

# Constellations

Issue no. 2  
Summer 2024



## Table of Contents

About <i>Constellations</i> .....	1
To NYI .....	2
Articles .....	3
<b>Regarding the issue of the long and short forms of adjectives in the Russian language and the challenges of learning this aspect</b>	
Irina Aliyeva, University of Siena .....	4
<b>Essay: If God Gives a Bunny</b>	
Arina Boyko, Northern Arizona University .....	11
<b>Vietnamese Audience Reception of Fairy Tale Music Videos - A Case Study of Hoàng Thùy Linh's "See Tình"</b>	
Huynh Vinh Khang, Van Lang University, Vietnam .....	19
<b>Universal Boundary Theory: An Old Icelandic Case Study</b> Sayantan Mandal, Université Concordia .....	33
<b>Discursive Consciousness in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's "The River Between" and Alex Guma's "A Walk in the Night"</b>	
Lucky Amarachukwu Onebunne, Nnamdi Azikiwe University & Ifeoma Blessing Morah, Nnamdi Azikiwe University .....	43
<b>The Role of Prosody in the Marking of Information Structure in Korean Speakers of L2 English</b>	
Suzy Park, Yonsei University .....	61
<b>Missing Coming Out: Production of Queer Identities in the Russian Music Scene of the 1990s and 2000s</b>	
Ksenia Roit, independent researcher .....	71
<b>Tamed Realism and Surrealism in Graves' and Apollinaire's Visual Poetry</b>	
Jenis John Rumao, University of Mumbai .....	92
<b>Memory studies and commemoration in documentary and videoart: Searching for new forms of archive</b>	
Yanka Smetanina, University of Art Berlin .....	105
Poetry & Prose .....	115
<b>inter</b>	
Alex Dautova .....	116
<b>"You're all..."</b>	

## Discursive Consciousness in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's "The River Between" and Alex Guma's "A Walk in the Night"

**Authors:** Lucky Amarachukwu Onebunne, Nnamdi Azikiwe University & Ifeoma Blessing Morah, Nnamdi Azikiwe University

### ABSTRACT

The study investigated discursive consciousness in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *the River Between* and Alex La Guna's *a Walk in the Night*. The study sought to investigate the extent the ontological state of being, language and identity of the people are expressed in Ngugi Wa

Thiongo's *the River Between* and Alex La Guna's *a Walk in the Night*. It also sought to identify the extent the characters make discursive conscious representation of themselves with respect to gender, race, ethnicity and domination. The researcher also adopted a Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) as the theoretical framework for the study and descriptive and qualitative approaches were adopted in the course of analyzing the work. Findings of the research showed that, that the thematic preoccupations of the two texts under study center on the struggle for leadership, survival and the influence of European culture and religion in Africa. Thus, there is power struggle, cultural and religious clashes between the African society and the whites according to the study.

**KEYWORDS:** Discourse, Consciousness, Discursive Consciousness, Ontology, Psychology and Critical Metaphor

### Background to the Study

Literature is an artistic work of arts that mirrors life or reflects the human society (Shalini and Samundeswari, 2017). One thing that it is important to know about literature is that it is aesthetic in nature in the sense that it evokes imagery (mental pictures) in the mind with reference to experiences of any given society. Hence, literature does not develop in a vacuum, but reflects the norms and established social and cultural identity of a given society (Shalini and Samundeswari, 2017). African literature, on the other hand, according to Odinye

(2018:76), “performs the didactic function of representing African beliefs, culture and existing social or moral values in order to correct, enlighten, and teach morals”. Ojaide (2006:29) also visualizes African literature as, “literary works that articulate the social, cultural and historical imperatives of the African people, which is written by any African who is a citizen of any African country”. By this definition, African literature is a vital part of peoples’ lives. It is a process that deals with the use of words (language) artistically to show the identity and state of being of people.

Language and literature are intrinsically related; hence, one cannot exist without the other.

Since literature “finds its expression in language” (Osundare, 2010:10), language, therefore, is a vital tool used in creative works to represent the identity of a given people. This means that the use and mastery of language or linguistic forms is an indispensable tool employed by

creative writers to make a discursive conscious representation of people’s identity, belongingness or state of being (Osundare, 2010). However, for a better conceptualization of discursive consciousness, it is pertinent to understand what the terms “discursive” and “consciousness” are all about, and how they are deployed in literature.

The word ‘consciousness’ is deep in meaning and utilized in many different ways. It is often used to scientifically explain one’s ability to discriminate stimuli, report information, monitor internal states or control behaviour (Chalmers, 1995). In definition, it is the state of being awake and aware of one’s surroundings or one’s identity (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2004:16). This means that the term consciousness is a process in itself. It is thus the awareness of an individual about his or her identity and anything surrounding him or her. Similarly, consciousness is quality or state of being aware especially of something within oneself (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, 1981:17).

The term “discursive” can be referred to as the use of spoken words or language to express an ideology or a notion. Discursive consciousness, on the other hand, according to Luriya (2006:323), can be referred to as:

a mechanism that allows one to delve deeper into the meaning of things, go beyond the limits of direct impression, organize a purposeful

behaviour, reveal complex relationships and relationships inaccessible to direct perception and transfer of information to another person.

This means that discursive consciousness helps to explicate things we do, things we say and how the state or ontology of being is expressed through the use language or spoken discourse. Discursive consciousness therefore goes beyond the mental psychology of what we think about the world we live in and the mental pictures we create in the mind, but rather, it is how our awareness of our state of being and belongingness is said (Krieger, 2018).

The description above shows that, discursive consciousness is associated with the speakers' consciousness, awareness or knowledge and ideas, which are formed in the process of socialization and become the basis of that cultural mass, transmitted from generation to generation within a certain ethnic group or society. However, discursive consciousness, in the context of this study, is the introduction of a mental outlook, consciousness or awareness in an individual or a group which leads an established perceptions of reality, identity or state of being (Kumar, 1990).

Some African artists have tried to explicate African culture before they came into direct contact with the Whiteman. According to Wilson-Tagoe (1998:16):

These writers address themselves to the pre-colonial era and their major aim is to show the world that Africans did have an ontology, identity and culture it could boast of; For instance, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* provides a vivid picture of traditional African life- religious rites, recreational and economic activities. Camara Laye's *the African Child*, is a good portrayal of African life as beautiful, peaceful and harmonious, and also comes under this group. A second group of the African writers concerns itself with the fatal conflict between Africans and Europeans. They show the subsequent loss of identity, belongingness, image and cultural values of the Africans.

This theme seems a dominant and favorite one among African writers of the 1930s. Writers such as T.M. Aluko's novel, *One Man One Matchet*, Mango Beti's, *in Poor Christ of Bomba*, Chinua Achebe's, *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi Wa Thiongo's, *The River Between*, all illustrate the theme of conflict of culture in their respective

communities. However, this research focusses on Ngugi's *the River Between* and Alex La Guna's *a Walk in the Night* and Alex La Guna's *a Walk in the Night*.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Discursive paradigms of consciousness recognize it as an abstract concept that only involve cognitive thinking. However, it is pertinent to note that discursive consciousness is aptly beyond cognition, but also refereed to how these thoughts are articulated (things we do and say with these thoughts). While cognitive thoughts, theories and ideologies relate consciousness to the five traditionally recognized human senses, (i.e. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch), the concepts of awareness (i.e. being aware of things happening around a human being or state of being) and having a sense of purpose or intent in undertaking actions are relevant in the study of consciousness; hence this study will focus on making discursive conscious representations of identity and belongingness using literary texts (Lakoff, 1990).

Nevertheless, as much as substantial works have been done on consciousness in Africa (Struthers, 2001, William, 1890 and Jaynes, 1978), more seem to agree that consciousness is an object of psychology by looking at consciousness as just cognitive thinking without looking at how these cognitive thoughts are used in a discursive manner to express state of being or identity. However, this present research hopes to fill this gap in knowledge by exploring a discursive consciousness using *Ngugi's the River Between* and Alex La Guna's *A Walk in the Night*.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this research is to carry out an analysis of the discursive consciousness in

Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *the River Between* and Alex La Guna's *a Walk in the Night Between*.

Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. to investigate the extent the ontological state of being and identity of the people is expressed in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *the River Between* and Alex La Guna's *A Walk in the Night*.

2. to identify the extent language use mirrors the way the people think, talk and act in the novels under study.
3. to identify the extent the characters, make discursive conscious representation of themselves.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions serve as a guide to this research study:

1. To what extent is the ontology and state of being of the people expressed in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *the River Between* and Alex La Guna's *A Walk in the Night*?
2. To what extent is language used to mirrors the way the people think, talk and act in the novels under study?
3. To what extent does the people make discursive conscious representation of themselves with respect to gender, race, ethnicity and domination of Western modernity in the novels?

### **The Concept of Consciousness**

From a medical perspective, consciousness is being aware of the stimulants through the five human senses consistently alert and controlling one's behaviour and attitudes (Kriegel, 2018:34). In other words, what is meant by consciousness is one's ability to perceive through senses. This is to say that for someone to perceive or become aware of his/her environment, he or she must apply his/her senses of touch, smell, reasoning, sight etc. According to Chalmers,

“there exists, to a certain extent, willpower in consciousness; that influences one's decisions” (1995:22). After a human perceives things with his or her five senses, the brain processes the information that is sent to it and this consequently results in the direction of the decisions it

(the brain) makes. Hence, consciousness involves the ability to perceive something or one's identity and make sense of it (Chalmers, 1995).

Furthermore, consciousness which is expressed through the word 'cognition' therefore is the mental activity and high brain functions that concern the processes of thought, decision-making and attention of a person (Chalmers, 1995). Man is a special being

with intelligence and ability to distinguish between right and wrong; good and bad by relating to situations. This consciousness, which makes man 'real man', has high functions and it means being able to discern and differentiate abstract concepts (Chalmers, 1995). A man is therefore able to make a conscious awareness of him or herself as a social being and thus express his/her identity and belongingness to a particular society.

The concept of consciousness from societal perspective according to Berger and Luckmann, in their *Social Construction of Reality*, logically argue that consciousness is individuals' awareness of their identity and belongingness to a given society through social relationships and interactions (1966). Berger and Luckmann further explain that "persons and groups interacting in a social system create over time concepts or mental representations of each other's actions, and that these concepts eventually become habituated into reciprocal roles played by the actors in relation to each other" (1966:23). Interestingly, another Western scholar, Van Dijk, in his book, *Ideology - A multidisciplinary approach*, while discussing on the social dimensions of ideologies, linked consciousness with the cognitive context very much related to the history of the study of ideologies and thus sees consciousness as the ability to make a conscious awareness of one's identity and belongingness to a given social group (1990). Following Van Dijk's line of thoughts on the concept of consciousness, he sees consciousness as the use of the five traditionally recognised human senses (i.e., sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch) to make a conscious awareness of one's immediate environment (1990). Therefore, consciousness is embedded in concepts of 'will', awareness and being aware of things happening around a human being or having a sense of purpose for doing something. We may therefore infer from the postulation of Van Dijk that a conscious person will use his/her senses to conduct life as civilized beings.

### **Discourse or Discursive**

Discourse can be straightforwardly seen as spoken or written communication. It follows then that the term discourse or discursive analysis can be understood as the analysis of such communication (Crotty, 1965:3). Discourse is very integral in the study of cognitivism in psychology which involves the ability to make a conscious assertion of oneself or one's belongingness to a particular social group by means of spoken or



written communication (Potter, 1996:23); that is of the notion that cognitive processes are the primary shapers of human action (Edwards and Potter, 1992:92).

It is pertinent to note that all of us are discursive analysts in our everyday lives. According to Gee, “we listen to others speak, we read texts and we make meaning of and interpret what is said or written; we also attend to how something is said or written and can understand the same word, phrase or sentence in different ways depending on the speaker’s or writer’s tone” (1999:2). All these activities are embedded in discursive study. However, what sets discursive analysis as a qualitative research methodology apart from these everyday activities is the analyst’s deliberate showing of what it is in the speaker’s or writer’s use of language that results in particular understandings and interpretations of what is said or written (Gee, 1999).

### **Language as Saying, Doing, and Being**

Discourse cannot be discussed without considering language as a potent tool for making discursive consciousness. Gee in his work was able to critically explore language as a tool for saying, doing and being. Therefore, according to Gee, “language serves many functions in our lives; giving and getting information is by no means the only one; language does, of course, allow us to inform each other and to do things as well” (1992:5). In fact, saying things in language never goes without also doing things and being things. Language allows us to do things. It allows us to engage in actions and activities. We promise people things, we open committee meetings, we propose to our lovers, we argue over politics, and we “talk to God” (pray) through language (Gee, 1992:5). These are among the myriad of things we do with language beyond giving and getting information. Therefore, language can be used as a potent tool to make discursive consciousness.

Furthermore, language allows us to be things, it allows us to take on different socially significant identities (Gee, 1992). This means that through language, we can speak as experts — as doctors, lawyers, or carpenters or as “everyday people.” To take on any identity at a given time and place we have to “talk the talk”. Hence, in language, there are important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity) (Gee, 1992:5). If I say anything to you, you cannot really understand it fully if you do not know what I am trying to do and who I am trying to be by saying it. To

understand anything fully, you need to know who is saying it and what the person saying it is trying to do.

### **Critical Metaphor Theory**

The theory that drives this research is Critical Metaphor Theory propounded by Charteris-Black in the year 2004 (Charteris-Black, 2004). As a fundamental cognitive tool to conceptualize the world, metaphor plays a vital role in constructing social reality. Thus, providing a particular perspective of viewing the reality, metaphor forms an important part of ideology (Guo, 2013). Critical Metaphor Theory focuses on the conventional metaphors which are found in language in order to explore cognitive perception of humans and their awareness about their surrounding environment (Lakoff, 1990). It is pertinent to note that, Critical Metaphor Theory (CMT), as an approach to metaphor analysis aims at revealing the implied intentions and ideologies of language users as well as the conceptual nature of metaphor (Charteris-Black, 2004). This is to say that the essence of metaphor in discursive consciousness is to influence the opinion of the people of a particular society about their identity and belongingness to the society.

Furthermore, Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Theory framework for metaphor analysis suggests that in metaphor analysis, the linguistic, semantic, cognitive and pragmatic criteria should be combined in order to effectively account for metaphor in any linguistic expression (Charteris-Black, 2004). Thus, the framework the researcher employed to analyze metaphoric expressions in this research combines the components of linguistic, cognitive and pragmatic criteria since one component cannot sufficiently account for the metaphoric expressions in the exposition of people's discursive consciousness and awareness of their identity (Charteris-Black, 2004). It is on the premise of linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive criteria that Charteris-Black (2004:24) gives comprehensive definition of metaphor to avoid controversy over what should constitute a metaphoric expression thus: "Metaphor plays a key role in the construction of social reality, for few concepts are semantically autonomous". Thus, conceptualization of the world relies greatly on metaphor.

According to Fairclough (1992), metaphors are socially motivated, different metaphors may correspond to different interests and perspectives and may have different ideological loadings. When we see the world with a particular metaphor, it then forms the basis of our action (Guo, 2013). Therefore, once a new metaphor comes into being

in our conceptual system, our perception of the world and behavior will change accordingly (Guo, 2013). This is what Critical Metaphor Theory postulates.

However, Critical Metaphor Theory is adopted as the most suitable theory for this study on discursive consciousness. This is because, as Charteris-Black (2004) states, metaphor is central to critical discourse analysis since it is concerned with forming a coherent view of reality. Thus, this study aims to investigate how the authors of the two texts under study explicates the people's perception of their identity or state of being and how they make a discursive consciousness of their identity with the use of language. Where Critical Metaphor Theory has been concerned with ideological structures of discourse, metaphor is just such a structure (Hodge and Kress, 1988).

Hodge and Kress (1988:15) contend that ideology involves "a systematically organised presentation of reality". Metaphors are ideological, then, in so far as they define in significant part what one takes as reality (Chilton, 2004). This makes Critical Metaphor theory very paramount to the study of discursive consciousness because the study aims to explore how characters in the novels under study consciously define their ideology and belongingness to the society.

In this study, therefore, the researchers adopted the framework of Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) which derives from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This framework is interested in exploring the implicit intentions of language users, the ideological configurations, discursive consciousness and the hidden power relations within socio-political and cultural contexts (Charteris-Black, 2004). It captures the ideological and conceptual nature of metaphor and transmits truth alive into the hearts of the people by passion (Charteris-Black, 2004).

The thrust of this study is the identification, analysis and interpretation of the ideological and conceptual metaphors in the two novels under study "*The River Between* by Ngugi Wa Thiong and *A Walk in the Night* by Alex La Guna", that create a particular linguistic style, conceptualize the speakers' experiences and transmit their ideologies and thereby making a discursive consciousness of their state of being and belongingness to their society.

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

Here, we would address the research questions that guided the study using a critical metaphor theory as the theoretical framework for the study. However, emphasis is on how the two authors, Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Alex La Guna, succeed in making discursive consciousness by explicating the identity and state of being of the Africans with the use of language as a potent tool that mirrors the society.

### **Synopsis of Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *the River Between***

The novel, *The River Between* was written by Ngugi. *The River Between*, published in 1965, examines the dilemma of an African ethnic group torn between Christianity and Westernization on the one hand, and indigenous ritual and values on the other (Avomah, 2017). The novel does not only pose the dilemma of choosing between African and Western values, it reflects the crises in the consciousness of a people whose beliefs are no longer the certainties their predecessors had considered them to be (Avomah, 2017). Ngugi sought to show the strengths and weaknesses that characterise the traditional life of Kenyan people in the novel. Therefore, a critical survey of *The River Between* by Ngugi reveals a pattern of increasing self-awareness of the issues caused by historical events and experiences on the consciousness of the Kenyan people. This is why thus research focuses on how the author succeeds in expressing the consciousness of Kenyan people in the text.

### **Synopsis of Alex La Guma's *a Walk in the Night***

Alex La Guma is a South African writer who was a product of the pathetic experience of South Africans during Apartheid in the past (Abraham, 1986). Thus, the painful etymological root and state of being of South Africans were reflected in his writings. In fact, his life experiences are represented in his creative writings and politics is the core of his life. He was born, grew up and died in a political environment (Abraham, 1986). Therefore, La Guma goes beyond the ordinary limits of any normal fiction and creates in *A Walk in the Night* the inspirational uplift of a truly revolutionary novella just like Ngugi did in *The River Between*. He uses his novella *A Walk in the Night* to explicate his displeasure with the abominations of the apartheid system perpetrated against the black

people in South African society and makes a discursive consciousness of South African state of being and identity through the use of language (Abraham, 1986).

### **Textual Analysis of Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *the River Between***

In *The River Between*, Ngugi explores vividly a discursive consciousness and awareness of the life, identity and tradition of his rural Kenyan society. The novel is set in Central Kenya in preindependent days, dating as far back as the 1930's when Kenya was under colonial rule (Mkhize, 1989). In Kenya as at the time the text was written, there was discrimination and exclusion with respect to gender, age, tribe and social status which led to the Black Consciousness Movement which is aimed at asking questions that borders on the ontological route and identity of Kenyan people (Balutansky, 1990). Ngugi uses his prominent novel, *The River Between* in a bid to make a discursive consciousness of East Africa, Kenya precisely.

### **To what extent is the Ontology and State of Being of the People expressed in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *the River Between***

In a bid to answer the first research question. Ngugi poses a question; this question is: Who is a true Kenyan? As elsewhere in Africa, the question is particularly important to this issue because it explicitly underlines the fact that a new vision of self, what Ngugi calls a "true selfimage" free from the distortions of colonialism, is the foundation of a new consciousness

(Ngugi, 1986:5). The peculiar nature of Kenya's ontology or state of being and its multi-ethnic and multi-racial nature has made this a complex and difficult question which resists the easy categorization of ethnic group and race, as Ngugi himself admits: In Kenya, there is really no concept of a nation; one is always a Kikuyu, a Luo, a Nandi, an Asian or a European; To live on the level of race of tribe is to be less than whole (1986:6). For Ngugi, identity is synonymous with an individual's rootedness in the community; a complete, organic identification with its hopes and aspirations, and by extension with the hopes and aspirations of other communities like it (1986:7).

In *The River Between*, the creation myth of the Kikuyu is woven into the land: "Murugu brought the man and the woman here and again showed them the whole vastness of the land. He gave the country to them and their children and the children of their children, tene na tene, world without end" (*The River Between*, 8). As Ngugi characterizes it, Kenyan identity is rooted in the land, and in the flora and fauna which characterize it

and make it unique (1986:9). Land, in other words, is the means through which many of Ngugi's characters define themselves, its rigidity providing them with a firm basis in reality from which they face the reality of life (Anderson, 1983).

In charting the evolution of discursive consciousness, Ngugi stresses the importance of a sense of history and ontological root, an ability to know where things started to go wrong, where "the rain first began to beat us" (Achebe, 2006), using Achebe's popular phrase. It is in this regard that the importance of memory becomes manifest in the novel, *The River Between*. In *The River Between*, this historical sense is perhaps most clearly explicated in the roles of seers and prophets who, as links between the past, the present and the future, have a duty to remind the community of the strength of the traditional heritage and to warn it of the dangers threatening that heritage (Gikandi, 1992).

### **To What Extent is Language Used to Mirrors the Way the People Think, Talk and Act in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *the River Between***

It is evident that the narratives in Ngugi's novel, *The River Between* comprise a network of metaphors and images which enrich the setting as well as intensify characterization, expand thematic discourse, and clarify a certain vision (Omar, 2006). According to Omar (2006), every aspect of the oral tradition is present in his novel; from the narratives of epical style to myths, songs for every occasion, proverbs, figures of speech, folktales and fables, chants and incantations, names and naming styles, ceremonies, language and imagery and is deeply rooted in the traditional cultures of Africa.

Thus, Ngugi tactfully uses language, verbal and non-verbal, symbolic and silent to effectively make discursive consciousness of Kenyan people. His varied characters representing different strata of society, offer scope for the usage of powerful and rich language.

Ngugi through his descriptions of the landscape introduces the importance of land in the lives of the Africans. The invasion settlers, their taking over of the land, colonialism and exploitation, reflect the dominant conflict in a multi-racial society. In *The River Between*, "beautiful and young and fertile" land "unaffected by turbulent forces outside it", shows the use of mind blowing language to create the impression that the fertile land of Kenya basically belonged to the Africans who believed that their land was their God (*The River Between*, 1965).

‘This land I give it to you, oh, man and woman; it is yours to rule and till you and your prosperity’ (*The River Between*, 1965).

The advent of the white man is thus expressed with the use of figurative language, “There shall come a people with clothes like butterflies” (*The River Between*, 1965). Ngugi exhibits the ignorance of the Africans about the railway line laid by the whites and their deep belief in their impenetrable nature of the hills. “The white man cannot speak the languages of the hills. And knows not the ways of the land” (*The River Between*, 1965). The invasion of the white man spreads ripples of hysteria in the Gikuyu society. “In the past years, things were changing. The pattern of seasons were broken...perhaps, it had to do with the white man” (*The River Between*, 1965).

### **Textual Analysis of Alex La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night***

La Guma goes well beyond the mere limits of any natural fiction and skillfully creates in *A*

*Walk in the Night* the inspirational uplift of a truly revolutionary novella just like Ngugi did in *The River Between*. He uses his novella *A Walk in the Night* to explicate his displeasure with the atrocities of the apartheid system perpetrated against the black people in South African society and makes a discursive consciousness of South African state of being and identity through the use of language (Abraham, 1986). Therefore, the novel, *A Walk in the Night* unravels the dark side of apartheid system through its analysis. The analysis of the novel brings aims to the limelight how La Guma uses language to express the consciousness and awareness of South African people about their ontological state of being occasioned by oppression and discrimination by the whites (Apartheid). This novella reveals to readers the atrocities that were perpetrated against the non-whites in South Africa. This study also highlights the restrictions placed on African workers under the oppressive Apartheid system and its effects on the psyche of the non-whites in South Africa (Asante, 1979). Different forms of maltreatments suffered by the blacks (non-whites) during the Apartheid regime were therefore evident in the novella. There is also seen in the novella a relentless effort by La Guma to protest against the Apartheid era. The life-styles of the non-whites clearly indicate that the Apartheid system really took away the dignity of the non-whites in South Africa.

### **To what extent is the Ontology and State of Being of the People expressed in Alex La Guma's *a Walk in the Night***

Alex La Guma's *a Walk in the Night* also explores the awareness or consciousness of South African people about their identity and state of being just like Ngugi did in *The River Between*, although he (Ngugi) uses Kenya as a case study. La Guma vividly describes the life of urban working class in South Africa whom their life is characterized with violence and all sorts of crimes. In the novel, two characters are killed, a young thug named Willieboy and an Irish actor called Doughty and neither deserves his death; they are innocent victims of a cruel and vicious sociopolitical system that destroys the lives of the disadvantaged. A promising young man, Michael Adonis who is sacked from his workplace ends up being a criminal. The police, supposedly the upholders of law and order have been brutalized into agents of oppression. Clearly, something is wrong with a society like this, a world where death, degradation and despair crush the human spirit.

This short novel is about the cruel treatment of the detestable Apartheid system which the nonwhites community has to suffer. Michael Adonis and Willieboy are in this vein, presented as typical examples of the ill-fated people. Hence, numerous other young fellows including Michael Adonis and Willieboy who live in District Six in Cape Town, cannot practically find a solution to their plight except through criminal behaviour. Willieboy, in order to survive, involves himself in petty crimes and violent acts and Michael Adonis, also after dismissal, finds solace in Foxy's gang which is specialized in burglary and minor crimes; hence, he becomes a member. To worsen the situation, Adonis who is still angered by the sack, transfers his anger onto an old Irish man; Mr. Doughty, during an argument over a bottle of wine and strikes him dead. In response, the police begin a furious hunt of the supposed killer. With no evidence against Willieboy, Constable Raalt, a vindictive white police officer, pulls the trigger and shoots him.

Indeed, blacks are brutally humiliated at every corner of this world. But for Adonis to say that

“Anyway those whites are better than ours, I bet you” (*A Walk in the Night*, 34) does not mean that they were better treated than the blacks in other continents especially Africa. It is probably suggestive of the fact that the blacks in the Americas are privileged enough to receive maltreatment on a foreign land. But the blacks in South Africa are



virtually maltreated in their own native land. Moreover, Adonis' anger against whites remains unmitigated while climbing the stairs of his tenement and 'nursing the foetus of hatred inside the belly' (*A Walk in the Night*, 35). The word 'foetus' used here gives the indication that the 'hatred inside the belly' will surely grow to become a "baby" and that it will surely be delivered. When invited by Doughty, an old Irish one-time actor living in the tenement to share a drink, Adonis' 'anger mixing with headiness of the liquor he had consumed and curdling into a sour knot of smouldering violence inside him' (*A Walk in the Night*, 26) makes Doughty a focal point of his anger against whites. Adonis 'struck out at the bony, blotched, sprouting skull, . . . The old man made a small, honking animal noise and dropped back on the bed' (*A Walk in the Night*, 2829). Eventually, the prevailing racial situation in South Africa makes matters difficult for Adonis.

### **To What Extent is Language Used to Mirrors the Way the People Think, Talk and Act in**

#### **Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night***

In *A Walk in the Night*, a stylistic use of language and the third-person narrative point of view is employed. Through the use of language and the third-person point of view, readers are made to view circumstances and events through the lives of two major characters: Michael Adonis and Willieboy. The sequence of the events is also made to revolve around Adonis and Willieboy such that the story literally moves with them. It is through the lives of these characters that readers identify the characteristics of apartheid and its consequences on the people and how the people express their consciousness and awareness of their identity and their experiences as South African under Apartheid.

The story begins by introducing to readers Michael Adonis, a coloured worker in a sheet metal factory. He is dismissed from his job upon talking back to a white foreman, Ou Scofield who refuses to allow him to take a few minutes off his work for urinating. It is obvious that the story deals with a subtle but steady moral deterioration of Michael Adonis. Adonis who meets a friend, Willieboy at the café tells us how and why he got sacked from his job:

‘Nice, boy, nice. You know me, mos. Always take it easy. How goes it with you?’

‘Strolling again. Got pushed out of my job at the facktry.’

‘How come then?’

‘Answered back to an effing white rooker. Foreman.’

‘Those whites. What happened?’

‘That white bastard was lucky I didn’t pull him up good. He had been asking for it a long time.

Every time a man goes to the 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’. (*A Walk in the Night*, 4)

From the dialogue above, we are made aware of the main reasons for sacking Adonis from the job. It is quite unfortunate that working for the white man is a tedious task for the non-white fellow. One has to get worn out for working under the white’s authority. As in the case of Adonis, he goes out to urinate and he is questioned on that. The verb ‘moaning’ as used in the passage tells us the displeasure shown by the foreman when he realizes that Adonis takes a break to visit the urinal. Adonis who considers himself as a human being but not a working machine also talks back to the foreman which results in his dismissal from the factory. It is therefore pertinent to note that the South African have an awareness of themselves as inferior to the whites, this is why they are subjugated by the whites through Apartheid. Apartheid which started from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa was the racial discrimination under the whites’ colonial rule which stipulated that all the non-whites comprising the South African as well to live in separate areas from the whites who regarded themselves as supreme.

## **REFLECTION**

The study investigated discursive consciousness using two prominent literary texts written by

African authors, Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *The River Between* and Alex La Guna's *A Walk in the Night*. Language serves many functions in our lives; one of which is that language is discursive in nature. In fact, saying things in language never goes without also doing things and being things. Language allows us to do things. It allows us to engage in actions and activities. We promise people things, we open committee meetings, we propose to our lovers, we argue over politics, and we "talk to God" (pray) through language. These are among the myriad of things we do with language beyond giving and getting information. Therefore, language can be used as a potent tool to make discursive consciousness.

It is also pertinent to note that the theoretical framework adopted for this study is a conceptual metaphor theory. This theory helped in the interpretation of the ideological and conceptual metaphors in the two novels under study "*The River Between* by Ngugi Wa Thiong and *A Walk in the Night* by Alex La Guna", that create a particular linguistic style, conceptualize the speakers' experiences and transmit their ideologies, thereby making a discursive consciousness. While Ngugi in *The River Between* brings out vividly the life and identity of Kenyan society. Alex in *a Walk in the Night*, on the other hand, explores the life and ontological root of South African society under Apartheid. The findings of the research showed that the thematic preoccupations of the two texts under study center on the struggle for leadership, survival and the influence of European culture and religion in Africa. Thus, there is resistance struggle, cultural and religious clashes between the African society and the whites according to the study.

## REFERENCES

- Abrahams, C. (1986). *The Writings of Alex La Guma*. In *Essays on Contemporary Post-Colonial Fiction*. Edited by Hedwig Bock and Albert Wertheim. Munich: Max Hueber, 149-172.
- Achebe, C. (2006). *Things Fall Apart*. Penguin Classics.
- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities*. London and New York: Verso.
- Asante, K. (1979). *Apartheid in South Africa: Origins and Impact*. Ghana: n. p.

- Avomah, O. (2017). A Critique of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences*, 4, 5, 35-50.
- Balutansky, K. M (1990). *The Novels of Alex Guma: The Representation of a Political Conflict*. Boulder: Three Continents Press.
- Berger, P., and Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Construction of Reality*, Garden City. New York: Anchor Books.
- Chalmers, D. (1995). Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness* 2(3): 200-219.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crotty, L. (1965). *Annals of Apartheid*. *New Statesman*, 29 January 1965, pp. 164-65.
- Dijk, V. (1990). *Discourse & Society: Discourse & Society. A new journal for a new research focus*, 1, 5–16.
- Edwards, H., and Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). Discourse and text: linguistic and intertextuality analysis within discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society*. 3, 192–217.
- Gee, J. P. (1992). *The Social Mind: Language, Ideology, and Social Practice. Series in Language and Ideology*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *The Social Mind: Language, Ideology, and Social Practice: An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Gikandi, S. (1992). Ngugi's Conversion: Writing and the Politics of Language. *Research in African Literatures*, 23, 1, 131-144.
- Guo, S (2013). Metaphor studies from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis: A Case Study of Business Acquisition. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3, 3, 475-481.
- Hodge, D and Kress, G. (1998). *Social Semiotics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Krieger, M. (2018). *Intentionality*. In *The Oxford Handbook of Phenomenological Psychopathology*, edited by G. Stanghellini, A. Raballo, M. Broome, A. V. Fernandez, P. Fusar-Poli, and R. Rosfort. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Krieger, M. (2018). *Intentionality*. In *The Oxford Handbook of Phenomenological Psychopathology*, edited by G. Stanghellini, A. Raballo, M. Broome, A. V. Fernandez, P. Fusar-Poli, and R. Rosfort. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kumar, B. (1990). *Oral History and the Reconstruction of District Six*. Cape Town: Buchu Books.
- La Guma, A. (1967). *A Walk in the Night and other Stories*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Lakoff, R. (1990). *Talking Power: The Politics of Language*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lakoff, R. (1990). *Talking Power: The Politics of Language*. New York: Basic Books.
- Luriya, A. (2006). Mind, self and consciousness as discourse. *African Literature Today*, 18, 24-34.
- Merriam Webster Online Dictionary (1981). *Outcast Cape Town*. Cape Town: Human and Rosseau.
- Mkhize, J. (1989). *Social Realism in Alex La Guma's Longer Fiction*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Natal: University of Natal. 95.
- Ngugi, W. T. (1965). *The River Between*. London: Heinemann.
- Ngugi, W. T. (1986). *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational.
- Odinye, I. (2018). Girl-Child" Trafficking and Sex Slavery in African Fiction: an Analysis of Akachi Adimorah-Ezeigbo's Trafficked. *Mgbakoigba, Journal of African Studies*, 7, 2, 40-43.
- Ojaide, T. (2006). *International Perspectives and Nigerian Laws on Human Trafficking*. Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Nigeria.
- Omar S. (2006). *The River between by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: The clash of three ideologies*. London;Sterling, Va: Pluto Press.
- Osundare, N. (2010). Wordsworth and Nigerian Poetry. *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.4000/ces/8439>.
- Oxford English Dictionary Online (2004). *Oxford*: Oxford University Press.
- Potter, J. (1996). *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. London: Sage.

- Shalini, S. and Samundeswari, .A. (2017). Literature as a Reflection of the society. *Teaching Innovations and Enhancing Learning (Arts, Science and Technology)*, 5, 1, 170.
- Struthers, W. (2001). Defining Consciousness: Christian and Psychological Perspectives. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 53, pp. 102-106.
- Wilson-Tagoe, N. (1998). *Historical Thought and Literary Representation*, in West Indian Literature. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Journal of the NYI Global Institute of  
Cultural, Cognitive, and Linguistic Studies

All rights reserved 2024

