

# A Critical Study of Novels of Alex La Guma

Anowar Hussain

Research Scholar, (Asstt. Professor) Department of English, Sontali Anchalik College, Mahatoli-781136,  
Kamrup, Assam, India

## ABSTRACT

The working class people of South Africa in the matrix of social tension and strife in South Africa is revealed in the novels of Alex La Guma. The purpose of this paper is why the workers become violent in rainy environment and its effects on the working class family, La Guma expands to the macro-environment of the working class in the novel. The family and the working class district form the background to which the political movement can be understood. The underground liberation movement is portrayed as a working class organisation fighting against racist oppression and exploitation, apartheid. The present study emphasized is completely the urgent need for impact with special reference to this Novel "A walk in the Night" The Stone Country, And a Threefold Cord. This novella reveals to readers the atrocities that were perpetrated against the non-whites in South Africa. This study highlights the restrictions placed on African workers under the oppressive Apartheid system and its effects on the psyche of the non-whites in South Africa have been given credible space in the novella. There is seen in this novella a fictionalization of the different forms of maltreatments that nonwhites suffered during the Apartheid regime. There is also seen in the novella a relentless effort by La Guma to protest against the Apartheid era. The life-styles of the non-whites clearly indicate that the Apartheid system really took away the dignity of the non-whites in South Africa. Analyses such as this can be fruitful for instance in the area of "A walk in the Night". A Walk in the Night is literally a story of Michael Adonis's walk through District Six in one eventful evening.

**Keywords:** Apartheid, Brutal system, Novelist, South Africa, Restrictions, Fictionalization

## INTRODUCTION

South African society has developed over the last three centuries as an impacted polity of ethnically defined groups within an overall framework of white political and military dominance. During this era, racially based classification became a principal response to what Christopher Heywood describes as 'a maze of contradictory loyalties.' Numerous literary works deal with the theme of inter-human clash whereby there is an attempt by the weaker to escape the dominance of the stronger. La Guma therefore recognizes the fact that racial separation is an essential artistic predicament that South African writers face. He says: "The artistic vision in South Africa is restricted by apartheid barriers and even the most vivid imagination is no substitute for experience. In South Africa the wall between the races is impenetrable. La Guma uses the title A Walk in the Night for his short novel to represent his disagreement with what he considers as an ethnically-political attitude in the coloured community. These words from La Guma are an This kind of fiction often is set in ugly urban slums or ghettos, where man is shown not acting freely; merely reacting to external and internal pressures that ultimately overwhelm him. Certainly, no one can deny the fact that the characters we meet in this novel are trapped in a hellish environment. They live in District Six, a Cape Town slum, where everything is in a state of dilapidation and decay. La Guma describes in vivid detail the sordid tenements and shanties of the urban working class living conditions that spawn crime and random violence. Two people are killed in the course of the story a young thug named Willieboy and a derelict Irish actor called Doughty and neither deserves his death; they are innocent victims of a cruel, vicious sociopolitical system that routinely destroys the lives of the disadvantaged. A promising young man, Michael Adonis who is sacked from his workplace ends up being a criminal. The police, supposedly the upholders of law and order, have been brutalized into agents of oppression. Clearly, something is wrong with a society like this, a world where death, degradation and despair crush the human spirit. La Guma, through his naturalism, suggests that the situation is hopeless, that South Africans brought up in such a world are at the mercy of forces much too large and powerful for them to resist and overcome. They appear constrained to continue forever their nightmarish walk in the night. The Stone Country is the story of people in a world without beauty, a lunar barrenness of stone, steel and locked doors. No tree grows here to offer men the peace of cooling shade. Shadow there is and walls rising like cliffs and scribbled on with protests - obscene, profane, belligerent, nostalgic, laced with grim, mocking humour. This is a prison where men are thrown together, regardless of the charges against them. For they are men who share a common crime in South they are Solly acting the clown in tattered rags, a scarecrow come to life; Josef the Turk, lean, sleek, dangerous as a knife blade; his sworn enemy, Butcherboy Williams, a collector of tribute; and the Casbah Kid who will hang for murder. Getting him to talk is like trying to pry open the jammed doors of a vault; yet George tries; George whose crime is illegal organizing in the fight against apartheid. This story is theirs, men who know violence and who express it in a prison break, in a fight to the death for power in the cells. It is also the story of a

man who brings a touch of humanity into the dark corrosion of terror and brutality. Yet, it is through adroit use of symbolism, a contradictory and complementary strategy of protest, that he gives this pessimistic story an optimistic conclusion. The book ends with a vision of hope, a promise that this society is destined to change profoundly in the future.

### **Origin of Research Problem**

*The origin of South African society in the Novels of La Guma, a coloured novelist from South Africa, where the socio-political structure was controlled by the racist ideology of apartheid is really the nation building education and the maintenance of good quality therein is of tremendous importance.* On the other hand, the colour-bond laws of the City Council condemn him on account of his ethnic origin to a situation where he cannot even access the beaches his forefathers freely moved about. This paper seeks to analyze the various aspects of maltreatment that is perpetrated against the non-whites in the novel. It will look at how the maltreatment of the non-whites culminates into their lost dignity. *The present paper is an attempt to describe the major research carried out on Alex La Guma, a coloured novelist from South Africa with special reference to this Novels "A walk in the Night".* The present study emphasized is completely the urgent need for effect with special reference to this Novel "A walk in the Night". The formal features of brutal system of South African society in the Novels of La Guma, under this study is an attempt to describe the major research carried out on critics tend to classify the novel as a naturalistic novel – that is, a novel manifesting what the Oxford English Dictionary defines rather laconically as "a style or method characterized by close adherence to, and faithful representation of nature or reality." This kind of fiction often is set in ugly urban slums or ghettos, where man is shown not acting freely; merely reacting to external and internal pressures that ultimately overwhelm him. Lastly, the paper describes the various problems for utilizing the indigenous knowledge, source of knowledge, forms of knowledge- "A walk in the Night" and this field is relatively unexplored. This indication brings to the fore how the white men in the society live with the non-whites. There is no point of respect for the non-white races as regards their human identity and that authorizes the white men to derogatorily approach the non-white. The whites perceive the colour black to be connected with evil and wickedness; "virtue is white as sin is black."

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

Through the review of related literature, researcher can avoid unintentional duplication of well-established findings. It is no use to replicate a study when the stability and validity of its results have been clearly established. In an interview with Cecil Abrahams (1985 & 1991), La Guma says: One of the reasons why I called the 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 were walking, 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 of a people struggling to see the light, to see the dawn, to see something new, other than their experiences in this confined community. La Guma has spoken of having "really had no hope for the book" when he wrote it. "I just did it as an exercise for myself, and I was therefore, surprised (1962). The Strandlopers, as Schapera points out, 'were merely Bushmen who took to the seashore, so that we have to deal with a particular mode of life rather with particular people'. Joe never gets the "luxury" of life which even some blacks have but is content with whatever he has because that is where he gets comfort from. The writer thus appeals to our sense of sight visual imagery with the description of Joe. With vivid description of this character, we are presented with the picturesque nature of the poor natives. Nothing but tattered penury has enveloped Joe to the extent that his pair of trousers' original colour cannot be guessed and shoes 'worn beyond recognition'. Effectively, this form of imagery brings to readers the lost dignity of the natives of South Africa under the apartheid era.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The followings are the main limitations of the present Study:

- (1). The study has been delimited of creative thinking only.
- (2). The study has been conducted in *South African society* only..
- (3). The study has been confined only life-styles of the non-whites community and restrictions placed on African workers (treatment of Negroes).

### **Analysis of the Oppressed**

*A walk in the Night*, this short novel is about the cruel treatment of the detestable Apartheid system which the non-whites community has to suffer and, alternatively, it is about the hardly any benefits granted the non-whites to live supposedly standard lives. Michael Adonis and Willieboy are in this vein, presented as typical examples of the ill-fated coloured people. Hence, numerous other young fellows including Michael Adonis and Willieboy who live in District Six in Cape Town, cannot practically find a solution to their plight except through criminal behavior. Willieboy, in order to survive, involves himself in petty crimes and violent acts and Michael Adonis, also after dismissal, finds solace in Foxy's gang which is specialized in burglary and minor crimes, hence becomes a member. To worsen the situation, Adonis who is still angered by the sack, transfers his anger onto an old Irish man; Mr. Doughty, during a argument over

a bottle of wine and strikes him dead. In response, the police begin a furious hunt of the supposed killer. With no evidence against Willieboy, Constable Raalt, a vindictive white police officer, pulls the trigger and shoots him. In *A Walk in the Night*, the third-person narrative point of view is employed. Through the use of the thirdperson point of view, readers are made to view circumstances and events through the lives of two major characters Michael Adonis and Willieboy. The sequence of the events is also made to revolve around Adonis and Willieboy such that the story literally moves with them. It is through the lives of these characters that readers are made cognizant of the characteristics of apartheid and its consequences on the people. It is quite unfortunate that working for the white man is a tedious task for the non-white fellow. One has to get worn out for working under the white's authority. As in the case of Adonis, he goes out to urinate and he is questioned on that. The verb 'moaning' as used in the passage tells us the displeasure shown by the foreman when he realizes that Adonis takes a break to visit the urinal. Adonis who considers himself as a human being but not a working machine also talks back to the foreman which results in his dismissal from the factory.

Willieboy informs us: 'Ja,' Willieboy said. 'Working for whites. Happens all the time, man. Me, I never work for no white john. Not even brown one. To hell with work. Work, work, work, where does it get you? Not me, pally.' From this quotation, one can glean that the non-white is not respected by the white man. He is made to overwork himself like a 'donkey'. Adonis' colleagues in the factory are not even given the chance to urinate when they wish to. One has to work all the time when one gets to the work place. The only time he gets to rest is when he has closed from work. This therefore indicates how cruel these white employers are. Willieboy, on the other hand, who does not want to over-work himself decides that he will never work for a white man. However, Adonis is not only sacked from his job but also is insulted by his foreman. He does not remain silent after he had been insulted but also insults the foreman by saying 'he was no-good pore-white'. Having nowhere to go and nobody to appeal to against the dismissal, he finds himself in a café which is described as an outpost of 'the whirlpool world of poverty, petty crime and violence' of District Six. Thrown into this coloured urban slum, without a job, or the surety of getting one in the near future, his thoughts were 'concentrated upon the pustule of rage and humiliation that was continuing to ripen deep down within him'. Adonis is boiled up with anger deeply in his thoughts to the extent that even when eating at the restaurant, the thoughts of the foreman insulting him never escaped the mind and he says: 'That sonavabitch, that bloody white sonavabitch, I'll get him'. Further, when Adonis comes out from the restaurant, he is stopped on the road by two Afrikaner policemen who intend searching him for dagga (marijuana) in a very derogatory manner. Smoking of marijuana is associated with the non-whites because they are seen as having nothing to do with their lives than to smoke and foment troubles in the society. "This policeman asked in a heavy, brutal voice, 'Where's your dagga?' 'I don't smoke it". The adjective 'brutal' as used to describe the voice of the policeman indicates how pitiless and heartless the policeman is when asking Adonis whether he has marijuana in his pocket or not. This indication brings to the fore how the white men in the society live with the non-whites. There is no point of respect for the non-white races as regards their human identity and that authorizes the white men to derogatorily approach the non-white. The whites perceive the colour black to be connected with evil and wickedness; "virtue is white as sin is black." Consequently, in advance, with no any proof, Adonis has been classified as a thief. Adonis possessing any amount of money means it was a stolen item and that he has no other ability or capability of getting money in the view of the white police officer. However, the truth is, the non-white only earns a living from succumbing to performing the laborious jobs for the whites for low earnings devoid of stealing. Yet, he (Adonis) is regarded as a thief since he is caught possessing money. In the apartheid system, the non-whites only do the menial but tedious work in the society. They work in areas like the mines and steel industries like that of Adonis and are paid small amounts of money as wages. This is a major characteristic of the apartheid system where non-whites are not given better jobs with better remuneration but are made to go through various forms of maltreatment in their workplaces and at the end of the month they go home with a salary that cannot cater for themselves not to talk about a family. Obviously, this kind of attitude by policemen is a characteristic nature of the fascist1 regime of apartheid South Africa. Non-whites are stopped by policemen and searched anyhow all because they are prejudged by the white man as callous creatures who can cause destruction at any point in time on the streets. This therefore causes the white policemen to maltreat the non-white races with contempt and indignation. Besides, with insult added to injury 'They pushed past him, one of them brushing him aside with an elbow and strolled on. He put the stuff back into his pockets. And deep down inside him the feeling of rage, frustration and violence swelled like a boil, knotted with pain'. The disrespect shown towards the black's identity by the white man creates a serious pain in Adonis. This is shown by the use of the simile "like a boil" in the sentence. The comparison made in the sentence by relating a boil to Adonis' feeling with the use of 'like' probably shows implicitly how painful the treatment meted out to Michael Adonis is. A boil is defined as "a painful pus-filled abscess on the skin caused by a bacterial infection of a hair follicle." This definition gives credence to how painful it is to be humiliated by a white man on your own soil. For the pain to be compared to a boil on a skin is indicative of the intensity of the pain that Adonis harbours in his heart. Yet again, Adonis goes into a pub on his way home and meets a few of his friends who were already there enjoying themselves and sharing ideas. We are told by the narrator that: The pub, like pubs all over the world, was a place for debate and discussion, for the exchange of views and opinions, for argument and for the working out of problems. It was a forum, a parliament, a fountain of wisdom and a cesspool of nonsense, it was a centre for the lost and the despairing, where cowards absorbed dutch courage out of small glasses and leaned against the shiny, scratched and polished mahogany counter for support against the crushing burdens of insignificant lives. Where the disillusioned

gained temporary hope, where acts of kindness were considered and murders planned. From the passage above, we are given a vivid description of what goes on in the pub. All good and bad things evolve from this pub. The pub creates an avenue for every person who is one way or the other facing a peculiar problem. 'The lost', 'the despairing', 'the coward' and 'the disillusioned' all have their place here because the pub is 'for the working out of problems' and 'acts of kindness considered'. The adjective 'temporary' used by the narrator to modify 'hope' tells us that the pub is just a means to overcome hardships for a short period of time and that there is a better means to attain a permanent status of hope which probably is fighting for your right position in your own land. Besides the benefits one gets from visiting the pub, the fact is established that the pub is also 'a cesspool of nonsense' where murders are planned. It is therefore not surprising that Adonis before going home passes by the pub to be a beneficiary of its components positives and negatives. Fascinatingly, their conversation shifts to the discussion of the treatment of Negroes in America. The Negroes in the United States of America were treated the same as the blacks and coloureds in the South African society. Eventually, the prevailing racial situation in South Africa makes matters difficult for Adonis. The realization that the man he kills is a White makes him feel very nervous. The writer's use of interior monologue reveals to us the feeling of Adonis: "There's going to be trouble. Didn't mean it. Better get out. The laws don't like white people being finished off. Well, I didn't mean it. Better get out before somebody comes. I never been in here". The third person omniscient narrator reveals to us the 'flood of thoughts' that runs through the mind of Adonis. The thoughts that run through Adonis' mind are not stable but like 'bubbles' floating in space. He feels uncomfortable after this incident and does not want to explain the occurrence to anybody in the tenement nor to the police. Knowing very well that killing a white man is an action against the 'law', he is gripped by the fear of its consequences. Lying on his bed after being able to slip out of his victim's room, Adonis goes through a thinking process: To hell with him and the lot of them. 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. 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? To hell with him. Well, I didn't mos mean to finish him. AWright, man, he's dead and you're alive. Stay alive. Ja, stay alive and get kicked under the arise until you're finished, too. To hell with them. One major characteristic of the apartheid system in South Africa is separation with regard to ethnic background. Apart from the major social discrimination against blacks, the natives are grouped into various ethnicities. This is done in order to destroy the bond of solidarity among the natives to enable the Whites manipulate the blacks to their advantage. Adonis' ethnic experience of discrimination and the social distance from the Whites are determinants of his reaction towards Doughty. The once-sensitive and kind-hearted Michael Adonis degenerates into feeling a sense of importance even from killing an old helpless man.

As a matter of fact, one character that symbolizes the poor life of some blacks and their lost dignity is Joe. He is one of the many people who 'just seemed to have happened, appearing in the District like a cockroach emerging through a floorboard'. Many people like Joe don't belong in the society as others do. He is compared to a cockroach which has to always escape being crushed by someone. The image stresses the nature of the nocturnal lives of the blacks, searching for physical and psychological comfort. It is therefore not surprising that Joe is known to be living as a beachcomber. The narrator presents to us the physical details of Joe: Joe was short and his face had an ageless quality about it under the grime, like something valuable forgotten in a junk shop. He had soft brown eyes of a dog, and he smelled of a mixture of sweat, slept-in clothes and seaweed. 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 raincoat that reached almost to his ankles, the sleeves torn loose at the shoulders, the body hanging in ribbons, the front pinned together over his filthy vest. His shoes were worn beyond recognition. The passage above provides to readers the disgusting image of Joe and the wretchedness of some black people living like Joe. He is actually in tattered penury from the description above. Thus, Joe becomes a representative of Strandlopers, the beachcombers near Cape Town who survived on animals washed up by sea. The dignity of Joe is nothing to write home about and therefore is compared to 'something valuable forgotten in a junk shop'. The verb 'forgotten' shows how unimportant the black man is to the whites. We are created as 'something valuable' but our valuable dignity is 'forgotten' by our white counterparts. Although Joe retreats to the beachcombing habits of his historical past, yet it does not save him from the problems of the industrial society. He is prevented from bringing the dead fish he finds on the beach into the city. Otherwise, as Adonis tells him, 'City Council would be on your neck. On one hand, the colour-blind laws of the City Council of an industrial city prevent him from bringing in dead stinking fish into the city. On the other hand, the colour-bond laws of the City Council condemn him on account of his ethnic origin to a situation where he cannot even access the beaches his forefathers freely moved about. In his conversation with Adonis, Joe says: 'I hear they're going to make the beaches so only white people can go there. It's going to get so nobody can go anywhere'. The separation laws of the apartheid seem not favourable for Joe, so he finally resorts to the option of retreating further away from the society of Cape Town, to make 'his way towards the sea, walking alone through the starlit darkness'. Another major character worth being discussed as regards the lost dignity of blacks is Willieboy. The racial discrimination in South Africa illuminates the character and fate of Willieboy. La Guma describes Willieboy as a product of material deprivation and consequent depravity of moral values. He slips into criminality and he gets himself into breaking laws due to the society he finds himself in. At the tender age of seven, he is forced to sell newspapers on

commission basis often on an empty stomach. He is beaten by his mother if he fails to bring home the paltry earnings and spends it instead. In order to escape the lashings of his father, he has to run away always from home. He is deprived of proper education and climbing the social ladder becomes impossible for him. Through the third person narrative point of view, we are given the description of Willieboy who has experienced childhood bitterness: He was also aware of his inferiority. 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. He had looked with envy at the flashy desperadoes who quivered across the screen in front of the eight penny gallery and had dreamed of being transported wherever he wished in great black motorcars and issuing orders for the execution of enemies. And when the picture faded and he emerged from the vast smoke laden cinema mingling with the noisy crowd he was always aware of his inadequacy, moving unnoticed in the mob. He had affected a slouch, wore gaudy shirts and peg-bottomed trousers, brushed his hair into a flamboyant peak. He had been thinking of piercing one ear and decorating it with a gold ring. But even with these things he continued to remain something less than nondescript, part of the blurred face of the crowd, inconspicuous as a smudge on a grimy wall. This passage brings to the fore the unfulfilled aspiration of Willieboy which leads him to finding fulfillment outside his inner being. He sees himself as an inferior being compared to the white man. His attempt to compensate for his inadequacy becomes unrealized. This is the real state of being of the black man in the apartheid era which the author records impartially. The simile as used in the sentence 'inconspicuous as a smudge on a grimy wall' indicates that Willieboy is not recognized by the society he lives in. 'A grimy wall' has many spots on it and it will be very difficult if one wants to identify a particular mark. Thus, Willieboy being compared to 'a smudge on a grimy wall' will never be recognized by the society he lives in, particularly by the whites. The native blacks have lost their dignity and identity because they are mixed up totally in a 'grimy' society. Willieboy goes to Adonis' apartment to borrow money. Finding the door locked he thinks of borrowing it from Doughty. He opens the door and finds the dead body. He therefore runs away from the tenement, but while doing so he is seen by two occupants of the tenement. When these two people are questioned by the police, they indicate that they had seen somebody 'with kinky hair and yellow shirt'. This sets Constable Raalt on Willieboy's trail. Raalt in his patrol van, catches Willieboy in a glare. His yellow shirt and kinky hair are evidence enough to conclude that he is the murderer. Willieboy's immediate reaction is to run away from being caught by Raalt and consequently a chase ensues.

Nonetheless, Constable Raalt's anger against 'bushmen' the derogatory stereotype of all coloureds is sourced from his private frustration. He is unable to control his wife whom he suspects of indulging in an extramarital affair. Upon further frustration even while on the patrol, he gets very angry about the affair and tells himself: "It's enough to make a man commit murder, I'd wring her bloody neck but it's a sin to kill your wife. It's a sin the way she carries on, too. If I ever find out something definite she'll know all about it". Raalt becomes so furious that he does not care about committing murder. Again, he tells the patrol van driver, Andries: "I wish something would happen. I'd like to lay my hands on one of those bushmen bastards and wring his bloody neck". His private frustration is therefore transferred to unknown 'bushmen bastards'. The derogatory names given to this unknown victim who is probably a black or coloured person reveal the intensity of Raalt's anger against his victim. Here, the difference between his wife and the unknown 'bushman' victim totally disappears when he thinks of what he would do if ever he finds the guilty person. The omniscient narrator tells us that Raalt 'found little relief in transferring his rage to some other unknown victim, but he took pleasure in the vindictiveness. This therefore indicates that Raalt is determined to commit a horrendous act which comes out of malice. La Guma, therefore, suggests very early in the delineation of Raalt's character a link between his private frustrations on one hand, and on the other his brutal behaviour in the discharge of his public affairs. Moreover, Raalt is psychologically equipped to be extremely ruthless if his targets are 'effing hot not bastards' or 'bushmen bastards'. Finally, upon becoming aware that the alleged murderer has kinky hair, his desire for violence takes on racial overtones. While he is putting down the specifics of the suspect murderer of Doughty, he thinks: They hate us, but I don't give a bloody hell about them, anyway; and no hotnot bastard gets away with murder on my patrol; yellow shirt and kinky hair; a real hotnot and I'll get him even if I have to gather in every black bastard wearing a yellow shirt. Raalt here represents the fascist ideology in the South Africa. Political violence is a hallmark of fascism and it is of no doubt that Raalt without evidence initiates a chase for Willieboy. He represents the many policemen who commit atrocities against the blacks just because in their prejudiced minds the blacks are criminals. The condition of a working class family in South Africa as it is portrayed in the novel *And a Threefold Cord*. The purpose is also to show how the micro-environment of the family is affected by the exploitative and oppressive society around it. The effects of exploitation and the extent of other social pressures which confound the # family to a daily existence of misery, privation and general squalor are brought out by the author in this novel. The Pauls are shown as a typical working class family, a unit struggling to live within a broader class of people already far removed (expropriated) from all means of production. We see idleness, joblessness, lack of proper shelter and medical attention, and a general absence of all those amenities and conveniences that would make life passably comfortable. The incidence of all these inadequacies falls on the family as the smallest unit in society. The results are disastrous, I as the pressures lead to an internal disintegration where the members of the family cannot stand these tensions emanating from society. The examination of the family therefore provides a starting point towards a general understanding of the larger social category, i.e., the working class in South Africa. La Guma in this novel focuses on the Pauls family, as a typical unit from the working class, the inclusion of brief statements about the rich white South African family serves the purpose

of illuminating two things. First it tells us that on that on the other side of the rain drenched, chilly and depressing slum is a well ordered, r comfortable and rich haven of the rich. The workers who live in the dreary atmosphere of the slum have contributed to the beauty of the rich by working to set up those conveniences that the rich enjoy. Charlie's reference to "laying pipes by Calving" is an indication of this. Although the workers create the beauty, they live in wretchedness and perpetual want. Although Charlie lays water pipes leading to the big mansions, the Pauls can hardly find water to bath the dead Dad Pauls or Caroline's new born baby. Secondly, Charlie's statements referring to the whites I bring out the reality of apartheid: "Jubas like me can't even touch the handle of the front door." This is later seen in the relationship between Charlie and George Mostert. Mostert would like to strike a friendship with Charlie, but we learn that he chooses to do so under cover of darkness. Although the rendezvous between the two is not kept, their conversation reveals the uneasy relationship between on black and white. The novelist gives focus on the economic deprivation on the lives of the inhabitants of the ghetto. For the Pauls it means an inadequate diet, poor living quarters, poor sanitation, non-existent health facilities, joblessness, and a generally insecure livelihood. Old Dad Pauls is compelled to live in a damp environment in his poor health. He eventually dies without proper medical attention. Caroline is compelled to have her baby on a bed of newspapers and rags. And Freda loses her house and children in a fire accident which guts her shack. In the novel we see that the people, shut in this vault-like situation, live a precarious existence. The bad situation is worsened by the added terror of the police who patrol the ghetto, interrupting whatever little peace there is. The occurrence of violence at the slightest provocation, seems to indicate that the pressure on the people is unbearable.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study is that the brutal system of South African society in the Novels of La Guma, a coloured novelist from South Africa, where the socio-political structure was controlled by the racist ideology of apartheid. As a critical reaction to the socio-economic, political and cultural practices of the South Africans which serve as impediments for both growth and emancipation of the blacks in South African, La Guma develops his literary aesthetics. This is clearly exhibited in the lives of his characters that are irritated, treated roughly without any form of dignity and incarcerated by the apartheid system. However, he is highly resolute to end their state of affairs. It is due to this radical spirit of altering an iniquitous structure that resulted in Adonis striking Mr. Doughty dead without knowing just owing to the fact that he feels discrimination against him as regards colour is the ultimate reason for his disturbed life. In this novella, the characters presented to us are "helpless victims who have no control on their fate." And this has been evidently shown in Raalt's killing of Willieboy. A symbolic promise of profound social transformation is carried in the last paragraph of the story, which takes us back to the grimy tenement where Frank Lorenzo and his wife remain for the duration of the night: "Frank 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". Lorenzo's eyes may be closed now, but it is just a matter of time before he will open them, wake up and see the truth. And when that dawn of illumination comes, as it inevitably must, a new day will begin and a new generation will be born that no longer will have to live in darkness. La Guma's depressing story of life and death in District Six thus ends with an Utopian vision of rebirth through proletarian revolution. A Walk in the Night is literally a story of Michael Adonis's walk through District Six in one eventful evening. But it is also a narrative that attempts to convey an impression of the nightmarish experience of living in the South African ghettos and it contains a critique of the kind of benighted society that promotes human suffering. The people we see in District Six are presented to us as victims of an oppressive social order who have lost their real identity and to the large extent their dignity. Perhaps this is all that we as readers need; a picture of oppression vivid enough to shock us into a further awareness of South African horrors. Uncle Doughty before being killed accidentally by Adonis said: "We're like Hamlet's father's ghost". The key word here is the first person plural pronoun: 'We'. Uncle Doughty and Adonis, men of different colour, are identified as fellow sufferers in South African's purgatory. In other words, whites as well as blacks are victims of the system, so everyone in South Africa will continue to walk in the night until corrective measures are taken to transform it into a just, democratic society. Yet, it is through adroit use of symbolism, a contradictory and complementary strategy of protest, that he gives this pessimistic story and optimistic conclusion. The book ends with a vision of hope, a promise that this society is destined to change profoundly in the future.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Abrahams, C. 1985. Alex La Guma. Boston: Twayne Publishers.
- [2]. Abrahams, C. 1991. Memories of Home: The Writings of Alex La Guma. Trenton: Africa
- [3]. Abrams M. H. 1981. A Glossary of Literary Terms. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- [4]. Asante, S. A. 1979. Apartheid in South Africa: Origins and Impact. Ghana: N.P, DIA..
- [5]. Ashcroft, B. et al. 1995. The Post-Colonial studies Reader. London: Routledge.
- [6]. Best, J.W., 1999. Research in Education, Prentice Hall of India, New Delhi-21.
- [7]. Balutansky, K. M. 1989. The Novels of Alex La Guma: The Representation of Political Conflict. Washington: Three Continent Press.

- [8]. Chandramohan, B.1992. A Study in Trans-Ethnicity in Modern South Africa: The Writings of Alex La Guma, 1925-1985. Lewiston/Lampeter: Mellen Research University Press.
- [9]. Coetzee, David A. 1992. Doubling the Point. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- [10]. Heywood, C. 1976. Aspects of South African Literature. London: Heinemann.
- [11]. La Guma, A. 1962. A Walk in the Night. London: Heinemann.
- [12]. La Guma, A. 1975. "South African Writing Under Apartheid", Lotus: Afro-Asian Writings, vol. XXIII.
- [13]. Mkhize, J. 1998. Social Realism in Alex La Guma's Longer Fiction. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Natal: The University of Natal.
- [14]. Mphahlele, E. 1974. The African Image. London: Faber and Faber.
- [15]. Nanda, Bijaya Kumar. 2000. "The Novels as a Social Construct: A Study of R. K. Narayan's "The Vendor of Sweets." Haritham.12.: 94.