

A Writer in Search of Black Freedom and Beauty: Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night*

Stanley ORDU¹; Better ODUKWU²

¹Research department, Chaps Multi-Concept Ltd, Nigeria. stanleyordu12@gmail.com ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2137-2842

²Department of General Studies, Federal College of Education (Tech), Omoku Rivers State, Nigeria.
odukwubetter@gmail.com

Abstract

Oral literature is the major form of literature in Africa, and it has existed for a long time. This is because, because of the widespread illiteracy in Africa, the creation of written literature took a long time. History has shown us that white people have discriminated against black people throughout the history of slavery. The novel investigates the ills of racism, which deprives individuals of their basic human rights. The work's approach and method are based on sociological, postcolonial, and Marxist theories. The major cause of the creation of protest writing in South Africa and Africa as a whole is shown in this text. Finally, the conversation demonstrated that, as an African writer, Alex La Guma is dedicated to questioning gender, racism, and aesthetic systems. In order to do this, he showed that the female characters are discriminated against because of their gender and skin color.

Key words: Racism, South Africa, Oral literature, La guma, Aesthetics. Africa

1. Introduction

Oral literature has been the main form of literature in Africa for a very long time now. Because Africans were mostly illiterate, there was a long delay in the development of written literature. No writer operates in a vacuum, and there is a close relationship between literature and society (Ordu and Better, 2022). History demonstrates that since their time as slaves, white people have had prejudice against black people. Wilmot, (1980). When Africans crossed the sea to meet the West for the first time, Phyllis Wheatly and George Horton were two of the people who planted the first seeds of new literature through this meeting. These poets were willing to accept the white values they had been taught, even though they didn't like being slaves. In his 1968 book, *A History of Neo-African Literature*, Jan Janheinz called the new universal works of black authors from the 18th and 19th centuries "apprentice literature." Two pan-African conferences were held in a variety of European locations, including New York, between 1900 and 1945. These seminars aided the patriotic development of African students who were studying abroad. During the sixth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945, nationalism for the first time expressed a desire for political independence. When he wrote his book, "Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race," in 1887, Blyden was the first black person to look at African culture from a neutral point of view. In this book, he tried to keep African communities' living cultures alive and took pleasure in their blackness. He used sociology, history, and literature to show that Africans had something good to say about the world, and he encouraged his fellow African-Americans to do the same. Every piece of art must, without a doubt, make a statement about itself (Ordu,2022).

He told African-Americans to use their history and culture as a foundation for the future. It was because of the romantic ideals of the time that Blyden had conversations with people. Peter Abrahams wrote *Sons of the City* in the 1950s, which made him the first non-white African author. There was a literary craze in the 1950s. This work began to have its own life. It is important for every writer to start writing with a strong sense of the language, styles, and forms that he is used to dealing with the time that Blyden had conversations with people. Peter Abrahams wrote *Sons of the City* in the 1950s, which made him the first non-white African author. There was a literary craze in the 1950s. This work began to have its own life. It is important for every writer to start writing with a strong sense of the language, styles, and forms that he is used to. There are some examples of this in African writings. They have their own unique qualities because they learned their writing tools from the West. They learned their language, styles, and forms from the West. It was in his book, *A History of Neo-African Literature*, that he said that all literature written by people who can trace their ancestors to Africa has a common theme. During a speech at the first Congress of Negro Writers in 1956, Ben Enwonwu said that literature should be used to show how important nationality is to people. "There must be a conversation about politics and art in this generation of African artists," says Ben Enwonwu. They should try to see art through the lens of politics (1956). "The political side of African art shows a lot of chaos and misery."

2. Theoretical framework

In terms of literature, postcolonialism covers a wide range of topics. The idea is concerned with the literature of both colonized and colonial nations. According to McEwan (2009), many individuals have used the term "postcolonialism." According to Saada (2014), the term has been used to describe a wide range of cultural, economic, and political problems in areas where

European colonialism has occurred (as cited in Saada, 2014). According to Saada, the word "postcolonialism" refers to a broad spectrum of relationships between conquerors and colonized people. In a similar spirit, Thamarana (2015) claims that postcolonialism, which is linked to imperialism, symbolizes concerns about ethnicity, culture, and human identity in the contemporary age, mostly after the independence of many conquered nations. Meanwhile, postcolonial literature, according to Javed (2016), is "work that investigates the many crises and ramifications of a nation's decolonization." According to Brians (2006), postcolonial literature is literature created by civilizations that have been colonized before. However, Brian has pointed out that the term should include works created before colonization as well as those written after independence. According to Brians, the term "postcolonial" may lead some people to believe that colonialism has ended, but the reality is that, despite their technical independence, most countries are still culturally and economically subordinate to wealthy industrial states through various forms of neocolonization. Everyone has been colonized in some way, even if postcolonial theory mostly concentrates on the last 50 years, particularly nations like England, which was invaded by Romans and Normans. The prevalence of the othering problem is evident while reading postcolonial literature. Othering, according to Tyson (2015), occurs when people in positions of power believe they are superior, civilized, the center of the universe, and a role model for humanity. In contrast to the prior, Tyson pointed out that colonized people are often seen as being inferior, strange, and lacking in human traits. Postcolonial theory may be applied to literary works to find patterns of hybridity and ambivalence in addition to concentrating on the process of otherness. Given the above, the theory concentrates on spotting colonial attitudes in literature, how colonizers take advantage of those with less political clout, and how oppressed people seek to reclaim their lost identities by battling various types of persecution. Marxism is a critical philosophy based on Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' writings. The Communist Manifesto (1848), in which Marx and Engels declare that the history of all existing civilizations is the history of class struggle, encapsulates the basic principles of Marxism. (Duiker and Spielgovel 428, qtd.) Marxism is an anti-capitalist and anti-feudal doctrine that proposes communism or socialism as the ideal state. According to the idea, every human civilization has two opposing classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, who comprise the elites/haves and the have-nots, respectively. The Marxist doctrine strives to eradicate this duality in human society by advocating for a classless society ruled by intellectuals, a society founded on equality and shared wealth, a society free of exploitation and oppression via proletarian revolution, and an egalitarian and utopian society. "Marxist criticism is not only a "sociology of literature," concerned with how novels are published and whether they address the working class," writes Terry Eagleton, a leading literary critic. Its goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the literary work by focusing on its forms, styles, and meanings. But it also necessitates an understanding of how those forms, styles, and meanings emerged from a specific historical context.

3. Literature review.

The novella is about the constraints of limited political understanding, according to Yousaf (2001). He goes far further, analyzing the novella using Marxist principles. He thinks that La Guma, writing from a Marxist perspective, "depicts the macrocosmic, capitalist-sponsored apartheid state's awful treatment of its majority people in microcosmic detail in his first novel." As a broad remark on the presence of ideas and resistance in La Guma's works, Yousaf notes that La Guma's novels "draw on a range of overarching themes presented in an opening chapter that examines the topic of writing and resistance in the context of apartheid South Africa."

Another critic who significantly contributed to our understanding of *A Walk in the Night* (2001) is Pointer. "A Passion to Liberate: La Guma's South African-Images of District Six," his article, analyzes the novella's themes and literary devices. He places a strong emphasis on using images in his analysis.

"The visuals are inextricably linked to the book's fundamental ideas, and they serve a vital role in communicating its meaning and heightening its aesthetic impact." When he comments that "when he (La Guma) is not employing similes, he is using other figures of speech, the most prevalent being metaphor and personification," Pointer adds to our understanding of La Guma's style.

Field examines *A Walk in the Night* from literary and political perspectives in his (La Guma's) "A Literary and Political Biography of the South African Years" (2001). He bases his justification on knowledge of La Guma's circumstances at the time he wrote "A Walk in the Night." He demonstrates how the creator of the anthology was impacted by historical, political, and social factors. His research shows La Guma as a child, adolescent, and adult. His research indicates that La Guma is a byproduct of the society in which he was raised. His analytical strategy is based on elucidating how apartheid affects coloured people, including the village of La Guma. He explains La Guma's desire for them to become conscious of the economical and political circumstances they were compelled to live in. His study emphasises the primary issues of La Guma, which include racism, socioeconomic injustice, and the anti-apartheid struggle. However, more importantly, his interpretation of the novella's conclusion, "A Walk in the Night," will be used to illuminate its truth.

According to Geertsema (2018), *A Walk in the Night* depicts the societal issues that coloured people were compelled to deal with as a result of the apartheid regime. The novella places a strong emphasis on critical realism's effect. He said.

Our comprehension of the novella has also greatly benefited from Cecil Abrahams' contributions as La Guma's "official biographer" since 1991. The novella "concerns itself with the social, economic, and political purposes of the Cape-colored people," as Abraham rightly notes.

According to him, La Guma "has the capacity to convey character... he is a master at observation, and he does not fail to note every line of physique, every facet of clothing, and every stance that a character may engage in." Abrahams also describes the novella as a slow-paced work that investigates every detail of the principal characters' lives and their harsh surroundings. I agree with Abraham's assertion in part. The novella does deal with the social lives of people, but it is incorrect to call it "slow-moving." Several occurrences occur in a single night, one after the other.

La Guma's political environment included issues such as race awareness and the concept of a racial hierarchy. This is what the anthology has to offer. Doughty, the old white former actor who drinks and thinks he's part of the downtrodden like Michael Adonis, is a good example to show this.

Violence, as Breidlid (2002) points out, has two sides. It has an impact on both the victim and the offender. People who perpetrate violence on others must ultimately become victims of the same violence they inflict on others. And almost always, people who are victims of violence respond in some way. This could be physical violence, or it could be a huge cloud of emotional violence—hate, anger, and a desire for revenge directed at the person who did the violence to them. "A Walk in the Night" and most of Alex La Guma's other works deal with "the dilemma of different communities being defined in exclusive terms but living in the same area and on the same ground," says Richard Priebe in 2005. Apartheid and its brutality are the issue. Both the victim and the perpetrator get dehumanized as a result of violence. Victimizers reject the humanity of their victims when they commit particular types of violence, such as the racial oppression inherent in Apartheid. The perpetrators of such denial block their eyes to their own humanity by refusing to recognise that the objects of their violence feel agony, scream, and cry out, and that when they are shot or slashed with a knife, the blood that runs from their bodies is just as crimson as their own blood. As a result of such denial, the perpetrators of violence suffer severe psychological consequences, as portrayed brutally by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Many of the French troops who tormented Algerian peasants for hours suffered from mental illnesses, which caused some of them to commit suicide or go mad. Fanon and other influential colonial writers like Albert Memmi (*The Colonizer and the Colonized*) and Aime Cesaire extensively discuss the dehumanizing effects of violence on both perpetrators and victims (*Discourse on Colonialism*). More recent writers on the subject have confirmed this reality. A quote from Priebe (2005) says that "in the face of violence, everyone is reduced to an object." Priebe uses the story of Tantalus from Greek mythology to illustrate the domino effect of violence. Aeschylus' *Oresteia* Trilogy shows the tragic chain of events that happened after Tantalus killed his son and served his flesh to the gods. Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia; Helen was stolen by Paris of Troy; and Clytemnestra slew Agamemnon in retaliation for her daughter. Violence "breeds violence," as the saying goes. Violence is a devastating force that affects both individuals and groups, and no one person or entity has ownership over or control over it. Violence can never be used by one individual or one group without repercussions. Alex La Guma believes that violence breeds violence and that victims of violence have no option but to retaliate with violence. Apartheid was, by all accounts, one of the most heinous crimes against humanity in modern history. It was every bit as racist and fascist as Nazism was. The infliction of mental and physical violence on black, Asian, and coloured South Africans began in 1910, when Britain firmly placed political authority in the hands of the white minority in South Africa. In the preface to his edited collection *Apartheid* (1978: 13), La Guma says "the country's constitution codified racism and created the foundation for different facets of national oppression, exploitation, humiliation, and brutalization of non-white people." Despite the fact that apartheid did not become official policy until 1948, its origins may be traced back to the early days of Dutch and British colonisation in the Cape and on the border of British Kaffraria (mid-17th to early 19th centuries). Between 1948 and 1994, non-white South Africans were subjected to a wide range of emotional and physical violence as a result of the policy of separate development. Apartheid's fundamental goal was to keep South Africa white. Apartheid is defined as "the space of the white man's existence... the distance required to persuade himself of his rejection of the other's humanity," according to Breytenbach in an essay titled "Vulture Culture in La Guma's Collection." It ultimately deprives the other person and himself of all humanity. Apartheid is the darkness that obliterates the white man's knowledge and conscience. *Gymnasium* (2016). "What cannot be seen, cannot exist" (*Apartheid*, 138). "A Walk in the Darkness" by Alex La Guma serves as a metaphor for the darkness that Apartheid imposed on South African society.

Alex La Guma was a resistance writer who opposed both Western society's individualism and the idea that South Africa's white minority was immune to the brutality perpetrated against the non-white majority. While describing the oppressive heat and dry conditions in *Time of the Butcherbird*, he portrays the opulent environment in *A Walk in the Night* (2013). Apartheid is shown in both pieces as a colossal monster that feeds on society's flesh. It didn't know the difference between white and black flesh, just like a monster would. The environment of District Six is one of palpable hatred, wrath, severe poverty, decadence, depravity, and beastliness, all of which are natural outcomes of a society that feeds and lives on man's inhumanity to man. As a result, even Constable Raalt, the book's most powerful character, emerges as one of, if not the, saddest. Raalt is

a whirlwind of anger and malice. He's "fed up with riding around looking at these effing hotnot bastards" and wishes he could "wring one of those bushman bastards' bloody necks," he says, referring to his wife's alleged treachery (29 & 36). The ridiculousness of Raalt's seething wrath is revealed when it is realized that the only reason he is so angry with these "hotnot bastards" is because they have a different skin tone than he does. Raalt's humanity has clearly been harmed by his dehumanization of his fellow creatures. He's been reduced to a ferocity akin to that of a wild beast that pounces on weaker creatures and tears them apart. As the racist officer follows Willieboy on the dark rooftop, La Guma uses a metaphor of Raalt as an animal: "He'd cornered his prey and was confident in his ability to complete the hunt." He grinned contentedly as he crouched in the dim light (81).

In La Guma, the character of Raalt, a spokesman for the white establishment, represents the dehumanization of the ostensibly all-powerful oppressor. Raalt is little more than a ruthless hunter as he crosses District Six. He plunders the Jolly Boys Social Club, abuses Chips, and extorts money from him, leaving him with bloody lips. Raalt treats the locals with his usual scorn for "hotnot bastards" at the site of Doughty's assassination. Raalt takes his time after shooting Willieboy and flinging him into the back of his van, walking calmly into a store and extorting a package of cigarettes from the Portuguese proprietor, showing no regard for the boy's life. Raalt wonderfully captures everything about Apartheid's brutality, barbarism, and dehumanizing repercussions. In an unpublished interview with Cecil Abrahams in London in March 1978, La Guma states he was inspired to write *A Walk in the Night* after reading a small line in a Cape Town newspaper reporting "that a so-called thug had died in the police van after being shot in District Six" (Abrahams, 1985). The story's shallowness bothered La Guma. Was this officer-involved shooting victim a true thug? Or, like Willie, was he a helpless victim? Even if he was one, how did he become a hooligan in the first place? Was he a Michael Adonis or one of the three "skollies"—law-abiding, hardworking folks pushed into crime by Apartheid's brutal excesses? What led to the alleged hooligan's run-in with the cops and his death in the back of a police van? These and many more concerns are addressed in "A Walk in the Night." At the start of *A Walk in the Night*, Michael Adonis is subjected to ludicrous brutality. For just going to the restroom, he gets fired. From that point on, the story is filled with rage and a sense of impending doom. As Michael Adonis is leaving his old job, the police stop him. He is already very angry because he has been treated so badly. As Michael Adonis is leaving his old job, the police stop him. He is already very angry because he has been treated so badly. He was also questioned about his drug storage. His run-in with the cops is only one more step toward Adonis' ultimate criminality. La Guma takes us through dark alleys and into drunken bars where "insignificant lives" meet to drown their sorrows in streams of whiskey, compelling us to peek into the troubled minds of District Six inhabitants via Michael. He doesn't allow us to believe that these anguished souls are all black and white. Uncle Doughty, the old white soul who now lives "on crap street" and is like all the other animals that walked, crawled, or slept in the long, dismal night of Apartheid, is the subject of his attention. As a metaphor for South Africa, District Six has two dimensions. Its disorganized and decaying appearance represents all South Africans' physical agony. Within its gates, the decadence reflects the occupants' inner turmoil and misery. Povey 1993: 95) describes "the horrific conditions of slum living: the arrogance of the employers, the sadism of crooked cops, and the dehumanising character of poverty-induced hopelessness" in District Six and, by extension, apartheid South Africa (Povey 1993: 95). However, *A Walk in the Night's* storyline demonstrates "a much deeper and, in some ways, more devastating reality than the evident wrong of oppression: that the human propensity for violence, when awakened by anguish, may take routes that serve no purpose or reflect only iconoclastic savagery." In fact, Michael's murder of poor old Mr. Doughty "in a moment of drunken wrath" and Raalt's murder of the innocent Willieboy are two of the clearest examples of this phenomenon of ludicrous violence. When Willieboy is wrongfully accused of Doughty's murder, he realises that stating the truth won't help him. He has no choice but to become a wanted criminal for a crime he didn't commit. According to La Guma, years of perilous experience and victimization via distrust had corroded the armor of confidence, turning him into a generic creature who was an easy target for a lie that specialized in looking for scapegoats for everything that diverted him from its doomsday course (46). Willieboy has spent his whole life aspiring to be "a big shot," but he has never succeeded in realizing this ambition. He nevertheless "remains somewhat generic, a smudge on a dusty wall, part of the crowd's blurred visage" (69). The old alcoholic Greene tries to persuade himself that he is someone, but the harsh system eventually neutralizes him. Willieboy's life is a sorrowful journey from an unloving household to a loveless society, where he is eventually brutalized to death (Abrahams 1985: 60).

Mr. Doughty's assassination by Michael implies more than a drunken outburst. Doughty isn't Constable Raalt, nor is he even Raalt's terrified driver, who is terrified that his senior colleague would do anything to smear the white man's superior image. Mr. Doughty seems to be a non-racist individual. He's just a penniless and impoverished elderly white drinker living on "crap street," a victim of an awful system like the rest of District Six's non-white residents. However, he remains a white man. In Michael Adonis' life, he continues to represent all that is cruel, wicked, tyrannical, and harmful. When he stares at Mr. Doughty, Michael initially sees a white guy. And when Michael strikes Mr. Doughty, he is not striking his friendly and innocent uncle, with whom he had just shared a bottle of alcohol moments before. Instead, he is striking a white guy. By hitting Mr. Doughty, Michael Adonis, symbolising a youthful black country, is striking at Apartheid's corrupt system, indicating that one day soon, a black hand will strike and slay Apartheid's rotting monster. This seems to be a feasible

explanation for Michael's allegedly random murder of the elderly Mr. Doughty. In *A Walk in the Night*, La Guma makes another argument about violence: that all of Apartheid's brutality is unnecessary, even meaningless. Many apartheid institutions, such as the Group Areas Act, the Pass Laws, a biased court system, and a harsh security force, are plain in their ridiculousness. Mr. Doughty's assassination by Michael is a remark on apartheid South Africa's bizarre and violent culture. Raalt's assassination of Willieboy is a good example of this. Willieboy's childhood beatings by his traumatized mother are also remembered. In the above-mentioned article, Povey argues, "La Guma's series of severe and ultimately inexplicable injustices is no less ludicrous and implausible than society's ongoing, chronic injustices." "In a corrupted society, crazy things happen" (1993: 96). Consider the case of Shilling Murile, in *Time of the Butcherbird*, who was tried and convicted in an Apartheid court of law. The heinous assault committed on Shilling Murile and Michael Adonis can only fuel a desire for revenge. The difference between Apartheid's violence on its victims and Apartheid's violence on its victims is that the latter is not absurd; it has a source and a goal. In a way, it's necessary violence. Apartheid and its perpetrators were only able to communicate in this language. In this way, violence appears in *The Time of the Butcherbird* as a necessary evil. As a kind of retaliation against the system and the individuals who have denied him a good life, or at the very least, an honest and peaceful living, Michael Adonis in *A Walk in the Night* joins the "skollies," quits his honest work, and enters the shadowy underworld of theft and possibly murder. "The suffocating social and political climate drives him unavoidably to the realm of crime and eternal darkness," says Cecil Abrahams of Adonis, "and he becomes a full-fledged member of the underground with the possibility of roaming the night until he is captured or dies" (1985: 56). Finally, Alex La Guma seems to be arguing that, like Hamlet's father's ghost, South Africa was doomed to wander the night until the great evil of apartheid was abolished. Victims and perpetrators alike would be held captive in a mindless cycle of violence that became more savage and terrible by the day until that moment came. Shortly before his death, Uncle Doughty tells Michael, "Michael, that's us." "Nothing except ghosts, destined to wander the night" (26). Apartheid was a black night that encompassed and harmed all South Africans, regardless of skin color.

3.1 A summary of the text

He had just been fired from his sheet metal production job for defying his white boss, and two white police officers had since harassed him on a daily check route. He stops at one drinking establishment after another on his way home, seeking to wash away the shame and humiliation of his interaction with the white foreman, which resulted in his job loss. Mr. Doughty, a decrepit and intoxicated Irish co-tenant, greets Michael as he returns home. Over a bottle of strong wine, they have a fight. Michael spits at his adversary, already locked up with rage from his last encounter with the whites. In a fit of rage with the wine bottle, he loses control and accidentally murders Mr. Doughty. Adonis becomes a killer after this occurrence. To avoid being caught, he exits his apartment. Willieboy, Michael's buddy, comes on the scene to ask if Michael can give him any money from his payoff, only to find the elderly Mr. Doughty's body. To avoid being identified as the killer, Willieboy departs the apartment. On the basis of John Abrahams' facts and description, Willie exited the apartment in a strange way, which John noticed. The remainder of the story revolves around Willieboy's disappearance. Willieboy is apprehended by the authorities. Constable Raalt, a police officer, shot him in the leg, and he died almost instantly. As previously stated, Michael Adonis is at the center of the plot, and Willieboy is subsequently introduced to the following event (scene), in which he is mistaken for Mr. Doughty's killer. Michael Adonis and Willieboy's stories essentially make up the text's plot. ("*A Walk in the Night*"), according to the plot of the novella. After carefully reading the narrative, it will become clear that there is a group of individuals (the whites) who have an advantage over the "colored" people (blacks). During the colonial period, they persecuted black people in a variety of ways, including racial oppression, segregation, and brutality. They dominated the people, yet they ignored their needs and unfairly assessed them.

During the colonial era, Alex La Guma's "*A Walk in the Night*" depicts white rulers' sentiments against the South African people and the apartheid system in South Africa.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Discourse of freedom and beauty

Since its origins in the early twentieth century, South African English literature has come a long way. South African literature has reflected the history and social-political tone of its country as part of a larger body of work in the world's literature.

Apartheid inspired so many works that it has its own literary canon in Africa. Apartheid is intrinsically tied to the study of South African literature. Apartheid and racial dynamics may be traced back to the first works written in English by South Africans in the genre of fiction in which this work is set. Peter Abrahams was one of the early apartheid fiction authors. *Mine Boy* (1946), his globally acclaimed book, is widely regarded as a masterwork of the South African apartheid era. J. M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, Andre Brink, Albie Sachs, and Njabulo Ndebele are just a few of the authors that dominated the South African literary scene during the apartheid era.

According to Johan Geertsema (1-2), victimisation and black suffering were fetishized in South African literature during the apartheid era, and a stereotype arose as a result. Since South Africa's literature was highly restricted during the apartheid era, literary works, particularly in the category of fiction, are limited. A number of anti-apartheid writers had their books banned in South Africa, including Nadine Gordimer, André Brink, Mary Benson, Richard Rive, Bessie Head, Peter Abrahams, Dan Jacobson, C. J. Driver, and J. M. Coetzee. For their political and literary activities, a number of writers were detained on Robben Island, including Rive, Alex La Guma, Dennis Brutus, Breyten-Breytenbach, and D. M. Zwelonke. Several other anti-apartheid authors, particularly those who were black or of mixed race, such as Rive, Abrahams, La Guma, Arthur Nortje, Lewis Nkosi, and Ezekiel Es'kiaMphahlele, as well as some white South Africans, such as Breytenbach, Brink, and Athol Fugard, were exiled or fled their country on their own to avoid political oppression. Before the South African National Party formalised such practises prior to the official foundation of the apartheid regime, South African intellectuals like Olive Schreiner and Sol Plaatje criticised the inequities of racial segregation and discriminatory economic policies. Schoenberg and Trudeau (2) assert that there have been two main traditions in anti-apartheid literature: the more radicalised protest tradition that emerged in the black townships and gave rise to the works of Abrahams, Rive, and La Guma, and the multifaceted, liberal tradition started by Schreiner and carried on to varying degrees by Alan Paton, Gordimer, and Coetzee.

A novella is a term that has been used to describe this work. According to Field (243), La Guma's change from reportage to prose fiction is marked in this book. Mbari, a Nigerian publishing firm, first published the book in 1962. According to Field (226), La Guma seems to have completed it sometime in 1960, but it is uncertain whether he did it before or after his arrest. Throughout the whole novel, several people are affected by the horrible persecution of South Africa under apartheid. In his essay, Alex La Guma explains why he chose such an odd title:

One of the reasons why I called the book "A Walk in the Night"
The reason was that, in my mind, the coloured community was still discovering
In relation to the general struggle against racism in the South,
Continent of Africa They were working and enduring, and in this way, they were
They experienced this while walking in the night until such time as they found
They were prepared to be citizens of a society in which
They wanted to make a contribution. I tried to create a picture.
of a people struggling to see the light, the dawn, and the stars
Apart from their experiences in this confined space
community (Abraham 49).

A group of young black South Africans are portrayed in the narrative as being subjugated by a totalitarian regime that prefers one racial group over another. District Six, a South African slum located in the city of Cape Town, is where the narrative is set. The narrative centres on Michael Adonis' murder of an elderly Irish man in a drunken frenzy and how the police mistakenly shoot the wrong guy, Willieboy, for Michael's murder. The novel's realism, language, and thematic thrusts have all been lauded. Using Marxism as a critical tool, the story depicts the wretched lives of the proletariat, the have-nots, and the oppressed in phrases such as "domestic workers," "working people," "taxi drivers," "loiters," "prostitutes," "number runners," "small gangsters," and "tattered looking thugs" (La Guma 3). The repressive class is portrayed as the scourge of the powerless. The South African police and white employers serve as the story's representation of the downtrodden class. By treating them like second-class citizens, oppressing, abusing, and ultimately disposing of them, this privileged class takes advantage of the black proletariats in the novel. Young blacks are shown as proletarian characters, and they are represented as destitute in the clearest possible terms. According to La Guma, Michael Adonis was a young guy who "wore pants that had been cleaned numerous times and were now left with a light blue color decorated with old grease stains" (1-2). Michael Adonis' residence on Hanover Street, in the District Six neighborhood, has "a row of dustbins lining one side of the door" (21), and the awful odor is described as "rotten fruit, stale food, stagnant water, and general decay," according to La Guma (21). The novel is depicted in these images as being aware of the oppressed masses' misery and situations, whereas the blacks and have-nots are not.

The work also addresses a number of other concerns. Racism and apartheid are at the forefront of these concerns. The black experience in South Africa is truthfully shown from many angles. One such example may be found in the main character, who gets fired from his job merely for standing up to his supervisor, who treats him like an animal rather than a person (14). As a result, his employer symbolizes the predatory bourgeoisie, who extort the proletariat's services in order to profit themselves while considering the oppressed workers as peasants, disposables, and appendages. The capitalist system's driving force is race. The use of derogatory phrases like "the colour of old leather" supports the novel's discriminatory portrayal of black people.

"a cockroach emerging through a floorboard" (9), "negroes" (16), "bushman bastard" (39), "hottentots" (39), "kaffirs" (39), "tan coloured" (51), "skollies" (56), "black bastard" (63), "coloured boy" (80), "bloody baboons" (88). These terms are mainly used by the white elites to taunt, debase, and mock blacks.

Apartheid is dealt with deftly in La Guma's story. It does not need to be highlighted since it has become so ingrained in people's everyday lives that authors do not strive to conjure up scenarios in order to depict this huge injustice. One such blatantly realistic picture of apartheid may be seen in an early exchange between Joe and Michael Adonis, in which Joe asserts unequivocally that the City Council would limit access to public beaches "so only white people can go there" (10). The oppression of the lower class of blacks by the governmental superstructure is also a component of oppression. In the story, segregation is directly blamed on the capitalist system (17). The cab driver is convinced that racial segregation, or the "color bar," is caused by capitalism.

The work is filled with themes like racial segregation, brutality, and filth. On the other hand, this study intends to investigate the South African police's role(s) in inciting the aforementioned, as well as their own specific responsibilities in victimizing and brutalizing innocent black South Africans.

5. Conclusion

According to the debate, as an African writer, Alex La Guma is devoted to questioning gender, racism, and aesthetic systems. He accomplished this by demonstrating that the female characters face discrimination based on their gender. The black characters in the book show how a person's skin tone affects their sense of race and hegemony. The black man encounters prejudice as a result of his skin tone. Despite the fact that there are more black people than white people, white people are still able to dominate them because of their skin color. Racial discrimination manifests itself in housing for blacks and whites, different job descriptions for whites and blacks, separate restaurants for blacks and whites, special laws for blacks, and unique economic initiatives for blacks. They are particularly good at demonstrating how whites and blacks both have a part in the construction of gender and race beliefs. In African society, the work deals with concerns about gender, racism, and hegemony.

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