

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

MINISTERE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE
UNIVERSITE MOULOU D MAMMERI-TIZI OUZOU
FACULTE DES LETTRES ET DES LANGUES
DEPARTEMENT D'ANGLAIS

جامعة مولود معمري تيزي وزو
كلية الآداب واللغات
قسم اللغات الأجنبية



DOMAINE : Lettres et Langues Étrangères
FILIERE : Langue Anglaise
SPECIALITE: Littérature Générale et Comparée

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master in English**

Title

**Violence in Alex Laguma's *A Walk in the Night* and Richard
Wright's *Back Boy***

Presented by:

Frida HADDADI
Fouzia OUAZAR

Supervised by:

M^s Sabéha HADJ BACHIR

Board of Examiners:

Chair: Ms. Nadia GADA (M.C.A) U.M.M.T.O

Supervisor: Ms. Sabéha HADJ BACHIR (M.A.A) U.M.M.T.O

Examiner: Ms. BENSAFI (M.A.A) U.M.M.T.O

Academic year: 2017/2018

Dedication

To all the members of our families for their constant, unconditional love and encouragement.

To our friends.

Acknowledgements

This piece of research would not have been accomplished without the support and assistance of intellectual mentors and friends. First and foremost, we are eternally grateful to the never ending support and faith of our supervisor Mrs LARABI Sabéha, whose patience and mendacity, we could not have succeeded. Special thanks to Prof. Boutheldja RICHE, the intellectual mentor of all teachers for the part of our topic concerning Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night*, which he suggested to us as far back as the licence memoire. We won't forget our teachers of comparative literature who helped us, our most sincere thanks and an unending gratitude to them. We express our gratitude to all the administrative staff and librarians of the department of English. We owe debt to the panel of examiners, namely Dr Nadia GADA and Mrs Hassiba BENSAFI for their academic and professional assessment of our work. Their reading of our work has been insightful and valuable.

Contents

Page

DedicationI

Acknowledgements..... II

Contents.....III

Abstract.....IV

I. Introduction.....1

Review of the literature.....2

Issue and Working Hypothesis.....6

Methodological Outline.....7

II. Methods and Materials.....8

A. Methods.....8

A.1. Frantz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth (1961): the concept of “Counter Violence”.....8

A.2. Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1968): the concept of “dehumanization”.....10

Materials.....12

B.1. Jim Crow Laws12

B.2. Apartheid.....15

Summary of Black Boy..... 18

Summary of A Walk in the Night.....19

Biography of Richard Wright.....20

Biography of Alex La Guma.....21

III.Result.....	24
VI.Discussion.....	26
Chapter one: Dehumanization and Violence in Alex La Guma’s A Walk in the Night(1945) and Richard Wright’s Black Boy (1962).....	26
I.1. Dehumanization in Black Boy (1945) and A Walk in the Night (1962).....	27
I.2.Violence in Richard Wright’s Black Boy (1945) and Alex La Guma’s A Walk in the Night (1962).....	34
II. Chapter 2: Counter Violence for humanization in Black Boy and A Walk in the Night.....	41
II.1. Richard Wrights’ Counter Violence for humanization (1945):.....	42
II.2. Michael Adonis’s counter violence for humanization.....	46
Cathartic Effect in Black Boy and A Walk in the Night.....	49
III-Chapter Three: Literary Genres as Resistance.....	52
III. 1. Auto-biography as a literary form of Resistance.....	52
III.2.Short fictions (novella and short story) as forms of resistance.....	58
V.Conclusion.....	65
Bibliography.....	66

Abstract

This dissertation attempts to study the issue of white violence and black counter violence as resistance. A comparative study is held between an American writer, Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) and South African novelist Alex La Guma's *A walk in the Night* (1962). We intend to examine the two literary works within the historical contexts of the Jim Crow Laws in the early 20th century and the Apartheid in the 1960s. Emphasis is put on the way these two narratives depict the issue of black counter Violence. Our research relies on Fanon's theory of violence; *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) to analyse the theme of "Counter Violence". We borrow Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) in which the concept of "dehumanization" is analysed, and how the two writers depict it in their works. We have investigated both authors' portrayals of violence and dehumanization as causes of the white hegemony and the way these two concepts are the direct outcome of the oppressed' counter violence for his humanity retrieval. Hence, the study comes to the conclusion that both authors depict black counter violence as resistance to the white violence which is a direct outcome of repressive regimes.

Keywords: resistance, counter violence, Jim Crow, Apartheid. White hegemony, Oppressed, dehumanization, violence.

I.Introduction

Violence is a phenomenon that goes back to human beings' existence. Colonial and Racial Violence are among the prevailed forms that existed in the past and nowadays. Walter Dierk defines 'Colonial Violence' as "[...] a coherent explanation of the logic of violent hostilities within the context of European expansion" (Dierk, 2017: 10). For him: "Western interventions [...] from Afghanistan to Mali, are not new wars, but old tradition of transcultural violent conflict" (ibid). For Rinaldo Walcott, physical violence is rooted in individual's dominance and his need for domination. He further asserts that 'Racial Violence' "can take any form, from a racist remark to a physical attack on other groups that do not belong to the same race through an established system" (Walcott, 2010:2). Moreover, racial oppression is an important factor in the emersion of violence and crime. Walcott affirms that Racism is a sort of violence that generates other kind of violence. He further clarifies that "Violence is not only physical, but also epistemic — in the way others are spoken to, the body language, the treatment, [...] and the ways of making individuals or groups feel excluded from full citizenship" (Ibid). In fact, Colonial or Racial Violence is two faces of the same coin. Although the two systems are different but meant the same since they use power in order to exploit, subdue and dehumanize the "Other". Historically, the Europeans were colonizers and known about their rush to dominate the other peoples. To do so, they misidentified the 'Other' in general and the Blacks in particular as "barbaric", "violent, and "savages".

A comparative study is set between an Afro-American novel, *Black Boy* (1945), written by Richard Wright and a South African novella, Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* (1962). Our aim is to draw an attention on these two writers' narratives to see how they perceive White and Black violence. Both texts deal with White violence either racial or colonial systems, namely Apartheid and Jim Crow Laws which lasted for hundred years. In fact, the White violence dehumanizes and oppresses both the Black Americans and the South Africans

as well. In this perspective, Achill Mbembe states that the Africans were under an ongoing violence that the Whites imposed by force during and after colonization (Ashcroft, Gareth, 2007: 176). Furthermore, in the two works, we believe that two authors perceive the Whites as the pioneers of violence. Consequently, Black violence is just a logical reaction to White systems. We intend to interpret the texts of the two authors as a rectification of the Whites' assumption and misrepresentation that qualifies a Black as "violent" by nature. Moreover, in the two literary texts, Black's violence was not mere "barbarism" or "savagery", but resistance, which aims to reestablish Blacks' humanity. This idea was evoked by Fanon's *the Wretched of the Earth* (1962). He explained that the oppressed' violent acts is his last recourse of a persisting White oppression and dehumanization. The latter is a concept elaborated by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. In his work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), Freire explains the relationship that exists between the oppressed and the oppressor and the way they behave and react to each other. In his work, he clearly depicted the white man's "Sadistic Behaviour" towards the oppressed in order to dominate him. Besides, he shows the way the oppressed adopted a "Necrophilic Attitude" which leads him either to destroy his life or the life of his fellows. In fact, in our study, we will try to prove that whatever violence brought by the Whites, "Colonial" or "Racial Violence" has the same outcome on the oppressed in general and on the Blacks in particular.

Alex La Guma is a committed South African writer who grew up in a political active family (Abrahams, 1985:1). Therefore, he is involved in fighting for the rights of his people. In his writings, he denounced the atrocities of the Apartheid regime and focused on the impact of the Apartheid laws on his people, aiming for political and social changes (Abrahams, 1985: 46). La Guma witnessed racial discrimination; he was imprisoned and exiled by the South African government.

Just like South Africa, America experienced the implementation of the Jim Crow Laws in the early twentieth century. In *Black Boy*, Richard Wright depicted White violence and the way it affected the Blacks. The author is a black novelist who suffered from White racial violence of the Jim Crow. He witnessed the assassination of his Uncle Harrison and the mistreatment of the White race. Like the Black South Africans, the Black Americans resisted the white oppression in order to restore their freedom and their dignity. Consequently, in his autobiography, *Black Boy*, Richard shows how his characters resort to violence as a way of their expression and their defiance.

Autobiography and Novella are the two literary texts under study. The former were probably used by the post-colonial writers to answer back the colonial writings, which mystify Blacks violence as a kind of “vandalism”. Our aim is to prove that Blacks’ violence is the only alternative to affirm their existence and to get rid of their oppressors. Historically, some thinkers considered “Violence” as “Holy Violence». In other words, this violence was a legitimate defense to protect one’s life and to regain freedom and human dignity. For this reason, we have selected American and Palestinian Novellas, which depict racial and colonial violence. We will briefly analyze Frederic Douglass’s *Heroic Slave* (1842) and Ghassan Kanafani’s *The Land of Sad Oranges* (1963) as typical texts of postcolonial writings in one hand. We have also chosen some Black American and South African autobiographies to sustain our assumptions.

Review of the Literature

While handling Alex La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night* (1962) and Richard Wright s’ *Black Boy* (1945), we have noticed that both works of art have been scrutinized from different perspectives. Alex La Guma is among the South African novelists, who protested against racism. *A Walk in the Night* is considered as one of the most authentic works of anti-apartheid literature, which presents a significant example of “Committed Literature” during

the sixties under the Apartheid regime. Hence, Alex La Guma's novella has received a considerable critical attention.

Breidled Anders, in his book, *Resistance and Consciousness in Kenya and South Africa*(2002), he points out that "A *Walk in the Night* was a way of restoring a voice, which had always been suppressed by the Apartheid government" (Breidlid, 2002: 15).The critic argues that the novella analyses the historical, socio- economic and political circumstances. It is the product of the author's society. In fact, he explains how these facts influenced the author's production of his work. In order to sustain his claim; he introduces the example of the white policeman, who unjustly hunted and caused the death of the innocent colored Willieboy (Breidlid, 2002: 143). The critic further comments that police's duty is to protect people and their property; however, in Apartheid South Africa, it was not the case. Instead of doing their job, the agents of the state behaved as oppressors. In other words, La Guma's novella is not studied as an artistic work of art, but as a social product.

According to Field R M, in his book *Alex La Guma: a Literary and Political Biography of the South African* 2001,*A Walk in the Night* explores what Alex La Guma experienced both in his child hood and his adulthood. The critic insists that La Guma's work portrays the author's society in which he grew up. It also demonstrates how the Black South Africans were victims of the repressive Apartheid regime. Field's analysis of the novella, clarifies La Guma's themes: race, social injustice and resistance. Field considers La Guma's work as purely auto biographical work (Field, 2001:158)

Last but not least, the novella has been criticized from a Marxist dimension. The critic is provided by Ursula Barnett. In her book, *A study of South African literature in English*, she argues: "[...] although la Guma does not believe in thinking in color, he makes it clear in his fiction that the conflict is not identical with class struggle"(Barnett, 1983: 132).In other

words, Barnett assumes that La *Guma's* novella is concerned with class struggle. She recalls the influence of the African Communist Party that La Guma joined, when he was young. From a Marxist point of view, the critic asserts that La Guma expressed this idea in the novella, when he introduces a white character, Uncle Doughty, the drunken old actor who is a victim of the Apartheid system in South Africa. The Apartheid government should take care of him; however Uncle Doughty is marginalized and forgotten. For Barnett, South African problems are related to class, rather than to racial issue (Ibid).

As far as Richard Wright's *Black Boy* is concerned, it was regarded by critics as a masterpiece in Black American Literature. Richard Wright was among the first Black American writers; who plainly portrayed the atrocities associated with the Jim Crow law in the American South. *Black Boy* has received worldwide acclaim and criticism. Some critics also dismissed the author as one who relies on shocking and violent scenes.

Hakutani Yoshinobu, in his book, *Cross Cultural vision in African Modernism* points out that Richard Wright's *Black Boy* "[...]though not intended as such is a convincing sociological study, like sociology, it does not only analyze a social problem, but offers a solution to the problems it treats". Hakutani assumes that *Black boy (1945)* can be seen as a sociological piece of art, which analyses a social problem and finds a remedy to the problem raised (Hakutani, 2006:85). Therefore, Wright's work claims that the critic reflects a social issue. In fact, the social problems depicted in *Black boy* are that of racial violence and crime. It translates "Jim Crow" repression in relation to the protagonist's experience in the American South. Hakutani goes to pretend that Richard Wright's *Black Boy* is an autobiographical narrative.

Michel Fabre asserts that Richard Wright's interpretation of the racial problem in the South American was influenced by his readings of criminology, psychology and psychiatry of

contemporary American Literature. She claims that *Black boy* is Richard Wright's way of displaying his own existence revolting against the discourse of the American South (Fabre, 1985: 89). It is a testimony of the hard living conditions of the Negro boys under the repressive system of the "Jim Crow". Richard Wright's personal experiences reveal the hardships encountered by the Negro boys who tried to rebel against southern repressive laws.

Another analysis of Richard Wright's *Black Boy* is undertaken by Robert Phillipson in his book, *The Identity Question: Black and Jews in Europe and America*, where he states that:

Black Boy portrays Wright's inability of becoming a part of the Black community, as it has been constructed by the dominant White ideology, the tyrannical narrowness of his granny's household keeps him from any kind of social intercourse (Phillipson,2000: 156).

In the above quotation, Phillipson asserts that Richard's grandmother, being a fanatic authoritative religious woman, her house is considered as a prison. The same critic adds that the protagonist's restricted environment of his grandmother denies him a voice. Thus, Phillipson concludes that the excess religious doctrine of Richard's grandmother functions as a repressive discourse, which recalls the racist America. Therefore, it becomes clear to say that Richard's grandmother stands as an agent of the segregationist discourse of the Jim Crow Laws in the American South. Phillipson's critic on Wright's work, focuses on repressive religious doctrine.

It is obvious that both Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* (1962) and Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) have been the point of interest of several critics. Yet, it seems to us that most of the criticism lacks completion. In fact, for example, Ursula Barnett's view on *A walk in the Night* (1962) focuses only on Marxist belief, forgetting the novel from other issues such as sociological and political aspects. Moreover, both Breidlid Anders and Field.R.Mframe Alex La Guma's novella to their socio-political aspects neglecting by such their contribution to the Marxist understanding of the narrative. Indeed, both critics focus

more on socio-political circumstances. As for Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, the analyses provided by Phillipson, Michel Fabre and Hakutani focuses only on social aspects.

Issue and Working Hypothesis

From the above review, we notice that even if many studies have already dealt with their works. Hitherto, little research has been devoted to their shared idea of black counter violence as a means of resistance. This dissertation suggests a new perspective within the historical contexts of the two literary texts. With references to Fanon's concepts "Counter Violence" and Freire's "Dehumanization". Through the analysis, we believe that both authors share comparable ideas and visions about resistance through "violence". While the oppressive regimes tend to dominate and dehumanize the black through violence, the oppressed seeks a way to regain his humanity through the same device. Our assumptions are put as follow: is the oppressed a victim of white system? Or instead, does he develop ways to reject the white hegemony, in order to regain his humanity? Then, does the same oppressed remain passive to the violence he undergoes? And is counter violence a means of resistance or violence in itself? The aim of our study is to investigate, in these two literary works and to show their similarities. In fact, despite the long distance between the American South and South Africa, *Black boy* (1945) and *A Walk in the Night* (1962), may carry some affinities. The research is an attempt to reduce the distance between South African and African American Literature

Methodological Outline

The study is divided into four sections: the introduction is the first section in which we introduce the purpose of our study, as well as the Review of the Literature. The second section is related to Methods and Materials, through which we explain the concept of "Counter Violence" according to Fanon's theoretical book; *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), as well as the concept of "Dehumanization" and "Oppressors and Oppressed Consciousness" according to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968). We also provide the

biographies and the summaries of the two authors Richard Wright and Alex La Guma, as well as their historical background. The result section focuses on the findings we reached in the discussion.

The discussion section has three chapters. The first one deals with the analysis of the concept of “Dehumanization” and “Violence” in both selected works. In the second chapter, we demonstrate how “Native Counter Violence” is regarded in both works as resistance to the repressive regimes, in relation to Fanon’s theoretical concept of “Counter Violence”. In the third chapter, we depict how the literary concepts; auto-biography and short fiction (novella and short story) can be seen as a strategy to resist the white hegemony. Finally, the conclusion summarises the major points reached in our study.

II. Methods and Materials

A. Methods

In order to discuss the issue of “Counter Violence” as a way of resistance in Alex La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night* and Richard Wright’s *Black Boy*, we rely on two theoretical concepts: Fanon’s “Counter violence” discussed in *the Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and Paulo Freire’s “Dehumanization” in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968). These two concepts are deeply developed in the selected works. In his work, Fanon advocates “Counter Violence” as a means of resistance.

A.1. Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961): the concept of “Counter Violence”.

Frantz Fanon is a well-known thinker. He was against all kinds of human exploitations. His main works are revolutionary. They are devoted to raise awareness among the colonial subjects. In the *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon clearly explains the role of class, race, national culture and violence for national liberation. He asserts on this point: “The colonized masses intuitively believe that their liberation must be achieved and can only be achieved by force” (Fanon, 2004:33).

Fanon’s aim is to bring social political and cultural changes. In his essay, Fanon advocates his view on the liberating role of violence for the colonized as well as the necessity of the use of violence in the anti-colonial struggle. In the chapter entitled “Concerning Violence”, Fanon assumes that only violence can liberate the oppressed (Fanon, 1962:40). Hence, he denies the existence of another way to get rid of colonialism by violence. He legitimizes the use of violence by the oppressed as a way to end their state of self-respect and freedom.

In the same chapter, Fanon claims that violence is the only language that the colonizer understands. In this context, he asserts that “[...]the presence of the colonizer in the third world countries is based purely on military force, so it must be also responded to by rigorous violent acts”(Fanon: 1963: 86).Moreover, Fanon praises the importance of rebellion of the oppressed people and their commitment in the armed struggle. For him, Counter-Violence enacted by the colonized achieves three important results; firstly, it promotes individual self-respect because it releases tensions and aggression .Secondly, it brings political independence and decolonization, last, it creates a new humanity through the formation of a national identity (*Ibid*:40).

Furthermore, Fanon summarizes the process of the colonized ‘social and political revolution in three phases. In the first phase, it is the monopolization of violence by the White colonizer, who oppresses the colonized (*Ibid*). The latter does not show any reaction. He undergoes pain and White violence. In the second phase, the colonized reacts but in a wrong way, he directs his violence against within each other because he is not aware of the real source of his trouble (*ibid*: 41). In the last phase, the consciousness of the colonized reaches a degree of maturity. This enables him to respond by action and resist colonial oppression (*Ibid*). Thus, his reaction becomes a revolutionary counter violence.

Furthermore, Fanon argues that “Counter Violence” has a “cleaning force” because it puts the colonized at the same position with the colonizer. He claims that counter violence achieves psychological liberation of the oppressed. In this perspective, he says:

Concerning the individual, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the colonized from his inferiority complex and from his contemplative or hopeless attitudes: it makes him fearless and trains him to fit into society” (Fanon, 1961: 35).

Fanon’s concept of “Counter-Violence” offers a liberating means for the colonized subjects. Therefore, he considers the anti-colonial violence as related to the meaning of freedom and resistance to colonial domination.

A.2. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968): the concept of "Dehumanization".

The issue under study concerns the concept of "Dehumanization". We find it relevant to borrow Paulo Freire's concepts of "Dehumanization" and "Oppressor Consciousness". It analyses the way "Dehumanization" creates violence and how these two concepts are related. Paulo Freire (1921-1997) is a Brazilian educator. He is known for his theoretical contribution of the field of education. He conducted a research on critical pedagogy. His literacy efforts were concerned with adults of poor backgrounds. He devoted his life to the field of literacy to fight oppression. He wrote books on the same perspectives (education) such as *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1967), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) and *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992).

In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), Freire elaborates the concepts of "Dehumanization" and "Oppressor Consciousness" which can be relevant to our research. In the first chapter of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), Freire introduces the concept of "Dehumanization" or what he calls "Humankind's central problem (Freire, 1994:25). For him, "Humanization" is 'people's vocation' which is crucial in the individual's existence. Each individual seeks recognition from others to feel his existence (*Ibid*).

Freire adds that "Dehumanization" is not a 'fatalist destiny', but rather the product of an unjust social system. It is merely a 'Man-made law', which uses power and violence to dehumanize the oppressed (*ibid*: 26). He further argues that "Any situation in which **A** objectively exploits **B** or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression" (*ibid*: 37). He shows the way social oppression pushes the oppressed to seek liberation. In other words, he explains how the struggle for their humanity is important under the oppressive systems (*Ibid*).

For Freire, “Dehumanization” affects both the oppressed and the oppressor, since both are not fully human and free. In other words, one is dehumanized; the other is dehumanizing the other. (ibid: 29). Freedom is an essential aspect of humanity while “Dehumanization” is constraining it. He states: “Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen but also [...] those who have stolen it” (ibid: 26). In short, Freire relates humanization to self-affirmation and self-liberation, and dehumanization is the fact of denying one self’s right to be free and to be a human.

The concept Freire examines is named: “Oppressor Consciousness”. He claims that the oppressor holds ‘a materialistic view’ about the world. He attempts to change everything around him into an object, which can be possessed. Fromm claimed that the Oppressor Consciousness is identified by possession and without it, “it would lose contact with the world” (ibid: 40). Thus, the oppressor tends to turn everything around him into inanimate thing to be owned such as people, earth, and time through using power (*Ibid: 40*).

For the oppressor, “having is the state of being”, and “the human being refers only to themselves; other people are things” (ibid: 39). Since the oppressor perceives the oppressed as an object of possession. His perception of the oppressed’ struggle for humanization is a matter of violence. Moreover, any reaction from the oppressed is perceived as a threat, which endangers the state of the oppressor (ibid: 29). From this stand point, he says:

Conditioned by the experience of oppressing others, any situation other than their former seem to them like an oppression. Formerly, they could eat, dress, wear shoes, be educated, travel, and hear Beethoven; while millions did not eat, had no clothes or shoes”. (ibid: 39).

The Brazilian educator stipulates that the oppressor never calls the dehumanized as “Oppressed” but rather stigmatizes him as ‘the Blind’ and ‘Barbaric’ when they react to the violence of the oppressors (*Ibid: 39*). Furthermore, the oppressor has a sadistic behaviour toward his oppressed. He explains that the suffering of the oppressed is the oppressor’s will .He claims:

This tendency of the oppressor consciousness to “in-animate” everything and everyone it encounters, in its eagerness to possess (...) unquestionably corresponds with the tendency to sadism. The pleasure in complete domination over another person [...] the essence of sadistic drive (Freire, 1968:41).

Fromm further argues that the oppressed has a necrophilic attitude. In other words, the oppressed either destroys his own life or of his kinsmen. He claims: “[...] calls necrophilic behaviour: the destruction of life _their own (oppressed) or that of their oppressed fellows.” (Freire, 1968:47).

B. Materials

In this part, we present the materials will use to analyze our work. It displays both Alex La Guma and Richard Wright’s biographies. In addition, a historical context of the two authors’ countries; South Africa and America respectively is required. We provide major events that in prevailed both repressive regimes, namely Jim Crow Laws during the twentieth century and Apartheid system in 1960s. We provide the reader with major events that occurred in both countries as well as the summaries of the two selected works.

B.1. Jim Crow Laws

A profound reading of *Black Boy* requires an understanding of its social and historical context. In America, after the Civil War, Blacks were freed thanks to the 13th Amendment (Dailey, 2009:7). When slavery was abolished, the whites searched another way to re-enslave Black people. The Jim Crow Laws were an attempt to maintain the White supremacy. In other words to “keep the negro in his place” (Ibid: 8). Racial segregation was more significant in the South than in the North. The oppressive code lasted over 100 years from 1865 to 1964 (Latham, 1969: 7).

The origin of the name Jim Crow, goes back to 1830 with a white performer, who blackened his face for the minstrel show, dressed as a slave and performed a song-dance routine (Dailey,2009:8). It was a kind of pejorative expression and mockery on the Black

people in order to amuse and entertain the white audience. By the turn of century, this code was named accordingly (Benson, 2013:1).

Moreover, intimidation and the use of violence on the Negroes were significant by the Whites. Since “the culture of silence and fear” was another means which prevented the Blacks from claiming their legitimate rights. Lynching, the fact of killing without a court trial was a way that the “Ku Klux Klan”, or “Red Shirt”, and other racist white secret organizations used in order to maintain their position and absolute control. In short, they combined social oppressive laws with violence to subdue the Blacks (ibid:231)..

From 1918 to 1921, twenty-eight people were burned by an American mob and 3436 people were killed from 1889 to 1922 (ibid: 321). These facts reveal how much violence and oppression the Black community endured during the Jim Crow Era. Consequently, the repressive code led the Blacks to transgress the unjust laws, counter attack or escape to the less racist areas. Hence, after the Civil War and during the Great Depression, America has known two Great Migrations of the Black race from Southern to the Northern states (Dungan, 2014:2). Finally, in 1964, Jim Crow laws were finally abolished.

In 1919, twenty-five bloody race riots occurred in America between the two races. These riots revealed the new face of the African American who sought to escape his predicament. According to historians, these riots were known as the Red Summer. (Franklin and Moss, 2009: 313). Chicago riots burst after the World War I. At that time, the Whites tried to deprive Black war veterans of some gains they got from their participation in the war.

Accordingly, the “Blacks bristled into action and showed a willingness to defend themselves that they had not showed before” (ibid). Furthermore, in Texas, another riot occurred. Many whites went to seek a black school teacher. The latter was accused of sending a release to the

(Chicago Defender) newspaper about the blacks' lynching. To protect the school teacher, the Black Americans gathered and shot several whites. Before "order was restored, the number of casualties had increased considerably due to stern action that the Negro took" (*Ibid*: 314).

During the same year, another riot took place at Michigan beach. A young Black was caught swimming near the borders of the whites' beach. Thus, the whites stoned the boy and probably caused his drowning. Therefore, during the whole night, there was "a sporadic fighting" between the two races (*ibid*: 315). Two years later, the race riots continued. The whites and the blacks of Oklahoma involved in a fighting called as the "Race War". The fight started when a rumor about a black who attacked a white woman was to be imprisoned. As a reaction, the blacks gathered and "took arms to the supposed jail to protect the accused person."(*ibid*).

The black American is determined to face his plight and after many riots, he proved that he is a "New Negro" when "he is hit, he hits back" (Hart, 1921: 11). Furthermore, radical associations and secret organizations emerged as a response to this violence. Charles Hughes was a chief speaker of NAACP. This association set a program to fight lynching and protect the persons who were falsely accused (*ibid*: 317). Moreover, it succeeded to secure some rights that the blacks could not get before. Besides, in the same year, a secret organization appeared under the name of African Blood Brotherhood (1917). It served as an arm resistance against the white lynching and called for armed self-defense (Briggs, 1921:16). Among its leaders, Briggs and Claude McKay, Briggs claimed that the black secret organization is only a reaction to the Ku Klux Klan. He said, "The Klan forces us to protect ourselves!" (Briggs, 1921: 34). He further explains: "ABB (African Blood Brotherhood) is a protective and liberative organization (...) as a result of the terroristic tactics of Ku Klux Kan (...). It (ABB)

seeks not Negro supremacy but Negro protection and liberty.” (Briggs, 1921:18) Later on, he called for “great pan-African army” (Briggs, 1922).

B.2. Apartheid.

A close reading of Alex La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night*, offers an insight into the social and political life of the South African people in the sixties. That era was marked by the Apartheid policy. In 1948, the general election that took place brought about the national party into power. The latter implemented the Apartheid system. Its aims, was to maintain the white hegemony over the blacks and to separate the two races. The term Apartheid means “apartness”; separation of the Whites and the non-Whites South Africans, according to the Classification Act. The Black South Africans underwent another categorization by the Apartheid laws. In fact, South Africans were categorized into three main races: Black Africans, Colored Africans, Indians (Lewis, 1987:261).

The Apartheid policy began to implement strict racial policies. These restrictions affected different spheres in the South African society, namely religion, education health housing, schools and hospitals. (AJ.Christopher, 1995:38). Thus, the Black’s fundamental rights were denied. They were prohibited from running businesses or undertaking professional jobs. Furthermore, non- whites were excluded from national government, so they did not have the right to vote. In addition, the black Africans were forbidden to own a property. In 1952, the “Pass Law” was mandated to restrict the blacks’ mobility in the white areas. Without a passbook, they would be subjected to immediate arrest by the police. In 1953, the Bantu Education Act segregated the school system. It dictated separation of curriculums for Black and white students (*Ibid*).

Some Black South African political activists reacted against the segregationist Apartheid policies. Among them, Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko, who played an active role

in the liberation movement. They both revolted against the excesses of the repressive Apartheid regime, going through different actions and strategies to stand against the South African government.

To begin, Nelson Mandel and his compatriots led campaigns of Civil Disobedience. He advocated social justice to Blacks and Whites. He incited his fellow countrymen to non-cooperation and civil disobedience toward the restrictive laws of the Apartheid policy. Hence, the African National Congress turned to boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience of the segregationist laws. It revolted and challenged their discriminatory policies (Mandela, 1962:5).

Although, Mandela's first path in politics shows his fighting back the enemy through the use of pacifist actions. However, at the beginning of the 1960s, particularly after the Sharpeville massacre, his vision changed to reconsider his strategy .For this reason, he resorted to violent actions in some circumstances. According to him, the white man is the responsible for the Black's violent reaction. (Mandela, 1964:2).

In 1953, the Public Safety Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act were passed. They led the government to declare the state of emergency and increased penalties for protesting against the suppression of the law. The penalties included imprisonment and punishments. (Keppel, 1975:132) .In 1960, a group of Blacks protested against the "Pass Laws" in Sharpeville. They refused to carry their passes; as a result the police opened fire on the demonstrators. Hence, about sixty- nine of the protestors were killed and more than two hundred people were wounded (*Ibid*).

Moreover, in 1955, African National Congress issued a Freedom Charter. It stipulated that South Africa belonged to all who lived in it "blacks and whites". Mandela declares: "I am

ready to die. Our struggle is a truly national one. It is a struggle of the African people, inspired by our own experience. It is” a struggle for right to live” (Mandela, 1964:19).

The same argument holds true for Steve Biko, a South African anti-Apartheid activist. He harshly opposed the white racial segregation. He emerged during the mid-sixties, a period when both the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) were officially banned by the national government. Hence, in 1969, Biko and his compatriots developed the anti-apartheid campaign known as “Black Consciousness Movement”.The organization tried to awaken the Black South Africans’ consciousness. Its aim was to promote Black consciousness ideas, as well as to create unity and self-confidence among the oppressed “natives” (Biko, 1979:49).Biko’s ideas has turned into a powerful weapon. In his view, the “Black Consciousness Movement” stimulates a revolution of mind, and it allowed the oppressed natives to overcome their racial inferiority as well. The fact that allowed the black South Africans to unite their strength into actions to fight the Apartheid regime.

In 1973, Biko’s political activities were considered as a threat; hence, the national government placed him under “a banning order”. The government severely restricted his political activities (Graham, 2017:1). In fact, he was not allowed by the national government to write or to speak in public. However, Biko resisted. In fact, he carried on an organizing protests secretly, including 1976’s Soweto Uprising. It was a student revolt that led to deadly confrontation between the Black students and the police. In1977, Biko was killed, after being subject to interrogations and brutal torture by state security forces (*Ibid:* 1).In this context, Nelson Mandela argues: “The Apartheid state was so fearful of Biko’s influence that they had to kill him to prolong the life of Apartheid” (Graham, 2017:2).

Accordingly, the background under study is Jim Crow in its early twentieth century and Apartheid in its sixties. According to historians the Jim Crow system influenced the Apartheid. Brown and Webb argued that Apartheid was built on the same premise of “racial inequality as the American South” (Brown, Webb, 2007: 1). Valerie Strydom is one of architects of Apartheid in South Africa. In 1937, he admitted that the Jim Crow is a “model to be emulated to both colored people and Africans in South Africa” (Gilliom, 2003:11). The two systems lasted for a long time and were characterized by violence. Historically speaking, like America, South Africa witnessed violent reactions from the Blacks towards the White injustice and oppression. In South Africa, Sharpeville massacre was one among other Blacks’ rebellion. The Black demonstrators stoned the White police who opened fire against them. As far as America is concerned, , the Blacks created “The African Black Brotherhood” as a reaction to the white organization, the “Ku Klux Klan” to defend the Black community from the White lynching. Moreover, “Race Riots” emerged as an outcome to protect the Blacks from the White oppression.

Summary of *Black Boy* (1945)

Richard Wright’s *Black Boy* is a fictionalized auto-biography (Webster, 1995:424). The narrative is divided into two parts; he entitles ‘*Southern Night*’ and ‘*Horror and the Glory*’. It contains twenty chapters. The novel was published in 1945. The story is set in South America from 1910s to 1930s. The period was characterized by the segregationist system called “Jim Crow”. The novel is a kind of a life testimony, since the author relies on his experience to depict the atrocities exercised during that era and how it affected his life and that of his fellows. The novel traces the journey of a black boy named Richard Wright, from his childhood to his early adulthood. On the one hand, the life of the protagonist depicts racism, social oppression and violence. On the other hand, it shows his struggle and his quest

for liberation. As the protagonist cannot survive in the racist South, he migrates to the North which is regarded as “the Promised Land” (Dugan, 2014:2). The story starts when Richard, the little boy of four years old sets fire to his house because of his feeling of boredom and of the harsh treatment of his family. Margaret, Richard’s grandmother is a stiff religious white woman who imposes a restrictive environment. After the incident, Richard is brutally beaten by his mother, Ella, till he loses consciousness. The little boy hates his father even before he deserts his family. Because of his hatred and resentment, Richard kills a little kitten. By killing the cat, he challenges his father’s authority. This event is his first triumph over his father. After his father’s desertion, his mother takes care of him and his younger brother Leon, but her health status makes Richard shift from one relative to another.

As a child, Richard has just heard about the whites, but he has never been in contact with them. When he gets older, he notices how the colour of skin can be disastrous or beneficial to a black South American. The scenario of violence and struggle continues once he encounters the whites. This time, he is beaten by the shop boss because he expresses his dissatisfaction, and he is harassed by a policeman when he makes a delivery of goods in a white region. Moreover, he is compelled by Olin, a white boss to fight Harrison, a black man against his will. Because of his stubbornness, it is difficult for him to keep a job.

Richard endures all sorts of violence in his childhood; he is beaten, slapped and even cursed. The protagonist decides to protect and defend himself from anyone who hurts him. Therefore, he challenges his Uncle Tom and his Aunt Addie with a knife because the two relatives want to beat him. To support his mother financially, Richard takes several menial jobs.

The protagonist realizes that he is different from his kinsmen who managed to maintain their jobs due to their passivity. The latter makes him alienated and frustrated. His

plight reinforces his need to flee to Chicago to seek a decent life. Accordingly, he resorts to illegal activities to make money like stealing, cheating and telling lies. At the end, he succeeds to migrate with his family to the North. Once there; Richard discovers that even in the North, life is also hard. But this does not make him docile to perpetuate his struggle.

Summary of *A Walk in the Night* (1962)

Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* is set in Cape Town, District Six. It is a Black town in South Africa. The novella comprehends nineteen chapters. The plot revolves around Michael Adonis, a young black man, living in Cape Town District Six. The first scene starts with the main protagonist, Michael Adonis, who is sacked from his job for responding to his white boss. On his way to his tenement, Michael encounters two policemen, who harass him and suspect him of holding drug. In the district where he lives, he meets Uncle Doughty, an old Irish actor. The latter, invites him for a glass of wine in his room. Uncle Doughty's recitation of Hamlet's verses raises Michael's anger and resentment. On an impulse, he kills Uncle Doughty by an accidental blow with a bottle. Then, he takes refuge in his room. Willieboy, one of Michael's friends, comes to see him. Finding the door closed, he tries the door of Uncle Doughty. He opens the door and he discovers the corpse of the old white man. Frightened by the scene, Willieboy escapes, but he is seen by a woman. From his room, Adonis hears the woman screaming when she discovers the corpse of the old man. On his way out of the building, Willieboy is also seen by Abrahams, Michael's neighbor, who later denounces him to the police. Later, Willieboy was hunted over the roof tops by Constable Raalt, a sadistic white policeman. The latter shoots him twice in the chest. Then, he puts him in the van where he lies bleeding to death while the policeman goes to buy cigarettes. The novel ends when one of the gang members invites the main character to join the gang. Joe tries to prevent him from acceding to Foxy's gang. However, Michael Adonis joins the gang members and enters the world of crime.

Biography of Richard Wright

Richard Wright (1908-1960) is an African American writer who was born in Mississippi; South America .He was the grandson of slaves and the son of a sharecropper. Wright was among the Afro-American pioneers who protested against racial discrimination. He witnessed extreme poverty, hunger, violence under the Jim Crow Laws. For Anthony Pinn,Wright is “an example of this resistance to dehumanization” (De Young, 2014:5). He was a rebellious person from his early age.

His experience of violence under the white domination inspired most of his writings, such as *Native Son*, *Uncle Tom’s Children* and *Black Boy*. Because of the restrictive laws, Richard was not allowed to borrow books from the library. However, he found a way to get books thanks to a white man’s library card. Wright is deeply influenced by the American Literature and mainly the naturalist writers like L. H. Mencken, and Theodore Dreiser(Wright, 1945:269). Therefore, his writings were a reflection of his social reality. For Jan Mohamed, in “his work as realistic literary naturalism” (De Yong, 2014:3). From the reading of Mencken’s novels, Wright discovers the power of words which is a “lethal weapon” for their fight. (ibid)

In1927, he left to Chicago to seek for freedom and a better life. In 1929, America witnessed economic crisis known as the Great Depression. The latter affected particularly the social life of the Black Americans. Hence Wright perceived Capitalism as a source of evil while communism as “a way of life,” (De Gomez, 2015:4). He was a leading figure in the Black Liberation Movement and became interested in politics by joining the American Communist party and remained active for ten years. He states “I was a Communist because I was a Negro. Indeed, the communist party had been the only road out of the Black Belt for me” (Fabre, 1993:23).

Later on, he was appointed as the secretary executive. His political tendencies affected his writing so, he wrote proletarian poems like “Red Love Notes” and “I Have Seen Black Hand” (Zachariasiewicz, 2015: 5). In 1935, he was offered a job at the “Daily worker” newspaper and wrote many articles under the leftist perspective. In 1942, he left the Communist party because of intellectual divergences of opinion. He adds that Communism hinders him from pursuing his literary vocation (Wright, 1945:355). He spent the rest of his life as an expatriate. Wright found life in America hard. He argues “there was more freedom [...] in one square foot of Paris than in all of the United States” (Margolies, 1969:12).

Biography of Alex La Guma

Alex La Guma (1925-1985) is a Black committed South African writer. He devoted his whole life for the struggle of racial injustices. Through his artistic works, he harshly rejected the repressive Apartheid regime. He is the son of Jimmy La Guma, a communist figure of the South African colored community. La Guma’s father was influenced by the Leninist ideology. His political environment aroused his curiosity as a child and helped him to develop his political consciousness. As a child, La Guma experienced violence and racial discrimination under the Apartheid system. In the circus, La Guma wondered why he could not see the performers well. His mother replied that the privileged seats were reserved for the whites. (Abrahams, 1985: 4). This incident raised his awareness to understand the struggle of his father. From that time, La Guma started to develop his revolutionary ideas.

In 1946, he lost his job at the factory because he organized a strike. He asked for better wages and good working conditions (*Ibid*: 6). He witnessed bad conditions of the working class. This might be the reason that allowed him to join the Communist Party. Following the footsteps of his father, La Guma played an active role in the struggle of the liberation movement. In fact, in 1947, he joined the Young Communist League. The same year, he

became a member of the Communist Party in South Africa (Ibid, 1985:6). In 1953 he joined the South African colored people organization and became one of its executive members. In 1955, La Guma had contributed to the drafting of the freedom charter. (Ibid, 1991:24). As a result, he and 156 anti-racist leaders were arrested and jailed (Ibid, 1985:7). In 1961, because of insufficient evidences, they were acquitted.

Immediately after the Sharpeville incident of 1960, the South African government declared a state of emergency and arrested many political activists. In 1962, La Guma's political activism and writings were considered as a threat. Therefore, the Apartheid government isolated him and he was put under detention for months without trial. (JanMohamed, 1983:226). Later, La Guma was placed under twenty four hours house arrest, banned his writings in South Africa. As a matter of fact, he was forced to leave his country in 1966. While in exile; La Guma became more productive than he had been in South Africa. In fact, he published many work; *A walk in the Night* (1962), *A Threefold Cord* (1964) and *The Stone Country* (1967). As well as several Short stories. His last novels include *In the Fog of the Season's End* (1972) and *The Time of the Butcherbird* (1979). In 1978, Alex la Gumawas appointed the ANC's chief representative for the Caribbean and Central America. Being convinced of Marxist ideas, Alex La Guma was very happy to live in a socialist country. He declared in an interview before his death: "Obviously, it is a relief to live in a free atmosphere and in a socialist country after the tensions of South Africa and the insecurity of Western Europe". (Abrahams, 1991:40).

It is necessary to include the affinities between the two authors. Both La Guma and Wright lived under discriminatory system, namely the Jim Crow laws and the Apartheid system. They were subjected to racial White oppression. Like Wright, La Guma underwent White violence which shaped their writings. They were imprisoned and forced to exile because of the unfair White policies of both South African and American systems. Both of

were deprived from high education despite of their aspirations. Wright longs to be a doctor, while La Guma hoped to be a lawyer. Accordingly, they were forced to take menial jobs; Wright worked as *concierge* in a hospital, whereas La Guma worked as a factory worker. Although their plights, they reached high status as famous writers. Their predicament lay behind their determined commitments to request racial equality.

III. Results

Our study of Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* has led us to some findings. The first finding concerns Richard Wright and Alex La Guma's commitment. We have found that authors who lived under oppression and violence commit to the cause of their people. They committed themselves to depict and denounce the White violence. It is therefore, no surprise to find that both Wright and La Guma were themselves subject to physical and psychological violence. They simply have reflected it in their literary works.

In addition, both works are the product of areas and eras of repression namely South Africa and the American South, Apartheid and Jim Crow Laws. They are "historical pieces" which inform us about historical facts. In fact, both *Black Boy* and *A Walk in the Night* are far from being mere literary works only, but are actually faithful testimonies of the periods.

As we have shown it with evidence in the third chapter of our discussion chapter. It is surprising how both authors' choice for the genre of auto-biography and short fiction (novella and short story) suit well the issue under study. Even though, the two works are written in different periods of time and come from different areas, both texts are written to denounce the repressive regimes of the white hegemony. In fact, both authors share the same predicament which led them to engage in "Literature of Protest".

Moreover, Like *Black Boy*, *A Walk in the Night* can be interpreted as a response to the repressive systems. In both works, the characters and mainly the protagonists stand against the authority. They are depicted as active towards the colonial oppression. Like Alex La Guma, Richard Wright is cautious to present to the reader a character that does not simply accept his plight as a fact of fatality, but negotiate and to gain the same status in society.

Likewise, for La Guma's main character, who after bearing the injustices and dehumanization of the white police, his resentment leads to the act of killing. Moreover, he seeks power within a gang in order to regain his sense of humanity. Both characters are presented as active towards their predicament and always seeking ways legally or illegally to challenge the racial codes. Furthermore, in both works, the two authors consider Black violence as the cause to the long imposed oppression. Like Richard Wright, Alex La Guma's text explains that violence does not come from vacuum. It is a reaction of an unbearable oppression and dehumanization. Moreover, the two authors agree that violence was never initiated by the oppressed, but it was the White men's device to subdue and dehumanize the Black. White violence and its aftermath is an evidence for what is said above.

Last and most importantly, we have given evidence that Black 'violence' which Fanon terms "counter violence" is resistance for humanization. The whole discussion chapter of our work shows that the Black 'violence' is but savagery and barbarism. We have quoted major figures as Steve Biko, Fanon, Mandela and others as evidence that Black 'violence' aim to counter an existing unjust violence performed physically, socially and psychologically on the Blacks by the Whites.

IV. Discussion

I. Chapter one: Dehumanization and Violence in Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night*(1945) and Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1962)

The following chapter examines the two works; Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) and Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* (1962) in relation to the white repressive regimes, the Jim Crow in USA and the Apartheid in South Africa respectively. The first chapter will explore the white's injustices inflicted on the Blacks. We will show how the Blacks have been belittled, denigrated, and reduced to objects by the Whites' oppression. In this sense, we borrow Paulo Freire's concept of "Dehumanization" to discuss this point. Then, we will analyse the issue of white men violence and the way the phenomenon affects the oppressed 'life. Furthermore, we intend to denote the oppressor's violence on the "Natives" as well as between each other. To explore this point, we borrowed Freire's concepts, the Oppressor's "Sadistic Behaviour" and the "Oppressed Necrophilic Attitude". At the end, we will prove that violence is initiated by the Whiteman who is the only responsible of this violence.

I.1. Dehumanization in *Black Boy* (1945) and *A Walk in the Night* (1962)

The Jim Crow Laws and the Apartheid were created to deprive the Blacks from their humanity. In his autobiography *Black Boy*, Wright attempts to reveal the violation of human rights and the way the Black Americans suffered from the white segregation. In the narrative, when Richard is recruited in an optical factory, his boss, Mr Crane intends to teach him the optical trade, he introduces him to two white co-workers, Pease and Reynolds. The latter are supposed to train Richard to clean lenses and how the optical machines operate. Instead of that, Reynolds and Pease divert from what Richard should learn. Thus, they order him to clean the floor, dust the machines in the morning and runs the errands in the afternoon.

Richard has waited days and weeks to teach him the trade, but both of them ignore him. He recalls:

They said nothing to me and I said nothing to them. The first day passed, the second, the third, a week passed and I received my five dollars. A month passed. But I was not learning anything and nobody had volunteered to help me. One afternoon I walked up to Reynolds and asked him to tell me about the work. (Wright, 1945:150).

the above quotation reveals how the whites dehumanize the blacks and their attempt to fix the natives in performing only menial jobs. Therefore, it was a way to curb their aspirations. Richard demonstrates his joy to learn the trade. He states “I’d like it fine, Sir. I’d like nothing better” (*Ibid*: 149). Moreover, when Richard asks Reynolds to teach him how the machine works, he answers him “Nigger, you think you’re white, don’t you? (...), you are acting mighty like it.” Actually, this echoes what Freire said about the oppressors’ mind, “any situation in which A objectively exploits B or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression” (Freire, 1968: 37). Moreover, Pease explains to Richard that these kind of jobs are destined only for the white people. He says “this is the white man’s work around here” (Wright, 1945: 150).

Likewise, in La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night*, the author displays a similar issue of dehumanization through Adonis’s unfair dismissal from the factory. In the factory where Michael Adonis works, the Blacks are not considered as human beings. They are exploited, humiliated and possessed like objects. Whites make them work for long hours per day. Therefore, this reveals that the whites are convinced of their right to exploit the blacks. Because of the discriminating practice of the Whites, the Blacks are excluded from economic opportunities. They are considered as sub humans or machines. This point echoes Freire’s concept of “Dehumanization” which is “not a fatalist destiny, but rather the product of unjust social system and it is merely a man-made law which uses power and violence to dehumanize the oppressed” (Freire, 1968: 26). Accordingly, the blacks have few chances to get good and

well-paid jobs because of racial prejudice. The following quotation best reflects the whites' exploitation of the Blacks:

Strolling again .Got pushed out of my job at the facktry.
How come then?
Answered back to an effing white rooker foreman.
[...] What happened?
That white bastard was lucky I didn't pull him up good [...] every time a man goes to piss house, he starts moaning. Jesus Christ, the way he went on you'd think a man had to wet his pants rather than take a minute off. Well, he picked on me for going for a leak, and I told him to go to hell (La Guma: 1967: 4).

The above quotation reflects the Blacks' restricted rights. The Black South Africans are not given the same opportunities as their white counterparts. At the economical level, their rights are restricted. Therefore, good jobs are kept only for the Whites, and bad paid jobs are left for the Blacks. The workers of the Sheet Metal factory are exploited and are not given enough time to relax, or even to go to the lavatory (ibid)

Another dehumanizing instance is presented in *Black Boy* When Richard is beaten while making a delivery in a white area, drunken white man, smashed an empty bottle of whisky on his head, because Richard forgets to say "Sir" when he talks to Whites. The drunken man arrogantly states "Nigger, ain't you learned no better sense [...] Ain't you learned to say Sir to a white man yet" (Wright, 1945: 144). Moreover, when the Whites decide to leave Richard, they tell him that he should be grateful of not being killed for not mentioning "Sir", while addressing a white man. They profess "Nigger, you sure ought to be glad it was us you talked to that way. You're a lucky bastard, 'cause if you'd said that to some other white man, you might've been a dead nigger now." (Ibid: 145). In this scene, we notice that there are two different groups: One is privileged and the other is excluded. Therefore, the Blacks are condemned to call the whites "Sir", keeping the oppressed in the inferior position. Sanchez confirms the following statement: "I have come out to you from reconstruction eyes that closed on black humanity" (Sanchez, 1984: 17)

Thus, Richard experiences a similar dehumanizing situation. Reynolds, the white co-worker falsely testifies that Richard calls Pease instead of “Mr” Pease. Furthermore, he threatens Richard with a steel bar in case he protests and denies calling him so “Now be careful, Nigger, I heard you call im Pease. And if you say you didn’t, you’re calling me a liar, see?” (Wright, 1945:151). However, the Blacks are no longer slaves and yet they are granted the American citizenship, but still the whites try to maintain the master-slave relationship. They want to recall the Black people of their inferior position towards the whites. As Wright argues: “they (whites) placed a premium upon black deceit; they encourage irresponsibility; and their rewards bestowed upon us blacks in the degree that we could make them feel safe and superior (*Ibid*: 159).

The same situation is presented in La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night*, the author reveals the dehumanizing way with which the policemen treat the Blacks. In fact, the Black South Africans are constantly reminded of their low positions by the police officer. The South Africans are taught to address the whites by “yes baas” or “no baas” .The case of the main character, Adonis who should always address the whites by the title “baas”. This point is exemplified in the conversation held between the policemen and Michael Adonis which goes as follows:

Yes,
Yes, what? Who are you talking to?
Yes, baas. (La Guma, 1967:11).

From the above conversation, we understand that the behavior of the two policemen towards Michael Adonis is one of disregard and mistreatment. Adonis is recalled about his inferior status. This discloses an image of belittlement and denigration of the Blacks.

In Wright’s autobiography, Richard encounters another dehumanizing stigma. It displays that the Blacks are all supposed to be infantile and immature individuals. When the

main character works in a medical research institute, he is asked to keep clean the operating rooms of animal laboratory. While observing the white medical students taking instructions from their professor, Richard recalls his adolescent dream of becoming a medical research worker. In the laboratory room, he is interested in the sick animals, which have different illnesses such as cancer, diabetes and Alzheimer. Wright has a curiosity about a sick rat and rabbit. He wants to know if these pets are going well or not. While asking the question to a doctor, the latter, scornfully answers him “if you know too much, boy, your brain might explode” (Wright, 1945:242). Apparently, the Blacks are doomed to be regarded as inapt to acquire knowledge. Their brains are undeveloped to be able to understand and absorb sciences. This scene echoes Friere’s concept of the oppressor who regards the oppressed as inferior human beings. Besides, when Richard asks questions about the state of the pets, the white doctor’s answer is put as follows :“When I asked the timid question I found that even Jewish doctors learned to imitate the sadistic method of humbling a Negro that the native-born whites had cultivated” (ibid). In this way, Richard explains how the white doctors keep ignoring their questions because they disrespect the blacks. He confesses:

The white doctors had made sure that we would not know. They had never taken time to answer a single question; though we worked in the institute, we were as remote from the meaning of the experiments as if we lived in the moon. The doctors had laughed at what they felt was our childlike interest in the fate of the animals (*Ibid*: 248).

In La Guma’s novella, Constable Raalt, a white policeman conveys a dehumanizing act. He holds a disrespectful attitude towards the Blacks; He considers them as primitives and inferior human beings. He says: “I wish something would happen. I ‘d like to lay hands on one of those Bushmen bastards and wring his bloody neck” (La Guma: 1967: 39). In describing the Blacks, Constable Raalt uses some pejorative names such as “Hotnots”, “Bastards”, Bushmen” “Skollies”. This connotation reminds us of Freire’s view. He explains how the oppressors never call the dehumanized as “Oppressed” but rather stigmatize them as

“blind and “envious masses”, “savages” (Freire, 1968:39). Therefore, the situation brings about an image of belittlement of the Black “Natives”. Michael Adonis is denigrated when he is called by a white policeman with a negative name in: “well, juba’s got to live called me a cheeky black bastard” (La Guma, 1967:31). Besides, the conversation held between Constable Raalt and his driver denotes the Black’s non- recognition. Raalt said “Okay, man if you’re not bloody, fed up with riding around looking at these effing, hotnot bastards, let’s go” (La Guma, 1967:31).

Equally, in *Black Boy*, Uncle Tom calls his nephew with negative names. When Uncle Thomas intends to beat his nephew, the latter resists him with a razor. Then he insults his nephew and calls him as “impudent black rascal”, “a sassier black”. In fact, the main character is totally astonished “I did not feel that I had given him cause to say I was sassy” (Wright, 1945: 124). Richard’s uncle further says: “You’re the worst criminal I ever saw” “you’ll end in the gallows”(Ibid: 125). Uncle Thomas feels pity toward his nephew’s violent reaction. In fact, Richard feels sorry for him “You better be sorry for yourself” (ibid: 126). The scene recalls Freire’s idea whenever the oppressor is met by native counter violence, he perceives the oppressed as savage and violent. Accordingly, he never calls him oppressed, but barbaric and wicked (Freire, 1968:39).

In *Black Boy*, another dehumanizing way inflicted on Richard is revealed through the White’s sadistic behaviour which affects the Black’s humanity. The following point illustrates the medical director’s attitude towards Richard. In the hospital, he puts a boy to watch and monitor the protagonist while he is working. He confesses “The man who ordered the boy to stand over me while I was working and time my movements with a stop watch” (Wright, 1945: 250). In fact, Richard feels dehumanized by the director’s behaviour; he sates “He did not regard me as human being. I did not share his world” (ibid). He symbolically adds that

even their workplace is located in the underground of the institute. In fact, it is depicted as a remote, a dark and a narrow place. Wright explains:

The hospital kept us four Negroes, as though we were close kin to the animals. We tended, huddled together down in the underworld corridor of the hospital, separated by a vast psychological distance from the significant processes of the rest of the hospital_ just as America had kept us locked in the dark world of American life for three hundred years (*Ibid*).

In the institute, Richard is considered as a slave. He is supposed to polish the steps in a limited time. Moreover, while scouring the stairs, the Whites walk on the undried steps carelessly, neglecting to avert the cleaned ones. In fact, Richard hates the fact that the white doctors and nurses overlook the situation. Richard confesses that while performing his job, no one (white) has the kindness to avoid the wet stairs. This act makes the protagonist furious of the whites who mackle the cleaned steps intentionally in order to make him feel wrong. He states:

Never had I felt so much the slave as when I scoured those stone steps [...] working against time, I would wet five steps, sprinkle soap powder, then a white doctor or a nurse would come and, instead of avoiding the sappy steps, walk on them and track the dirty water onto the steps that I already cleaned. To obviate this, I cleaned but two steps at a time, a distance over a ten years old child could step. But it did no good. The white people still plopped. [...] Not once during my entire stay at the institute did a single white person show enough courtesy to avoid a wet step. [...] Sometimes a sadistically observant white man would notice that he had tracked dirty water up the steps, and he would look back down at me and smile and say: "boy, we sure keep you busy, don't, we?" (*Ibid*)

The above quotation reflects Freire's standpoint of the oppressor's sadistic attitude towards the oppressed. He puts it as follows:

Tendency of the oppressor consciousness to in-animate everything and everyone it encounters, in its eagerness to possess [...] unquestionably corresponds with the tendency to sadism. The pleasure in complete domination over another person [...]the essence of sadistic drive (Freire, 1968:41).

A similar process of representation is depicted in La Guma's *A Walk in the Night*. Constable Raalt's mistreatment to Willieboy indicates the police' sadistic position towards the South Africans. When Willieboy is shot by Constable Raalt, he is put into the police van. The White policeman refuses to take him to the hospital. Instead, he stops to buy cigarettes,

disregarding the fact that a human being is bleeding to death. The following words display the scene:

Constable Raalt felt in his tunic pocket for his cigarettes and found that he had none. He said pull up at the Portuguese, will you? I want to get some smokes. Jesus, man, the driver said we haven't got time to get cigarettes. We've got to get this jong to the station. Ach, thee's lots of time, man. That bastard isn't going to die yet. These hotnots are tough. (La Guma, 1967:87).

This scene of ill-treatment demonstrates that Raalt perceives the Blacks as sub humans and mere objects without feelings and emotions.

From what have been discussed above, we conclude that both authors present the same issue of dehumanization and denigration through their black protagonists. In the white's perception, both main characters are reduced to an inferior position. They are relegated into animal-like stances. Like Richard, Adonis nearly endures the same mistreatment. Both characters are considered as objects and always reminded of their low positions.

I.2. White men's Violence in Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) and Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* (1962)

In this part, we intend to discuss the theme of white men's violence and the way it is portrayed in both selected works. In the two fictions, violence is not only carried out by the white men, but also adopted by the Blacks within each other. It is the outcome of repressive systems. Furthermore, we will demonstrate how violence affects the Blacks. We also will disclose how white men's violence turns non- white men into an inferior stance. In other words, the oppressors use violence to deprive the oppressed from their humanity.

Richard Wright is a committed writer; he is among the first writers who plainly denounces the atrocities of the Jim Crow Laws in the American South. In Wright's works and particularly in *Black Boy*, his predominant theme is violence (Wright in Makombe, 2011:27)

Moreover, he is criticized for using violent scenes which shock the reader (Fabre, 1985: 89). But in fact, it is one of his techniques to show the suffering of his people. In addition, Wright wants to draw the attention of the reader to the consequences of violence on the Black people physically or psychologically. In fact, white men's violence turns the Black into non-human being.

In *Black Boy*, Richard witnesses family violence. After setting fire to his house, he is violently beaten by his mother till he loses consciousness. He confesses:

I was lashed so hard and long that I lost consciousness. I was beaten out of my senses and later I found myself in bed, screaming [...] I was lost in fog of fear [...] my body seemed of fire and I could not sleep [...] I remembered that my mother had come close to killing me (Wright, 1945: 4).

It is a traumatic incident for the protagonist since it affects his state of mind. This leads him to a psychological breakdown. He starts having illusions in:

Whenever I tried to sleep I would see huge wobbly white bags, like the full udders of cows, suspended from the ceiling above me [...] I begged my mother and father to take the bugs away, pointing to them shaking with terror because no one saw them but me (*Ibid*).

The excerpt denotes the way violence affects both the physical and psychological state of an individual and how it can lead him to death. Moreover, symbolically, the character foresees the White oppression, which is referred to the huge white bugs that no one of his family can see except him. Once again, Richard is subject to his mother's violence. When he asks his mother questions on his grandmother's life, she gets annoyed and beats him. He recalls: "why didn't Granny marry a white man?" [...] she slapped me and I cried" (Wright, 1945:36).

During his childhood, the protagonist endures physical and mental abuses. In fact, his family violence foreshadows the whites' violence. The latter is an inevitable fate for Richard. Because of his rebellious and resistant attitude, his interactions either with his kinsmen or the whites end with confrontations and conflicts. Granny, Richard's white grandmother and

Addie, his aunt are two strict religious women. They compel him to pray for a long day. Moreover, they set a family rule that Richard cannot speak unless he is spoken to.

The fact recalls the repressive regime of Jim Crow, which dictates what a Black American should do or say. Its aim is to silence the oppressed. In violating one of Grandmother's rules, Richard escapes her blow, which causes her fall. Addie, in a fury, follows her nephew to punish him. Consequently, his aunt threatens him to come at night and kill him. Richard remembers: "You keep your mouth shut until you're spoken to [...] if you don't keep your mouth shut, then I'll hit you" She threatens him "I'll fix you this night (ibid: 105). At the end, Richard reveals that Granny's religious house is a violent and disputatious place. The protagonist recalls another harsh treatment from his grandmother, who hinders him to express himself: "she (Granny) barred her teeth and slapped me across my mouth with the back of her hand". She adds: "you shut your mouth" (Wright, 1945: 29). While Richard is having his bath, he utters an obscenity. Both his mother and his grandmother run to beat him, he confesses:

I ran into the kitchen, naked, yelling [...]. My mother said: I'm going to beat you tonight [...] I (Richard) was mortally afraid. [...] Grandpa came and ordered me from under the bed. (Grandpa) Do you want me to get my gun? Naw sir. Please don't shoot me! I cried. [...] Come out and get your whipping, my mother called [...] come into the kitchen, she said. I followed her and she beat me (Wright, 1945: 33).

Moreover, Uncle Thomas believes that young people should obey their elders without thinking; he gets angry whenever Richard takes a righteous position against him. Richard's uncle does not miss any opportunity to beat or ridicule him. Nearly, all his relatives try to silence, curb, and beat him. This echoes Freire's concept of "Necrophilic Behaviour" of the oppressed.

In *A Walk in the Night*, La Guma resembles Wright in the way he presents violence. Home is supposed to be a place of hope, family warmth and tranquility. In the case of Willieboy, hatred and violence prevail in his home. When he was a little child, Willieboy has

been subjected to parental cruelty. At an early age, he is accustomed to sell evening newspapers, but he was not allowed to spend the money he earned. Consequently, he is beaten by his mother. Willieboy recalls :“(his mother) slaps his face again and again so that his head jerked loosely on his shoulders and his face stung from the blow. He wept through pain” (La Guma,1967: 83-84). Another scene discloses Willieboy’s parental brutality. It is shown in the following quotation:

His mother beats him at the slightest provocation and he knew that she was wreaking vengeance upon him for the beatings she received from his father. His father came home drunk most nights and beat his mother and him with a heavy leather belt. His mother crouched in a corner of the room and shrieked and whimpered for mercy when his father is through with her, he turned on Willieboy, but sometimes, he managed to escape from the room and did not return until late in the night when the father was snoring drunkenly and his mother had cried herself to sleep. .His mother, unable to defend against her husband, took revenge for her whippings on Willieboy (La Guma, 1967: 84).

The above words display Willieboy’s lack of family warmth. Since his childhood, he does not lead a normal life because of the physical abuses of his mother and his father. This conveys La Guma’s message. The author blames the system. In South Africa, the Apartheid laws are responsible for creating an atmosphere of hatred, fear, and violence within the members of the Black families. Hence, the regime pushes the Black families by means of segregation and violence to beat their children and their wives. In this perspective, La Guma’s standpoints meets Freire’s concept of “Necrophlic Behaviour” of the oppressed who after bearing much violence of the white that lasted for a long time, the violence will turn over the oppressed themselves, then the oppressed become the oppressors of the same race. In other words, the oppressed or the Blacks in the case of the work under study use the same violence and direct it to their kinsmen. The case of the Richard’s family who oppresses the main character through beating, frightening, silencing or threatening him by a knife. Richard’s family members bear the violence exercised by the Jim Crow. In fact, this oppression can be either exploitation, denigration, impoverishment or all kind of oppression and violence that the White System, Jim Crow use on the Black community. For instance, his Uncle Thomas,

although his is a teacher, he suffers financially and cannot pay the bills because of the underpaid wage of the Black. Similarly, Richard's Aunt Addie who was a teacher too, cannot afford paying a rent of her house. Uncle Tom, his family and Aunt Addie decide to move to their mother's house which is not that a spacy place. Accordingly for Wright, the Jim Crow is the only responsible of the Blacks' violent reactions towards each other.

As far as *Black Boy* is concerned, the physical and emotional violence that Richard has undergone intensifies with his contact of the Whites. Regardless of the way he acts, the whites find Richard's behaviour improper and different when compared to his fellows. The author has purposely recalled many scenes of family and White violence. When Richard delivers goods in a white area, he is intimidated by police officers. He denounces:

I was pedalling my bicycle back to the store as fast as I could when a Police car, swerving toward me, jammed me into the curbing. Get down, nigger, and put up your hands! They ordered. I did. They climbed out of the car, guns drawn, faces set, and advanced slowly. Keep still! They ordered. I reached my hands higher. They searched my pockets and packages. They seemed dissatisfied when they could find nothing incriminating. Finally, one of them said. Boy, tell your boss not to send you out in white neighbourhoods at this time of night (Wright, 1945: 145).

In addition, a white drunken strikes Richard with a bottle of whisky in the white neighbourhood. Moreover, another scene of violence occurs when a white boss tries to plant seeds of hatred between Richard and his kinsman Harrison. The latter works in the rival optical house. Olin says "He (Harrison)'s got terrific grudge against you [...] you better watch that Harrison" (Wright, 1945:187). In fact, the imperial enterprise is known by the idea of "Divide and Rule" and how they internalize violence in the oppressed' mind, to make them fear from each other and grow un-trustful. Fanon states: "colonial rule is the bringer of violence to the home and into the mind of the native" (Fanon, 1963: 61). In addition, both Harrison and Richard's bosses incite them to keep their knives in order to defend themselves. This is exemplified in:

Did you buy a knife yet? He (Olin) asked, No (Richard), sir, do you want to use mine? You have got to protect yourself, he asked. [...] nigger you are fool, take this knife and stop acting crazy [...] I picked up the knife and put it into my pocket [...] now, you are acting like a nigger with some sense (Wright, 1945:190).

Both Richard and Harrison are aware of the whites' conspiracy. In this perspective Richard says: "We knew that the idea of murder had been planted in each of us by the white men who employed us" (ibid: 191). But once the White's plan has failed to make them kill each other, Olin decides to use money to settle their presuming grudge through the boxing rules. At first, Richard refuses, he says: "I don't want to fight for white men. I am not a dog or rooster" (Ibid: 192). The scene recalls us about the minstrel show of Jim Crow. The most striking moment is when both Richard and Harrison pretend to fight each other in a boxing match. But as soon as they started fighting, it turns into a real fight. The two characters forget the real reason of their combat. He states: "We all know WWF match is fake, right? Right?" (ibid). While the white men watch the match between Richard and his fellow, they shout at them:

Crush that nigger's nuts, nigger!
Hit that nigger!
Aw, fight, you godddam niggers!
Sock' im in his f_k_g piece!
Make' im bleed (ibid: 194)

This event recalls Freire's notion of the oppressed' "Necrophilic Attitude".

In La Guma's *A Walk in the Night*, Violence is presented as the product of racism and segregation of the Whites. The latter try to maintain their dominance and seek their interests through the Apartheid laws. In fact, the police institution in Cape Town, District Six use their power to brutalize the non-whites, in order to keep their political and material interest. A close reading of *A Walk in the Night* offers a clear insight of the political environment of the sixties in South Africa. La Guma confirms this point: "A society based on Suppression, violence, armed force, poverty and unemployment create violence, bloodshed and murder" (Odendaal and Field, 1993:52).

In the novella, the voice of the white men violence is represented by Constable Raalt, a white policeman. The latter, despises the Blacks, whom he considers as inferior human beings. The psychological trouble created by his wife at home, turns him into a sadistic person. Consequently, he vents his anger and his frustration on Willieboy. His harsh attitude towards the Blacks. The chasing episode of Willieboy is brought out through the sequence when Raalt obsessively pursue Willieboy on the top of the roofs:

Constable Raalt had been crouching against an old and disused water tank, waiting for some sign of the boy. He knew for sure that the boy was somewhere on that row of roofs and he waited for him to show himself. Constable Raalt was determined to take his time about this. He had his quarry trapped and he was quite sure that he would conclude the hunt successfully. He crouched there in the dark and smiled with satisfaction (La Guma, 1967: 81).

A further violent act of Police is shown in the killing scene of Willieboy. The following episode highlights Raalt's brutality, when he mercilessly kills Willieboy in the following quotation:

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 in a pool in the corner of his mouth and slid out and down that side of his chin , crooked trickle”(Ibid: 42).

The act of killing Willieboy by Constable Raalt, and the way he puts him in the van reveals a sadistic and inhuman behavior, Raalt says to Andries: “[...] load him in the back of the van and take him down to the station. They'll fix him up there, the bloody hotnot” (Ibid: 84). Andries, Raalt's driver is shocked by the state of Willieboy. Through his conversation with Raalt, he asks to call for help, in: “Jesus, man, the driver said .we'd better call an ambulance. Ambulance, Constable Raalt scoffed, hell, we'll take the blikzman down to the station. They'll patch him up. He's not hurt so terribly” (Ibid, 83). Once again, another scene of Raalt's cruelty is depicted in: “[...] in the crowd, somebody threw a tin can and it curved

and struck over the fender of the police van. Constable Raalt shouted waving the revolver. You bastards, you want to get shoot, too? (La Guma, 1967:84).

Besides, La Guma uses some words and phrases like “turret of the armored care” “ammunition”, “among the dead” and “the dying”, to convey the excess of the police brutality. Some other scenes of violence are displayed in the following passage:

A black preacher gave water to a man who moaned in shock, [...]the bundles of dead lay under the sun with the banned owned pop bottles, [...]comfortable thighs had been torn through, so that he bled quickly to death (*Ibid*: 26, 39, and 42).

The above words convey physical as well as psychological acts of violence performed by Constable Raalt on the Blacks. In South Africa, intimidations exercised by the White police can be interpreted as verbal violence. The scene evoking the policeman’s harassment is depicted through Michael Adonis. The latter is threatened by the White policeman, who addresses him in a brutal way, this conversation is an illustration:

Where is your dagga?
I don’t smoke it
yong, turn out your pockets, the first one ordered. Hurry up’
Michael Adonis began to empty his pockets slowly’...
Where did you steal the money? The question was without humor, deadly.’
Serious, the voice topped with hardness like the surface of a file.
Didn’t steal it, baas. Well, muck off from .Don’t let us find you standing around, you hear?(La Guma, 1967: 11).

From the above conversation, we understand that the policeman’s behavior towards Michael Adonis is one of intimidation and mistreatment. In fact, the white policeman’s improper behaviour reveals his verbal violence towards the protagonist. The latter is accused of theft and drug addiction.

Accordingly, we conclude that these different episodes of violence denote the police brutality in South Africa. La Guma depicts the brutality inflicted on the dwellers of Cape Town District Six. They are permanently at the mercy of the white police’s brutality. Adonis and Willieboy are regarded as examples of the Black South African community during the sixties. In this perspective, La Guma’s Black characters resorts to violent acts after enduring

violence and dehumanization by the White system. Just like La Guma, Wright's protagonist endures similar cruelty in the American South. Therefore, Richard responds through violent acts to resist the White system and to affirm his humanity.

II. Chapter 2: “Counter Violence” for “Humanization” in *Black Boy* and *A Walk in the Night*

Counter Violence or “Holy violence” as Marie Perinbam puts it in her book, *Holy Violence: the Revolutionary Thought of Frantz Fanon*, published in 1982. For Fanon, the oppressed’ violence is a logical reaction towards White oppression. Perinbam further argues that Fanon’ view of violence: “Was going beyond violence, and that heightened courage, bravery and altruism. (Perinbam, 1982:77). “Counter violence” is the major theme dealt in the selected works. Dehumanization and violence are the main causes for the oppressed’ counter attack for his self-affirmation. As the White’s policy is violent, the oppressed legitimizes his way of resorting to violence. In fact, it is a direct reaction of the oppressed to regain his humanity. In both works, the theme of “Counter Violence is embodied in the Black characters, namely Richard, Adonis and Willieboy. Going through many frustrations, they resent and despise the Whites who drive them to react in a violent way.

In *Black Boy*, the theme of “Counter Violence” is reflected through the main character Richard. Many events denote Richard’s active reactions towards the repressive environment of the American South. When he is five, his mother forces him to fight back his fellows to have his place in the oppressive world. Richard fails twice to buy the groceries that his mother asks him, because a gang steals his money and beats him. His mother, whose husband deserts her, understands the necessity to teach her son to defend himself in his entourage. In the third attempt, his mother warns him, that if he comes back without the ingredients, she will whip him and let him out “I said. You better stay right where you are. She said in a deadly tone. I ‘m going to teach you this night to stand up and fight for yourself” (ibid: 18). This time, Ella, Richard’ mother gives him money and a stick. Consequently, the circumstances do not leave much choice to the main character. He either fights or stays out. Therefore, the protagonist is determined to stand against his oppressors. He recollects his memories as follows:

They surround me quickly and began to grab my hand, I'll kill you! I threatened, they closed in. In and blind fear I let the stick fly, feeling it crack against a boys' skull. I swung again, lamming another skull, then another [...] I fought to lay them low, to knock them cold, to kill them so that they could not strike back at me, I hit again and again[...] the boys scattered, yelling, nursing their heads; staring at me in disbelief [...] taunting them to come on and fight. When they refused I ran after them, screaming. The parents of the boys rushed into the streets and threatened me, and for the first time I shouted at grownups, telling them that I would give them the same if they bother me." (*Ibid*: 13).

The above quotation illustrates the way Richard stands against his abusers. Furthermore, he does not only succeed to buy the things that his mother asks him, he also hits those who hurt him before. But, he goes after the boys to their home fearlessly and threatens their parents.

Similarly, La Guma illustrates the issue of "Counter Violence" through the voice of his two protagonists, Michael Adonis and Willieboy. At the beginning of the novella, Michael Adonis is humiliated by the Whites on two occasions: he is unjustly fired from his job. Later, he is harassed by two white policemen. These are sufficient reasons for his violent reaction. This filled him with resentment and wrath, the fact that pushes him to kill an innocent old white man. The scene of murder is clearly depicted by the author in the following passage:

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(La Guma, 1967: 28-29).

The above words illustrate the protagonist's violent reaction towards the White oppression. Michael strives to find a way to resist the repressive regime. His aim is to seek to liberate himself from two facts: psychological and economical. Firstly, he kills the White man to be released from his frustrations. Secondly, he joins Foxy's gang in order to earn a living. Accordingly, it is the character's way to challenge both the white authority as well as the Apartheid system.

In the *A Walk in the Night*, Michael Adonis is portrayed as being furious and swears to avenge his White boss for his unfair dismissal. He keeps repeating "white sonofabitch, I'll get him"

(La Guma, 1967:4/5). This expresses Adonis's determination to take revenge in order to get rid of his anger. As Cecil Abrahams writes on Adonis: "the stultifying social and political environment leads him inevitably to the world of crime and perpetual darkness [...] he becomes a full-fledged member of the underground with the prospect of walking the night until he is arrested or he dies. (Abrahams, 1985: 56)

Likewise, while Nathan, Richard's father tries to have a rest, the meowing of the neighbouring cat makes him annoyed. Therefore, Nathan comes with rage and asks his two sons to silence the cat. He shouts: "Kill that damn thing! [...] do anything, but get it away from here" (Wright, 1945: 7). Richard's fury toward his father's reaction pushes him to hang the little pet even if he knows that his father's words are not meant to kill it. The protagonist has no feeling toward his father "He was a lawgiver and I have never laughed in his presence [...] he was always a stranger to me"(ibid: 7). In this way, the main character challenges his father's authority. For Richard, the best way to take his revenge is to obey him literally. As he confesses:

I resented his shouting and it irked me that I could never make him feel my resentment. How could I hit back? Oh yes[...]He had said to kill the kitten and I would kill it! I knew he had not really meant for me to kill the kitten, but my deep hate urged me toward a literal acceptance of his word." (Ibid: 7).

Richard adds "I had my first triumph over my father. I made him believe that I had taken his words literally. He could not punish me without risking his authority". (ibid: 8). For Wright, he is now able to assert his own independence and have his dreams and ideas to realization. He is no longer under the dominance of his own father.

After bearing much violence from his family, Richard is determined to react against anyone who hurts him regardless his position. Aunt Addie thinks that her nephew has thrown crumbs in the classroom. Although he explains that he is innocent, Aunt Addie disbelieves and refuses to listen to him. However, she punishes him in the classroom; she still wants to

punish him again at home. Consequently, the little boy cannot bear more sufferings. Therefore, he takes a knife from the kitchen to defend himself. Richard yells and calls his mother: "But, mama, she'll beat me, beat me for nothing," he continues: "I'm not going to let her beat me; I don't care what happens!" (Wright, 1945:85). Richard's case recalls Fanon's stand point. For him, the colonial subject keeps absorbing violence as the first stage of his liberating process till he is fed up, then in the second stage; the oppressed uses the same violence to challenge his oppressor who is his kinsmen. In this perspective, counter violence comes as a logical reaction to the long oppressive white system which is not directed to the white oppressors, but within the oppressed themselves. Richard's words affirm what it has been discussed previously: "I fought because I felt I had to keep from being crushed, to fend off continuous attack" (Wright, 1945: 106). He continues:

I saw that she was holding another switch [...] I (Addie)'m going to teach you some manners. I (Richard) stood fighting, fighting as I had never fought in my life [...] perhaps the violence I had already seen and felt took hold of me [...] I get the knife and defend myself. I didn't want to be violent with her, and yet I didn't want to be beaten for a wrong I had not committed. Don't, don't hit me! if you hit me I'll fight you" [...]. she was upon me, lashing me across the face. [...] I grabbed up a knife and held it ready for her. [...]. She was still fighting for my knife and I saw a look on her face that made me feel she was going to use it on me if she got possession of it. I bit her hand and we rolled, kicking, scratching, fighting as though we were strangers, deadly enemies, fighting for our lives (*Ibid*: 83/84).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Richard endures family violence which refers to Fanon's second stage where the Blacks are redirecting the White violence between each other unconsciously ignoring their real oppressors. In the narrative, Richard reacts against his Uncle Tom, who intends to beat him for a trifle. Therefore, Richard uses a razor for his self-defence. When his uncle orders him to put the razor away, he refuses. After this scene, Uncle Tom confesses that he "Had never in his life faced a person more grimly determined" (*Ibid*: 125).

Actually, Richard is no longer afraid to face his members of his family, he says “I’ll make you bloody if you hit me! [...]If you want to fight, I’ll fight. That’s the way it’ll be between us [...] I’ll cut you! I’ll cut you! [...]I’ll make you bloody if you hit me (ibid: 125). In the American culture, Uncle Tom represents a docile and obedient Black person to the Whites’ authority. Richard despises the fact that his uncle and his kinsmen adhere to their predicament. The main character’s resistance towards his uncle Tom is clearly demonstrated, when Richard challenges him with the knife, he swears that it will be the last time he will be beaten. Richard continues: “I crept cautiously into the house, got my hat, coat, books, and went to work, went to face the whims of the white folks”(ibid: 126)

In the case of Willieboy, the protagonist engages in violent activities because firstly, he is subjected to family violence, secondly, he is rejected by his society. These are sufficient motives, which force him to seek refuge in the street gang who live on crime, violence and theft. Like Adonis, Willieboy’s encounter with the gangsters is his way to challenge the white authority. In the novella, Willieboy uses illegal means such as crimes, violence and theft, in order to earn his living. His resistance is displayed when he attacks Mr. Green in the following scene:

‘Hullo,old man,Willieboysaid;‘Give us five bob, man
‘No, man, I haven’t got. Mister. Greene gasped, His voice quavering with fear. He was scared that the boy would pull a knife.
‘Come on, pally. Let’s have five bob’
‘Please, man. Please.’
Greene tried to pull away, but the boy held onto him, then suddenly his legs were Kicked expertly from under himand he was flat on the pavement and the boy standing over him...
He kicked Greene again and again (*Ibid: 73*).

The following scene of violence reveals the way the Apartheid system reshapes Willieboy to a savage beast. For him, all means are allowed to satisfy his needs for his human recognition. In this perspective, Cecil Abraham states: “Willieboy’s life is a tragic path from an unloving home into a loveless society that finally brutalizes him to death” (Abrahams, 1985: 60)

Similarly at the beginning of the novel, Richard lives in a suffocating environment. Like all children of his age, the protagonist needs a space to play. Instead, he is constantly scolded by his mother. The latter, warns him to stop playing and to keep calm and quiet while his grandmother is ill. He says:

I was dreaming of running and playing and shouting, but the vivid image of Granny's old, white, wrinkled, grim face, framed by a halo of tumbling black hair, lying upon a huge feather pillow, made me afraid (Wright, 1945: 1).

Furthermore, Richard is denied the right to speak and to move freely in his grandmother's house. Consequently, the main character starts reacting against his oppressive family, he says: I knew that I would be punished if I did not obey. I crossed restless to the window and pushed back the long fluffy white curtains_ which I had been forbidden to touch" (ibid). Richard resists the brutality of his family. He remembers:

I _was playing placidly upon the floor with a toy. A bird wheeled past the window and I greeted it with a glad shout.
"You better hush", my brother said.
"You shut up", I said. (*Ibid*)

Richard sets fire to the white curtains, ending with burning the whole house. This act of violence can be considered as a way of resisting the suffocating entourage, which is embodied in the values of Granny's home. In fact, Richard's mother and grandmother are unconscious agent of the discourse of Jim Crow because they deny him a voice and a space. In restricting Richard, they perpetuate the Southern legacy of inculcating fear and docility among African Americans (Wright in Makombe, 2011:27)

Last but not least, "Counter Violence" is but resistance to a long life imposed violence. It is in fact cause and effect relationship. After bearing too much violence and for a long time, the oppressed internalizes oppression. Indeed, Michael Adonis, Willieboy and Richard bear violence either from their kinsmen or from the Whites. Therefore, in order to get rid of their oppressors, the oppressed stand against them using violence, the case of Willieboy who

threatens his fellows to survive and Michael Adonis who kills Uncle Doughty after being harassed by the White police. As far as Richard is concerned, he also resorts to kill the pet and beat the gang boys. For Fanon, counter attacking the oppressor can lead the oppressed' to his self-realization and humanity (Fanon, 1961: 94).

Consequently, both Michael and Willieboy, engage in violent reactions as a way to resist the Apartheid injustices. As it has been displayed in the novella, Michael Adonis has no intention of killing Uncle Doughty, his dismissal from the factory, as well as the intimidations he receives from the two white policemen, leads him to a psychological breakdown. The latter is the reason that drives him to commit a murder. Indeed, crimes and thefts is not a matter of their choice, but it is a consequence of their oppressive entourage. Likewise, the beginning the novella discloses that Willieboy is an innocent boy. His harsh environment compels him to engage in criminal acts, such as theft and violent actions. This echoes Fanon's concept of counter violence. He states that "violence, derived from the oppressed, is a vicious circle. It is "a state of rage" as he calls it (Fanon, 2004:17), In fact, the protagonists of *A Walk in the Night* are pushed to violence, because they are constantly dehumanized and frustrated by the white's system .Finding no other alternative of resisting the system, they choose to counter attack their oppressors. This fact also recalls Fanon's view on Counter Violence. In his chapter concerning violence, Fanon claims that the individual should counter the colonial domination by violence. For him, the colonizer puts tensions on the colonized; this causes him to challenge and resist the injustices. He stresses on the necessity to answer violence with violence or as he claims it: "with greater violence" (Fanon, 1961: 73).

To conclude, both Adonis and Willieboy are oppressed by the White system. The latter, does not provide them with their civil rights. As a result, they resort to illegal means as an attempt to regain their human dignity as well as to challenge the white injustices. In short,

it is a manifestation of the White domination. Both La Guma and Wright communicate the history of their peoples' oppression, as well as their resistance to the oppressive laws. Wright's protagonist resembles those of La Guma's, because they are both victims of physical and psychological White violence. Both authors are committed to the cause of their peoples; they are inspired by their personal plight. Wright's autobiography captures the experiences of his own life. Likewise, La Guma relies on his personal experiences in Cape Town to write his novella.

After enduring violence and dehumanization from the Whites, the oppressed Blacks resort to violent acts. Their behavior is regarded as a purgative force for Blacks' frustration and a way of regaining their deprived humanity. In this context, Fanon asserts that "the colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence" (*Ibid*: 73). According to Fanon, the aggressive reactions of the oppressed Blacks can be viewed as a means of their self-liberation. It can also have a cathartic impact on them. (*Ibid*: 94). In Fanon's view, "Counter Violence of the Blacks led them to a cathartic release. It is a way of getting rid of the individual's bitterness as well as a way of finding solace.

The issue of catharsis is typified through the protagonist of Michael Adonis at the opening of the novella. After killing the white old man, Michael Adonis felt released from his frustrations. The fact of killing a White man gives him a full sense of existence. The only moment that allows him to feel free is when he murders Uncle Doughty. The following quotation elucidates the point:

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 [...] it was just something that, to himself, placed him above others, like a poor beggar who suddenly found himself the heir to vast riches. (*Ibid*: 66).

The quotation above clearly shows that the Black character exteriorizes his frustrations to get freedom and recognition. It is a way of exteriorizing his interior frustrations as well as a means of finding solace. Fanon puts it as follows: “Concerning the individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the “Native” from his inferiority complex, and from his despair and inaction: It makes him fearless and restores his self-respect” (Fanon, 1963: 94). For Fanon, the acts of violence that are performed by the oppressed have a cathartic effect or as he calls it, a “cleansing force” (ibid).

Equally, in *Black Boy*, after performing his act of violence, Richard regains his freedom and self-worthiness. He feels invincible and his rage vanishes when he attacks back the gang boys who beats him and took his money, he claims: “That night I won the right to the streets of Memphis” (*Ibid*). His mother does not only set him free from his oppressors, but also prepares him to fight for life against the White oppression. For Fanon, answering by violence has a “Cleansing Force” because it puts the colonized in the same category with the colonizer. Being equal to his oppressor gives the protagonist a feeling of humanity. This recalls Fanon’s cathartic effect. In fact, it allows the individual to regain his self- affirmation (*Ibid*).

In the killing scene of the cat, Richard feels happy. He has no feeling of regret or guilt. Besides, the main character is relieved after murdering the cat, he confesses “Now papa can sleep, I said, [...] deeply satisfied [...] I was happy because I had at last found a way to throw criticism of him into his face [...] I had made him know that he was cruel and I had done it without punishing me” (Wright, 1945 : 7/8). Feeling relieved after hanging the little pet echoes Fanon’s “Cleansing Force” that one can feel after counter attacking the oppressor. In doing so, he feels accomplished. Richard discovers his worthiness and his sense of humanity.

According to Perinbam, “Fanon himself believed in the detoxifying power of violence” (Perinbam, 1982: 76)

From what we have discussed in the previous chapters, we conclude that both Black South Africans and black Americans were subjected to dehumanization and violence by the White systems. Therefore, their plights push them, to resort to violent acts. Once they are relieved from their frustrations, the Black characters regain their self- worthiness and self- liberation. Moreover, they restore their humanity.

III-Chapter Three: Literary Genres as Resistance

In history and for many centuries, the oppressed used literature to denounce and challenge the oppressive regimes. Black writings were among the “Literature of Combat” which played a significant role in awakening the Black’s consciousness. Several forms of writings were used to criticize and alter the bad conditions that the Blacks have experienced. Autobiography and novella are two literary forms that suits to stand against the white oppression.

III. 1. Auto-Biography as a Literary Form of Resistance

According to Collier: “Autobiography, a form of biography in which the subject is also the author; it is generally written in the first person and covers most or an important phase of the author’s life” (Collier, 1962:319). Afro-American autobiographical writing is a literary genre which goes back to the time of American slavery. The Northern abolitionists were the ones who recommended the fugitive slaves to write on their personal life. The aim of writing Autobiographical Genre is to depict the Black’s humanity. Moreover, auto-biographers speak about their plight and show the determination to escape the racial South and seek their freedom. One of the literary scholars explains how the slaves start writing their narratives:

The slave narrative that Northern abolitionist leaders initiated for fugitive slaves to use what characterized by a focus on the humanity of the slaves, the hardships they had suffered, their determination to achieve freedom, and their escape to free, Northern soil; the result of their flight was to build a new life in which they could pursue the American dream. (Stover, 2003:4)

Richard Wright chooses the same literary genre to speak about his plight and the way to escape the repressive regime of the racist South. In his autobiography, *Black Boy*, Wright depicts the suffocating environment of the American South. Wright’s choice for this genre

can be stemmed from the fact that autobiography is a recognised genre for centuries, which draws a great literary audience.

In the American history, after the Civil War, Afro-American slave's autobiographies proved their credibility. They were perceived as a menace by the racist South. This genre of writing was "an important tool of propaganda for the movement to abolish slavery and fed the fires of that movement" (Stover, 2003:5). In fact, most slave black auto-biographers such as Olaudah Equiano, William Wells Brown, Frederick Douglass, and Booker T. Washington were self-centred and celebrate their heroism and freedom (Stover, 2003:28).

Indeed, the autobiographical writings awakened the awareness of the black people and draw the sympathy of the white abolitionists. Probably, Richard Wright opted for the same strategy to raise black consciousness and to stir his emotion. The 'autobiographies were self-exploring and then self-empowering "Using the tool of literacy, black auto-biographers could themselves contradict those members of white society who denied humanity of blacks"(ibid: 35). Likely, the slave auto-biographies have influenced the coming generations since it proved its importance through provoking changes. Obviously, the African American writers of the 20th century, among them Richard Wright took the same device to overthrow the oppressive regime. This perspective is confirmed by Perkins, he states: "There is perhaps no literary form more conducive than autobiography to activist's effort to emphatically link the personal to the political".

Autobiography becomes a means of expression. For many centuries, many auto-biographers of the post-colonial era depicted their experiences with the negation of their personal being. The postcolonial writers are the pioneers who revealed the importance of the autobiography as a literary form of writing. Through it, the auto-biographer is affirming himself as an individual. It is the "The need for postcolonial authors to express themselves as

subjects and not as objects [...] self-affirmation is the essence of this book, [...] autobiographical writing is an art-form” (Benaouda, 2015: 17).

Once the oppressed is denied access to the communication tools in the dominant society, the autobiography genre is the first attempt that the black oppressed use in order to resist and denounce the injustices. In fact, through using this genre, they create a voice to protest and to change the oppressive society socially and politically. The narrative is considered as “a symbolic device exploring issues of cultural inclusion or exclusion [...] it is linked to equal social and political participation” (ibid). In fact, Richard Wright is among other committed black writers who use protest literature to deal with the black cultural exclusion. Indeed, self-writing is “eventually, a weapon to counteract their total cultural exclusion”. Gates declares that “black people [...] had to represent themselves as speaking ‘subjects’ before they could even begin to destroy their status as ‘objects’, as commodities, within Western culture”(Stover,2003:34).

The autobiography for the black American becomes “a way of preserving cultural memory while at the same time challenging their marginalization and oppression by the socio-political, economic, and literary establishment.”(ibid) Braxton writes that “autobiography, perhaps more than any other literary genre, is a form of symbolic memory, confluence of culture and consciousness.” (ibid) Obviously Richard Wright in his autobiography not only denounces the white hegemony but also uses it as a historical testimony of the Jim Crow era. It testifies the atrocities of the racist white authorities and how the black community bravely resist and defend themselves. In fact, what makes autobiography different from other fictional texts is its sense of truth, since scholars may check the accuracy of the given text.

For Es'kia Mphahlele, a South African writer wrote two autobiographies. He puts the purpose of this literary genre as follows “it tells black people who they are and where they come from, and what they should be doing (their repression)” (Benaouda, 2015:15). The aim of literature in general and the autobiographical text in particular is to provoke changes in the social practices. In this perspective, many South African writers use ‘life writing’ to denounce and alter the unfair social practises of the Apartheid that outlaws self-affirmation. Criminal enterprise uses racism as an institutionalised social practice.

In this instance, we can mention Peter Abrahams’ *Tell Freedom* (1954), Es'kia Mphahlele’ s *Down Second Avenue* 1959) and Albert Luthuli’s *Let My People Go* (1962). And yet, these regimes as Jim Crow and Apartheid are established in order to erect “an identity of the African as timeless, fixed, and immutable” (Benaouda, 2015: 16). In this perspective, Woodcock shows the importance of ‘life writing’, since these auto-biographers write in order “to create an awareness in their people in their past history and faith in their present struggle [...] in order that the ‘other’s reader develop an understanding approach towards their cause and realize the legitimacy of the Native’s struggle”(ibid).Accordingly, life writing is considered as kind of weapon that can reverse the stereotypical discourse.

Fictionalized autobiography is “thinly disguised as a novel” (Bloom, 2009: 82).In other words, facts and fiction are fused together. The author is not recalling all his personal life but he sheds light on the most important events. In fact, the auto-biographer has a direct control to his narrative. As Booth Opines puts it “he (auto-biographer) chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read; we infer him as an ideal literary, created version of the real man; he is the sum of his own voices” (Hunt, 2000:162).In other quarters, the author chooses some events that he wants to stress on his subject and neglects or minimizes other events that does not contribute to his vision. Moreover, what is crucial in writing an autobiography is that

the writer can recreate a life according to his criteria and the image he wants to project to his reader. The auto-biographer is the hero of the story. In addition autobiographical text leads the writer to discover himself. They write to affirm their membership to their nation.

For Roy Pascal, the auto-biographical genre is “essentially European” (Olbricht and Porter, 1996: 153). In the West, this genre becomes the most powerful form of self-expression. The Western auto-biographers have individualistic tendency, since the Westerner is obsessed to tell his story and to share his feeling; “unburden his heart” (ibid). The auto-biographers have the desire that the following generations must know about them. This is what Opines says:

Man is dependent on a community and is never isolated from it. But life in a community demands that each man must play a role which had sometimes or other been played by his ancestors and will be also be played by his offspring who would take on the names of their forefathers (Singh, 1997: 162)

For the autobiographical writers, it is their duty to acknowledge the following generation. It is their burden to depict and denounce the unjust practices. It is their mission “does it or betrays it” Richard chooses to do his mission.

Thanks to the postcolonial African and Indian auto-biographical writers, the genre has known advancement. It becomes popular and focuses on the importance of the individual. As Gayatri Spivak defines the “subaltern” as someone who tells his personal story to the rest of the world (Benaouda, 2015:13). A self-writing is a quest for identity, self-knowledge and self-recognition. To free themselves from the stereotypes imposed on them, Mphahlele’s autobiography reflects “an aspects of resistance and the forging of alternative, counter-hegemonic identities” (ibid: 16). In other words, the auto-biographers, in constructing counter-hegemonic identities, they destroy the “Apartheid ideology that the natives need time to develop by using technologies of the self in tandem with technologies of power” (*Ibid*).

As literary scholars put autobiography back to the first European's attempt who celebrated his uniqueness (Stover, 2003: 20). The former shows how the same pattern is an attempt for self-writing by the "Other," that is to say; by women and by people of colour in order to record their own personal histories (ibid). In fact, the colonial travel writers were self-centred and celebrated freedom and heroism while discovering the new colonies. In this perspective, Somnath Sarode states:

In these stories of conquest the Western European male, and occasionally his female counterpart, is engaged in a literal and psychological journey. He is tested by the forces of nature and by cultural conflict, and he acts as an agent of the Western concept of progress, which Europeans thought promised perpetual social improvement and gave them the right to "civilize" the world in their image. Hence, the autobiography and the colonization are closely linked with each other.

(SomnathSarode, 2015: 25)

Broadly speaking, for the European, writing an auto-biography is "a kind of a classical odyssey" in which the hero fights against the wilderness, the "savages" and opens "new" lands for the white settlement. Indeed, through their journey, they took pride of their bravery once they survive despite nature and the "savages". The auto-biographer had to face "the physical struggle with the forces of nature and with "uncivilized". Similarly, Wright as an auto-biographer uses the same strategy. Thus, he creates a hero that faces and challenges all kinds of obstacles and miraculously survives, regardless of his hostile entourage. In other words, Richard Wright uses the same weapon to celebrate his individuality. In fact, creating such a hero is not egocentrism, but it is concerned with the struggle of the black community. Indeed, black male autobiographies focus on the need of an "independent and heroic in the face of white-male biases" (Stover, 2003:28).

Through what have been said above, auto-biographical way of writing has proved its truthiness in protesting against the white oppression. The postcolonial auto-biographers use the same literary genre to reverse and to counter attack the stereotypical discourse that denies the dehumanized any human identification. Thus, the auto-biographers struggle for their

identity through denouncing the white repressive codes, being a witness to human history, celebrating their individuality and culture.

III.2.Short fictions (novella and short story) as forms of resistance

For the black writers, the autobiography genre is regarded as a way of resistance. Likewise, the novella form is adopted by the African writers as postcolonial writings. Our choice to include the short story genre is not taken haphazardly. Since La Guma himself is a short story writer. Moreover, his first writings were short stories. Furthermore, the author's novella, *A walk in the Night* is accompanied with seven short stories. They are published as a collection in 1967. It includes, *Tatto Marks Nails*, *Blankets*, *At the portagee's*, *The Gladiators*, *A Matter of Taste* and *The Lemon Orchard*. Both the novella and the other short stories deal with the realities of Apartheid injustices

According to Merriam Webster's encyclopedia, a novella is "a work of fiction intermediate in length and complexity between a short story and a novel" (Webster, 1995:820).The novella can be defined as a narrative work of prose fiction. The novella genre is shorter in length than a novel, but longer than a short story. The novella as a literary genre first emerged in the early fourteen century in Italian renaissance literature with the works of Giovanni Boccaccio (*Decameron* 1353). In the nineteenth century, the novella emerged in the writings of Russian and German authors. Some popular novellas included Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.According to Boccioni

The novella achieves its verisimilitude by embracing historical time and the arrangement of events [...] employing historical events help to achieve its verisimilitude (credibility) it gives the novella an air of truth and verisimilitude. (Rabell, 2003: 25).

In the twentieth century, many authors started writing contracted form of narratives. "Sudden fiction" is another name referred to all shortened forms of short fiction. The former

is divided into two types: the sudden fiction and the flash fiction. The latter is shorter than the sudden story. Later, the flash fiction has included all short-short stories containing of 50 to 1500 words. According to William Sansom, good writers cannot escape the fact of being committed in their writings, he states: “There has never been any writer of importance who is not ‘engaged’” (Allaham, 2009:16). The novella is seen as responses to a particular moment of history. It denounces and resists against the hegemony of the colonizers. The themes of the novella depict oppression and dehumanization of the white towards the blacks. Hanson says: “Concentrated form, wrought out of an intensification of thought and feeling and demanding an equivalent stylistic intensity” (Hanson 1985: 3). It focuses on an important moment in the life of an individual.

Among the features of the short fiction are brevity, intensity, and unity of impression. These characteristics are of great importance for the short story writer, because of the political, social and economic contexts, in which they wrote their stories. Hanson suggests that “it was because of a general interest in the ‘significant moment’ that short fiction came to prominence in the modernist period” (Hanson, 1985: 55). Furthermore, Cortazar regards the short story writer as a photographer. For him, the writer has to “choose and define an image or event that is significant not only in itself, but also capable of affecting the spectator (Allaham, 2009:14). In Alex La Guma’s case, he uses one significant event in the South African history, where the natives react against the white authorities. Sharpeville massacre is the image that La Guma wants to point out in his novella. In other words, he displays the moments of oppression and struggle. La Guma’s characters are involved, either victimized or struggle against their oppressors. For Hanson, short story has the ability “to establish links with past and future events” (Hanson 1985: 56).

The storyteller relates forgotten events, in order to:

Bring them alive and introduce into them modifications which are increasingly fundamental. There is a tendency to bring conflicts up to date and to modernize the kinds of struggle which the stories evoke, together with the names of heroes and the types of weapons (Allaham, 2009:17)

Hanson further explains that “there is a connection between social unease of disjunction and a preference of the short story form” (Hanson, 1985: 34). Gullason also argues that “The short-story writer usually gains in control, in power, and in meaningfulness by his arts of distillation, telescoping, and understatement. And, the short story can be easily reread; often it must be reread. Like the diamond, the short story throws off glints of meanings” (Allaham, 2009:19)

Language is another feature of the short fiction. In fact, there is “no word written just to fill up the page” (Allaham, 2009:14). Every word has a significant meaning, as Warren S. Walker argues: “because of its intensity, the short story engages the full attention of the reader” (ibid). Likewise in La Guma’s novella, he uses names such as Adonis, Constable Raalt and Willieboy, who are allegorical. The short story writers adopt vernacular language to target readers of a low level of education category; peasants, middle class workers. In addition, Deleuze’s and Guattari explain how the language of the short story writer appropriates it in order to target his audience. They state: “it is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization” (Allaham, 2009: 23). This means that language used is modified to suit a certain category. For this reason, La Guma chooses the language of everyday life as a tool for communicating resistance.

For Hanson, “many prose writers began their career with short fiction and continued to find the form congenial in the glancing form of fiction that seems to be right for the nervousness and restlessness of contemporary life” (Hanson 1985: 124-125). Likewise La

Guma's beginnings of writing were short stories and novella. Moreover, the repressive entourage that he witnesses during the Apartheid is the fuel of his writings.

For Paolo Amalfitano, novellas need unity of action. He states: "while novels reinforce their point by means of repetitious episodes, novellas concentrate instead on a striking event"(Pavel, 2017:482). Similarly, La Guma's novella has one striking events is the act of killing the innocent Uncle Doughty. Furthermore, for Boccaccio, his novellas consist of a couple of narrative moves: desire and fulfillment, offense and acceptance or revenge, crime and punishment, test and success (ibid).Likewise, Alex La Guma's A Walk in the Night focuses on the offense and oppression of the white's regime in one hand, and the black's resistance in the other hand. As still another feature of the novella is that in each beginning of the story, the character(s) face a major challenge, "however, these characters react in the least expected fashion [...] the shocking interpolation of the ordinary and the extraordinary" (Thomas,2017:483). Like La Guma's novella which starts with Adonis's an unfair dismissal and the police's harassments, then ends with the unexpected act of killing of Uncle Doughty. This act is interpreted as an action of insubordination

In the post-colonial periods, many writers' works has significantly contributed to the literature of their countries. They responded to the present political turmoil and its effect on their people. They criticized racism and oppression. In this way, they explored their possibility of resistance. In their literary works, the writers devise some literary forms such as the short story and the novella. Both these literary genres, disclose the aspect of resistance literature. Indeed, the stories written by these authors depict themes of oppression, humiliation and violence and their impact on the life and the mind of the oppressed.

The committed literature, produced by these writers has engendered political action among the masses. The aim of protest literature is to challenge and resist the writings of the

whites. It conveys the stereotypical image of the blacks. The literary texts are mainly social and political revolts against the hegemonic power of the colonizer.

Among the reasons that led the authors of resistance literature is to opt for the novella genre. Firstly, the fact that these writers are committed, they engage themselves with their local issues that concern their own communities. Secondly, the novella genre could be seen by some writers as a tool for communicating their resistance and counter the colonial discourse. In this context, Fanon points out that when the native starts to address “his own people” then, we can claim a national literature or what he called a “literature of combat”. The latter, calls on the whole people to fight for their nation. Since the writers of resistance literature are involved in the issues of their people, they depict their own experiences. Harlow states: “that particular category emerged significantly as part of the organized national liberation struggles and resistance movements in Africa, Latin America and the middle East”(Harlow, 1987: xvii).

To prove that the novella genre is a strategy of resistance, we make reference to two novellas, which incite its audience to revolt against the white hegemonic systems, namely the Zionist and American Slavery. We have selected the American Frederick Douglass’ Heroic slave (1842) and the Palestinian Ghassan Kanafani’s *The Land of Sad Oranges* (1963). In the case of Ghassan Kanafani, whose novellas can be interpreted as responses to specific Palestinian historical moments. Harlow puts emphasis on Kanafani’s choice of the Palestinian short fiction in: “the term resistance was first displayed in a depiction of Palestinian literature in 1966 by Ghassan Kanafani in his study literature of resistance in occupied Palestine: 1948-1966” (Hallow, 1987:2). The author opted for the novella genre because of the objective it presents. It calls people for action and revolution in order to change their predicament. Indeed, his fictions tackle the Palestinian resistance movement. As Salma Jayyusiputs it, all the

Palestinians are “committed by their way to identify to a life determined by events and circumstances” (Jayyusi, 1992:3).

The best example of Kanafani’s resistance literature is found in his novella *The Land of Sad Oranges* (1963). The author depicts the painful moments of the Palestinian’s exodus and the loss of their land in 1948. This event is symbolized through the image of the loss of orange place. Therefore, this loss means the loss of the land. Thus, the author’s message conveys that the Palestinians should revolt in order to restore their land.

Similarly to Ghassan Kanafani, Alex La Guma, a committed South African writer undergoes the same fate. He harshly rejects the oppressive Apartheid system. His way of adopting the novella genre is a means of his resistance to the white regime. Cecil Abraham states: “*A Walk in the Night* is La Guma’s first attempt at writing a long story or a novella. Until this novella, he had written a few short stories (Abrahams, 1985: 46). La Guma’s novella illustrates the predicament of the South Africans and the impact of the Apartheid system on their lives. The author portrays characters who manage to resist the hostile environment. In this sense, the author uses the resistance literature as a way to incite his people, for unity and action, in order to regain their humanity. It is also a tactic to counter the white hegemony. La Guma’s novella is considered as a historical testimony of the atrocities of the Apartheid system in the sixties. In *A Walk in the Night*, La Guma focuses mainly on his two characters, Michael Adonis and Willieboy who challenge the white authority as the way of their resistance to the white system. As a matter of fact, he uses his personal experiences to write his fiction and finds it the best way to resist the oppressive white regime (Abrahams, 1985: 49).

Like the South African people, the African Americans suffered from the white oppression. During slavery era, Frederick Douglas was a militant African American writer.

His choice of the novella form suits particularly the oppressed voices of the African Americans. In this context, Merriam Webster's encyclopedia confirms this point: "set in the American Deep, each novella concerns an aspect of lives of black people and explores their resistance to white racism and oppression". (Webster, 1995:1148).

Frederick Douglass focuses on slave's hardships and their resistance to the white injustices. In the *Heroic Slave*, Douglass focuses on the everyday realities; the hardships of his people. The characters' revolutionary actions are considered as an evidence of their resistance. The plot revolves around a fugitive slave, who led a rebellion aboard a ship of nineteen slaves in 1841. It was known as the "Coastwise slave trade". Madison Washington, the main character, diverts the ship's itinerary to Virginia from the Bahamas. This rebellion freed 135 slaves. This recalls Douglas's participation in the Creole rebellion. In fact, the author based his novella on historical facts and figures. The author's historical references give the story its credibility for narrating a reality. In their struggle for emancipation, the African Americans aim for recognition and equality, seeking to be integrated in the American society. As a matter of fact, Douglas's use of the novella genre fits the events of the rebellion. In this perspective, like other previous writers, Douglas uses the novella genre as a means of resistance. This could be seen as his form of political involvement in the struggle during slavery time.

As a conclusion, we can say that the autobiography and short fiction serve as "awakener" of their people's awareness. The previous authors adopt a "committed literature" that best suits their objectives. Like the autobiography, novella denounces the atrocities of the white system and its dire consequences. Both genres are kind of historical testimonies and counter hegemonic discourses. Moreover, they incite their people for revolutionary actions in order to achieve their emancipation.

V. Conclusion

This piece of research has allowed us to explore the issue of white violence and black counter violence as resistance in Richard Wright's *Black Boy* (1945) and Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* (1962), through the lenses of Frantz Fanon's theoretical concept of "Counter Violence" and Paulo Freire's concept of "Dehumanization". Our basic assumption is that because of both authors' own life experiences under the repressive regimes of the Apartheid and the Jim Crow Laws, and because of their commitment, they both produced two literary works worth to be considered as testimonies of the two periods of history. In fact, the relation of violence and counter violence is that of cause and effect. We have built the discussion section with respect, in the first chapter; both authors' depict violence and the cause of dehumanization of the Blacks. In the second chapter, we have developed and defended our hypothesis that Black violence is resistance and the logical outcome to the White violence.

We conclude that violence is never initiated by the Blacks. In fact, the Whites brought and imposed it through the repressive regimes. Furthermore, the Blacks internalized the idea of dehumanization and violence in the oppressed' mind. Moreover, violence has never been Black's nature. The work of Wright and La Guma can be considered as historical testimonies of violence of the white hegemony. In fact, the two literary works allow us to discover how the field of literature is important to history.

After the analysis of both fictions, we come to conclude that the two literary forms are not haphazardly selected, but intentionally chosen by the two writers. Since auto-biography and short fiction are historically proved to be the best genres, as well as a strategy to denounce and counter attack the Western culture. Furthermore, both texts can be seen as a living testimony to maintain and perpetuate the African and Black American culture. Both

Wright and La Guma try to revise the stereotypes and the prejudice that a Black is violent. Through literature, the two authors were given chance to truthfully report the Black sufferings and their resistance to the repressive white regimes.

We have noticed that both works and authors are still rich for workable topics. We have also noticed that when Wright moved to France, he met some important figures and writers, such as Simon de Beauvoir, Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. According to critics, Wright is probably influenced by Camus's ideas and writings. In fact, like Camus, the American novelist wrote a book under the same title which is *The Outsider* in 1953. Actually, Camus's novella *The Stranger* or *The Outsider* is published in 1945. Therefore a comparative study can be conducted to see to what extent does the work of Camus influences the work of Richard Wright's narrative.

Bibliography

- **Primary Sources:**

- La Guma Alex, *A Walk in the Night*(1962), London: Heinemann, 1967.
- Wright Richard., *Black Boy* (1945), New York: literary classic of the United States, 1991.

- **Secondary sources**

- A.J. Christopher. *Segregation and Cemeteries in Port Elizabeth, South Africa* in the *Geographical Journal*, 1995.
- Abrahams, Cecil. *Alex La Guma* .Boston: Twayne, 1985.
- Abrahams, Cecil. Preface, *Memories of home: The writings of Alex La Guma*. New jersey, Africa World Press, 1991.
- Assata Shakur. *Assata: An autobiography*: West post Lawrence Hill and Co,1987.
- Barnett, Ursula. *A study of South African literature in English* (1914- 1980).London: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983.
- Bloom, Harold. *Bloom's modern critical views Arthur Miller*, New Edition, 2009.
- Breidlid, Andres. *Resistance and Consciousness in Kenya and South Africa: Subalternity and representation in the novels of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Alex La Guma*. Frankfurt- Peter Lang, 2002.
- Collier Encyclopaedia, Vol – 3, 1962.
- Dierk, Walter, *Colonial Violence: Empire and the Use of Force*,2017
- Dailey, Jane. *The Age of Jim Crow*, Norton & Company, Library of Congress, New York, 2009.
- Fabre, Michel. *The World of Richard Wright*. Mississippi: University of Mississippi press.

- Fanon, Frantz. 'Concerning Violence', in *the Wretched of the Earth* by Jean Paul Sartre. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press, 2004.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin Books, 1961.
- Field, R.M. *Alex La Guma: A literary and political biography of the South African years*. Western Cape: the University of the Western Cape, 2001.
- Franklin, John Hope and Moss Alfred, *From Slavery to Freedom, John hope Franklin*, New York, 2009.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, (1968), London: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Hakutani, Yoshinobu .*Cross Cultural vision in African American Modernism*: Ohio:OhioUniversity Press, 2006.
- Hanson, Clare, *Short stories and short fictions*, London: Macmillan, 1985
- Harlow, Barbara. *Resistance Literature*, New York: London Methuen, 1987.
- Hunt, Celia. *Therapeutic Dimensions of Autobiography in Creative writing*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000.
- Jan Mohamed A.R. *Manichean Aesthetics: the Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts press, 1983.
- Johnnie M. Stover, *Rhetoric and Resistance in Black Women's Autobiography*, university Press of Florida, 2003.
- Keppel, Jones Arthur, *South Africa: A short history*. Hutchinson, 1975.
- Latham, B. Frank, *The Rise and the Fall of "Jim Crow" 1865-1964*, Franklin Watts, Library of Congress Catalog, New York,1969.
- Lebdaï Benaouda, *Autobiography as a Writing Strategy in Postcolonial Literature* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

- Lewis, G. *Between the wire and the wall: A history of South African “coloured” politics*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1987.
- Mandela Nelson, *Black Man in a White Court*, 1962.
- Mandela Nelson, *I am prepared to Die*, 1964.
- Margo V. Perkins, *Autobiography as Activism*, Jackson, 2000.
- Merriam-Webster’s *Encyclopedia of Literature*, library of Congress, 1995.
- Ntaganira, Vincent. *Alex La Guma’s Short Stories in Relation to A Walk in the Night*, 2005.
- Odendaal, A. and Field, R. *Liberation Chabalala: the world of Alex La Guma*. Bellville: Mayibuye Books, 1993.
- Paul C. Jones, *Unwelcome Voices: Subversive Fiction in the Antebellum South*, Publisher: University Tennessee Press, 2005.
- Phillipson, Robert. *The Identity question: Black and Jews in Europe and in America*. Mississippi Press, 2000.
- Porter Stanley E and Olbricht Thomas H. *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from Pretoria Conference*, 1994.
- Rabell, Carmen R. *Rewriting the Italian novella in counter-reformation, Spain*, 2003.
- Sewak, Singh. *Spectrum History of Indian Literature in English*, Charu Sheel Singh Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 1997.
- Yayyusi, Salma Khadra. *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- **Articles and Theses**
- Ali Ahmad, Allaham. *The Short Story as a Form of Resistance: A Study of the Short Stories of Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, and Alice Walker*, Doctorate thesis of Philosophy , Newcastle University, 2009.

- Allaham, Ali Ahmad, “In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of”, Newcastle University, 2009
- Briggs, CyrilV. “The Crusader”,in The Program of ABB,Vol V, no 4. PP. 34, 1921.
- Briggs, CyrilV. “The Crusader”, in The Program of ABB,Vol V, no.3, P 18, 1921.
- Briggs, CyrilV. “The Crusader”, in The Program of ABB,Vol VI, no.1, P 16, 1922
- Chesstealia, Benson, “the Rise and the Fall of Jim Crow”, 2013
- Gomez, Juan. Socialism and Identity in the Life and Works of Richard Wright, Antioquia University, 2014
- De Young, Mark, The Dialectic of (Dis) Alienation the Life and the Works of Richard Wright, Rice University, 2014
- Dungan, “The Man who Almost was a Man Style and Substance”, 2014
- Field, R.M. *Alex La Guma: A Literary and Political Biography of South African Years. Doctorate Literature Thesis. Western Cape: The University of Western Cape, 2001.*
- Graham, Matthew. Why Steve Biko’s Remarkable Legacy is Often Overlooked? 2017.
- Makombe, Rodwell. Crime, Violence and Apartheid in Selected Works of Richard Wright and Athol Fugard: A study .Doctorate Thesis. University of Fort Hare, 2011.
- Pavel Thomas, “Forms of Insubordination in the Novella” Vol. 1, 2017.
- Somnath Sarode,Rani.A *Study of Selected Autobiographies in Literature*, Doctorate Thesis of Philosophy, 2015.
- Sonia Sanchez, 1984, Reflection After the June 12th March for Disarmament, NY, Thunder’s Mouth Press.
- Walcott, Rinaldo, The Root of the Youth Violence,, Phd paper in Centre of Criminology, University Toronto, 2010

- Zachariasiewicz, Wladermar “Richard Wright: the Ethic of Living Jim Crow: the Autobiography Impulse in Rendering the Racial Divide in Wright’s non- Fiction”, 2015.