example, is frustrated. The driver of the patrol van considers him a very dangerous and hence alienated. On his part, Raalt nurses a grudge against his wife and contemplates over murdering her, an aggression that he transfers on Willie Boy who becomes the victim of his vows with anyone he encounters, even if it is just any Kaffir wearing a yellow shirt. In a fit of anger and drunkenness, Michael Adonis kills Uncle Doughty and through flashback, the novelist shows how Willie Boy's mother transfers her anger and aggression on to the poor boy. This serves as an escape for her from the countless bashing that she is subjected to by her husband, whose character and emotional venom are shaped by the poverty and squalor of his immediate environment.

However, character portrayal is not the means through which La Guma develops the theme of racism and class domination in South African apartheid era. Jaji (2008) argues that it is in his "effective use of the authoritarian comment underscores the point of view with a vividness that is incomparable with other romantic style." For example, in the text, bar alludes to all drinking houses. The pub, like pubs all over the world, was a place of debate and discussion; for arguments, for working out problems. It was a forum, a parliament, fountain of wisdom. The symbol of the pub is self-evident; it constitutes the focus of what Jaji refers to as "nascent social and political contact and exchange of revolutionary ideas." Thus, a forum for the cultivation of an ideology of class-consciousness is evoked in an artistically honest rendition: "it is the capitalist system" says the taxi driver, "whites act like that because of the capitalist system."

Balogun (2004:162) however, argues that in La Guma's works,

the lumpen proletariat is passionately recognised. This class is simply the down trodden, the masses, the oppressed and the wretched of the earth, whom the oppressors have made the drawers of water and hewers of wood. In the novel, the Casbah Kid, Butcherboy Williams, Yusuf the Turk and all the imprisoned blacks and the coloureds (except George

Adams) are the Lumpen – Proletarians. What did you do, lighty? ‘Murder’. The boy spoke as if homicide was a normal activity, like going to the latrine or scratching an itch (35).

This is Casbah Kid at work as a member of the oppressed class. “He is a character through which most attitudes of the lumpen-proletarians are revealed to us. His characterisation typified by violence indicates somebody fighting against class oppression and social injustice. He commits murder in retaliation for the hanging of his father. His reaction to the social environment reveals that the environment is cruel to the people. It also shows that the environment is either the maker or the destroyer of its people. Therefore, all the attitudes of the Casbah Kid and other members of the oppressed class in the novel are dictated by the society. Ragged street-corner hoodlums, shivering drunks, thugs in cheap flamboyant clothes and knowledgeable looks, murderers, robbers loiterers and simple permit-offenders, tumbled in a line through the doorway, (19).” Balogun (2004:165) also observes that there is hardly any of the blacks and coloured characters without one or more of these descriptions. They are portrayed as “unwanted and mortals who are lumped together in South Africa because of their social predicaments.” However, the members of the class are committed to the decolonisation struggles.

The colonizer denies the colonized the most precious right granted to most men: liberty. Living conditions imposed on the colonized by colonization make no provision for it; indeed, they ignore it. The colonized has no way out of his state of woe-neither a legal outlet (naturalization) nor a religious outlet (conversion). The colonized is not free to choose between being colonized or not being colonized (Albert, 1974:12-130).

Different critics have looked at Alex La Guma’s two works, *A Walk in the Night* and *The Stone Country* from different perspective and used different theories in interpreting them. The research intends to study the primary texts using the post-colonial and from it, examines the impact of violence on the black South Africans. A close reading of La Guma’s *A Walk in The Night* and *the*

Stone Country provides an insight into the socio-political situation of the black South African in the early 1950, a period characterised by the dominance of apartheid policy in all spheres of life. Through his autistic design, La Guma presents details of how the blacks are in dehumanised, humiliated, frustrated and alienated in different ways. South African writers have always acted as vanguards in depicting the inhumanity associated with apartheid regime. As Nkosi (1983) himself admits, “Literature of South Africa mostly concerned with the theme of struggle and conflicts between the conquerors and the conquered black (1981:67).”

Franz Fanon, argues that the post-colonial theory looks into the psychopathology of colonialism and analyses the psychological effects of colonial domination and disappointment of the natives as in the case of South Africa. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon explores the racial difference in colonial and post-colonial societies. His crucial contribution in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) is to point out that under colonial administration, the objective of material oppression involves the subjective realm. That is, colonised subject is made to feel inferior (The colonisation of the mind). As a result, the native feels that wearing the white mask (culture) is the only way of dealing with psychological inadequacy. Nonetheless, Fanon’s most controversial contribution to the postcolonial theory has been his stand on “revolutionary violence” as the most effective mode of opposition to the violence of the colonial expression (James, 2008: 431). Fanon rejects the western conception of the nation as a “universal stand point” that subsumes all particulars (i.e. individual human life) in the fulfillment of its own abstract freedom. But, he offered cultural nationalism, which is respecting the native culture and literature, as a remedy to the nauseating colonised existence (James, 2008:4).

In this regard, Jallow (2009:112) considers violence as a double edged sword that affects both the victim and perpetrator. People who inflict violence on others must themselves be the victims of that very same violence. Furthermore, the victims of violence invariably direct some form of violence against their punishers; this could be physical violence or simply a massive cloud of emotional violence, hatred, anger and the desire for revenge directed against the perpetrator. The problem Alex La Guma addresses in *A Walk in the Night* and most of his novels, is what Richer Priebe (2005: 111) argues is the problem of multiple communities that define an exclusive term but living in the same land. It is the problem of apartheid and its violence. On the other hand, Alex La Guma (1986) also asserts that “Subscribing to the Fanonian theory violence can only breed violence and that victims of violence are left with no choice but to react with violence.” By all accounts, apartheid was one of the most violent assaults on humanity in recent times (2009:2). In *District Six*, and by extension the apartheid South Africa, La Guma exhibits the brutal circumstances of slum living, the arrogance of the bosses, the sadism of corrupt policemen, and the dehumanising quality of poverty which induced despair (Povey, 1993: 95). Yet, the author’s plot in *A Walk in the Night* proves a “far deeper and in some ways, a more painful truth than the obvious injustice of oppression: that the human capacity for violence when stirred by misery can take direction that serve no purpose or reveal only iconoclastic ferocity (Povey, 1993: 95).”

In the text, however, La Guma presents a grimmer outlook of discrimination and real alteration in apartheid South African milieu. Most of the situations and location are the prison that La Guma has artistically described as a stone country, a place where survival is almost impossible. The realities are that the writer depicts, his personal experience as a prisoner, of conscience and a real prisoner, translated into his craft to show the dimensions of the apartheid system, as well

as a near state of immobilisation which the system has imposed on the oppressed. Thus, *The Stone Country* presents us with true Realities, experienced by the writer himself, and as he progress his views entirely of South Africa as a besieged nation, barricaded by large stone-walls of law, a real prison indeed (Wa-Belinye, 1991:36). La Guma's novels show concern and commitment to collective action, including the use of violence and oppression in the society (Jaji, 2008:153).

Nazareth (2004: 38 cited Lindfors, 1985:30) asserts that, "South Africans taught us to deal with man's immediate environment not to try and escape from it." Willie Boy in *A Walk in the Night* is caught up in ghetto life. He is a drifter and is chased and gunned by the police for a crime he has not committed. The tragedy here is through the portrayal of life in the ghetto where a man has no control over his own destiny. Like Willie Boy, he cannot do anything about it. In a novel like that Mphahlele (1985:31) argues that the "setting makes the character to appear as the big thing. In fact, the major character in this novel is the ghetto, District Six itself, rather than Willie Boy, who is a sacrificial lamb as it were." This is clear in Fanon's idea of introverted violence:

The native is being hemmed in; apartheid is sampling one form of the division into compartments of the colonial world. The first thing the native learns is to stay in his place, and not go beyond certain limits. This is why the dreams of the native are always of muscular prowess, his dreams are of action and of aggression (Fanon 1968:41).

This destructive violence, thus, functions relatively among the squatters as the various encounters with the other inhabitants reflect their own misery, effectively distracting their alteration away from the real causes of their poverty-stricken existence. Abrahams (1985: 84) observes that Michael Adonis in *A Walk in the Night*, completely gives up a decent life by resorting to crime, and is, therefore, as La Guma himself underlines, morally and psychologically higher than the other characters in the text.

In La Guma's fictional narratives, the inhabitants of the Cape Flats still walk in the night, the conscientisation process has barely started and his voice has given the people who for long were deprived of the right to speak for themselves as his contribution to the South Africans in giving them a voice. The two works of Alex La Guma *A Walk in the Night* and *The Stone Country* draw valuable attention to the creative genius of one of the most remarkable members of the generation of South African writers whose maturity coincides with the onset of full blown apartheid, and who were, thus, harassed, suppressed and even killed.

The difficult conditions portrayed in the two novels warrant an important link in the chain of a complex phenomenon of violence in 1950s District Six in Cape Town. Alex La Guma's portrayal with minute details reflects the violent ways of the white and their ill-treatment of the blacks through the dehumanisation process of the apartheid system.

CHAPTER THREE

A WALK IN THE NIGHT

3. 0 La Guma and the Symbol of the Night

First published in 1962, *A Walk in the Night* captures the squalor of humiliation, trauma and slum- existence to which the blacks were subjected under apartheid rule. There include, the discomforts of poverty and deprivation, the oppression of the blacks by the white minority population, and above all, the criminality and immorality that such a situation breeds in its sufferers.

La Guma skillfully depicts the gloom and squalor of the ghetto named District Six in his realistic portrayal of the decaying tenement, dingy eating places and filthy streets and alleys. The decay of the environment itself is a sign of hostility to its occupants. The novel also makes extensive use of war symbolism to re-enforce this idea of environmental harshness. The disintegrating tenements are compared to bombed villages in a war-ravaged front and the games that children indulge in are oriented in the direction of violence playing with wooden guns and simulating the act of shooting at one another. The shabby and disintegrating condition of a street described near opening of the story is typical of most areas of the slum:

He turned down another street, away from the artificial glare of Hanover, between stretches of damp, battered houses with their broken-ribs of front-railings; cracked walls and high tenement that rose like the left-over of a bombed area in the twilight, vacant lots and weed-green patches where houses had once stood, and deep doorways resembling the entrances to deserted castles. There were children playing in the street, darting among the overflowing dustbins and shooting at each other with wooden guns. In some of the doorways people sat or stood, murmuring idly in the fast-fading light like wasted ghosts in the plague-ridden city. (p.21)

The comparison of the environment to a war-torn area itself, evokes and suggest an image of violence which is rampant in the society. The characters of this novel reflect their environment in physical and moral shabbiness, with their; bedraggled, worn-out clothes, most of them displaying ungainly mannerisms. The description of Joe reveals this outward wretchedness as fanon calls it that is typical of most of them.

His trousers had gone at the cuffs and knees, the rents held together with pins and pieces of string and so stained and spotted that the original colour could not have been guessed at. Over the trousers he wore an ancient rain-coat that reached almost his ankles, the sleeves torn loose at the shoulders, the body hanging in ribbons, the front pinned together over his filthy chest. His shoes were worn beyond recognition. (p.9)

Over this wretched dwelling place is the leviathan white society that controls every aspect of life in the slums; minority white society that has sentenced the slums to a difficult existence, through its policy of domination and oppression. The novel considers the multitudinous effects of oppression that apartheid policies unleash on the oppressed, represented by its law enforcers, the police force, men who have 'hard, frozen faces', and 'dispassionate eyes'; and who wear their guns like appendages of their bodies. The police in *A Walk in the Night* symbolise the violence of white domination in their brusque manner of law enforcement. Although they, are all-powerful, nevertheless, they know that the oppressed hate them. They are highly corrupt and unscrupulous, with a limitless capacity for inflicting violence on the non-whites and often display inordinate cruelty in dealing with their victims. Raalt, the elderly policeman portrayed on a night beat, is a typical figure of the oppressive policeman. He extorts money out of petty businessmen by beating them, whether or not they break the law. The younger police companion of Raalt, on the other hand, is imbued with the superiority complex of his white origins and does not care whether the blacks all kill one another which could be seen as the domestic violence.

The nature of the law, which makes it function only for the comfort and, supremacy of the whites and conversely, for the persecution of the races is defined by Michael Adonis, in a depressing soliloquy after the killing of Doughty, when he says in a fit of indignation: “What’s the law for? To kick us brown bastards around” (p.44). This is an indication of the legal violence that the South African state freely inflicts on blacks. It is for this reason that the characters of the story are so distrustful of the law and its agents, like the police.

A prevailing motif in much of La Guma’s writings and, especially *A Walk in the Night*, is the violence implicit in the fact that the tyranny of the whites is responsible for the pervasive influx of blacks into originality. Wilfred Gartey gives a similar view of the role of oppression in the high wave of crime in South African life and how it is reflected in South African literature:

Fear, resignation, hopelessness: these contiguous emotions are motifs in this literature (though other motives that differ and are also present). Perhaps anger and criminality with their ensuring violence came from and arise out of fear and hopeless resignation. Or perhaps they are the end result of deep frustration that grips so many of the characters. Criminality and violence are active components of hopelessness and fear. In their search for some form of conscious being in a totally negative society, many characters strike out blindly, even when afraid, thereby gaining some form of identity through action. Thus the gratuitous criminal action is everywhere present in this body of literature. (p.2)

It is this motif of society goading her citizens on to crime and the violence behind it all, will be examined in this chapter as it delves into the incidents in the novel.

The story opens with the portrait of a shabbily dressed youth, by name Michael Adonis, who has just been sacked from his job by the white boss for what sounds like a very trivial reason. Even as the frustration from this misfortune gnaws at his inside, he is summoned by the road side police, roughly searched and then ordered to disappear from the street. Throughout his life, Adonis has striven to live the life of a decent citizen, to earn his money by honest means, yet he

becomes disillusioned as he is sacked for going to ease himself. This cruel and violent experience goads him on to committing the unpremeditated murder of an old white man named Uncle Doughty a crime he himself finds hard to rationalise. Nevertheless, deep within him, the murder has gratified him. He experiences an immediate emotional satisfaction:

He was suddenly pleased and proud of his own predicament. He felt as if he was the only man who had ever killed another and thought himself a curiosity at which people should wonder. (p.66)

Obviously, Adonis relishes the murder he has been driven by circumstances to commit. Yet, this is understandable from the point of view of the workings of frustrated minds in apartheid South Africa. Indeed, critics, like Lewis Nkosi, consider this of a gratuitous criminal in South Africa:

Drinking, violence and sex bound people together as nothing else did, for even murder was a form of affirmation of one's presence and vitality: the desperate tsotsi finally striking and attempting to feel or assert his own sense of being in a cruel unthinking environment. In Johannesburg most murders, usually stabbings, were unprovoked, almost totaling irrational and motiveless, for every so often there was not even the desire to rob the victim. Only the American slang word 'flip' accurately describes the personality disturbance which preceded these stabbings. (p.3)

The murder of the old man appears to be is or could be motiveless; An impulsive reaction generated by alienation in his cruel and unthinking society.

It is quite apparent that Adonis displays no special predilection for crime. However, having once committed a hideous crime, it is significant to note the rate of moral degeneration that he experiences. Shortly after his sacking, Adonis is able to repel the overtures of Foxy's criminal gang to join them to take the place of another member sockies. However, later that same night, after the murder of Uncle Doughty, he willingly lends his services to the gang of criminals. It is evident here that a criminal tends to drift inexorably into the morass of crime ones he is frustrated within the society about him.

Despite everything, Adonis is also stricken with pangs of remorse, but the feeling hardens into indifference as he reflects over the trauma of the oppressed:

Maybe I ought to go and tell them. Bedonerd, you know what the law will do to you. They don't have any shit from us brown people. They'll hang you, as true as God. Christ, we all got hanged long ago. What's the law for? To kick us poor brown bastards around. (p.43)

Here, Adonis banishes his fears about a probable hanging, feeling that it would be no extraordinary painful experience, since all of them (the blacks) are used to all manner of painful sufferings. This, again underscores the issue of violence as a pervasive feature of the South African life.

A Walk in the Night, is replete with hyper-alienated characters, with Willieboy as another example. In him, one witnesses the egregious effects of the dehumanising social conditions on the life of the youth. Young as he is, Willieboy does not believe in working for a living because according to him, "Where does it get you"? He sees no point working "when always there's somebody to kick you around" (p.85). Apart from the harshness which the black man suffers in the hands of their white overlords, the society offers no incentives to the former, and, consequently, leaves them with no sense of belonging. This further explains the individualistic nature of the characters in the novel, their lack of depth and abstruse way of life. As is presented, Willieboy has known no love whatever since at birth: his mother was fond of avenging the beating she suffered from her husband by thrashing him, all the time. In turn, the father's sadistic tendencies are traceable to his own suffering and deep sense of alienation and resentment generated in the society. Growing up under such an atmosphere of extreme cruelty, it is not surprising that Willieboy becomes the jackal that he is – vicious, frivolous and psychopathic. This behavior can be referred to as psychological violence.

On one of his rounds of community – harassment, which takes him to Miss Gipsy’s drinking place, Willieboy taunts the lady for making coloured girls available for white seamen to befriend. This is a typically racist reaction, which underscores something fundamental in race relations in South Africa. Willieboy too begins to spurn the whites.

Despite his aimless gravitation along the corridors of South African life in search of fun and meaning for his existence, given the chance, Willieboy could be ‘somebody’. He has ideas and wants to be something in life, but the daunting nature of apartheid does not open up a fair opportunity for him. The black man’s fate is entirely subject to the whims of his boss, that is, if he is lucky to get a job in the first place. Willieboy is very much conscious of this:

Working for whites. Happens all the time, man. Me, I never work for no white John. Not even brown one. To hell with the work. (p.4)

The black man is harshly treated and easily dispensed with as, demonstrated in the case of Adonis example. The violence here is that of the causal victimisation of non-whites by their white bosses, despite the harshness embedded in the fact that blacks are always exploited for the lowest pay imaginable. Under these uninspiring conditions, Willieboy and his ilk seek their self-fulfillment just anywhere, including the twilight world of crime:

He was also aware of his infidelity. All his youthful life he had cherished dreams of becoming a big shot. He had seen others rise to some sort of power in the confined underworld of this district and found himself left behind. (p.72)

Clinging to crime as a partial means of livelihood, he goes about with a knife in the pocket, robbing those who are weaker than he is. In one instance, he meets a drunken Mr. Green from whom he demands five shillings. When the money is not produced, he unleashes his anger on the poor man in the form of a severe beating, in a show of pure unprovoked violence. This psychopathic behaviour seems rooted in his disillusionment with the society as a whole. In the

end, the police gun him down; on the suspicion that he murdered old Doughty. Raalt, the policemen who kills him, is imbued with a relentless hatred of blacks, whom he refers to contemptuously as 'bloody Kaffirs and whose neck he would like to ring' at the slightest opportunity. To compound this hatred, he has a morbid grudge against his wife, an ill-feeling which further needs an escape vent. The fortuitous moment comes when he has to pursue Willieboy, suspecting him on the crime being more Doughty's assailant since he wears a yellow shirt. Thus, for Raalt the pursuit is replete with sadistic delight. We assume, at one point, he has become a hunter preferring to be left alone to hunt his quarry. Before Willieboy knows exactly what is going on, therefore, he has been repeatedly shot and killed for what he did not do. This is another manifestation of the gross indifference of those in authority to the black citizens, as well as the gross injustice prevalent in the system.

The casual victimisation of the blacks is a common phenomenon in this society, a premonition that Willieboy himself, knowing has always had. Although he knows he has not committed any wrong, yet he cannot be sure that the police will implicate him for one crime or another:

But years of treacherous experience and victimization through suspicion had rusted the armour of confidence, reduced him to the nondescript entity which made him easy prey to a life which specialized in finding scapegoat for anything that steered it from its dreary course. (p.48)

Willieboy is an older version of the countless number of juvenile idlers, loungers and apprentice criminals that are presented from place to place in the story. They are portrayed typically in the passage below:

Along the pavements little knots of youths lounged into twos and threes or more, watching the crowds streaming by, jeering, smoking, joking against the noise, under the balconies, in doorways, around the plate glass windows. (p.8)

These are forsaken children who float around idly and usually end up in the cesspool of crime. The reason for their abandonment by their parents is, again, linked to the pervasive frustration in the society which seems to reverse the normal working order of things. The parents, having too much to worry about in the midst of their festering sense of frustration, seem too lax about the disoriented and purposeless moral upbringing that they naturally indulge in unpleasantly.

The violence of economic exploitation of the blacks is the best represented in the character called Franky Lorenzo. Even his appearance is significant:

He wore a singlet and a pair of old corduroys and the singlet was dark with sweat and dust, and the corduroys shiny with wear, and there was coal dust in the grooves where the furry cotton had not been worn away. He had an air of harassment about him, of too much hard work and unpaid bills and sour babies. An old scar above his left eye made a white mark in his briskly brown face. He had received the scar in a fight many years ago, when a man had hit him with a bottle. Under the singlet he had a massive chest, covered with thick, wiry hair, and his arms were thick and corded with veins and muscles, and he had a thick, heavy neck. The lines in his face, around the mobile mouth, and under the dark, deep-socketed eyes were full of old coal dust which he had never succeeded in washing away, and the eyes themselves, under the overhang of frontal bone and eyebrows, were soft and bright and young, like these of a little boy. (p.35)

Lorenzo's features have been distorted somewhat by the mining work to which he puts the whole of his efforts and yet gets very little as remuneration. He has so committed himself to the job that particles of coal dust have entered onto some exterior parts of his body and can never be washed away.

His wife's announcement that she is "once again pregnant" is by no means palatable news to Lorenzo, for he shouts at her. He mediates over the news in a bid to decide "whether it is good or bad news". Ordinarily, most people would probably not mind such news, but Lorenzo is now consumed figuring out how he will be able to feed all his children and this makes him shout at

his wife. Actually, it is frustration that makes him behave the way he does, not his wife. He thought on how committedly he works (not to say slavishly) and yet only to get very little, to the extent that he cannot even sustain himself and his family properly. Lorenzo's dilemma therefore is indicative of the violence of labour exploitation which the blacks suffer.

Recalling Nkosi's statement quoted earlier, about the desperate search for identity among the blacks because of their used effacement, it is significant to notice other ways, besides criminality, by which the latter seek identity in the novel. These people are so successfully repressed and denied responsible roles in society to the extent that the denial constitutes a form of violence against them. John Abrahams, who so enthusiastically reports the murder of Doughty to the police, seems to be courting some kind of attention to himself, using 'unapproved' means. Similarly, the old man placed in charge of the brothel at Miss Gipsy's place feels unduly elevated, above the general human morass of the jobless. This comic state of affairs, however, emphasises the acute lack of self-fulfillment that afflicts the people, as it equally shows the psychic violence unleashed upon them by this deprivation.

The gang of Foxy, Scarface and the boy with skull-and-crossbones ring delineates yet another phalanx of socially alienated youths. Throughout the night of the story, they drift from place to place scheming petty crimes, which they later execute. Their physiques have been altered in different ways by past incidents of violence and otherwise by the suffering that envelopes their daily lives. The scar-marks they bear on various parts of their bodies portray violence as their stock-in-trade. This physical manifestation of all pervasive violence again underlines the frenetic nature of life in the society. Most of the characters, even those who are not manifest criminals, bear old knife-scars.

Another instance of the violence of alienation in the story concerns the account in respect of Joe's family. At the beginning the father had no job and so could not feed the family or pay the house rent. The children, thus, became beggars, scavenging for left-over food to feed themselves. When they were ejected from their home, the mother and children retired to the village, except Joe, who felt that it was like running away from the problem of existence. Here is a family dispersed by want. Joe, who remains in the city is lonely, as he wanders like a specter between the seacoast and the dwellings of District Six. The father, apparently unable to face the reality of his penury, had run away and left the family. This incident presents another sour note on the oppressed of South Africa, signifying the ugly violence of poverty born of oppression.

Almost all the characters sketched in the story are at best pale duplicates of men. No portrayal of any single person has any edifying effect on the audience, which is meant to see the whole mass of the people simply as faces of the fear springing from the violence they are perpetually victims of. George Mangakis' observation of the effects of dictatorship on its subject parallels the experience of the oppressed in this story:

You feel as if your reason and your human status were being deeply insulted every day. And then come the attempt to impose on you by fear, acceptance of various barbarous actions of theirs that you heard about, or that you actually see them commit against your fellow human beings. You begin to live with the daily humiliation of fear, and you begin to loathe yourself (p4)

Thus, when Raalt slaps the barman, all he can do is submit meekly and bribe the policemen with money; and when Raalt shoots Willieboy and handles him so recklessly, the crowd that gathers round only murmurs its disapproval with humiliation and fear. Even when the people pelt the van with stones after it has taken off is an admission of their fear, abject impotence and all the humiliation that goes with these disabilities.

Most people in the story have ‘young-old’ faces; meaning that their once beautiful physiques have been mutilated by their condition of suffering, frustration and violence. They are people who, because they suffer so much emotional violence, are shorn of any sense of human integrity, rationality, humaneness and all those qualities that beget emotional stability and rational behavior. They have been reduced to a dehumanised, psychopathic animal always preoccupied, at least mentally, with violence. The anecdotes told in drinking places invariably centre on bloodletting and the pattern of inter-personal relations among the characters portrayed is devoid of harmony. In fact, they seem to have no civil way of addressing one another except in violent language.

La Guma also makes an extensive use of environmental squalor as a symbolism for the violence and general harshness of the society. Everything about the physical setting, the decay, the disintegrating buildings, the filth and the vomiting of the characters, is meant to nauseate the readers, as well as point to the inevitable disintegration of a society whose ethos is harshness and violence. The police who represent the whites are constantly portrayed as having hard, metallic or pebbly eyes. Here again, their lack of humaneness is emphasised through the imagery of hard substances.

3.1 Violence as Freedom in *A Walk in the Night*

The atmosphere of the story is one of utter despair and frustration, with the characters resorting to violence, not in order to change anything, but because it is the only out-let for them to ease off their frustration. Violence in line with the argument of Fanon as the solution to the problem of decolonization is indeed portrayed as a way of life in South African society and La Guma’s graphic descriptions testify to this. Raalt, the policeman, for example, transfers his anger on the

blacks around him and behaves violently towards them: I'd like to lay my hands on one of those bushman bastards and wring his bloody neck: He found little relief in transferring his rage to some other unknown victim, but he took pleasure in the Vindictiveness (p. 39)."

These are Raalt's thoughts even before he comes across any crime that night. It suggests that he is looking for a scapegoat to bounce on. The theme of violence is present throughout the novella.

Michael Adonis murders Doughty:

The old man tried to get up and Michael Adonis said, 'take your effing port and struck out at the bony, blotched, sprouting skull, holding the bottle by the neck so that the wine splashed over his hand. The old man made a small, honking, animal noise and dropped back on the bed (p. 28-29)

Adonis kills Doughty as a revenge for the injustices, which he has recently experienced. It is, therefore, reasonable to associate revenge with his violent action. Violence is also depleted in the death of Willieboy. Raalt, treats him violently and it is through this mistreatment that Willieboy dies.

Before his hand reached the pocket and before he could discover the knife was not there constable Raalt fired again. The bullet slapped into the boy, jerking him upright, and he spun, his arms flung wide, turning on his toe like a ballet dancer (p.86).

Despite the situation, Raalt exhibits no mercy or pity for the poor child. He shows no concern at all, so much that his own colleague, the driver also notices him as being heartless:

The driver looked down at the boy. He lay groaning, holding himself where he had been shot, and a pool of blood was forming under him, spreading on the asphalt. Jesus, man; the driver said, we'd better call on ambulance. Ambulance; Constable Raalt scoffed; Hell, we'll take the bliksem down to the station. They'll patch him up. He's not hurt so terribly...load him in the back of the van and take him down to the station. They'll fix him up there. The bloody hotnot (p.87)

Another instance of the common violence in the novel is, Raalt's brutal treatment of chip as he has done to Willieboy:

Raalt held the dusty grey eyes on him and lifting his right hand up near his left shoulder struck the olive skinned man across the mouth with the back of it, saying, spitting out each word: 'you don't have to smile at me, jong. I'm not your playmate'...and Raalt struck him again, so that the blood formed a pool in the corner of his mouth and slid out and down that side of his chin in a thin, crooked trickle. (p.42)

Earlier, Miss Gipsy has beaten Willieboy, another form of violence that he had been familiar with since his childhood. His mother beats him at the slightest provocation and he knows that she is wreaking vengeance upon him from the beatings she receives from his father. This is a form of transfer of aggression on an innocent person, just as in the case of Adonis's murder of uncle Daugherty.

3.2 Crime for Survival in *A Walk in the Night*

The fundamental idea of apartheid policies in South Africa is to reduce the black and other coloured people to ghetto life which ultimately drive them into crimes; the class which Fanon describes and as the whites brand "bad", "dark", "poor" "the others" "evil niggers" "towel heads" or the "wretched" as the title of his work suggests. Apartheid is depicted as a system which relegates its victims to the periphery of the society. Crime, therefore, becomes the only means through which the majority black and coloured South African survive.

As Doughty asserts "individuals living in the world of apartheid are ghosts, doomed to walk in the night (28)." Michael turns into a criminal because of his experiences of traditional and normative society which is filled with harassment, insult, and lack of support. Willieboy turns into a criminal in order to simply support his drinking habit which may help him to endure a kind of life where existence is marginalised and silenced. It is difficult to believe that these characters would embrace crime as the tool of solving their problems; there worthwhile and significant opportunities are available for them, in a setting that actually displays respect and understanding

of their dilemma and condition. Poverty and lack of opportunity were the driving forces which pull the black South African into one form of crime or another, under the apartheid regime.

Similarly, it is the duty of the police all over the world, to protect the lives of the citizens and their property. Indeed, according to La Guma, in South Africa, “we live with the police. I believe black people are constantly being harassed by the police...so that when one is concerned with the social situation one cannot leave the police (Abrahams,1991:23)”. The brutal, merciless and ubiquitous South African police which were “frozen and hard faces, with desperate eyes and voices which were equivalent of snap of a steel spring (11)”, are hardly friends of blacks: Constable Raalt raised his head and looked at Franky Lorenzo, his eyes bleak. He said: ‘listen jong, you seem to have a lot to say downstairs, too. Do you want to be arrested for intimidating a witness and defeating the ends of justice?’ (p.62). To also demonstrate the parallel understanding between the police and the black and coloured South African in the primary text, La Guma states that: “Raalt saw the boy reach the end of the lane and turn up the street beyond and he looked at the driver. What the driver saw in his eyes were what he thought were the fires of hell (p.81).”

For the apartheid police, the black youth is a criminal for his/her black skin before he is proven otherwise; the condition which Fanon sees as caused by the Manichean or compartmentalized nature of the colonized society. It is the desperation of the police to punish every black youth with or without any crime, in the manner that Raalt follows and kills Willie. It is the unjust treatment of the blacks by the police which provoke and trigger their anger to commit all kinds of violent crimes including Micheal’s murder of Doughty and this is justified Fanon as he maintained that colonialism is “naked violence” and does not understand any other language than violence. Despite Micheal’s remorseful feelings, he still feels in a way, that his action is a sort of

revenge for the blacks since he is the only white that could be accessible to them. In the vast recess of Michael's remorsefulness, he even contemplates giving himself up to the police; but no one does that in apartheid South Africa, where the police "pray for something to happen", so that they can have the alibi to arrest and brutalise the black youths:

Maybe I ought to go and tell them (police). Bedonerd. You know what the law will do to you. They don't have any shit from us brown people. They'll hang you, as true as God. Christ, we all got hanged long ago. What the law for? To kick us poor brown bastards around. You think they're going to listen to your story; Jesus, and he was a white man, too. Well what's he want to come and live here among us browns for? Awright, man, he's dead and you're alive. Stay alive. Ja, stay alive and get kicked under the arse until you're finished too. Like they did to your Job (P.44).

The reader is forced to sympathise with Mickey in his inner turmoil, because it is quite apparent that he will never get justice from the system. According to Adrian Roscoe (1997: 236), "we are bewildered by our moral response as Michael himself. Clear moral choices under apartheid become as hard as everything." The greatest injustice portrayed in the novel is the cold bloody murder of innocent Willieboy by the constable Raalt and Andries. In their prejudice and hatred for the black youth, Willieboy is not given the chance to defend himself before he is killed. Anders Breidlid (2002:143) decries that "the positional superiority of the white officer, as represented by the apartheid police over the positional inferiority of the blacks" which is due to the apartheid policy in South African regime. His submission is sustained by the incident of the two white policemen who unjustly hunt and cause the death of the innocent coloured boy, Willieboy, "for the perceived murder of Daughty, the old Whiteman inhabiting District Six (Breidlid 2002:143)." The racist policemen are only interested in the murder of uncle Doughty because he is a white man, his status as a slum dweller notwithstanding.

Violence became the subject and focus of research in the 80s South African history, in the time of colonisation. Violence ranging from political, social and psychological which many South Africans still remain exposed to high level of different forms of violent crimes, including public violence, rape, aggravated assault, aggravated robbery and murder. The condition which Bhabar described as caused by the disproportionate placement of the “oppressed” in opposition. Some victims of violence subsequently seem to be committing violent acts themselves. Their actions are often associated with vigilantism and self-administered justice. Morris (1987:351) asserts that victims of criminal violence, if untreated, are at risk for perpetrating acts of retributive violence or for displacing their aggression within the familial context. Social inequality and enormous deprivation caused by the apartheid system are at the root of this violent crime.

In Fanon’s account of the violence of decolonisation, violence oscillates between these two forms: a mythical violence that will find a new arrangement of rule within the flow of history (this new arrangement might be called “postcolonialism” or “neocolonialism”), and a divine violence that would herald the blasting open of history to an order not after, but on the other side of colonialism. What Fanon calls the violence of reversal is explicitly instrumental. The violence of reversal is the violence in the service of law, a form of mythical violence which finds and sustains a particular reality; true decolonisation is something, much more radical than the reversal of position and the replacement of rulers and decolonisation is the uprooting of the system as a whole. Fanon’s absolute violence is irreducible to the instrumental violence that enacts reversal.

Absolute violence is recognisable not in violence as such (in its instrumental appearance), but rather in its epochal or world-shattering effects. It can be argued that Fanon’s claim can be

applied to South Africa in two instances. The first is often unrecorded violence among black South Africans during apartheid regime. These men and women were frustrated with the status quo to the extent that they vented their anger against their fellow men and women. The prevalence of youth gangs throughout South Africa's history serves as proof. Foxy's gang in *A Walk in the Night* is a typical example. The second instance could be applied to contemporary South Africa where minority group (whites) oppresses the majority (blacks). In South Africa, this constitute a form of neo-colonialism. The frustration with the status quo causes anger which is vented against the coloniser. The colonised begins to realise that the coloniser knows nothing but force (Fanon, 1961:66).

3.3 Poverty Decay and the Ghetto Life

In line with Fanon's description of colonialism as denying the "other persons" all attributes of humanity, poverty and decay portrayed in the story vindicates Fanon's assertion. Micheal (Mikey) who has just been sacked from job in a factory for talking to white boss, best exemplifies the state of decay in the society. This goes well with Albert's suggestion:

A qualified worker existing among the colonizers earns three or four times more than does the colonized, while he does not produce three or four times as much, either in quantity or in quality. It is more advantageous to use three of the colonized than one European. Every firm needs specialists, of course, but only a minimum of them, and the colonizer imports or recruits experts among his own kind. In addition, there is the matter of the special attention and legal protection required by a European worker. The colonized, however, is only asked for his muscles; he is so poorly evaluated that three or four can be taken on for the price of one European (Albert, 1974:124).

La Guma's use of imagery gives details to illustrate this terrible incident such as a woman using toilet water to make tea. Many instances in the novel depict the decay in the ghetto life which is

highly symbolic in the lives of the blacks during the apartheid regime. The image of filth and decay is pervasive, as in this description of Franky Lorenzo's house:

And in the dampness deadly life formed in decay and bacteria and mould, and in the head and airlessness the rot appeared, too, so that things which once were whole or new withered or putrefied and the smell of their decay and putrefaction pervaded the tenements of the poor. ...The ceiling had been painted white once, a very long time ago, but now it is very grey and the paint was cracked and peeling and fly spotted over the grey (34-35).

Franky's character is a typical example of poverty in the lives of the Black South Africans and his apartment in the tenement portrays the decay in the urban slums in general. The writer describes the life of Lorenzo's family as the most pitiful, as he cannot afford to give them even enough cover.

They slept under one threadbare worn, sweating blanket, fitted together like part of puzzle into the narrow sagging space... Now they slept, the two boys together, their mouths open, and the two girls, their stringy hair plaited into tight ropes, all the heads pressed in the coverless, partly disemboweled, greasy striped pillows (.36)

Such is the life of the black people in the ghetto, which is described as a harshly detailed world of nightmare in existence:

Through the realms of the poor, until massed smells of stagnant water, cooking, rotting vegetables, oil, fish, clump plaster and timber, unwashed curtains, bodies and stairways, cheap perfumes and incense, spices and half washed kitchen ware, urine, animals and dusty corners became one vast, anonymous odour, so widespread and all-embracing as to become unidentifiable, hardly noticeable by the initiated nostrils of the teeming, cramped world of poverty which it enveloped (48).

This suggests that the filth and the smell have become a way of life for the people dwelling in it. So much they hardly even notice it, because ghettos are defined by three core characteristics: the race of the occupants, their urban location, and poverty.

The ghetto life creates desperation and the feelings of shame, and in their attempt to escape the weight of their social conditions or at least to make it more bearable, many resort to crime. For

instance, Miss Gipsy asks Willieboy as a matter of fact: “soon as you get the money? You mean as soon as you rob somebody again?” She knows that Willieboy turn into a criminal and relies on it for his income. Gangsters use violence, threats, and intimidation to forcibly extract money, goods and services from others. The selling of illegal drugs is a way of accumulating wealth, from an illegal way. Miss Gipsy’s attitude of forcing young girls into prostitution in order to make money, is another example of the popular practice in the ghetto where it is quite normal to live a life of lawlessness. In another dimension, the air in Foxy’s room is also described in its infinite foulness: “The room smelled badly of tobacco smoke and marijuana, which is called dagga here, mingled with the stench of stagnant water from a puddle under a filthy sink in a corner (75).”

3.4 The Symbol of Night

Fanon holds that physical violence always has a symbolic dimension with this, it may be argued that one symbol which stands out in *A Walk in the Night* is darkness. This symbol proclaims itself even from the very title of the novel. Darkness is associated with night which forms part of the title of the novel. It is also associated with fear and confusion. In the text darkness provides a cover for the various crimes committed in District Six. Some of these crimes are carried out by individuals against the state or by the state against individuals. It is true that night and darkness are not peculiar to the city. Yet, as a cover for crime, they are associated more with urban slums than with rural settings. Darkness in also provides safe hiding place for the animals which act as carriers of death and disease in the slum of District Six. According to the narrator in the:

Dark corners of unseen crannies, in the fetid heat and slippery dampness the insect and vermin, maggot and slugs, roaches in shiny brown amour, spiders like tiny grey monsters carrying death under their minute feet or in-their suckers, or rats with dusty black eyes with disease under the claws or in the fur, moved mysteriously (34-35).

There is another, less grim or gloomy, even positive sense in which La Guma also employs darkness in the characterising the city. This is in respect of his use of the colour black, which is associated with darkness; as an aspect of colour symbolism to depict the racial diversity and cosmopolitan character of the city. This is quite significant, in view of the centrality of race and colour as instruments of stratification and segregation in the apartheid era in which *A Walk in the Night* is set. Here is how the narrator puts it: “The city was a patchwork of grays, whites and reds threaded with thick ropes of black where the darkness held the scattered pattern together (71).”

The characters, as the title reveals, symbolise people walking in the darkness of apartheid injustices because they lack political commitment that may enable them to organise a struggle for freedom. La Guma summarises it as follows:

One of the reasons why I called this book *A Walk in the Night* Was that in my mind the coloured community was still discovering themselves in relation to the general struggle against racism in South Africa. They are walking in the night until such time as they found themselves and were prepared to be citizens of a society to which they wanted to make a contribution. I tried to create a picture of a people struggling to see the light, to see the dawn, to see something new, other than their experiences in this confined community (Abrahams, 1985:94).

La Guma wrote the novel as part of his contribution to end apartheid injustices. His purpose, as stated in the above quotation, to open the minds of his community so that they could see exactly why they were oppressed and what they had to do to become free. However, hope for the future remains, despite the wrongful death of Willieboy and the ongoing existence of apartheid. La Guma ends with the following, “Franky Lorenzo slept on his back and snored peacefully. Beside him the woman Grace, lay awake in the dark, restlessly waiting for the dawn and feeling the knot of life within her”.

To conclude on the representation of symbolic violence in the story we may say that Fanon holds the notion that one reason why “subaltern” violence was necessary was that it was the only way to break the internal chains of oppression. This may be restated that the first necessity in the struggle for freedom was that blacks should overcome the internal complex of inferiority fostered by white racism. The symbolic violence of racism in the other words, has enormous force in the colonies.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STONE COUNTRY

4.0 South Africa as a Prison

La Guma's *The Stone Country* unfurls the pernicious design of violence that was engraved on the South African social fabric through the use of elaborate symbolism. The author dedicates the novel to the daily average of between 70 to 351 newly admitted prisoners in South African prisons in 1964. This gigantic number of incarcerations gives us a glimpse of the pervasive reality of legal violence with which the novel is woven. In her treatment of the same subject, Fatima Meer (2000) says:

While intensive regression may project an atmosphere of peace, violence is most potent fact in the country and it is reflected in the hundreds of death during mass demonstrations, thousands of arrest, prosecution and convictions, bannings, house arrest and banishments of political offences imposed, in particular on Africa (1)

The quotation summarises the legal persecution and violence on blacks, which is extensively demonstrated in La Guma's novel.

The title of the novel is itself significant on two symbolic levels, both of which have implications on violence which Fanon traces as being the heart of colonialism. On one level, '*The Stone Country*' symbolises the severe and oppressive nature of South African life in general (by the image of the stone); the world in division as Fanon suggests. Secondly, it symbolises the barrenness and harshness of the prison world, in the setting of the story, which is described as a world devoid of beauty; a world made up of stone and steel and locked doors. However, it could be assumed or interpreted that the two symbols seek to depict one idea – that of violence and oppression, which are the true elements of the South African reality. The prison world is also a

patent microcosm of the South African society, so that the portrayed of violence and the quaint ways of life are meant to be viewed as typical of the kind of oppression in the wider society.

For all the blacks particularly South Africans had been underscored by the overwhelming scale of legal violence that inflicted on them. As Leonard Thompson (2001) says; “The law is explicitly and manifestly unequal and one African man in two can expect to see the inside of prison each decade (2)”

The critic, Lewis Nkosi (1983), also laments the persecution of blacks by the judiciary, the effect being the noxious syndrome of mass imprisonment for infringing laws, which are so inherently absurd. He demands such laws should be repelled :

Africans have learned that if they are to remain sane at all, it is pointless to try to live within the law. In a country where the government has legislated against sex, drinks, employment, free movement, etc., which are taken for granted in the western world, it would take a monumental kind of patience to keep up with the demands of the law . . . so Africans have accepted the status of being outlaws from society and have evolved an elaborate system of escaping, hood-winking and baffling the law (3).

Besides portraying South Africa as a stone country, the inhabitants are considered (because of their actions) as nothing but wild camels and savage or in Fanon term “wretched” cavorting about in a jungle:

This was the country behind the coastline of laws and regulations and Labyrinthine legislation; a jungle of stone and iron, inhabited by jackals and hyenas, snarling involves and trembling sheep, entrapped lions fighting off shambling monsters with stunted brains and bodies a moored with the hide of ignorance and brutality, trampling under-foot those who tried to claw their way from the clutch of the swamp (p.4).

It could be interpreted that the wild animals referred to in the passage are the human brutes in South Africa. The jackals, hyenas and monsters are quite apparently symbolic of the brutal white oppressors who have lost their humanity and relentlessly persecute the trembling blacks they

have trapped. This idea could be interpreted from the reaction of the prison guards in the allegorical story of the pursuit of the mouse (the blacks) by the cat (the whites): “The three guards were watching, with fascination, the punishment of the mouse, chuckling, as if they felt a natural association with the feline sadism (p.124)”

The blacks are also people who have suffered so much violence to the extent that they have become essentially dehumanised, to a point where they behave and react more or less like animals. This reaction therefore is triggered by the psychological violence. The small fellow, Solly, recounts his murder of an unprovoking man with malicious glee:

This rooker come in come up to the bar, and he is just like this: ‘ Gimme a banana lick-your’. well, I look at him and reckon: Banana like-your? Banana Blerry lick-you? What you reckon this pal? The blerry Grain’ Hotel? Banana Blerry lick-yours. That’s most a blerry woman’s drink. This rooker look at me and say: min your own business: And ‘oh’ I say. Blerryhighly-tighty, hey?’ Go to hell; this rooker reckon. ‘you’s drunk’. Well I’m getting damn fed up with this blerry nighty-nighty ways, see. So I reckon to him: ‘oh, so a man can’t get drunk, hey? Man can’t have a blerry drop without you nighty-nighty basket putting your nose in, hey? Banana lick-your. I’ll give you banana like yours. And I just grab him, and then (p.31-32).

The animal imagery would appear to be the symbol of the savagery and violence that pervade the life of the country.

This is why Albert Memmi argues that:

Revolt is the only way out of the colonial situation, and the colonized realizes it sooner or later. His condition is absolute and cries for an absolute solution; a break and not a compromise. He has been torn away from his past and cut off from his future, his traditions are dying and he loses the hope of acquiring a new culture. He has neither language, nor flag, nor technical knowledge, nor national or international existence, nor rights, nor duties. He possesses nothing, is no longer anything and no longer hopes for anything. Moreover, the solution becomes more urgent every day. The mechanism for destroying the colonized cannot but worsen daily. The more oppression increases, the more the

colonizer needs justification. The more he must debase the colonized, the more guilty he feels, the more he must justify himself, etc. (Albert, 1974:171-172)

The text portrays the life in a contemporary South African prison. The hero, George Adams, and his comrade, Jefferson, are arrested for distributing seditious literature, and are, subsequently, detained. The theme of the novel is a call for united action among the oppressed, against their oppressors. Unlike *A Walk In the Night*, this text conveys La Guma's political philosophy of exploiting the hero to articulate his anguish over the tyranny of the land and postulates a blueprint for its dethronement. The image here is that of the prison too, with its ubiquitous segregation, just as it is outside it, as Jefferson warns Adams that the jail is: "Something of what they want to make of the country. Everybody separate, boy: white, African, coloured. Regulation for everybody, and a white boss with a gun and stick".

The text also centres on the main character, George Adams, who is a political activist. Due to this, he is arrested and put under detention, awaiting trial for no specific offence. To worsen the situation, Adams is locked up in the same place with inmates who are murderers, robbers, house-breakers, rapists and loafers. The narrator provides a graphic profile of Adams's inmates in the following terms: "Ragged street-corner hoodlums, shivering drunks, thugs in cheap flamboyant clothes and knowledgeable crooks, murderers, house breakers, petty criminals, rapist, loiters and simple permit offenders, tumble in a line through the doorway".

This profile equates political activism with criminality and the treatment that is meted out to Adam. La Guma implies that the blacks are barred from socio-political activities because the white dominance regards them as outsiders and scavengers. This is why the blacks can neither vote nor be voted, which all together why politics in the country cannot be free and fair. As

Emmanuel Toryima Jenkwe (1979) argues; “One can identify as political violence as the denial of political rights to a section of the polity and even the right to protest and seek redress when they are violated”. This is, of course, a dialectical process in which the determination of the white ruling class to suppress the majority blacks and consign them to a permanent state of servitude.

Despite this, the prison remains the most effective weapon of enforcing racial discrimination, which explains why the prison inmates are being segregated by the guards. Everyday, the names of the prisoners are called to ensure their presence and, once a guard experiences across difficulty in pronouncing an African name; or the prisoner hesitates to respond, the person will be stormed at with an avalanche of insults and abuses. The narrator in the novel describes the barbaric action of the guards which is a typical form of racial violence in the following words: “Once the guard with the papers stumbled over an African name and when they hesitated he was stormed at with an avalanche of insult and abuse come to you . . . Kaffir. Do you think this is a . . . location (19)”

Here, the guard equates the ‘location’ with the prisoner and, thus, implies this sojourners status of blacks. Through this association, *La guma* reveals the second class status of the blacks, who are made to feel dejected and dehumanised in their own land. Many blacks are often sent to court without any fair hearing or judgment and are convicted to serve some jail term or even executed. This is what the narrator suggests when he explains that:

While all this was happening, those who had been sentenced by the court had been called aside and made to strip and they stood in a bunch, stark naked, each holding his bundle clothing, waiting for their names to be called again and to be moved to where they would receive their convict uniform (22).

In addition, all the oppressed blacks have been restricted in terms of movement from one place to another without a “card” or a pass. Anybody who is not in possession of such a “card” will be prosecuted, as Jefferson explains to the prisoners:

You get your card? Listen, look after it. Anywhere you go in this place you got to have that card with you. You lose it and these Dutch-mon give you the works. It like a pass, hey (24).

Butcherboy, who also serves as an agent of apartheid in prison, maltreats the blacks for instance, seizing one of the persons that has just been brought to prison by the neck and disfiguring his face, as William shouted:

Bring him to me...and in a second, the newcomer had been sized by neck, seat of trousers, and rushed towards the waiting call boss. A fist-like a mallet struck and the face exploded.

The prisoner sagged in the grip of his captors and Butcherboy seized him by his waist-band, and as the other released and lifted him high and then flung him carelessly across the cell, the prisoners scattered and the man’s body struck the wall and slid to the floor where he lay, making sounds like a hurt animal (31). The intensity of the violence and dehumanisation in prison is quite apparent. Furthermore, George Adams discovers that the living condition of the prisoners is pathetic, boring and hard. For the first time he has been to the place where he would sit up, yawn, and wipe sleep from his face or eyes. His body is sore and stiff from sleeping on the hard mat (16). The problems of the prisoners are further compounded by the fact that some of them are imprisoned for no apparent reason and are refused bail. George Adams is a victim of such circumstance and having noticed that he has stayed for some time in prison, Yusuf the Turk, asks when Adams would be taken to court. In response, George Adams says that he has been remanded for a month without trial or bail (52).

4.1 Brutality in Prison

In line with the focus of the post colonial theory that the post colonial discourse concerns with the oppression and the subjugation of the “Other”; Bhabha specifically argues that the “other” is dominated by the Western imperialist in the colonial setup with this, it may be said that La Guma highlights the maltreatment of the blacks by the whites. The portrait of apartheid is, thus, eminent throughout the text in the sense that, the whites do not like the blackman to answer them back, an attempt of any such is met with brutality. George Adams remarks: “These boggers don’t like a man talking back at them; I bet that fatty is more worried about me than he is about anybody else in the yard (63).

The blacks suffer untold hardship in prison to the extent that Yusef, the Turk, pretends to be sick and stays in the sick-bay than remain healthy in prison to get better treatment: “Don’t worry Professor. He won’t murder me, no play. He chewed and swallowed. Maybe I will land in the sick-bay or hospital, but a man sleep on a bed there and get better treatment than here (70).

The plight of the blacks and the hazards of their day-to-day environment find out a parallel in the gruesome experiences of the prison inmates. One of the characters whose name is not disclosed but is a close associate of Gus has been in prison for twenty-three years without trial or bail: “Gus laughed, pull? What pull? He was already serving an accumulated sentence, of twenty seven year old and he had no intention of finishing the sentence (97).

The conditions of the blacks in South Africa is so bad that even young ladies who have pregnancies out of wedlock are afraid of retaining them because they will not be able to maintain the children they give birth to. Typical of such ladies is Bella, Toffy’s girlfriend. When she

discovers that she is under stage, she becomes worried, thinking of terminating the pregnancy, but she is rebuked by Toffy to leave it and that he is going to marry her.

Life has been made difficult for the inmates by the prison guard who locks them up at 2:30pm after they are served food. The inmates do not get respite because they are kicked at the back side all the time. This kind of ill – treatment irritates George Adams to the extent that he voices his anger: “The little men who get kicked in the backside all the time, you got punched and beaten like that mouse and dodge to avoid the laws and fangs. Even a mouse turns, someday. (127)”.

Here, the narrator’s use of the word ‘mouse’, could be interpreted as representing the blacks who are being punched and beaten by the guards. Although George Adams is optimistic that these sufferings will one day come to pass, the cat and mouse imagery used in the narrative interpret the predation of prison life and the inequality that it entails. In this syndrome, the cat represents the ruling whites who exploit, oppress and subjugate the ruled blacks. The ‘mouse’ however, represents the blacks who are forced to choose a service life.

The correlation between prison life and the outside life is highlighted by the wide dimensions that violence takes place within the jail walls. The usual authoritarian terrorism is meted by the prison warders who, to satisfy their sadistic proclivities, beat and insult the prisoners for the least lapse in conduct and sometimes even for no fault committed. The passage below shows the extent to which the guards react behavior of the prisoners.

His complexion, normally pink, was flushed red with anger and impatience, and coming through the archway, finding that the crowd had over flowed across the thoroughfare, he hurled himself suddenly at them, shouldering the men into a stumbling, clawing rout against the wall. “... off” he shouted furiously”. You think this is a ... baroom? (22).

4.2 Struggle for Political Freedom through Violence

The text is a toll for liberation just like Fanon suggests it raises a fundamental concern over the unfairness of most incarcerations on political grounds in South Africa, George Adams being a typical example.

There is so much to lament in the wasting years of men coked in cold concrete cells, laboring in the stone quarry, at the mercy of a prison system calculated to destroy the person, the process of the mind, the cause for which these men suffer and dream. The political prisoner is the most abused victim of an order that nurses a callous contempt for human suffering (5).

As Ruth first remarks, this pervasive imprisonment of people demanding their basic human rights in a political rule that treats them like animals, represents the most egregious aspect of violence against the blacks. The prison represents a vicious apparatus operated to kill the human attributes in the oppressed, by its degrading forms of punishment. Yusef the Turk's account of the trauma of the prisoners who work at the quarry, illuminates this point:

There Johns serving time working on the quarries, and they can't stand it anymore after a time. So they cut the strings in their heels to get away from that place. Or maybe they tackle a guard and get solitary or brought here for extra charges. Just to get a little easier treatment, hey." (70-71).

The nature of the violence among individuals and how it is casually let loose on the society is epitomised in the character of the weird-looking Butcherboy, whose portrayal reaches symbolic heights. He signifies the totality of the viciousness latent in people of all colours of the South African human spectrum and an incarnation of the perennial violence in the country's social life. Totally psychopathic, Butcherboy, the dangerous criminal, operates a reign of terror among his inmates, dispossessing them of whatever belongings they possess, and meting out corporal punishment to them whenever his impulses dictate. His portrayal is blood-curdling:

Gang leader, and incidentally cell boss by virtue of his brutality and the backing of bullied and equally vicious toadies, he was mean as a Jackal,

blood thirsty as a wolf, foul as a hyena and the group whom he had trapped in the corner shuffled nervously on their feet, and avoided the paleoanthropic glare (30)

Even his physique is tattooed in emblems that are said to be consistent with his barbarism – “hands holding hands, a skull – and – crossbones, a union Jack, a dripping dagger”. (p.31). Butcherboy’s portrayal in the novel underlines a significant point about the oppressive nature of violence in South Africa: On this level, Butcherboy is symbolic of the oppressor and the violence imbedded in the idea of oppression. He is more so, as the prison guard encourage his bestiality. Even the mock courts operated by Butcherboy and his coterie for punishes other inmates parallel and underscore the travesty of justice in the judicial system of the outer South African society. The murder of the prisoner who Butcherboy has ‘condemned’ to death is yet another testimony of how casually and contemptuously life is held in South Africa, particularly that of the blacks. On this symbolic level, it is quite apparent that the death of Butcherboy at the hands of the Casbah Kid is the nemesis that is bound to catch up with all oppressors someday, and for that purpose, the apartheid clique and the entire white community endorse this fascist violence.

On a more personal level, Butcherboy is a pitiable victim of the aggression that his society has enthroned as a principal ethic. His sadistic tendencies are the result of the dehumanisation brought about by the day-to-day intake of frustration and brutality that apartheid rule generates. The sub-plot, which treats the sensational hunt of the ‘mouse’ by the ‘cat’ within the prison walls as discussed earlier, serves or could be interpreted as portrayal of the theme of violence. Here again, is a case of the polarisation of typical attitudes: the guards, always sadistically inclined, hail the cat and even assist her to capture the mouse, while the mouse is symbolics of the prisoners.

George Adams' reflection on the incident is quite apparently illuminate the dilemma of the blacks in the face of violence from colonial masters:.

You were on the side of the mouse, all of the mice, George Adams thought. The little men who get kicked in the backside all the time. You got punched and beaten like that mouse, and you had to duck and dodge to avoid the claws and fangs. Even a mouse turns someday. No, not a mouse, its worm that turns. Okay. But he was glad the mouse had won out eventually, had managed to escape the slashing claws. You were to the side of the little animals, the weak and the timid who spent all their lives dodging and ducking (127-128).

The prison characters are collectively considered ordinary people whose lives have been ruined by the harsh violence of their environment. Admittedly, they are people whose life is treated like animals, as such they bear the stamp of South African environmental grooming and hostility. Their irrational tendencies and barbarism towards one another as epitomised in the person of Butcherboy, is a direct consequence of the violence and oppression they suffer, an experience which usually dehumanises its victims so much that they become no better than psychopathic barbarians. Obiechina (2000) poignantly underscores this same point in his article, when he says:

Violence and barbarism are, however, not mutually exclusive; the one generates the other. Under pressure from the violence of the oppressor, the oppressed is often so dehumanised that he falls victim to barbarism. His barbarism turns inwards and he unleashes irrational violence on his fellows. He contributes by so doing, to his continued degradation and the degradation of his fellow oppressed. They all sink deeper in the estimation of the oppressor and more and more lose the will to resist oppression (6).

What appears to be barbaric tendencies of most of the prisoners who conform very aptly to Obiechina's view point by extension, means that the entire mass of oppressed people in South Africa are becoming increasingly dehumanised and insensitive to human feelings, because of the persistent violence they suffer from their white oppressors. Just as he remarked, it could be interpreted that internecine destructiveness that operates between the prisoners themselves in the way they kill one another.

The casual manner in which the Casbah Kid and the puny fellow Solly, talk about murder or violence is blood-curdling, and marks the recidivist depths to which they have plummeted in their course of dehumanisation which also an effect of psychological violence. Young as the Casbah Kid is, the depths of his spiritual alienation are unplumbable. Having experienced nothing other than violence throughout his adolescence, he grows up to believe that violence is the only tool of achieving a better of life. Yet all these experiences stem out from the viciousness of the South African society. Morally neglected from birth, the kid has no capacity for either introspective or yet reflective thinking over what good purpose a man's life is supposed to serve. He grew up in violence, sees and experiences only violence and, thus, has come to accept it as the valid using way of life all predestined:

The Casbah Kid was waiting for Monday. On Monday, he would be taken down to the Supreme Court again and he would be sentenced to death. He had no doubts about that. It was fixed in his mind. Not being able to indulge in any sort of intricate thought, he accepted an idea, good or bad, and it became fixed in his brains, tightly, like a picture pasted in a scrap-book. He was nineteen years old and all his recollections of life were a series of pictures, shoddy, dog-eared, smudged pictures of dirty scenes (128).

His father, one of the many neurotic characters that oppression produces in South Africa, used to drink excessively, most probably to blunt the sharpness of his frustrated, vegetable existence. As is naturally resultant of excess drinking, he handled his family irrationally, wreaking massive beatings on his wife and the kid whenever he is drunk which was very often. This, instead of the affection which children need so badly if they are to grow to be level-headed human beings and not egregious monsters are the experiences of the ghetto life, Casbah Kid knew only beating and the pains they carry. Under such a circumstance of exposure to domestic violence, it is no wonder at all that Casbah Kid grows up to become an insensitive brute, as George Adams says:

People got knocked slap – happy by life too, and did funny thing. Like that Casbah Kid over there. I wish he'd talk, say something. It would relieve all his waiting but he is slap-happy, like he had been in a boxing ring all his life and was slap-happy from it. (128)

Here, George Adams stresses Casbah Kid's insensitivity and lack of normal human feelings, which goes to stress how much dehumanised the boy. Yet the reason lies in the pervasive nature of violence and oppression which all the blacks suffer in South Africa. It is these circumstances that have conditioned him into being what he is. Already on the threshold of death by hanging for murder (which bothers him little), Casbah Kid again eliminates his die-hard prison enemy, the Butcherboy, through murder, in a most subtle and ingenious way. On the eve of his execution, he recounts to George Adams in a callous and dispassionate manner about the revenge he takes on his father by withholding evidence, which could have saved him from being hanged. He recounts how he tells his father openly that when his mother took the knife with which she stabb herself, he thinks she is going to stab his father, and that is why he does not interfere with her. While one understands the reason for his deep-seated hatred for his father, the kid's blunt lack of feeling is disconcerting and once more goes to show the depth of his dehumanisation.

Casbah Kid is one of the thousands of young lives that atrophy in the apartheid enclave from the effect of indirect violence of apartheid processes of dehumanisation on them. He passes through his short life as a spectre, devoid of understanding of human morals, because the society he has lived in is impoverished of such morals. Instead of humanising the citizen, the South African society dehumanises him, and then punishes him for behaving like a dehumanised person. Even the judge who sentences the Casbah Kid to death confirms the pervasive nature of violence in the society when he says: "It has been advanced, on behalf of the accused, that he comes from a class and from surroundings where violence and drunkenness are an everyday occurrence" (166). Therefore, in what Spivak calls "subalternity" or voicelessness, the blacks and the coloured of the

South Africans resort to only the language they can speak, which is violence voice out their experiences.

4.3 Racism and Oppression: The Viciousness of Violence

The novel asserts that in a vicious tyrannical political system, such as exists in South Africa, everybody is automatically a prisoner; even the tyrants themselves unwittingly imprison themselves. In a sense, they too suffer from the violence they so eagerly brew because they (the whites as a whole) feel neither free nor secure: “It occurred to George that all guards in a prison were practically prisoners themselves. They were managed to the other end of chain (106)”.

Most incidents in the novel, even the very minor ones, emphasise the violence and inhumanity of an oppressive rule. The graffiti on the prison’s inner room walls have tales of pain to tell about the previous prisoners who were locked there: it is said that in this country of stone and iron, revenge for both actual and imaginary infringements always gets its way, be it between individuals or between the individual and the state; nobody, anywhere, could boast of being safe. The hero, George Adams, arrives at a new vision at the end of the novel. From an unfledged articulator of freedom for the oppressed, he grows into a mature ideologue of the cause of the oppressed. The awe that he exudes in his prison (even to the white guards), serves to buttress his personal confidence over the political cause, and for which he has been imprisoned.

From all indication, however, the nature of South African life as portrayed in *The Stone Country* points to nothing else than a kaleidoscope of violence, oppression and inhumaneness. Structurally, the novel is divided into two parts. Part one deals with prison violence, man’s inhumanity to man, and with Adams’s efforts to mold the political consciousness of the

prisoners. Part two deals with the jailbreak bid and the mouse and cat story, and, thus, emphasises the struggle for freedom.

George Adams is imprisoned for distributing leaflets for the underground organisation. He is an articulate revolutionary whose awareness and commitment to the cause impel him to preach the message of solidarity and struggle to the various prison inmates who have been detained for different reasons ranging from robbery, rape to murder. His defiant posture instills fear and anger among the guards and the likes of Butcherboy but also awe and respect among the rest.

He had grown up in the slums and he knew that here were the treacherous and the wily, the cringers and the boot-lickers, the violent and the domineering, the smooth-talkers and the savage, the bewildered and the helpless; the strong preyed on the weak, and the strong and brutal acknowledge a sort of nebulous alliance among themselves for the terrorisation of the underlings (37).

Thus, all sorts of characters, reflective of the wider society, are found in the prison. Butcherboy is the self-appointed lord of the prisoners. He type ties both the violence of the blacks against themselves and of the oppressors against the oppressed. He is a bully, and exploitative and oppressive brute who confiscates the blankets of several of his prison inmates to build for himself a comfortable mattress. He is described as a caveman. He maltreats the Casbah Kid, a new comer who has defied his orders. He is a huge, ugly, savage and brutal man whose horrid features instill fear in the prisoners. He organises mock trials, which reflect the travesty of justice in South Africa. He and his followers horribly murder a man who complains about him to a guard. The man has been 'tried' and 'sentenced' by Butcherboy's mock -court. The man is found dead the next morning; the investigation of the guards reveals nothing. Butcherboy is, thus, the quintessence of violence and repression.

The terror, violence and oppressive nature of the prison shakes even the mentally stable Adam:

He felt nervous, and he did not like it at all. This was the country behind the coastline of laws and regulations and labyrinthine legislation, a jungle of stone and iron, inhabited by jackals and hyenas, snarling waves and trembling sheep, entrapped lions fighting off shambling monsters with stunted brains and bodies armoured with the hide of ignorance and brutality, trembling underfoot those who tried to claw their way from the clutch of the swamp (81).

Butcherboy and his gang resemble the guards in their viciousness against the rest of the prisoners. They are the jackals and hyenas unleashed on innocent sheep. The guards approve the bestiality and crusty of butcherboy's gang upon the rest of the prisoners for, together, they form a class of oppressors. The guards are sadists who lash at the prisoners for, any trivial offence. They wield absolute authority and they flog, kick and urinate on the helpless prisoners. In their callousness they can deprive a prisoner of his meal. The way they force prisoners to strip naked depicts the general degradation and humiliation that the blacks suffer in South Africa. The ugly picture of the prison world is, thus, a mirror of the debased, capitalist system of exploitation and repression.

In their ruthlessness, however, the guards are also brutalized, they are themselves prisoners guarding prisoners. The guards cannot contain the daily rhythm of violence and death in the prison where they are trapped. The superintendent fears the violence and brutality in the prison, especially after the brutal death of Butcherboy. He wants to bring order to the prison but cannot conceive of how to reform the prison life. He fails to understand that the prison is a microcosm of the repressive and violent world of South Africa. He fails to see the violence of the prisoners as a natural response to state violence, and that disorderly society, which is built on aggression and exploitation cannot be peaceful.

The violent nature of Butcherboy and the guards is passed onto the other characters in the prison. The violence of the oppressors leads to the violence of the rest of the prisoners. Solly gleefully

tells the story of how he and his group murder an innocent person in a café. This ruthless and malicious act does not make him repentant or appalled. The Casbah Kid is also a violent person who lacks all sense of morality. He was born in an atmosphere of violence and, like his father, he is going to die from hanging; murder is a normal activity for him and, thus, he does not squint at the fact that he is going to die. Casbah Kid's violent nature, though, is due to socio-economic deprivation as a result of his father's neglect he had to beg for food as a child. The father was an alcoholic, a harsh and cruel person who does not care for the welfare of his family. He used to beats his wife and son regularly. The story of how Casbah Kid watches his mother kill herself is shocking and repugnant. Bewildering also is Casbah Kid's refusal to testify against his mother and thereby save his father. The father's brutality has not been healthy for the psychological development of Casbah kid. He has experienced a smutty life which, in turn has made him callous, eccentric, cold, stolid and withdrawn. Paulo Freire (1968) points out that:

If children are reared in an atmosphere of lovelessness and oppression, children whose potency has been frustrated, do not manage during their youth to take the path of authentic rebellion, they will either be alienated from reality or by the authorities which might later be used to 'shape' them or they may engage in forms of the destructive action (7).

The Casbah Kid lashes viciously at an innocent boy in the prison after his violent encounter with Butcherboy in turn, underlines their attitudes and their ways of grappling with reality. Having grown up in a violent family and society, the only reality the Casbah Kid knows is violence. By becoming openly destructive and violent he shows that he has accepted the debased morality of apartheid South Africa and, thus, he himself becomes a dehumanised person. It is left to the revolutionary Adams to shake him out of the brutalising and misdirected violence and to teach him that life can be changed.

The fight between Yusef the Turk, and Butcherboy, epitomises the beastliness of prison life and by extension, the life in South Africa. The other prisoners stand and watch the savage and deadly fight. Butcherboy dies through the combined effort of the Turk and the Casbah Kid. The implication of their joint effort is that solidarity among the oppressed is necessary to topple the oppressors. The brutal creature is dethroned. Here, La Guma gives a triumphant picture of the limited success of the oppressed over the oppressors. The fight is bound to be violent. The outcome is going to depend on group solidarity among the oppressed. There is the need for revolutionary violence to counter and conquer the legalised violence of the state.

Having been subjected to torture, humiliation and other indignities, and having been stripped of all normal human feeling, the majority of blacks have become dehumanised through the system. Just as Brutus (1968) gives a diabolic, bloodthirsty and hostile picture of prison life in *Letters to Martha*, La Guma, here, presents a battered and wasted humanity. Life is meaningless in a society of human butchery. Adams laments the fact that the blacks are set against themselves:

He thought, feeling sleepy with the heat writing around them, what a waste; here they got us fighting each other like dogs. George Adams did not have any regrets about his arrest. You did what was decided was the right thing, and then accepted the consequences. He had gone to meetings and had listened to the speeches, had read a little and had come to the conclusion that what he said was right. He thought, falling into dreamless sleep, there's limit to be kicked in the backside (p.106).

Adams laments the misuse of human energy and potential. Instead of striving to liberate themselves, the oppressed try to oppress one another by inflicting violence on each other. Freire (1968) states that this contradiction arises out of the “concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men, but for them, to be a “man”, is to be an oppressor. This is their model of humanity”, a phenomenon which grows out of the fact that “the oppressed,

at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of 'adherence' to the oppressors" (68).

In this depraved, unjust, exploitative and violent world, George Adams stands out as the revolutionary flame that kindles the heart of the oppressed, as a morale booster. His life in the prison mans out the role of the political detainee in the political awakening of other prison inmates. He is dismayed by the individualistic, uncommunicative attitude of Casbah Kid who, on his part, cannot understand why Adams should share his cigarettes with the rest of the prisoners. Gradually, however, Casbah Kid begins to open up to Adams. He also begins to learn to help other people, as suggested in the way he helps Adams to pass some cigarettes to three fellow prisoners in a neighbouring cell. In the end, Casbah Kid begins to appreciate the friendship and charity of Adams, as well as get political education; as borne out in his conversation with Adams:

"You's funny people, mister." The child-face with the ancient, bitter eyes, frowned. "Hear me, mister. All this stuff about our people getting into the government, too. You reckon it will help people like us? People in prison, like? George Adams said to this strange boy who was also a murderer: "There will certainly be more sympathy, I reckon." "You reckon that time will come?" (118-119).

The boy is beginning to ask political questions and talk generally of people like him. Thus he is beginning to ask about the possibility of change. The wheels of change are moving even in the dispassionate kid, we may not see tomorrow but tomorrow portends better things for those who will live to see it. The farewell scene between Casbah Kid and Adams is very boring and pathetic. There is a feeling of fraternity between them as Casbah Kid matches towards his death.

George Adams saw the boy come up. The guard made no move to stop him, and George Adams saw him on the other side of the wire screen. Fingers with bitten nails touched the screen, and for an infinitesimal instant there was a flicker of light in the cold, grey eyes, like the spark of faulty electricity. The bitter mouth cracked slightly into one of its rare

grins. "So long, mister," the Casbah Kid said. George Adams nodded. He said, "So long, mate." Then the boy turned away and went back to the guard and George Adams, watched them all go downstairs. (168)

This is the triumph of real friendship, which the barren society and hollow world of the prison is unable to stop. Hearts that were hitherto estrange from each other warm up in the final moment. Death itself is unable to severe the strong bond of friendship, which has grown out of bitterness in the cathedral of ruin. Commenting on this parting scene, Assein states that:

Adams's relationship with the condemned kid and the pathos of the scene of separation mark the triumph of those who have chosen to live by standards other than those dictated by apartheid of man in a determined struggle to stand against the weight of his human condition. In this final moment the stature of the Casbah Kid is amplified and with dignified solemnity he goes through the rights of separation from the only inmate who knew him fairly intimate. (9)

In the end, solidarity and mutual understanding replace individualism.

Yusef the Turk's association with Adams also shatters the ideology of everybody for himself. Adams's act of charity inspires the Turk, who had earlier preached individualism, and he begins to see the need for solidarity and collective action against the oppressors. Instead of asking people to do something for him, he now stands up to help others. Adams's collective "we", sinks deep. Thus, instead of exploiting the labour of other prisoners he can now tell Butcherboy that they are all in the same boat.

The most significant lesson which Adams infuses in the prisoners is that of defiance and struggle against all forms of oppression and exploitation. He knows his rights in prison and demands these rights, unlike the other prisoners. He, consequently, experiences various clashes with the prison authorities. He asks for blankets from the guard on duty, as is his right. The blankets are thrown down to the ground and Adams objects. Thus, though he picks up the blankets and goes, he has challenged the guards, and refused to be treated as a degraded, semi-human being.

This kind of challenge is strange to some of the prisoners, who grin in solidarity with Adams and subsequently, come to acknowledge and respect his line of action. The deprived, hopeless and compliant prisoners are being asked to re-examine themselves in Adams's revolting mirror. Only Butcherboy feels naturally allied to the guards and, thus, he begins to develop hatred for Adams.

On another occasion, Adams asks for a mug from a guard, who tells him that there was none to give him, thus, he cannot have tea to which he is entitled. The scene is tense and dramatic as Adams keeps on insisting and the eyes of the guard

Seemed to grow dark with anger, and the ruddiness of the smooth plump face flushed deeper. "youdonder", the guard shouted. "who the hell you talking to? You thing I let any *skolly*, talk to me like he was a white man?... off, out of my sight".

George Adams did not move, but continued to look into the flushed face. He was thinking, be damned if I'm going to let him get away with it. They expect you to crawl for everything: Please, boss, can I have this? Please, boss, can I have that? He said, "Well, why don't they run this jail proper? (75).

The guard experiences psychological complexes as he loses his temper because Adams dares to talk back. He realises that Adams's criticism of the administration is the genesis of rebellion in the prison and, thus, labels Adams as one of those agitators (p. 76). To his chagrin, the store boy brings Adams a mug. 'Rankled by the knowledge that he has been defeated, he vents his anger on the rest of the prisoners, who have been watching the drama with interest. Adams's defiance ushers a spirit of rebelliousness in the prison. The revolutionary wind is beginning to shake the hitherto dormant prison inmates.

As a revolutionary, Adams keeps on demanding his democratic, human rights for he knows that to give up the struggle in prison is tantamount to giving up the struggle in the external world. Adams remains disciplined and rebellious. He is a source of inspiration to the rest of the prisoners. He tries to raise the consciousness of the prisoners, so that they may realise and

fight for their own rights. He tells the Turk that the prisoners ought to rebel against the poor quality of food that is being served to them. He is, thus, politically mobilising the oppressed in the struggle for a better life.

4.4 Discrimination among the Prisoners

The inequality and segregation manifest in the kind of food the prisoners take. The Whites get sugar and milk in their porridge while blacks take theirs without milk and sugar. The Blacks eat rotten beans and are given only a small piece of meat; the white prisoners are given boiled vegetables and buttered bread. Adams, the Casbah Kid and other black prisoners are made to miss their meals for a whole day while whites are never punished in this manner. Often blacks are engaged in hard labour with hunger, drudgery and suffering. The socio-economic woes of the black South Africans are, thus, reflected in the prison world. In what Fanon calls “devilish dichotomy” which creates tension that cannot be ignored. The hierarchies and economic life of the prison have much in common with the organisation, of South African life outside the prison. Race or colour determines whether one is humiliated, exploited and maltreated.

Apartheid, in short, is an economic system of exploitation interpreted in racial terms. The trial of Albert March and the Casbah Kid depicts a refusal by the white judge to understand the real causes of violence in the South African society and represents an attempt by the oppressors to maintain the status quo through the further localisation of the state violence as a means of keeping order in the society.

The court, with its white Judge, white prosecutors and white defence counsels, reflects inequality, segregation and injustice. It is difficult to imagine that a ruling class with vested interests will give the Casbah Kid, or the ruled class, a fair trial. The Casbah Kid feels out of

place in this white world. Their white faces, neat suits and shiny shoes make him uneasy. While sentencing *him* to death, the judge states that the reign of terror brought about by night gangs will no longer be taken lightly and that it is the responsibility of the court to help the people live peacefully by imposing the harshest form of punishment. He points out that there have been repeated cases of violence in the city and the country:

The activities of gangs and individuals who roam around with the knife as their companion can no longer be tolerated. The state and local authorities are involved in an immense expenditure improving social conditions. The efforts to allow people to live better lives are being undermined by elements, such as the one before the court, who have established terror and confusion. It has been advanced on behalf of the accused that he comes from a cause and from surroundings where violence and drunkenness are everyday occurrence. This cannot be accepted as an excuse. (166).

The court, like the church, the police and the guards, all arms of the state, sanctions and protects exploitation and oppression. As part of the coercive arm of the government, the court refuses to accept that socio-economic factors motivate people into committing crime; it equally fails to see the connection between the violence of the state and that of the oppressed people and fails to acknowledge that violence is initiated by the tyrants and the exploiters.

When the judge talks of peaceful life and improving the social conditions of "the people", he is actually referring to the betterment of conditions among the privileged whites. For the blacks, there can be no better life unless the apartheid system is uplifted.

Against the injustice among the South African society, La Guma provides hope through the struggle of the oppressed. Apart from the exemplary defiance of Adams, La Guma suggests two symbolic lessons of the fight against apartheid. This is the parable of the 'cat and mouse', attempted escape of Gus, Morgan and Koppe. The two stories form the major focus of part two of the text.

In the 'cat and mouse' story, a cat chases a mouse while the guards and the prisoners look on. The cat tries to catch the mouse when he tries to escape from the predatory claws of the ranging cat. The mouse is dizzy and runs with some blood streaks from. The cat believes she must outrun the mouse or starve and the mouse knows he must outrun the cat or perish. This is the typical kind of life the black South Africans live in the apartheid South Africa. This is a brutal re-enactment of terror, violence and oppression. But though clubbed, battered and bruised, and despite the pain that quivers through his muscles, the mouse refuses to give up. Where the cat makes the mistake of rising up on all its four paws, the mouse escapes through the belts of a drain-pipe. The triumph of the mouse symbolises the celebration of victory of the oppressed under a difficult situation. The mouse's persistent struggle for freedom is a lesson to the oppressed class that they should fight relentlessly; success is there in the long run.

Symbolic as it is, the fact that the guards feel a natural attachment to the cat to help her catch the mouse. The prisoners feel aligned to the mouse and are happy that the mouse escapes; they giggle at the disappointment of the cat. George Adams (1989) meditates over the episode thus:

Like that cat and that mouse. That has been as good as going to the pictures, in a place like this. That crowd certainly enjoyed it. You were on the side of the mouse, of all mice, George Adams thought. The little men who get kicked in the back side all the time. You got punched and beaten like that mouse, and you had to duck and dodge to avoid the claws and fangs. Even a mouse turns, someday. No not a mouse, it's worm that turns. Okay. But he was glad the mouse had won out eventually, had managed to escape the slashing claws. You were on the side of the little animals, the weak and the timid the spend all their lives dodging and ducking (127-128)

Assein (2000) sums up the point of the passage when he says that;

Whether it is the mouse or the worm that turns against the cat in the chase does not really matter. The point being made in the comparison is that ultimately the common man will need to rise up against the authority and assert his humanity and dignity. George Adams's perceptive comment that even a mouse will turn someday, reveals the latent revolutionary impulse in La Guma's leading characters which sustains

George Adams's defiant nobility as well as Gus's and Morgan's fearsome courage in their abortive midnight escape. (17)

4.5 The Struggle for Freedom

An instance of Fanon's suggestion of "violent uprising" is exemplified by Gus and Morgan attempt of jailbreak. They draw the frightened Koppe into their plan. Koppe fears to join in, while staying behind would mean facing the wrath of the guards after Gus and Morgan have escaped. When the actual escape plan begins, however, Koppe becomes completely committed. He fights against the raging wind on the roof and he dispels the fear that had gripped him earlier on. Gus is spotted on the roof by a guard and an alarm is raised; Koppe weeps in fear and terror, but keeps struggling on, until he finally escapes. Gus and Morgan also persist in their struggle despite the shootings of the guards and despite the strong wind that blows against them. When Morgan finally realises that he is completely exposed to danger, he surrenders. The will to live is stronger in him than a wish to commit suicide. With defiant bitterness, however, he gives himself up:

He twitched with fright as the shot grazed his cheek-bone and whisked past his ear, but he recovered instantly, flinging his hands high, standing still, dead still. "Awright, don't shoot, you mucking baskets," he shouted, not without defiance. His deep voice boomed through the wind and the howling of the alarm (158).

Even when he comes down he continues to curse the guards as they club him. Gus, on the other hand, wrestles with the wind till the force of the wind finally pushes him down the floor. He and Morgan are led to the punishment cell.

The story depicts the need to commit oneself to the struggle. It is ironical that the reluctant Koppe escapes, while the originators of the escape plan are caught. But Koppe's success is also an encouragement and a call to the nonchalant, passive blacks to take part in the struggle. It

could be assumed that La Guma is suggesting that no one knows who will survive and reap the fruits of freedom. It matters less that Gus and Morgan are still in prison. What is important is that one soul has gained his freedom through their struggle. Gus and Morgan are, thus, exemplary revolutionary archetypes who carry out the struggle against the state which suggest a good example of political violence in their acts.

Significant also is the solidarity of the prisoners when they realise that some of their inmates are try to escape. Adams is excited and even the Casbah Kid wishes them good luck in their escape bid. The rest of the prisoners cheer up the men; they boom defiance and jeer at their malicious guards. The underworld solidarity is so strong that even the guards threats of "meals off" cannot quell their excited shouts (156). There is indignation and lamentation over the fact that Gus and Morgan have not been able to escape. The solidarity of the prisoners is a symbolic call for the solidarity of the oppressed. Songs of freedom are sung in prison. Thus, La Guma gives a vision of hope, a promise of a new dawn, rooted in the people's revolutionary struggle. There filters a voice of hope through the mouth of Adams, the representative voice of the oppressed. Adams believes that despite the present situation, gloom victory will surely come. George Adams tells the Casbah Kid that man's life is alterable and not predetermined continuous chaos, which is why people are always trying to change the existing social order. He, thus, creates hope in the Casbah Kid by making the point that the human condition changes through the continuous struggle of the oppressed.

The vision of hope, in the struggle, is reinforced by La Guma's use of lucid imagery and symbolism, in part two of the novel. The wind is persistently used to convey the idea of the struggle of the oppressed against apartheid: "During the night it would grow stronger and howl

and rage at the immovable obstruction of the stone, tear at the gates and bars, pound the concrete and brownstone, thrust futilely at walls and then growl on its way over the city (112). Morgan's story of Daniel in the lion's den demonstrates fact that, like Daniel, the oppressed will one day witness the triumph of truth and justice over despotism and ruthlessness; it also shows the ability of the oppressed to survive the most brutal persecution. The leaking pipe that keeps dripping away somewhere outside the cell symbolizes a break the system and is, therefore, a symbol of defiance and revolt. As in Brutus's prison poems, birds are symbols of freedom and hope. Towards the end of the novel a flock of pigeons flies over the prison, which probably symbolizes the escape of some inmates from the stone prison.

There is also the constant use of irony in the novel. In the hospital people sleep on beds and are treated as human beings. There are often instances where prisoners wound themselves just to be taken to hospital and, thereby, be freed from hard labour. It is also ironic that only after the Casbah Kid has been sentenced to death is he given a new pair of boots and clothes, a kind of burial shroud. Solly states that the prison world is more homely as one has free board and lodging and free meals three times a day. He would not entertain the idea of a jailbreak. The images, symbols and irony reinvigorate La Guma's prose narrative. They are also a subtle means of dishing out his revolutionary message.

In treating the theme of incarceration under the repressive South African regime, *The Stone Country* is radically different from, for example, Soyinka's *The Man Died* and *A Shuttle in the Crypt*, Solzhenitsyn's and D.M. Zwelonke's *Robben Island*. These are writings that deal with the same theme of imprisonment. These writers expose the debased, corrupt and suppressive regimes and show how the maddening prison world, which most of them have experienced,

mirrors the oppressive conditions of the external world. Although Soyinka and Solzhenitsyn castigate the whole machinery of justice in their respective societies, they fail to see the actual forces at play in their society. La Guma, like Ngugi, seems to explain imprisonment in class terms. He sees it as reflective of an exploitative economy where the racist ruling class tries to maintain the oppressive social order. Like Ngugi, La Guma hopeful that the exploited class will one day be free through its continuous and collective struggle.

The Stone Country is an expository novel. It largely describes the deplorable conditions under which black South Africans live. The squalor and sordidness of their ghetto life, the violence, brutality and degradation, which are poignantly brought out in these novels which could be interpreted as tales of suffering, which was written against the background of the social, economic and political realities of South Africa. Though the novel can be generally termed as expository and descriptive, it is rooted in La Guma's revolutionary world outlook.

La Guma is best known for his fiction concerning racial oppression under the apartheid system in South Africa. In his novels and short stories, he conveys, as Nadine Gordimer says in her *The Black Interpreters: Notes on African writing* (1973), “the sight, sound and smell of poverty and misery, so that the flesh-and-blood meaning of the color bar becomes a shocking, sensuous impact”. Driven into exile in the mid 1960s, with his books banned in his own country, La Guma gained international recognition for his efforts to bring down white-minority rule in South Africa. The two novels chosen in this study form a powerful indictment of the evils of apartheid, particularly in relation to violence in relation to the coloured community. In these stories, one can find out only the language but also many of the themes and narrative devices that La Guma employ portray the violence in South Africa.

His writings among other black African writers were initially the objects of high praise and adulation by critics worldwide for their unflinching portrayal of the conditions in which blacks have been forced to live in Africa, critical reception turned on them in the 1980's, when commentators began to question the aesthetic merit of their works beyond the bounds of social analysis. Ultimately, however, many critics continued to laud La Guma's artistic sensibilities in the portrayal of violence, and he remains one of the most highly regarded South African writers of the twentieth century.

This study tries to set out an agenda for historical research into the original of unusual high violent crime level in South Africa. It attempt to link historical research on crime explicitly to the contemporary crisis. It uses Alex La Guma's works to portray the social violence. An attempt has been made in this research to examine the use of violence in South African setting in his two novels *A Walk in the Night* and *The Stone Country* using the postcolonial theory and the Fanonain theory on social violence to portray the situation in the Apartheid South Africa.

Set in the crime –ridden District Six, Cape Town's toughest quarter in South Africa in the heyday of apartheid, *A Walk in the Night* focuses on a coloured youth, Michael Adonis, who is unjustly fired by his white boss. Blinded by anger, Michael visits his vengeance on an old and decrepit Uncle Doughty. His gradual dissolution finally leads him to join a gang of thieves. His friend Willie boy, is mistaken for the murder of Uncle Doughty and later killed by South Africa's trigger – happy police. The world of District Six, as presented by La Guma, is one inhabited by whores, gangsters, poverty – strike families and sundry social derelics who are doomed by the apartheid system for a certain term to walk the night. Hedged by racial segregation, exploitation and lack of education and therefore, poor or no job at all, most of the

coloured youths in District Six have come to see virtue in naked violence and smoking of ‘dagga’. Ironically, this marginalised existence – induced life style further denies them into the blind alley of self – destruction and ruin. It is in this context that one must come to understand the personality of Michael Adonis with his faded jeans. In his blind rage, anything negative and criminal is possible. One is therefore, little surprised at his unpremeditated murder of Uncle Doughty who is not even remotely connected with his problem.

The Stone Country, however, depicts prison conditions and violence in a repressive state. The prison is the world of criminals as such violence and brutality are the order of the day. Is built on the social, political and economic life of people in the apartheid South Africa. The title of the novel itself symbolises the severe and oppressive nature of South African life in general. It portrays South Africa as a ‘stone country,’ the inhabitants are depicted as ‘wild,’ and savage animals and cavorting about in a jungle. La Guma portrays the depressing conditions and alienation of prison life of the blacks in South African’s overcrowded prisons. This concern is aimed at highlighting the manner in which the blacks are treated in prison and of equaling by analogy the prison with the overall condition of the oppressed in the wider South African society.

The novel highlight the maltreatment of the oppressed, the ill treatment of the blacks by the whites. George Adams is behind the great walls of the jail beneath the mountain in Cape Town. He is there for political reasons but the others are there for any crime that the social and economic deprivation of apartheid creeds. Solly acting the clown in tattered rays, a scarecrow come to life; Yusef the Turk, lean, sleek, dangerous as a knife blade; his sworn enemy, Butcher Boy Williams, a collector of tribute, and the Casbah kid who will hang for murder. They have

brought the violence of Cape Town's District Six with them and are willing to kill one another for power in the cells, and to die in the bid to escape.

The two novels portray the violent life lived by the blacks in South Africa under the apartheid regime. The struggle for survival in poverty is what triggers anger and affects them psychologically which breeds rage and results to violence of all sorts. The racial segregation and brutal treatment they face from the white minority also makes them react with violence. They believe that feel it is the only solution to their condition. In the harshness of injustice, segregation and violence the black South Africans are doomed to live in the system of apartheid. The theme of dirtiness and lack of hygiene is noticeable in *A Walk in the Night*. In addition to squatters and bad housing, the scourge of poverty is also evident. The blacks are living below the poverty line; they are not able to meet material needs; they are just surviving; some of them resort inevitably to unlawful methods such as crime violence to survive which usually drive them to prison. Finally, this research attempts to answer or reply the whiteman interpretation of the black who is always been referred to has uncultured, savage and a criminal. The research demonstrate how the coloniser afflicts the colonised with hardship and showing he lacks humanity as such treat him with violence. The dehumanising nature of punishment was what breaded violence among them. The research open doors for further researchers to look at different types of violence crimes in apartheid South Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

La Guma is best known for his fiction concerning racial oppression under the apartheid system in South Africa. In his novels and short stories, he conveys, as Nadine Gordimer says in her *The Black Interpreters: Notes on African writing* (1973), “the sight, sound and smell of poverty and misery, so that the flesh-and-blood meaning of the color bar becomes a shocking, sensuous impact”. Driven into exile in the mid 1960s, with his books banned in his own country, La Guma gained international recognition for his efforts to bring down white-minority rule in South Africa. The two novels chosen in this study form a powerful indictment of the evils of apartheid, particularly in relation to violence in relation to the coloured community. In these stories, one can find out not only the language but also many of the themes and narrative devices that La Guma deploys to portray the violence in South Africa.

His writings are considered the object of high praise and adulation by critics worldwide for their unflinching portrayal of the conditions in which blacks have been forced to live in Africa, critical reception turned on them in the 1980’s, when commentators began to question the aesthetic merit of their works beyond the bounds of social analysis. Ultimately, however, many critics continued to laud La Guma’s artistic sensibilities in the portrayal of violence, and he remains one of the most highly regarded South African writers of the twentieth century.

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always been referred to as uncultured, savage and a criminal. The research demonstrates how the coloniser afflicts the colonised with hardship and showing he lacks humanity as such treat him with violence. The dehumanising nature of punishment was what bred violence among them. The research examines different forms of violence which could lead to a better understanding of the violent behavior as a form of resistance by the black South Africans.

The postcolonial theory reviews the normalisation of violence which has appeared to be seen as a necessary and justified means of resolving conflict and legitimising sexual harassment against women. The reliance on a criminal justice system mired many issues, including inefficiency and corruption. A subculture of violence and criminality, ranging from individual criminals rape or rob to informal groups or more formalised gangs. The vulnerability of young people therefore, was linked to the inadequate child care and poor youth socialization systems. As a result of poverty, unstable living arrangements and being brought up with inconsistent and uncaring parenting some South African children were exposed to risk factors which enhanced the chances of becoming criminals and violent.

In Fanon's theory of violence depicts that colonialist countries use force to exploit raw materials and labour from colonised countries. In their attempt to justify their actions, colonialist stereotyped natives as savages and viewed them as precolonial barbarians. Colonialist proclaimed that European culture was the ideal for natives to emulate use violence and divide and conquer strategies to keep the natives down. Fanon advocated violence against the settlers as the way for colonised people to regain their sense of self-respect. Although he was a psychiatrist, Fanon did not show that such violence would be psychologically liberating.

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