

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Language Games, Alex La Guma's Fiction,
and the new Post-Apartheid Reality
for the South African Writer

by

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ABSTRACT

What is the source of a writer's social power— and how can a politically dissident writer hope to have any effect in countering an oppressive regime? This thesis examines these questions by looking at the case of South African writer Alex La Guma. La Guma's novels *In the Fog of the Season's End* (1972) and *Time of the Butcherbird* (1979) were written against the apartheid regime of South Africa. I will argue that these works of fiction gain their effectiveness in two ways: first, by participating in, and subtly altering, the dominant social "language games" of La Guma's time and place; and second, by affirming potent notions of a self that participates in a "universal brotherhood." My concept of the language game derives from aspects of Wittgenstein's concept of the same name. Heidegger's notions of "care for the self" inform the second part of my approach.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval page	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Epigraph	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	7
i. The constitution of Wittgenstein's language game	8
ii. Understanding the rules behind the language game	14
iii. The logic of language and interpretation	18
iv. Origins of power in the language game	22
Chapter 2	26
i. The world of Da-sein	33
ii. Collective manifestation of care in formal language games	39
iii. The self in formal language games	41
Chapter 3	44
i. La Guma's view of the writer in defining the image of self	44
ii. Creation of the universal self	45
iii. Creation of the national self	49

iv. Potential for corruption in the revolutionary self	55
v. Institutional change	57
vi. Economic fragmentation of the self	60
Chapter 4	64
i. Self-determination in La Guma's fiction	66
ii. Future implications for the fictional self	68
iii. Self-determination in international law	73
Chapter 5	79
i. Social fragmentation in the United Nations Charter	80
ii. Economic basis for UN membership	81
iii. Self-determination and the vague concept of 'peoples'	84
iv. Social fragmentation in the South African constitution	88
v. Customary international law	89
vi. Customary international law and human rights in the SA constitution	91
vii. Potential for conflict in the SA constitution	93
viii. Constitutional obstacles for the South African writer	98
Chapter 6	104
i. Exposing the fragmented self in a democratic free-market economy	106
ii. Strategies against the economic fragmentation of the self	113
Conclusion	118
Endnotes	120
Works Cited	125

and what you once had fought for
begins to slide from what
you now perceive; slides
into the frown on your own brow
puzzled at its new surrender

As everyone except you marches anew
in a democracy of shapes and colours
for socialism
(you have so much to lose)
comrade, traitor, lover, friend
will you dismount into the street?

[Kelwyn Sole, "The Face and the Flag"]

INTRODUCTION

What is the source of a writer's social power— and how can a politically dissident writer hope to have any effect in countering an oppressive regime? This thesis examines these questions by looking at the case of South African writer Alex La Guma. La Guma's novels *In the Fog of the Season's End* (1972) and *Time of the Butcherbird* (1979) were written against the apartheid regime of South Africa. I will argue that these works of fiction gain their effectiveness in two ways: first, by participating in, and subtly altering, the dominant social "language games" of La Guma's time and place; and second, by affirming potent notions of a self that participates in a "universal brotherhood."

My conception of the language game derives from aspects of Wittgenstein's concept of the same name. Heidegger's notions of "care for the self" inform the second part of my approach. Both of these theoretical sources will be discussed in detail, in the first and second chapters. Using this analytical foundation, I then turn to an analysis of La Guma's oppositional strategies, as seen in his fiction. My conceptions of shared language games and care for the self then permit an analysis of the inevitable limitations such strategies face. I examine these limitations at work in the new SA constitution, which itself draws upon language games and an image of the self which echo those found in La Guma's work. Finally, I consider some

alternative oppositional strategies that may be suitable in today's changed circumstances.

Chapter I Analytical framework I

In this chapter I adapt Ludwig Wittgenstein's language game theory in order to depict shared uses of language. In my adaption of Wittgenstein's very much more ambiguous concept, language game means a shared means of *self* communication. Formalized language games develop from a positive image of the self in a language that best reflects that image. Thus defined a language game generates social power from its membership's shared perception and expression of the self, enshrining it in a physically present institution. This tangible representation of the positive social view of the self has the benefit of the established social and cultural power of tradition. However, reinterpreting the rules governing the original language game is possible for subsequent generations. I attempt to explain this idea of varying social interpretations by examining the interpretive logic behind the simple "if . . . then" statement. When reinterpretation occurs, a new group of people with a different perception of the self will break from the dominant language game and develop a new language game better suited to their specific social reality. This ability to reinterpret a language game is essential in discussing La Guma's role as writer in changing the way the 'civilized' world perceived nonwhite South Africans and how 'native' South Africans saw themselves.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework II

Drawing on my extrapolation of Wittgenstein's language game theory, I use Martin Heidegger's concept of the *self* as a being whose care for the self dominates in a world of other selves working toward the same end. As people share in a common perception of the self, the social power inherent in numbers becomes formalized in a language game. This process of 'caring' is the social and cultural reality that binds all people in what La Guma calls a "universal brotherhood." Thus the role of the writer, for La Guma, is to shape the collective consciousness of people toward the realization that the need to care for the self connects all of them. Western society contains the care for the self in various official language games such as the legal system, social safety programs, 'free' access to education, and the primary language game of a nation, its constitution. These language games I call *lateral power configurations* and they form the social and structural grounds for western democracy. The European colonizers early imposed this written, formal language game on 'native' South African culture in the seventeenth century. Their society was based on an informal oral tradition with the tribal chief as head. The social chain of command was simple when compared with the complicated manifestations inherent in the democratic lateral power forms. As it turned out the simple chain of command of the tribal society could not withstand the many-pronged attacks of the formalized language games of western democracy.

Chapter 3 La Guma's strategy; its strengths and some unavoidable limitations.

To offer efficient resistance to western language games and the power they represented, writers like La Guma had to adopt the west's lateral power configurations. He had to help work toward

rewriting the nonwhite population into the constitution of the civilized democratic government. To work toward this he first had to present, in his fiction, the native South African as a 'real' person deserving of the same care for the self expressed in the constitution of the white minority government. In terms of Heidegger's concept of the self, La Guma was attempting to promote the *authentic self* in a language game that could compete with a civilized democracy. As a model to support his efforts, La Guma adopted the language game of human rights as outlined in the United Nations Charter. In this effort he found international support from a liberal faction in Western society. At this point I turn to present-day South Africa to demonstrate an unavoidable short coming of this strategy. Unfortunately, drawing on the model of western human rights within the democratic system means drawing on the insidious social fragmentation of the citizen inherent in this system. Contributing to future social unrest in post-apartheid South Africa is the fact that institutions, and the founding image of the self protected within their walls, change much more slowly than a society's image of the self. When this happens, people will attempt to change the institution's image of the self to reflect the new evolving social reality. There is the inevitable lag time between social unrest and institutional change, and in this space a revolution can take place. In post-apartheid South Africa, the new government has slipped into the institutions of the former government, adopting the social fragmentation of the self typical of all democratic capitalist societies.

Chapter 4 Results of La Guma's strategy

Did La Guma's role as a writer favouring change really result in positive developments for SA?

To address this question I examine the image of the authentic self presented in La Guma's

fiction comparing it with the theoretical authentic self presented in the United Nations description of human rights and self-determination. In both the fictional language game and the official language game of human rights there is an effort to create a standard for evaluating a universal authentic self, or as La Guma calls it a “universal brotherhood.” Next I pose the question; what happens when the image of the authentic self, as presented in the post-apartheid constitution, no longer reflects the care and concerns of a large section of the country’s population? This is now happening in South Africa due to the social fragmentation of the self inherent in democratic capitalism. In this culture, individual pursuit for profit and material gain is paramount, and the “I” is isolated in a competitive atmosphere where everyone is striving to obtain ‘limited’ goods. A telling statement made by La Guma after leaving South Africa, suggests he has suffered the strain of social fragmentation and cultural isolation. This is hardly a judgement against him, but evidence of the pervasive economic power to fragment the individual in a society where the pursuit of profit dominates authentic care for the self.

Chapter 5 What is a “people”?

In this chapter I trace the source of this problem to the liberal language game La Guma adopts. To do so, I turn to the post apartheid SA constitution and the United Nations Charter with its lack of a clear definition of peoples as evidence to support my theory of social fragmentation in democratic capitalism. The United Nations Charter on Human Rights does not state a strict legal definition of ‘whom’ deserves human rights protection. This omission is also evident in the new SA constitution. In both documents they outline only the “principal of the recognition of human rights and self-determination.” They always defer the promise of a concrete legal definition of

the subject of human rights to a future time. This detailed examination of the above official language games suggests that the invisible economic number bar of capitalism defines the inauthentic self, and the principle of universal human rights. They have replaced the clearly defined racial demarcation between white and nonwhite in apartheid policy with the insidious social fragmentation of the economic number bar against which human rights is measured. This is the new enemy for post-apartheid writers and social commentators.

Chapter 6 Alternative Strategies

Given the invisible nature of economic fragmentation, what strategies will the writer and social reformer adopt to fight this new enemy? How will they 'move' those disadvantaged into action toward social change? Recent post-apartheid developments in South Africa suggest that a coalition between non-governmental organizations (NGO) and writers of fiction must work together to create a language game of universal human dignity replacing the human commodification existing in capitalism. Formalizing the new language into a visible institution with worldwide representation is necessary to defeat free-market globalization of the human "resource." The larger the number of people sticking to the language game of human dignity the greater the power for positive social change. This will take time, and time is exactly what a formalized language game and its encapsulating institution will lend to the struggle.

CHAPTER 1

The woman laughed, the great body shaking in the moonlight. 'There, you see? You have the spirit of defiance.' She shook her head. 'Ai, these passes, needed for moving here, moving there. I remember when they were first forced upon women. I was one of those who marched to the capital to protest. Thousands of women, and it gave a sense of power. One learned the power of numbers.' La Guma *Time Of The Butcherbird* (88)

In this chapter I will explore Wittgenstein's theory of the language game, the rules that govern their existence, and the relationship between the logic of language and interpretation. I will then explain why I chose to use Wittgenstein's theory of the language game as an analytical lever to explore the 'intent' behind Alex La Guma's fiction, keeping in mind that 'fiction' is a type of language game.¹ I will be focusing on La Guma's latter novels *In the Fog of the Season's End* (1972) and *Time of the Butcherbird* (1979).² As a corollary to the above discussion, I will develop the idea that an individual's concern-for-the-self, as formulated by their experience of existence, is the genesis of power in society. This, in turn, is contained within cultural institutions and the specialized language they use to protect their distinct identity. Rules governing the use of language are 'played' and protected in institutions where they formalize the

collective concern-for-the self into linguistic and ritual power structures. Apart from the physical presence of institutions, language is another formal social power structure encapsulating the collective concern-for-the-self. I introduce the ideas of concern-for-the-self and power in this chapter in relation to Wittgenstein's concept of the language game and elucidated in chapter two, with Heidegger's theory of 'being' as described in individual "Da-sein" (There-being). I will then use these philosophical concepts to examine La Guma's fictional writing placing emphasis on his motivation to write against apartheid. This will involve looking at La Guma as both a fictional writer and a political commentator on the oppression of the colored population in South Africa. Because La Guma died before the realization of an emancipated South Africa, I will reexamine his desire for a 'universal brotherhood' in chapters four, five, and six, seen against the background of economic fragmentation of the self evident in the new South African constitution.

i. The constitution of Wittgenstein's language game

My understanding of the power dynamic implied in Wittgenstein's language game, shapes my interpretation of Wittgenstein's language game theory. Let me state his concept of the language game, as detailed in *The Wittgenstein Reader* edited by Anthony Kenny. There are "ways of using signs" that have "countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols', 'words,' 'sentences.'" This multiplicity is not something fixed, but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence. Others become obsolete and get forgotten" (47).

He goes on to explain that language games share “family characteristics” or “similarities” which overlap with other members of the ‘family’ giving the language game strength. (49) With the repetition of shared characteristics there is ‘clarity’ communicated within the language game that distinguishes it from similar language games.³ By examining ‘clarity’ it is then possible, according to Wittgenstein, to understand the ‘intent’ behind language use in a particular social setting. With this knowledge comes the power of recognition and an awareness of the ‘self’ that leads to social change.

The underlying concept of power in my adaptation of Wittgenstein’s language game theory stems from the idea that language game ‘families,’ that is, shared ways of interpreting and using language, can create an image of the self and a form of social power. The strength of this game depends on the number of people willing to use it. People form the base of power in a language game and by extension they form the nexus for social power. It is evident in the above epigraph that La Guma is aware of the power generated by people willing to act against a language game that does not represent their ‘family’ concerns. Open defiance gains power and momentum directly proportional to the number of people willing to act. In the above epigraph, the protester could feel the power of numbers directed toward desired social change.

A language game cannot exist in an individual. Wittgenstein’s belief that private language and the social expression of private experience do not exist supports this, given the social nature of language games. For instance, his conclusion that a “private” language is impossible because by its very nature language is a social construction, points to the fact that language can be interpreted in a number of ways depending on the perspective of the members. Reinterpretation serves for abrogating the rules of a language game and may lead to social

change. Though social *will* originates with the individual, it must be communicated to another person for social reform to occur. Here, with the word “will,” we see the seminal development of “power” and how a language game generates authority through collective will. In all language games individual experiences, both sensory and cognitive, are “described” in a language that another person shares with the speaker. Social power is in the sharing of experiences coupled with the will to abrogate the rules of one language game in favor of a language game which better serves our “care” for our “selves.” These terms derive from Heidegger’s theory of “care” which shapes Da-sein’s interpretation of reality and is expressed in our “there” among other people. The measures we take to look after our interests within our social environment become apparent in self-preservation. Thus, our images of self and the actions we take in the interest of self-preservation determine the way in which we construct reality. More of this will follow in the section on Heidegger’s description of “Being” in chapter two.

Before I explore the genesis of social power in Wittgenstein’s language game, I would like to relate Alex La Guma’s novels *In the Fog of the Seasons’ End* (1972) and *Time of the Butcherbird* (1979) as a language game for gathering and generating power toward social change. It is my contention that Alex La Guma’s fictional writing is an attempt to achieve “order,” “end,” and “distinctions” — an explanation of these terms will follow this section — to remove the cultural barriers built around interpretations of race, personhood and cultural identity. In both novels, La Guma creates a cultural space in which the reader experiences the existence of the author through the actions and concerns of the novel’s characters. The space created by concern for the self marks the universal denominator that underpins our daily

existence. In an interview with Cecil Abrahams, La Guma comments on his desire to re-create the cultural reality from which he was raised:

Having read South African literature, I have discovered that nothing satisfactory or worthwhile from my point of view had been written about the area from which I sprang. So I think there was a conscious effort on my part to place on record the life in the poor areas, working class areas, and perhaps for that reason most of my work is centered around that community and life. (19)

Once the reader has moved into this social space, he can then interpret the social situation from which La Guma is writing. We begin to see how the ‘rules’ of the dominant white language game suffocate the ‘self’ of all who are nonwhite in South African society. La Guma’s narrative shows us that the “distinctions” on which the apartheid language games are formed are invalid simply because they deny the existence of more than two thirds of the country’s population. I will discuss this issue in greater detail in chapters two and three. These ‘distinctions’ are replaced in the current South African constitution with a cultural language game that recognizes all cultural families as equal citizens, as defined in the constitution. This document recognizes *who* is a South African citizen and *why*, as a citizen, you are deemed a person with the promise of basic human rights. The issue of citizenship will be discussed further in chapters four and five when I speak of the legal right to self-determination as defined the United Nations Charter and the “spirit” of the new South African Constitution. In what immediately follows I will elaborate on Wittgenstein’s language game theory with my interpretation of how a language game captures, collects and protects social power.

In his article “*The Nature of Philosophy*” Wittgenstein explains the concept of the language game. It is as follows:

We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a

particular end in view; one out of many possible orders; not *the* order. To this end we shall constantly be giving prominence to distinctions which our ordinary forms of language easily make us overlook. (Kenny 284)

There are three words I would like to focus on in the above quote that will facilitate a clear understanding of my interpretation of Wittgenstein's language game; they are "order," "end," and "distinctions." By "order" Wittgenstein means clarity in the meaning, and therefore the use of language, so that general understanding is possible in everyday conversation. Phrases like "oh I thought you meant this when you said that" would become rare in interpersonal conversation. Within such an "order" the rules governing the use of language would be clearly understood and the social and cultural relevance of each language game would be properly employed in any given situation. More importantly this order would allow us to recognize why a particular language game is used in a particular situation, showing the specific cultural motive behind such use. We may not necessarily understand the specialized "jargon" in that language game but knowing what social and cultural "order" it belongs to will give insight into why people are participating in a particular language game.

The second word "end" is itself a recognition that intent or motivation is essential in deciphering the codes of 'conduct' in any language usage. Words do not fall from your mouth or appear on paper until the desire to communicate a particular idea is known to the author. Here Wittgenstein's "end" is the desire to know why people in specific cultural settings use certain words. Also implied in the word "end" is the desire for all speakers to recognize why we speak as we do, and to 'see' where 'meaning' originates with the hope that universal understanding will be achieved. This would level out most interpretive problems and clear up many divisions

currently existing around personal and cultural identity. Imagine, for instance, that it became clear to people of any religious inclinations that the idea of deferring the responsibility of our existence to an invisible superior being is a basic human reflex to our fear of death, and by extension, the unknown. What could be more unnerving than awakening in the forest at night, blind, naked and hungry and not knowing why you are hungry, where you are, or why you are cold? On top of all this, you cannot communicate your fear to yourself through either a mental picture or an audible formation. It seems that the sum of our existence is to obtain knowledge that will explain who we are and why we are, which I believe is the “end” to Wittgenstein’s theory of language. It is for this reason that I choose to use his language game theory to explain the origins of social identity, motivation and the measures, i.e., ‘power,’ we take to promulgate and protect that identity. This will answer the question Why would La Guma risk his life to write about his community?

Now understanding “distinctions” depends on understanding “order,” and “end.” If you can identify common rules for language use and understand the motivation behind such use, then it is possible to identify the unique cultural forces shaping the language. The “end” here is the realization of a shared “care” for the self. Colonialism, with its inherent social distinctions via economic competition, does not allow for the free expression of care for the self, and by extension, care for others. The free market value of the human commodity constantly defers the intrinsic worth of being human, as expressed in care, with a view toward profit. This artificial economic ‘distinction’ isolates the individual by removing the universal characteristic of care, replacing it with competitiveness.

La Guma wants to remove economic isolationism through the artistic expression of

universal “brotherhood” as stated in an address given to an Afro-Asian Writers congress in 1975 in Tashkent, Soviet Union, in his comments on the social fragmentation inherent in colonialism:

Colonialism and its attendant manifestations prevent this process. In addition anti-imperialist struggle has united millions of people across borders and across continents. Out of the artistic manifestations of this struggle can also be traced a common desire, ambition, aspiration, that of international friendship and indeed a brotherhood, based upon equality which includes the fusion of all that is good in all cultures into the basis of an eventual common world culture. (55)

A universal interpretative procedure is possible only if you accept the idea that our perception of self motivates social identity, our ‘care’ in nurturing that image, and the active measures taken to protect them. It is through authentic ‘care’ that we will realize an “equality . . . in all cultures” from which we can interpret a common understanding in all discourse. With this type of universal clarity in place, the intellectual effort now wasted in trying to define, consolidate and convince others of ‘my point of view’ will be channeled into addressing the larger questions influencing and shaping our existence.

ii. Understanding the rules behind the language game

Since social interaction determines language use and that people talking within a particular social setting give *life* to the language game, I have developed the following ‘rules’ concerning the language game:

- Language games have rules and players qualify for participation in a language game

by accepting the rules. Rules develop through a shared social communicative utility based on an accepted perception of the self within a particular social paradigm. Noting that different language games can be interpreted by different groups to convey a different meaning within a culture. Take the following passage from *In the Fog of the Season's End* where the white South African police force has a check point set up in a city subway station designated for 'Blacks' only. La Guma uses the Afrikaans dialect spoken by both white and black people in South Africa mingled with 'European English' simultaneously to convey the social degradation of apartheid while translating this injustice to an international audience, specifically the international human rights movement:

'F— you. Who in the blerry hell do you think you are? Let me see what you got in that parcel.'

'Just my overalls, *meneer*, just my overalls. Taking them home to be washed.'

'Open up, you hell, before I *donder* you.'

'Hey, what the hell goes on there in front? A man must *mos* get home for supper.'

'Jesus, working all day and now there is this hold up.'

'*Jong, waar's jou pas?* Where's your pass?'

Pale white fingers like maggots flicked over the pages, identifying the bearer against the photograph. 'Lord, all you *bliksems* look the blerry same. Where did your mother get you from, hey?' The pages rustled one over the other. (67)

Those who use a language game do so based on a "shared communicative utility" that conveys a commonly held perception of the self. However, here La Guma is using the language game of the fictional writer and the language game of the political writer to highlight the fact that there is no 'commonly' held perception of the South African 'self' under apartheid. You have the white authoritative self in opposition to the black *subject* self. For those in power the only 'commonality' is that the blacks are an inferior race that must be controlled. This social

imbalance is particularly striking in the line “‘Jong, waar’s jou pas? Where’s your pass?’” The fictional writer presents the talk of an oppressive regime in the Afrikaans followed by an English translation given by the politically conscious writer. La Guma is adopting the formal European language game to resist the degradation inherent in apartheid. The clarity of La Guma’s intent is evident in his juxtaposition of the fictional and political writer. Moreover, this juxtaposition holds true to Wittgenstein’s contention that “language-games are set up as objects of comparisons which throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities but also of dissimilarities” (*Philosophical Investigations I*, 50).

— People generate “power” in a language game through willful intention that is based on a perception of self and the preservation of that image. Thus, the rules of the language game reflect the image and concern for self held by the founders of the game. We store and protect this image of self in the formal structural institutions built around the language game, with the “life” of a language game being the obedience of its followers to the rules. Once they have established and institutionalized the rules of the game, the institution will infuse all players, to varying degrees, with the game’s power by accepting its rules and formal organization. Infusion is the process in which the institutional structures of behavior determine the actions of those in the institution. This is possible because the ‘life’ of an institution is longer than the life of its human followers. More on this in chapter three in the section on ‘institutional change.’

— A player cancels his right to participate in a language game if he develops and follows his own rules contrary to the intent of the established language game; a power struggle will follow any abrogation of accepted rules. This situation is possible because, as social constructs, game rules are susceptible to interpretation and change as a culture’s perception of

‘self’ changes. In La Guma’s South Africa the rules do not represent most of the population in the official government language game, creating growing resentment. A clear example of this occurs in the final paragraph of *In the Fog of the Season’s End* where the main character, Beukes, reflects on the armed struggle against apartheid:

Beukes stood by the side of the street in the early morning and thought, they have gone to war in the name of a suffering people. What the enemy himself has created, these will become battle grounds, and what we see now is only the tip of the ice-burg of resentment against an ignoble regime, the tortured victims of hatred and humiliation. And those who persist in hatred and humiliation must prepare. Let them prepare hard and fast— they do not have long to wait. (180-81)

The “enemy” has created “resentment,” “hatred,” and “humiliation” by consciously shaping a social and political system that does not represent a reasonable respect for the native majorities’ image of self. This situation is unacceptable for La Guma and those actively resisting apartheid. By extension, who is willing to tolerate a political, social and philosophical system that refuses to grant some degree of human dignity and respect? La Guma makes it clear that the blame for the armed struggle is the policy of apartheid and that the creators of this policy will answer for their crimes.

A new language game will gain strength in direct proportion to the number of people accepting the image of self promulgated by the new game. Players are always involved in more than one language game and can easily move in and out of different language games. Often this movement reflects a change in how others perceive the person making the shift from one social setting to another. This is exactly what is happening in post-apartheid South Africa where greed and the social fragmentation of the self are co-opting the promises of a “liberal” society. Those in government who speak the language of human rights, live a life of privilege as did the former

white rulers. More on this topic in chapters four & five.

— A nation's constitution is the dominant official language game in that culture. This governs the size, type duration, availability, and number of all other cultural language games in a particular society. Thus, a nation's constitution institutionalizes the use of a dominant interpretive lens that influences all communication within that particular language game. In an ideal situation the constitution must reflect a reasonable respect for the identities of all peoples living within that nation. A country's government is the direct descendant of the constitutional language game and is responsible for ensuring the fair treatment of all citizens. Government legislation shapes the spirit and language of the constitution into the rights and restrictions expressed in the legal language game. Here we see the projection and protection of the country's collective image of self as accepted by the *majority* of the citizens; however, this majority acceptance is rarely the case in practice especially in post-apartheid South Africa. Following the constitution and government, a nation's legal system is the third step in interpreting and protecting the accepted image of self held by its citizens. The "end" is to provide a systematically 'fair' interpretation of the rights of the citizen given the enormous "distinctions" inherent in a country's diverse language game collage.

iii. The logic of language and interpretation

In this section I will examine how, according to hermeneutic thought, even the straightforward rules governing propositional logic are subject to social and cultural interpretation. It is my

intent to identify the process by which a theoretical language game, like a country's constitution, can represent, in print, the interests of all or most of its citizens while in practice giving the theory a very different interpretation. It will become evident in chapters four & five that consumerism and the pursuit of profit are the universally dominant language game that defines the interpretive logic of Western 'liberal' society with its impact on post-apartheid neo-liberalism.

The immediate social setting in which dialogue takes place determines the meaning of statements. As the conditions of our conscious reality change, so too does our interpretation of phenomena occurring within that space. Underlying this social context is the fact that people will interpret a situation toward a meaning that reflects positively on their image of self. For interpreting immediate surroundings without referring to the individual's position within that environment is impossible. In our phenomenal perspective we always start from an implicitly understood image of self developed through our accumulated life experiences. This image, along with our immediate social setting, determines our motivation in language use and 'colors' our dialogue toward a specific potential for action. It is this intentional coloring of language within a particular social and cultural context that determines the rules that govern a language game. In his book *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* Jean Grondin reflects on Gadamer's belief that the essence of language lies not in the abstract proposition but within the active parameters of social exchange:

Against propositional logic, in which the sentence consists in a self-sufficient unity of meaning, hermeneutics reminds us that a proposition can never be prescinded from the context of motivation- that is, the dialogue- in which it is embedded and which is the only place it has any meaning. (118)

Dialogue is “embedded” in social interactions in a specific social and cultural setting where each person has an image of self shaping the “motivation” behind language use. That is why the seemingly clear language of the proposition and the rules that guide its use are themselves open to socially contextual hermeneutics.

The rules of inference, a language game governing the symbolic representation of prepositions, present us with a clear example of how even the most ‘logical’ linguistic rules are open to interpretation shaped by individual concern-for-the-self. For example, the weak material implication of the “if - then” conditional, a very specialized rule is worth discussing. For instance, if I drop the ball it will fall to the floor. This statement appears as a self-evident truth given our familiarity with gravity. This truth presupposes that the holder of the ball is standing upright and that the floor is naturally positioned under the feet. All this is evident to the observer. Now let us change the physical parameters so that the person holding the ball is suspended by the feet from the ceiling of a room made to look like the floor of the room. Next we turn the ‘room’ upside down to give the impression that the person is assuming a normal standing position. An observer is introduced to the scene without being made aware of the shift in the normal physical parameters of the room. When the ball is dropped, it will appear to defy the simple “if-then” relationship between gravity and ball by moving upward toward the ceiling. What this instance shows is the importance of perspective in establishing the ‘truth’ in any given situation.

A self-evident truth supported by the repetition of its validity from a fixed perspective is not necessarily a universal truth. Take for instance the implied “if-then” relationships in the following quote from La Guma’s *In the Fog of the Seasons’ End* where a white police sergeant is

speculating on the fatal consequences of civil unrest by the black African:

The whole black population of the country had been called on to defy the country's laws; the bloody kaffirs were going to burn their registration books; the Government was about to make a statement on the carrying of these pass-books; the Blacks were going to overrun the White districts and butcher everybody in sight. (99)

Given the social parameters in the above situation, there is the underlying 'truth' that the "Blacks" are naturally barbarous and must be strictly regulated in all their social and economic actions. *If* they allow them to openly defy official authority *then* they will naturally revert to exercising their butchery. This is the traditional perspective of the colonizer toward the colonized.

From the above discussion, the words "necessary" and "self-evident" mark the logical limits within which the language game governing propositional use and logical interpretation must occur within symbolic logic. Because 'necessary' and 'self-evident' have meaning only in relation to a person's perception of self in their environment, the strict logical limits within propositional logic must be extended to include a larger social hermeneutic. Now in Alex La Guma's fiction he writes against the forced imposition of a tradition and culture alien to his ancestors and what he 'knows' to be his position in the phenomenal world called South Africa. The knowledge derived from the traditions of the 'native' South African shape a distinct image of self different from the interpretation 'given' by the Europeans. The white European image of self in turn shapes the European's interpretation of the native population, forcing an entirely different social meaning on the native 'people.' The exact nature of the 'civilized' Western interpretation of the South African 'native' will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

iv. Origins of power in the language game

Language-games are socially constructed tools, language “facts” developed through intent, rules derived from facts, acceptance through obedience to the facts, and obligation to the rules. Those who openly object to the facts are considered foreign to the language-game. The exclusionary power of a language-game is essential to its survival, where survival is the continuation of the language-game’s created intent. The ‘creator’ of a language-game can be an individual or a group. Power, be it political, social, cultural or economic, is directly deduced from the intentions, beliefs, vision, will, need, “care,” and self-perception of the language-game creators. Individuals in turn receive their “powers” of creation from the social environment impressed upon them. Now noting that one’s social environment is a collage of everything that has preceded the individual in the character of formal history and informal tradition is important. We select those elements that appeal to our image of self as exercised in the “care” we take in securing our present and future existence. The will to survive, the need to look after ourselves with the aim of always improving our present for a better future, is the source of the living dynamic that drives the creation and life of all language games. This is La Guma’s intent in writing about his community and the injustice suffered under apartheid with the aim of reaching an international audience. Language needs people to generate and conduct social energy.

A second level of energy exists in established language games that I call the power of indoctrination. The power of the creator is directly proportional to the number of people “willing” to express and follow a similar idea of present and future expectations for the self. In La Guma’s novel *In the Fog of the Season’s End* the protagonist, Beukes, is arranging for the

printing and distribution of 'educational' materials to the young members fighting against apartheid:

But there is also the matter of political education for these young people. I will see that you get more material for them, as soon as I can lay hands on some. Prohibited stuff is scarce. (88)

The more people accepting the ideology of the language game, the greater the need to formulate a structural container for this ideology. In the above statement the institutionalized language game of 'education' is used to promulgate a positive image of the nonwhite population in South Africa as legitimate citizens with the same rights as the 'white' population. With this La Guma is adopting western 'civility' to support his "universal brotherhood" argument mentioned earlier. We also see the need to indoctrinate as many people as possible into this civilized language game because it is through people willing to act toward the realization and continuation of an acceptable image of self that a language receives its power to initiate social change.

Our image of self marks a precious characteristic of existence that must be encouraged, promoted and protected at all costs. The formal social structures that accompany a language game are our best means of securing our identity and protecting our interests. This formal structure collects and multiplies the power of its membership making it greater than the power of the individual. This is achieved through the fact that an individual must accept on "faith" that which exists outside her immediate concerns for the self. However, it must be cautioned that an interpretive reliance on "faith" in official language games with their 'theoretical' ability to protect our positive image of self opens a cultural space in which the interests of the institution will differ from the interests of its theoretical foundations. This is the case in post-apartheid South Africa where the interests of the capitalist institution outweigh human rights issues. Very

often in a large formal organization, such as the legal system, the rules of the language game develop informal interpretations and applications beyond the scope of formal rules.

Understanding the essence and nuance of such interpretations is virtually impossible for any one member. Accepting that which we cannot know or see involves the projection of power to an organization greater than the individual. We are willing to do this to protect our interests against another language game that we perceive as opposing our own. There is after all truth in the saying — “they” who “say” are itself an example of the mysterious forces of the organization— ‘there is security in numbers.’ However, the security in numbers ideology has been adopted by the free market system to exploit the individual in a consumerism where the “they” dictate to the self.

As mentioned above, one manifestation of this power is the ability to exclude those who do not fit into the picture of the “dominant self” inherent in a particular language game. Exclusion is a judgement open to different interpretations. But the dominant interpretation of the language game is woven into its formal structure, i.e., rules, regulations, constitution, charter, duties, and code of conduct. By its very nature interpretations are as diverse as the individual beliefs that shape them, resulting in an ‘intentional’ susceptibility within the dominant language game. For example *In the Fog of the Season’s End* we see the exclusionary indoctrination of the ruling whites working to maintain the apartheid philosophy, while working to abolish the very grounds of apartheid. This adaptation is designed to appease the western humanitarian. In this quotation a black educator, Flotman, is speaking to Beukes on the white education system:

Do you know that we are told to teach that everything that happens is ordained by God and that it’s no use, even sinful, trying to change the order of things. The Boer War was a sort of holy crusade, evolution is heresy and nobody existed in

this country before Jan Van Riebeeck arrived. (86)

In this instance the White rulers of South Africa are using the institutionalized doctrine of Christianity to subvert, and eliminate, any competing language game that dares to question their interpretation of rightful existence. What is happening here is the attempt to establish the 'natural' conditions for the inequality between the white and colored races. Once achieved this would render 'apartheid' an empty concept, contrary to nature. To strengthening the dominant language game of the White Christian culture the white minority population must convince the majority black population to accept this doctrine. Again we see an example of the way people generate power, a power increases proportionally to the number of people involved in a specific cultural perspective of self. It is therefore conceivable and inevitable that the same power of will that creates a language game has the power to reinterpret and redefine the rules of a language game if most of the society perceives a need for change. In chapter two, I will explain how the white minority imposed their language game onto the already existing oral language game of the aboriginal South African.

CHAPTER 2

The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something — because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless that fact has at some time struck him. — And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful.
Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations* (50)

In my interpretation of Wittgenstein's language game theory I identified the individual's concern for self as the genesis of the power that pushes the language game toward the goal of expressing a distinct image of self and the preservation of this image through formal rules. I believe it is this 'push' to protect the self that motivates La Guma to write against apartheid under the threat of great personal risk to him and his family. The concern for the self, according to Martin Heidegger in his book *Being and Time*, is the individual's recognition of its "potentiality of being" in the world, which he calls *authentic care*. For the most part we live in the world as caught up in the inauthentic care of the "they" in which the opinions and actions of the "they" determine our "potentiality of being."¹ In *The Time of the Butcherbird* the white 'they' use official programs to protect their image of self against an *unstable* colored population. In this instance a public program called *Annie Get Your Gun* (50) aims at protecting white

women against the nonwhite based on a false generalization of the ‘natives.’ A contrived inauthentic care for the self is covering the “potentially of being” for both the white and nonwhite population based on unreasonable fear. However, in the following passage Maisie, a white South African woman, intimates a desire to move away from this inauthentic care for the self:

The radio behind her was broadcasting the Annie Get Your Gun programme— advice to house wives on the use of firearms— and a voice was saying: ‘...the Colt Woodsman is a point two-two calibre target pistol and perhaps a little too lengthy for carrying in a purse. Anyway she wasn’t going around with a bloody great revolver like John Wayne, though she did eventually buy a little pistol, one you could stick in your bra or a stocking garter. ‘One never knows when some terrible kaffir will run amok,’ one of the women at the club said with contrived horror, looking comic wearing the big rubber ear-muffs. ‘You’ll probably enjoy it, you bitch,’ Maisie thought. (50)

Having Maisie eventually buying the hand gun is La Guma admitting that the prejudice against the “terrible kaffir” is firmly entrenched in the systematic programs of the “they,” and that an appeal to the authentic care starts in the natural revulsion felt by Maisie against her club mate. The writer must be the promoter for social change by exposing the inauthentic self promulgated by the ‘they’.

As Heidegger states “the they itself, for the sake of which Da-sein is every day, articulates the referential context of significance” (121). They “articulate” referential totality for those beings in the collective through the dominant language games and their formal institutional rules and regulations. I will explore this issue in more detail in the following chapters concerning the definition of “peoples” as distinct entities as outlined in the United Nations Charter and the South African Constitution under Nelson Mandela. This will have significance for the writer as an effective force for social change in post-apartheid South Africa.

However for the moment I will focus on the social implications of living under the placebo of the “they” where the *authentic care for the self* is tangled in the *inauthentic care of the they*.

Living under the social collective of the “they” becomes explicitly oppressive when the dominant language games of the “they” and the power they generate perpetuates an image of the self that represents a minority of the beings within a given society. This is the case in La Guma’s South Africa where the minority White government dominates the country’s constitutional language and the legal implications derived from that constitution. According to Heidegger’s idea that *authentic care* forms the ontological basis of our being-in-the-world with other beings and is the existential ground for the image of self, it is only *natural* that we want to express our authentic self apart from society’s artificially contrived *they-self*. This implies an *authentic self awareness*, or understanding, separate from the constitutionally defined *white-South African they-self*. Underpinning the perception of the *white they-self* is the belief that nonwhites are inferior social and cultural beings to be kept in check by the ‘civilized’ authority of a superior western culture. La Guma’s novel *In the Fog of the Season’s End* clearly illustrates the oppressive nature of the White *they-self* language game:

When African people turn sixteen they are born again or even worse, they are accepted into the mysteries of the Devil’s mass, confirmed into the blood rites of a servitude as cruel as Caligula, as merciless as Nero. Its bonds are the entangled chains of infinite regulations, its rivets are driven in with rubber stamps, and the scratchy pens in the offices of the Native Commissioners are like branding irons which leave scars for life.
(80)

The “mysteries of the Devil’s mass, the language of the White *they-self*, work to define the potentially-of-being and cultural significance of the nonwhite *self*. The native African labors under the explicit “servitude” of White government regulations such as the pass laws that define

the nonwhite *self* as inferior citizens. Here the White *they-self* are the masters and as given in the restrictive language of La Guma's quote the Black African is bound into slavery. The master-race motivation behind the minority government and the policy of apartheid becomes clear in the official language governing the 'freedoms' of all nonwhites in South Africa. Under the obvious social boundaries established through color, economic interests come into play in the establishment of apartheid. Nonwhites in South Africa were aware of this social human bondage and actively sought to express their *authentic care for the self*. Awareness creates a genuine will-to-change so that the authentic care for the self occurs in the progressive realization, via actions, of its true potentiality-of-being. When enough *selves* understand their authentic potentiality-of-being and help others recognize it in themselves then they generate significant social power to work against the inauthentic potentiality-of-being defined by the *they-self*. *Change* is the existential expression of authentic-care-for-the-self of Da-sein shared *with-others* or as Heidegger calls it the Mitda-sein of others.

However, before social change there must be a recognition of the authentic-self as distinct from the dominant they-self. Recognition occurs when the individual realizes that their idea of *care-for-the-self* as a being-in-the-world is not being addressed by the idea or concept of the *care-for-the-they-self* as explained in a country's constitution. This is a basic violation of the underlying care that all of us actively pursue in taking care of our self. Even as children we are sensitive to being excluded from collective activities in which we are allowed to nurture a positive image of self that we share with others *like us*. For instance, we like to play on a team because it represents a collective activity in which we see our-self as having a place and role to play on that team, and when we are denied membership into the team we *naturally* feel hurt. The

they of the *team-self* is an official language game of the social image-of-the-self in which we *understand* natural membership, membership that reflects positively on our image of self.

In La Guma's South Africa the official rules of the dominant language game are based on the care of the *White-they* while barring membership to all nonwhite beings. This exclusion, once it has been identified, goes against the grain of any Da-sein's natural expression, via language games, of authentic care-for-the-self. It is from this recognition that the seeds for social change germinate into action and a reclamation of the authentic care-for-the-self. Returning to La Guma's writing, we find a clear statement of this recognition and the power it has as a catalyst for social change. *In the Fog of the Season's End* Beukes speaks of the motivation for illegal labor strikes and the printing and distribution of illegal anti apartheid literature:

"The workers have acted before in spite of stupid or cowardly officials. Once the workers have seen that they should make a stand, no silly official is going to get in their way." (96) (and), "'Tchah, but I admire the way you boppers go ahead. Nothing seems to stop you. What drives you?'" "Drives? Nothing drives us,' Beukes replied. 'We understand our work, so we enjoy it.'" (87)

Both quotations show action stemming from an understanding of the *nonwhite self* as distinct from the White ruling *they*. With understanding comes the desire to take a "stand" and reclaim the authentic care for the self that is inherent in all human being.

The question must be asked, how do we come to distinguish our *authentic self* from within the complicated social web spun by the *they-self*? If our *authentic self* is based on the *care-for-the-self*, then it would, at first glance, appear that an *authentic society* would consist of separate I-am-this-being taking care of *my* interest. Within such a society 'civility' would be

reduced to a narrow pursuit of individual pleasures without heeding the consequences of our actions. This harkens back to John Stuart Mill's commentary in *Utilitarianism* on the moral foundation of *Utility* as the theory for life. A moral, and therefore good act, is that action which "tends to promote happiness" and actions that "tend to produce the reverse of happiness" are immoral. (257) What qualifies as happiness for one person may not define happiness for another and what happens when the individual pursuit of happiness conflicts with the happiness of another? These questions also apply to Heidegger's concept of a being's pursuit of *authentic care* as the foundation of our existential *being*.

Before I attempt to address these questions, in the context of La Guma's fiction, I would like to present J. S. Mill's solution to the above questions. In *Utilitarianism* he states:

It is desirable, in short, that in things that do not primarily concern others, individuality should assert itself. Where, not the person's own character, but the traditions or customs of other people are the rule of conduct, there is wanting one of the principle ingredients of human happiness, and quite the chief ingredient of individual and social progress. (185)

Now the first difficulty with the above solution is equating individuality with strictly *private* behavior. As a being who is a *being-in-the-world-with-others* how is possible to exist exclusively as a private individual so that our actions "do not primarily concern others?" It is a cultural myth to think that a truly private sphere exists independent of a separate and exclusive public sector. Our actions, behavior, thoughts, habits, beliefs, hopes, fears and anxieties are conditioned by the society we are born and raised in, coloring any perceptions and expressions of *private individuality*. As Heidegger states the essential "truth" of our being lies in the constant realization of our potentiality-of-being through *authentic care* as always occurring within the context of the *Mitda-sein*, or coexistence with others. Thus the "traditions or customs of other

people are the rule of conduct,” becomes an expression of the inauthentic they self stifling the expression of authentic care.

La Guma destroys the social myth of a free and exclusive private individuality when he speaks through the character of Elias concerning the total control the minority White government has over the nonwhite majority:

So they made me older than I really am, Elias thought, and smiled to himself. They have command of everything now, even the length of time one is entitled to live in this world. If they do not do it with the gun or the hangman's rope, they can easily write it out on a piece of paper, ending days, years, life, like a magician he had once seen at a concert, making playing-cards disappear. *In the Fog of the Seasons' End* (128)

Now strangely enough J. S. Mill in the second sentence of the above quotation supports La Guma's observations on the total social control of nonwhites in South Africa by “the traditions or customs of other people” which in this case are White Europeans. Thus it appears that Mill favors, in theory, the existence of an exclusive private individual sector, while admitting that the attainment of this ideal is impractical. The same ‘spirit’ of human freedom is echoed in modern language games such as the United Nations Charter on Human Rights, the right to self-determination as defined under international law, and the Bill of Rights outlined in ‘civilized’ western democracies. As with Mill, the practical implication of individual human rights within society does not match the smooth, positive, language used in the *theory* of human rights.

The second point of concern in Mill's quotation is the coexistence of “individual and social progress.” Individual progress occurs within the larger social structure and is determined by the power inherent in the established institutional language games, with a country's constitution and its derivative legal system as the dominant expression of the collective *self*. Individual and social progress do not *coexist*, simply because they are not *separate* cultural

entities. Societies are complex equations in which every factor plays an essential part in the outcome of the equation. Equating personal freedom with social progress is an understatement of the complexities involved in creating and re-creating a cultural paradigm. To extrapolate from Heidegger's concept of *Da-sein* as a being that is always already concerned with its potential, or future, a society, as a collection of such beings, is also always striving for the *best* realization of its potentiality of being. Implied in this understanding is the fact that an individual can identify its potential while living with others, or as Heidegger calls society a basic type of coexistence called *Mitda-sein*. Once individuals have achieved this, they can then work toward the realization of their potential and help to show others their own distinct potentiality of being in the world. It is in this process of recognizing and exercising *authentic care* that the constitutive elements of social power owe their origins. Because *authentic care* is the basic element in *Da-sein*'s referential totality, it is the expression of *authentic care* that influence our image of self and the language games we adopt to express and protect that image. In my interpretation of social power, Heidegger's theory of *care* and Wittgenstein's theory of the *language game* are essential in explaining why people, like Alex La Guma, would risk their lives for the promulgation of an "essential" view of self. The linguistic expression of our *authentic* self is the 'natural' force driving social change.

i. The world of Da-sein

To better understand Heidegger's concept of 'care' and why I see it as the essential element in the formation of 'power,' one must understand the referential significance which forms an

individual Da-sein's social reality. Now without getting into the particular details of Heidegger's theory, my 'world' has meaning as far as it is experienced by me in maintaining the existence of my being in a world with other beings doing the same thing. Thus, I take 'care' to ensure that my being-in-the-world with others (*Mitda-sein*) continues in a direction that will best reflect my perception of my *authentic self*. In *Being and Time* Heidegger states that there is always the danger that we will get caught up in the world, becoming entirely identified by the *other*, which are the *they*, thus losing our authentic *self* in the collective of the *other*:

Everyone is the other, and no one is himself. The *they*, which supplies the answer to the *who* of everyday Da-sein, is the *nobody* to whom every Da-sein has always already surrendered itself, in its being-among-one-another. (120)

In contrast to assimilation by the 'they' is the realization that 'I' am the center point of all that is significant in my reality and my actions must work toward perpetuating the 'I' in a world of others. It is important to note that this 'I' is not an isolated objective entity, but a being that recognizes that by being-in-the-world with others I have a need to project my image of self onto the world that conceptualizes my identity. In this process we act in the present to perpetuate our image of self into the next and all subsequent *presents*. This is what Heidegger calls the 'potentiality of being' in authentic care and forms the basis for interpreting the social reality of all Da-seins. It is this potentiality-of-being, or care for the self, that becomes encapsulated in the language we use to identify ourselves and the society in which we belong. Thus, a nation's constitution is the 'highest' formal expression of authentic care associated with a particular social identity.

Given the recognition of *self* in a world with *others* as the existential referent that is common to all Da-sein, we must acknowledge the fact that our current culture influences our

image of self and our perpetuation of that image, along with the implicit culture of the past preserved in tradition and ancestral heritage. In recognizing this we are accepting the idea that there is no such thing as a true essential identity of *self* but a *self* whose signification is woven into its past and present worlds. What is essential to the concept of *self*, is Heidegger's idea that all of us possess the primordial need to promote, perpetuate, and protect our perception of self. Because of this need, we are motivated to take *care* of a distinct image of self. This motivation results in acts of taking *care* in the presence of the *they* who define the referential totality of our world. Motivation expressed through *care* moves people to act, and it is in actions that we see the development of social power. According to Heidegger the care-of-the-self is a basic primordial 'fact' for Da-sein and forms all our social and cultural significance:

The referential context of significance is anchored in the being of Da-sein toward its ownmost being—a being which cannot be in a relation of relevance, but which is rather the being for the sake of which Da-sein itself is as it is. (115)

So we can see that the totality of being-in-the-world is constituted by Da-sein's basic need to promulgate its image of the self as defined by the larger social and cultural context in which we exist. People and things have significance only in relation to their relevance to our image of self and the perpetuation of that image with the best possible 'results' for Da-sein.

With this existential referent in place we see the potential for conflict in a situation where a society imposes a foreign cultural image of the collective self on another culture with different cultural icons forming its collective identity. This is the case in La Guma's South Africa where a White, Christian, European culture was forced on a culture whose color, customs and spiritual beliefs were viewed as different and, therefore, labeled inferior. Open conflict followed, and because of a structural advantage in the European's power to protect and

perpetuate its image of self, the native population was forced to exist under the language rules (i.e., constitution) of another culture. However, the historical image of *self* of pre-White South African society is kept alive in the traditions and oral history of the native African, an image of self that signifies the referential totality of their being in a world that was no longer their own. It was this image of a shared self and the will to bring it back to the totality of its former significance that fueled the anti-apartheid movement detailed in La Guma's fiction. This becomes clear in the scene from *In The Fog of the Season's End* where the main character Beukes reflects on the type of person willing to risk his life for the promotion of the 'native' African *self*.

He read the handbill. 'We bring a message... you will wonder that men and women would risk long terms of imprisonment to bring you this message. What kind of people do these things? The answer is simple. They are ordinary people who want freedom in this country... Give us back our country to rule for ourselves as we choose... . (58)

There are a number of important social phenomena at work in this passage. The first is the implicit recognition that words, here the language game of 'resistance,' have power to challenge the dominant language game of the minority government, particularly the official policy of apartheid. The fact that they distribute the "handbills" in secret against the government's efforts to quash their printing and distribution, gives witness to the power of language driven by the will of a large group of people. As stated in chapter one, people give power to a language game, and the greater the number of people who invest their image of *self* in a language game, the greater the power to initiate social change. In South Africa the nonwhite population outnumbers the white population by a ratio of ten to one. Through superior numbers, the nonwhite collective

gained enough power to effectively oppose the minority government. Now it must be mentioned here that the 'native' anti-apartheid movement was not enough to topple the white government. It took an international movement against apartheid working with 'native' groups to provide the final push for freedom. Here a more powerful language game of universal liberalization and human rights, the theory of which is given in the UN Charter on Human Rights and the principle of self-determination stated in international law, was needed to establish a democratic 'color-free' constitution for all South African citizens. This will be discussed in chapter four when I look at the United Nations Charter and the section of the Charter dealing with the rights of "self-determination."

The second, implicit element at work in the above quotation is the fact that 'fiction' does have the power to identify and express a people's image of *self* through the actions of characters in a fictional world. La Guma's being is a *being* from the world of which he writes and must reflect the referential significance of one who lives with the *they* in that world. By *they* I wish to signify only those who are excluded as the inferior *other* in the apartheid language game, and not the unified *they* as defined in a democratic constitution. Though La Guma's writing is the language game of fiction, there are enough cultural signifiers in his work to associate the setting and characters in the novel with the lived experience of the *nonwhite self* in the presence of the dominant *white self*. Thus, using Heidegger's "totality of referential significance" we see the linguistic duplication of the oppressed *they* in the fictional world of the *they* as detailed by La Guma. Through fiction those readers who live outside the referential totality of the nonwhite South African living under apartheid are linked to the struggle of the oppressed. The only reason we are able to identify with the nonwhite *they*, is the fact that as *Da-sein*, we share in the need to

promote our image of self and the larger manifestation of that image in the formation of a collective self as recognized and protected under a nation's constitution and laws. In our image of self we are always striving toward the best possible realization of self, not the worst. As a being who takes *care*, it is possible to share in the referential totality of the beings signified in La Guma's fiction who, like us, strive to take care of their being.

The third existential phenomenon at work in the above passage is the fact that a language game obtains power in the will to act. Words on paper that propose social change are inert theories incapable of mobilizing people toward positive social reconstruction as long as they remain on paper. The "handbills" which Beukes and others like him distribute are meaningless unless their message is communicated to as many people as possible who are willing to act. Action has power because it explicitly identifies and moves the *self* from under the cloak of the *they* and demands that this *self* be recognized as something more than a *non significant* element of the *they*. In daily social traffic *going along with the they is easier* than disrupting the 'natural' flow, blaming our troubles on the *everybody* and *nobody* of the invisible *they*. As stated by Heidegger, we cannot avoid the *they*, because as a being living and taking care in the world with others, the *they* in our very midst influence us. However, letting our self be swept away in the flow of the *they*, grounds any effective movement toward social change. The very physical presence of the "handbills" and the willingness to act on their message, represent a tangible manifestation of the *self* distinct from the conformist whitewash of the minority *they*.

It is important to note that the same essential need to project the image of self onto the world is also at work in the white South African. Now this begs the question, who is right if *the same essential understanding of the self motivates both groups as needing to take care* of its

potentiality-of-being? The answer to this question lies in the fact that the individual *care* of Da-sein takes place within the larger social context where signification is collected and identified in the language games of governments and institutions. In theory, these institutions should represent a collective image of self held by most, if not all, of its citizens.

ii. *Collective manifestations of care in formal language games*

As with Wittgenstein's belief that there is no such thing as a private language, Heidegger's concept of *care* has meaning only in a larger social reality, or as he calls it *being-in-the-world* with the *they*. Implicit in the being of the self is the interaction with other Mitda-sein *being-in-the-world*. This interaction with the *they* shapes the way we see our *self* and the way others see us. This is a fact of existence and one which influences our every thought, action and language. As Heidegger states in *Sein und Zeit* the "they itself, for the sake of which Da-sein is every day, articulate the referential context of significance" (121). All of us share in the primordial need to take care of the self in the midst of others taking care of the self and the image of the self is largely influenced by our social context. For instance, the title of our occupation often identifies us, the place where we live, the religion we follow, or choose not to follow, the manner in which we dress, the vehicle we drive or do not, the people we associate with, the public places and events we attend, our level of education, the color of our skin, the length and style of our hair. In most of these instances we make choices that best reflect our image of *self* that in turn is derived from the norms and conventions as established and promoted in the language games belonging

to a particular society. Given our image of self, we then expect others to treat us in the manner that enforces our self image within the conventions of 'our' society. We can never own a society: we willingly, or not, partake in the norms of that society. The norms and conventions of a country are promulgated in the dominant language game signified by the nation's constitution. Now the constitution is, in *theory*, the formal expression of a collective *image of self* which reflects how the majority of citizens wish to be interpreted within that society. In this we see the expression of the collective self or the *they* in a language game that gathers and signifies the image of self as a being living with others.

Although pre-linguistic constitutions do exist in traditions and oral histories, my focus will be on the formal linguistic expression of the constitution and the power contained within its language. In Alex La Guma's South Africa, the remnants of a pre-linguistic 'constitution' do exist in the traditions and language of the various native populations established long before European settlement. However, these informal structures, though they expressed the care-of-the-self of the majority, could not effectively channel the collected power of individual Da-sein against the structurally binding strength of the European's formal language games. Why is this so, and what is it about formal language games, such as a country's constitution, that enables them to collect, multiply and project a particular image of self? To answer these questions we must look at the difference between the formal language games and informal pre-linguistic society to identify the existential influences shaping the cultural concept of the *self*.

iii. *The self in formal language games*

In European society, social reality is signified primarily through language and captured in the written word of institutions. A nation's constitution encapsulates the collective image of self, defining that self and constructing laws to protect the self. Individual expressions of will are curtailed by the laws promulgating the collective care of all those peoples living under the dominant language game of the constitution. A constitution, while binding the country's interest under one linguistic expression of the self, has the potential to marginalise, in theory, at least 49% of its citizens at any given point in a country's history. Again we see that J.S. Mill's belief in a society based on the individual pursuit of happiness is impossible given the structure of a formalized democratic society. Oddly enough those living under such a governmental system, for the most part, tolerate the lack of a genuine avenue for the expression of free will, saying the *they* in power must know what is best for the country. Also keep in mind that the power placebo, given in the name of the right to *vote*, lulls the majority into thinking that the 49% who 'lost their vote' will have the right to vote again and meanwhile they have cast aside their legitimate right to complain about the political status quo. Inherent in this system is subservience to the *they* and an acknowledgment that the power of the *they* somehow represents the country's image of self as explained in the constitution, and as a voting member of that constitution you must obey the rules of the country's formal language game. So we see the power of the *they* multiplied by the social illusion that the individual is only one in a system based in the *many*, and that our care for the self is unique and separate from the care for the self of our neighbor, and somehow inferior to the care of the nation's collective self. This fragmentary illusion is

successful simply because we do not naturally *see our self* as belonging, in a meaningful way, to the collective of the *they*; yet we are willing to contribute to the power of the *they* through virtue of the denial of our essential role in the power of *they*. In accepting our membership to the *they* who have no power because of a lost vote, we accept the democratic fact that 49% of us will not have our care-for-the-self represented in any given government. This gives the democratic system a great deal of leeway in interpreting the theoretical principles outlined in ‘official’ language games inevitably dominating individual expressions of the self and the care-for-the-self. This is how a nation’s formal language game perpetuates power in a system where the *they* are allowed to hold power over the *they* who have no power while giving the illusion that *we* have power as ‘promised’ in the constitution. As we will see in chapter six, the post-apartheid government has fallen into this democratic illusion of power ‘to’ and ‘by’ the people.

Given the complexity of the many-layered formal expressions of power in the Western democratic tradition it is no easy task to bring democracy back to the people who form the power base of government. The apartheid regime has utilized the complexities of the formal *lateral power configurations* to bind the non white population in endless streams of official regulations. An example from La Guma’s novel *In the Fog of the Season’s End* supports the effectiveness of the *lateral power configuration*. As stated above, the many structural manifestations of the dominant language game, a country’s constitution, strengthens the image of the self projected in that language game making it difficult to challenge this multilayered structure with the single power strand of an oral tradition. In the following quotation Beukes itemizes some lateral power configurations inherent in the modern White European language game system:

The serious national news was padded with the announcements of officialdom. "The Minister of Defense stated in the House... It was announced last night by the Commissioner of Police... The Minister of the Interior, of Coloured Affairs, Asiatic Affairs..." Ministerial statements disguised facts, they could dismiss anything as speculation, misreporting, or threaten a breach of the Secrets Act. (163)

The links of "officialdom" represent *lateral power configurations* spreading the authority of the constitution among the people represented in the constitution here the minority whites. In this manner power of shared perception strengthens each lateral government organization. The role of the writer is to eliminate the discriminatory foundations for these lateral power configurations by showing the reader the human face behind the regulations. La Guma tells the story of his people in a manner that makes them people like us, effectively removing the evil of the irrational 'kaffir.'

CHAPTER 3

I have been talking about our community; our community culturally has been Europeanized. We speak European languages. Our cultural background is European as a result of the colonialization of the Cape province in particular. And because we read and write English, we tend to those authors for our education. So to that extent I suppose European, particularly the English language writers, have influenced me because that is the circumstance of South Africa. *Memories of Home: The Writings of Alex La Guma* (22)

i. La Guma's view of the writer in defining the image of self

In this chapter I will discuss La Guma's philosophy on politics and the role of the writer in promoting a unified cultural identity that could challenge the dominant White cultural identity in South Africa. With this discussion I will show how native South Africans adopted the strategies of western *lateral power configurations* to develop an effective political lever against apartheid.

La Guma recognizes the complete domination and infiltration of the European language game with all of its *lateral power structures* into traditional South African culture. In order for native Africans to express their image-of-self against an official constitution that did not recognize them as "persons" writers like La Guma had to write the nonwhite community into

the constitution. This involves adopting the strategy of the *lateral power configuration*, as detailed in chapter two, to create a culturally layered representation of Black African life that could effectively challenge the many regulatory layers of White officialdom. In his address to the Afro-Asian congress La Guma comments on adopting the linguistic power structures of Western civilizations:

The degrees of independence might vary from country to country, but certainly major advances have been made in destroying the old colonial empires governed from Europe. The peoples of these countries are reaching towards modern forms of civilization and culture, working to end the heritage of the colonial past, to catch up with what they missed during centuries of foreign oppression and to take their rightful place alongside advanced countries. (53)

“Modern forms of civilization” means adopting Western cultural language games consciously to express, in writing, the image of the South African Black *self* as “rightful” citizens distinct from the inferior *self* written in the White South African constitution and regulations.

ii. Creation of the universal self

As you recall, Heidegger’s image-of-self and the *authentic care* for that image is essential in developing a language game that protects and promotes, by design, that image. Our life is an investment in our self, and all of our thoughts and actions are geared to bring us to the destination we desire for our *self*. However, before we are able to do this, we must be able to identify our *authentic self* from within the social maze of the insidious *they*. In La Guma’s South African society the European *they*, which have devoured the authentic self of the aboriginal South African goes against the need to express our *authentic self*. It is this lack of *authentic self*

identity that he attempts to recreate in his fiction. In an interview with Cecil Abrahams, La Guma defines the role of the writer in developing a community where the *authentic self* is defined:

[I] think that it is the role of the conscious writer to guide the morals, the perspectives and the objectives of the community. The community might be small, depending upon his own outlook; the community can be national, and the community can be universal. All this depends to what extent the writer's consciousness embraces the things which influence not only himself, but all people. (20)

The "community" he refers to is not only the community of nonwhites but also the "universal" community of all peoples despite color, race, or religion. With this move, La Guma is adopting the Western democratic language game of officially recognizing 'universal' human rights. A language game detailed in the United Nations Charter, International Law, particularly with respect to the right of a 'people' to become a sovereign state, and the democratic Bill of Rights outlined in republic constitutions. What links these formal language games together is the basic need of human beings to express, in our daily interaction with others, a positive image of the self coupled with deliberate, willful actions taken to secure the best possible outcome for our being. It is with this basic, yet universal, thread of a positive image of the self that La Guma set out to weave a network of international support against apartheid through his writing. For instance, in *The Fog of the Seasons' End* the central character, Beukes, is speaking with a black maid who works for a white family. She is resigned to the 'fact' that the blacks will always be servants to the whites and that there is nothing they can do to change this:

'We all good enough to be servants. Because we're black they think we good enough just to change their nappies.'

She said, hesitantly, wondering whether it would be the right answer, 'That's life, isn't it?'

It wasn't, she could feel, because he said, 'Life? Why should it be our life? We're

as good or bad as they are.'

'Yes, I reckon so. But what can us people do?'

The brown eyes smiled. They were red-rimmed from lack of sleep, but not angry in spite of the bitter tone he had used. He rubbed the shot overnight stubble on his jaw with a long brown finger. 'There are things people can do,' his voice was not sleepy, 'I'm not saying a person can change it tomorrow or next year. But even if you don't get what you want today, soon, it's a matter of pride, dignity. You follow me?' (11)

The idea of a clear positive image of self is foremost in Beukes' mind and is the driving force behind his involvement in resisting apartheid. He is justified in claiming ownership to "pride" and "dignity" which are intrinsic to any authentic self image. By appealing to the universal desire for the authentic self, La Guma is speaking against the dehumanization of the native South African under European colonization. The quotation also makes it clear that those who recognize the potential of the authentic self, must educate others with that perception. In this manner Beukes' question "You follow me?" is La Guma asking his reader "Do you understand that *we* also deserve "pride" and "dignity?"

There is little doubt that the decades following the Second World War saw an active indictment of the tyranny of colonialism, a political and economic tyranny implicit in the strong lateral power configurations inherent in capitalism where cheap Black labor drives the profit machinery. For instance, in South Africa's neighbour, Mozambique, gained its independence in 1975, Angola in 1975 and Zimbabwe in 1980. Drawing on the success of these new countries La Guma shapes, through his philosophy on self-determination and his 'fictional' depiction of the horrid life of the nonwhite South African living under apartheid, an international appeal to remove the shackles of oppression. He recognizes that the traditional power configuration holding together tribal society has disappeared under colonization, and to challenge that authority he must draw on the universal necessity for the expression of *authentic self* in the

authentic taking care. In effect La Guma is tapping into the lateral power configurations of countries and cultures that hold dear the authentic expression of the self in a democratic constitution. He is shaping an image of the South African self free from the restrictions of the color bar by writing a language game free of what Wittgenstein in chapter one calls “distinctions” toward the “end” of creating a common culture of *authentic care* for the *authentic self*. There is a clear example of ‘decoloring’ in *The Fog of the Seasons’ End* in a scene where police open fire on a crowd of blacks protesting the carrying of pass books. La Guma describes the identity of the victims in general terms, without reference to color or race:

The bundles of dead lay under the sun, with the abandoned pop bottles, fluttering pass-books, shoes, broken umbrellas, newspapers, all the debris of life and death. Among the dead was the Washerwoman. She had been shot low down while running away—the femoral arteries in the comfortable thighs had been torn through, so that she bled quickly to death, lying heaped on top of her collapsed sunshade by the runningboard of a parked car.

The Child lay on her face and there seemed hardly a mark on her, except when she was turned over and they saw the exit hole the heavy slug had made in the meagre chest. Her face was at peace and she seemed to be dreaming of something far away.

Those who found the Outlaw discovered that he took some time to die. He snarled up at those who tried to aid him, his life bubbling and frothing away through his mouth and nose and the neat line of holes punched through his back and lungs by most of the clip of a sten-gun.

The Bicycle Messenger had died instantly, sprawled jointlessly over his fallen cycle which he had refused to abandon in flight, his flesh burst open, his spine shattered and his splintered ribs thrust into heart and lungs. One of his ankle clips had come off and was entangled in the spokes of a wheel. (105)

The description of wounds, of suffering, and onslaught of death are told with such detail and feeling that the reader must feel sympathy for the victims. While reading this passage one forgets that these are ‘black’ people and their wounds become the reader’s. Their torn, shattered bodies make us reflect on the condition of our own body. This sympathetic reaction forms the first step

in realizing *authentic care* for the *authentic self*. Noting that La Guma uses clear concise *English* is important, because that is the language used to express the philosophy of international human rights.

To crystalize his new language game into an effective lever against apartheid he must draw on the power of existing “enlightened” language games. In support, I draw on La Guma’s remarks to the Afro-Asian Writer congress in 1975 in Tashkent, Soviet Union:

As we have tried to point out earlier, the anti-colonialist struggle has drawn millions of people together from all parts of the world. The colonized countries, the newly independent countries, the progressive, enlightened people of the metropolitan countries, the socialist world, all form this mighty force, reinforcing each other in the struggle for the progress of all mankind. South Africa has no longer become a localized issue. (60)

International ‘threads’ collected under the *authentic care* for the self give power to the language of the novel as it depicts the *inauthentic* image of the self constructed by a constitutional language game that defines *authentic self* according to a very small, very select group of people. The ineffectual traditional power configuration is abandoned in favor of the stronger, “progressive” unity held in the written lateral power configuration of western society.

iii. Creation of the national self

Along with international consciousness the writer must nurture local communal consciousness to create a strong, unified core to which the larger universal or international consciousness can attach itself. In this instance it is the writer’s ‘duty’ to make those suffering from apartheid realize their position and to understand the fact that they must hold together their fragmented

selves as divided under the alien *they*. This involves an understanding of the *authentic self* and an acknowledgment of the basic need to actively express an *authentic care* for the *self*. I will explore this issue first through Heidegger's characteristics of 'care' and, secondly, through La Guma's philosophy on the role of the writer as a source for social change.

In *Being And Time* Heidegger stresses the liberating quality inherent in understanding the self as an *authentic self*, free from the image of the *inauthentic self* created by the everyday commerce with the *they*:

In contrast to this [*they*], there is the possibility of a concern which does not so much leap ahead of him, not in order to take "care" away from him, but to first give it back to him as such. This concern which essentially pertains to *authentic care*; that is, the existence of the other, and not to a what which it takes care of, helps the other to become transparent to himself in his care and free for it. (115)

There is the distinction between the inauthentic care of the *they* and the *authentic care* of a person who is concerned with the well-being of another. Often in capitalists societies the *they* are more than willing to take "care" of all our needs if we are able and willing to pay for this service. It is easy in such a system to lose our self and become re-created in a profit-oriented language game where we must see our self as 'consumer' and where we must pay to participate. Sure enough this company will promise to take care of your every financial need, or another company will promise to take care of your every health concern, a religion will promise to take care of your spiritual needs, a lawyer will promise to protect 'your' self-respect through justice and so on. In these cases self image and care for that image are entirely defined, controlled and 'looked after' within the language game of profit. We are given choices according to the rules, but our choices are limited by our ability to pay. This is not *authentic care*, or a genuine concern for another human being, but a contrived illusion with the sole objective of creating a self that

sees itself as a 'willing' and 'necessary' participant in language game where you must, as a consumer, pay as you play. Under the rules of this language game the individual is isolated from a genuine relationship with others through the idea that you are in direct competition with your neighbor for the purchase of "care." In turn we must compete for jobs so that we can acquire our "care" from those who are most qualified to do so. So in effect the self becomes a commodity in that we must 'sell our self' to our employer and convince others to buy our services.

In contrast to the fragmentation of the self in the capitalist language game is the language game of the *authentic self*. Here, the existence of the other, or Mitda-sein, is linked directly to the existence of your *authentic self*. According to Heidegger we are social beings and our potentiality-of-being is linked with the potentiality-of-being of others. Because of this basic characteristic of being, we are able to link social power with people and the solidification of power in the formal language games of institutions. The cultural fragmentation in the capitalist language game is just one example of a language game that corrupts the basic social link and drives people to pursue their potentiality of being as a distinct enterprise. However, there is an alternative state in which individual Da-sein perceives a commonality in the care they take in ensuring a happy and successful tomorrow for their being and the care of the other. Noting that the other is similar to the they by virtue of the reciprocal realization that they view their being in the same manner as I, is important for the realization of their potentiality-of-being. Initially this understanding is expressed through informal discourse. And if enough people communicate a will to act on the promulgation of their shared view of the self, then a formal written language game will develop which in turn translates into some type of organization with a distinct title

that encapsulates the essential view of the self. Heidegger calls this development “authentic alliance” where social fragmentation is dropped in favor of the pursuit of a common goal:

On the other hand, when they devote themselves to the same thing in common, their doing so is determined by their Da-sein, which has been stirred. This *authentic* alliance first makes possible the proper kind of objectivity which frees the other for himself in his freedom. (115)

The *I*, that stands out from the *they*, receives its drive to maintain itself from its *authentic care*; that is, the care for the existence of the other and not to a *what* which takes care-of-your-care.

People entwined together in the understanding of their shared *authentic care* and banded together toward a common goal wear a badge of recognition which allow them to see their true Da-sein in the Mitda-sein of others. This self awareness of the being that *I* am is the essence of Da-sein and is only possible as being-in-the-world with others. And once they have realized authentic care in *I and others* then we become free to act toward realizing our view of the self as expressed in *our* language game.

In the Fog of the Season's End Elias, an active member of the underground anti-apartheid movement, comments on the necessary link between assessing and understanding the nonwhite reality in South Africa, and the active ‘willing’ needed to alter that reality into one where the *authentic care* of the South African citizen is realized. Though they face imprisonment or death the need to express their legitimate being out weighs the risks which “cannot be helped, because by activity the people’s understanding develops” (139). And it is the role of the writer actively to develop the “people’s understanding” despite extreme personal risk.

As I have noted before, La Guma uses writing as a tool to develop and promote an image of the self as a free and responsible citizen living under a constitution that addresses and

identifies people of all colors as legitimate beings. He understood the “*authentic alliance*” that links all beings through the expression of *authentic care* for the self, in contrast to the White South African constitution that defined an authentic being as one who is white like the *they* of the minority. However, before La Guma could express this “*authentic alliance*” he had to overcome the social fragmentation caused by the white minority government. Realizing the potential power in an organized, educated, colored alliance, the South African government actively sought to divide them along old tribal boundaries. They divided Native Blacks along traditional tribal boundaries while nonnative ‘colored’ peoples were segregated by nation of origin. We see this in the *In the Fog of the Season’s End* when Beukes reflects on the cultural segregation initiated by the South African government:

In the late-summer night the darkness slowly edged away the dry sand-lots, the rutted lanes that passed for streets, the sagging fences that surrounded arid patches which were hopefully used as gardens, and left only the dim lights like smudged gold tinsel scattered haphazardly against a shabby cloth of smoky purple. It was the frontier between the official ‘Bantu’ Township that sprawled behind wire fences, the Colored and Asiatic zones, and the White-proclaimed city. One day the ragged settlement of cardboard, flattened metal drums and tottering cottages, would disappear, its habitants neatly packed off into various categories like specimens in a museum, but now it hung on, in unconscious defiance of what was euphemistically termed ‘slum clearance’. (141)

With this division in place an authentic alliance could not take shape. Apartheid is a policy that recognizes that the strength in official *lateral power configurations* is effective as long as the potential political power of an organized majority is physically fragmented. The last section of the quotation stresses the impotence of “unconscious defiance” by linking it with “ragged settlements” which would one day “disappear.” La Guma and other native writers must replace “unconscious defiance” with an active well-organized conscious resistance shaped by the same

language games that form government power structures.

The social consequences of the South African society fragmented along the color bar are more severe than those of a fragmented consumer society. In this society there is not even the illusion of social freedom and the expression of a being's will. The consequences of willful expression of *authentic care* for the self in South Africa were imprisonment or death. The stakes in this language game is much higher than dissatisfaction with taxes, high prices and unemployment. However, it is an essential characteristic of our being to take care of ourselves and to create a culture where authentic care for the self is built into the structure of that culture. Now to do this La Guma, as a socially conscious writer, had to draw together the different cultural threads which the white government actively sought to divide. In his address to the Afro-Asian Writers Congress he states:

Within the indigenous society the action of the liberation on the cultural plane entails cultural unity, corresponding to the moral and political unity necessary for the dynamics of the struggle. With the opening up of closed groups, tribal or ethnic, racist aggressiveness tends to disappear and give way to understanding, solidarity and mutual respect, a unity in a struggle and in a common destiny in the face of foreign rule. (56)

With "mutual respect" we see the existential manifestation of Heidegger's *authentic alliance* where the care of the self is recognized as the same care for the self of the *they* and as such forms the power basis for cultural unity. This "mutual respect" is formally expressed in the language game of resistance while developing the *lateral power configurations* "necessary for the dynamics of the struggle." The old tribal power configurations no longer hold against the many-layered power dynamic of a 'written' culture.

iv. *Potential for corruption in the revolutionary self*

Having highlighted the role of the writer in creating a unified *authentic alliance* in the “face of foreign rule” by adopting the linguistic strategies and structures of European “civilization,” we might ask whether there is not a danger of being corrupted by the cultural inequalities inherent in these structures? Keep in mind that South Africa is made up of different tribal and ethnic groups among the Blacks and various nonwhite nationalities including the Chinese, East Indians, peoples of Indo-China and various non-White cultural hybrids. In contrast, the white minority government consists of British, Dutch, German, and French descendants. By far most of South Africa’s population consists of the ancestors of the native Black African population whose traditional power configurations are completely different from the linguistic strategies and structures of Europe’s lateral power patterns. Yet the one thing that these groups have in common, white and colored, is a political and cultural enemy that they perceive as a threat to their will to care for the self. The native Blacks see the White European government as a threat, and the descendants of the French, Dutch, German and British see the Blacks, Chinese, East Indian and Colored peoples as a threat to taking care of their potentiality-of-being. The White minority government mirrors this threat to self in the language and spirit of the country’s constitution and all of the consequent *lateral power configurations* manifested in the legal system, the economy, public religious worship, the taxation system, the country’s health plan, transportation, housing, education and employment strategies.

Since La Guma is writing an informal constitutional identity for the nonwhite in South Africa by adopting the linguistic and cultural power strategies of ‘civilized’ European society,

does he not first have to destroy the White ‘motivation’ for taking care of the self that underlies the “spirit” of every institution and legal organization in the South African government? If literature can achieve this, how is he going to encapsulate the spirit of universal personhood in the residual cultural power structures designed on a recognized inequality among different ethnic, tribal and cultural peoples? La Guma states in the above quote that it is the role of the writer to unite the various ethnic, national and tribal groups in “understanding, solidarity and mutual respect” against the common enemy of colonialism. In his address to the Afro-Asian Writers congress he repeats this point by quoting P.I. Seme, the original treasure-general of the African National Congress in 1899: “The demon of racialism, the aberrations of Xhosa-Fingo feuds, the animosity that exists between Zulus and the Tongas, between the Basuto and every other native, must be buried and forgotten. We are one people” (56). Given apartheid, it is easy to eliminate cultural racism and join feuding tribes as “one people,” but what happens when the common enemy is gone but his ‘works’ remain? Given this situation is it then possible for the revolutionary self to devolve into the ‘linguistic white’ self of the former enemy? With past revolutions, the French Revolution(1779) and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia (1917) the answer to the above question is yes. A derivative of this adaptation of the ‘enemy’ will eventually manifest itself between the many different ethnic and cultural groups in South Africa despite La Guma’s positive view of shaping a universal personhood through a common linguistic culture. I must confess that this opinion has the benefit of seeing the ‘future’ beyond the scope of La Guma’s writing, but I feel that I must address this issue so that an examination of the *self*, as being in the world with others, can be conducted. With this study in place I will then look at how La Guma drew on the international cry against apartheid to develop a ‘universal

consciousness' aware of the stagnant oppression of the Blacks in South Africa. To do this I will look at the United Nations perception of legitimate peoples and reveal, by what is not expressed in the Charter's language on human rights, the image of self that the Charter does not safeguard under our modern 'economic democracy.' This will help to clarify my belief that the new South Africa will someday face renewed civil unrest. There are two reasons why this will happen. The first is that, by nature of formalized power structures, institutions change more slowly than people, creating a rift between revolutionary will and the 'national' evolution of institutions. The second reason, is that an 'economic democracy' fragments people in the pursuit of profit by creating the perception that there is always, lurking in the background, the possibility of a direct threat to the self through commodity scarcity. In this instance the common enemy is not a 'color' but a residual effect of the Western democratic lateral power structures, namely social fragmentation through exploitive consumerism.

v. Institutional change

Successful social revolutions that adopt the institutions and organizations of the former government are not guaranteed immediate cultural representation in those residual power structures. Keep in mind that the language game behind an institution develops from a shared view of the self and an active will to establish that image within a society that is initially resistant to change. The very physical nature of an institution is designed to protect and

perpetuate the founder's cultural and social view of the self, and as such is resistant to quick, radical change. Throughout the history of colonization in South Africa, the Europeans have adopted the same Western democratic power structures responsible for the complete dehumanization of indigenous peoples in North, Central, and South America. Inherent in these structures are cultural imprints of a superior, white culture in which personal worth is identified with material and monetary success. As mentioned before, the *lateral power configurations* derived from this 'culture' are based on the image of self as racially and economically superior to the 'native' population, and reflected in the language games developed to protect their image of self. This image of the self, with all of its prejudices and presuppositions, remains in the institutions long after the revolutionary government has taken power and affects the manner in which the new government views itself and those they govern.

Now the question must be asked, Is it possible for an institution to possess a 'life' of its own which in turn shapes the existential system of signification for those living under the rules of the institution? I believe this to be the case, based on Heidegger's basic tenet that human existential reality is constituted by the active care for the self within the social context of other beings pursuing the same ends for their 'self.' The image of self is shaped by the institutions and language games in which we seek to achieve our potentiality-of-being. And we follow the rules of the established language games as long as they continue to reflect a favorable image of self. A country's constitution is the nation's primary language game and remains valid as long as it holds to the original intent of its citizens. If this ceases to be the case, then revolution will take place. But once established, is there potential for an institution to stand for something different from the founder's potentiality-of-being and image of self? And if so what is the time required

for this change to occur? With colonized countries gaining their independence, as with African countries in the 1960's and 1970's, there has been an *easy* transition by the new leaders into the established system of institutions constructed by the European rulers. Unfortunately, the new leaders have adopted the founder's power residing in these institutions by way of the 'official' language games to create a split in the revolutionary spirit. While reinterpretation can take place immediately after independence, the physical structures embodying the social power structures of the former government remain, as does the original image of self on which they were constructed. Keeping in mind that institutions and the language under which they identify themselves reflect a favorable view of the self as we take 'care,' it is no wonder that the new government soon becomes accustomed to the physical comfort of the old institutions backed by the intoxicating prestige of established power. Soon the 'authentic alliance' against the common enemy becomes an 'inauthentic alliance' where the common will expressed in the revolutionary 'self' is split between the new leaders and the new citizens. With respect to the revolutionary writer the struggle for national freedom is achieved, in principle, but now he is faced with the restrictions of the old power regimes inhabited by the new leaders. In an article by Abraham Chapman *THE BLACK WRITER in africa and the americas* (1973) Chapman argues:

[...] the new problems of the African writer after the defeat of direct colonial rule and the birth of independent African states [is] the struggle for artistic freedom against the imposition of literary doctrines and programs, negritudinal or not, by the state, and the struggle for the individual vision and integrity of the artist. (36)

Suppression of 'artistic freedom' is possible because the physical presence of recorded language games, represented in "literary doctrines and programs," changes slowly compared with the social influences shaping our day to day attempts to realize our potentiality-of-being. Cultural

norms and language change, but not nearly as rapidly as an individual's willful image of the self as expressed in art and literature. The language of being-in-the-world with others can communicate shifts in people's image of self long before formal organizational language games change in any significant way. That is why mass protests for social change are active long before the language game of institutions move to reflect this change in the image of self.

Yet, people create social power and people directly influence the dynamics of that power. And because individual Da-sein exists for a relatively short period and that time is invested in taking care of the self, long-lived institutions obviously evolve more slowly than people. Therefore, the 'authentic alliance' and 'authentic care' projected by the institution's original founders can differ from a 'present' authentic concern for the self. Those invested with the task of protecting a society's cultural icons are subject to the same temporal influences shaping our socially constructed image of self. Yet they will be reluctant to change because their task as keepers largely defines their immediate social reality in the institution, and because this position affords the positive reinforcement of our self through the prestige of traditional lateral power configurations. In this difference between the interpretation and formation of the self of those in power and those they rule, we have the seeds for a social movement against the 'establishment.'

vi. Economic fragmentation of the self

While the revolutionary writes to unite, the democratic prize, once achieved, works against the writer to fragment the union. Democratic capitalism is constructed on the principle of

divide and conquer backed by the ever impending threat of product 'scarcity.' Individuals are encouraged to value being as one would value a precious commodity and the value of this being increases according to the value of your investment in the commodity market. For example, in *Time of the Butcherbird* a white traveling sales agent by the name of Edgar Stopes visits the remote South African towns to sell his wares. His dealings with the people he meets, both black and white, are shaped entirely by his desire to make as much profit as possible in the shortest time. Stopes' description of the "Railway Hotel," one of his many stops, reveals the alienation of the authentic self inherent in capitalism:

Windowed doors that led on the left to the tiny dining room, on the right to the taproom. Straight ahead, beside the counter, another doorway curtained with fly-specked strings of wooden beads gave way to a short narrow passage with the kitchen of it and stairs to the four cramped bedrooms above. To all this Edgar Stopes was familiar. He knew that the whitewash would come off on your clothes if you were not careful, that the coloured help was named Fanie, that mice occupied the thatch roof. He had passed this way many times in the cause of Universal Products, and now taking off his sunglasses in the dim hallway, he did not savour having to spend a whole day in this place, with the meaningless chatter about Merino sheep, the town's prospects in the provincial country-sports meeting, the never-forgotten plan for the asphaltting of the square. (6)

There is no 'care' expressed in Stopes' description of either the hotel or its occupants. A bland recognition of their existence is carried by the "cause of Universal Products," the phrase itself an apt description for free market globalization. The only conversation that has any meaning for Stopes is one of sales and profit. It is this type of insidious consumer fragmentation that threatens the stability of the newly independent nations in Africa. This is possible because the founding spirit of colonial governments is based on exploitation for the sake of personal profit which in turn fits neatly into our 'natural' need to project a positive image of self as distinct from the 'they.' The capitalist image of the self remains in the institutions and language games

taken over by the revolutionary government. One can rewrite the country's constitution but the distemper of the old institutional icons remain to infect the new government. This is perfectly clear in an article by Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane where the lack of a post-apartheid image of the self shows clearly against the wholehearted adaptation of the old power structures by the new politicians:

With the best will in the world, it is difficult to see in South Africa today a post-apartheid society. We must admit that it is too early yet to speak meaningfully of post-apartheid South Africa. On the contrary, the many faces of neo-apartheid South Africa stare at us everywhere we go. The face of the new parliamentarians defending their six-figure salaries with the same zeal with which they once condemned the apartheid gravy train; the face of the new provincial MEC (Member of the Executive Council) arriving at a funeral, not in a chauffeur driven Mercedes but on a helicopter; the bright African face of a private multiracial school graduate heading for Wits (University of Witwatersrand) from a house in Parktown, or heading for UCT (University of Cape Town) from a house in Sea Point, thanks to the revolution led by his parents which saved him from enrolling at any of the Historically Disadvantaged Universities. (27.1(1996):17)

The "six figure salaries" and the privilege of the "private multiracial school graduate" represent the residual *lateral power configurations* of the colonial government. Although the language used to name the revolutionary adaptation of the old institutions such as "multiracial school" and the "new provincial MEC," the old profit-driven image of self remains to undermine the spirit of multiracial harmony written into the new constitution. And as long as this continues so too will civil unrest.

As La Guma states in the opening of this chapter, the structures and institutions of Europe have influenced his view of literature and life, and it is from within these social influences that he must sketch the Colored African into the new face of South Africa. However, they did not afford him the luxury of writing at home and was forced into exile in 1967. But the one positive outcome of exile was his ability to publish his novels in the international market

without fear of South African censorship, and to gain international support for native self-determination in South African through a distinct literary voice and cultural identity. Chapter four will explore the definition of self-determination as set out in the United Nations Charter, and how La Guma relied on this definition to rewrite the African *self*.

CHAPTER 4

The laundry workers had gone on strike for better wages and he [Elias] had gone to a meeting outside the big washing plant. Umanyano, the union, was not recognized, of course, and strikes by Africans were illegal: they were, according to law, not workers, but servants and the contract bound them fast. The management had sent for the police and they had charged the strikers with truncheons.
La Guma *In The Fog of the Season's End* (133)

In this chapter, I will explore the similarities and differences between the language of self-determination in La Guma's writing and the theoretical definition of self-determination as outlined by the United Nations General Assembly. This will involve a shift away from the fiction of La Guma in the latter part of this chapter to the more specialized text of the UN Charter. My analysis of the UN Charter will reveal the fact that global free-market economics has fragmented the image of the authentic self upon the unrelenting desire for profit. As a point of transition I will use a statement given by La Guma in a conversation with Cecil Abrahams concerning the imaginative imperative of the writer to explore his talents in the international community. This suggests a shift from his earlier view of the writer as social commentator and political activist to the writer as an 'artist' and social commentator on an international level. I will explore what I believe to be the reason for this shift in the latter section of this chapter.

La Guma's fiction gives a face to those people striving for self-determination, a face

which the reader is able to interpret in the narrative as a face not unlike our own. In this act of recognition, the reader is drawn into the 'care' expressed in the narrative. The injustice of the apartheid system becomes clear, as does the need for corrective action. The question for self-determination of a 'people' now becomes a question of dignity for the 'person.' The reader understands this because dignity and respect for the person is something we view as a right inherent in reasonable degree of self respect. In contrast, the official language of the U.N. General Assembly speaks of the rights of self-determination as proposed by Western standards of 'civility.' It is my contention that official recognition of the 'principle of equal rights,' as stated in the United Nation's Charter and the constitutions of democratic governments, represents a strong theoretical statement of society's positive view of the *self* through the tradition of a 'statement for the good of the people' which is a "liberal" indulgence in all 'civilized' societies. Theoretical statements postpone human rights with the recognition of, and striving toward, the 'principle of equal rights' by placing' human rights in an *ever present but never realized potentiality of being*. It is the writer who 'writes' the real lack of human rights in the vivid descriptions of daily life for most of a country's citizens that draws support from the powerful, yet for the most part theoretical, language game of universal human rights.

There are two different types of language games at play here; the official language game of human rights and the *fictional* language game of the writer, and the differences have important significations for the future success of post-colonial South Africa. What are the strengths and weakness of the fictional language game with respect to binding the collective will of the people and, more importantly, how does it define 'peoples.' Next, I will look at the nature of the theoretical language game encapsulating the United Nations conception of 'peoples' and

‘self-determination’ highlighting its strengths and weakness with respect to binding the will of the ‘collective’ after South African independence.

i. Self-determination in La Guma’s fiction

In this chapter’s epigraph, we see the legal interpretation of a native African as little more than a means of production with no rights under the White constitution. Since a language game projects and protects the image of self, the white minority obviously saw themselves as superior to the natives which, in turn, gave them the ‘right’ to diminish the blacks to a *non-self*, a faceless entity useful only in securing wealth for their ‘rightful’ masters. To be a ‘servant’ one must have a ‘master,’ and in an economic system where slavery is the shortest route to large profits, the master-slave language game has great appeal for the ‘civilized’ capitalist. La Guma writes from the perspective of the ‘servant’ within the dominant language game of the profit master. He hopes to convince those outside South Africa that the indigenous peoples are not savages, but rather, a distinct civilized ‘people’ as defined by Western standards. As stated earlier, La Guma realizes that to effectively challenge the status quo he must adopt the language and rules of the dominant language game so that he can *recreate* and *rewrite* the image of the native self into Western society’s image of the civilized self. This is where the fictional language game, with its power to represent a vivid mental picture of the stifling inequities in South Africa, attracts an international audience.

The fictional language game, unlike the formal logic of the ‘if-then’ proposition, is not

bound by theoretical considerations such as probability, validity, or authenticity, because it is not out to *prove* anything. Instead, it shows us directly what it is trying to communicate through an appeal to the universal necessity of interpreting our *selves* as note-worthy and valuable simply because we are individuals within a 'people.' La Guma does this by conveying the fears and aspirations of the Blacks and how they see themselves, while contrasting this with the fears and aspirations of the Whites. In this contrast we see that the two groups are people, who like us, have similar concerns about our image of self and the need to protect that self image. It is this emotional commonality that La Guma uses to bind author, reader, nonwhite and 'native' within his narrative. An example is found in La Guma's novel *Time Of The Butcherbird* (1979) where he speaks of the fear the White settlers have of the Blacks:

Bungalows where nervous ladies viewed the black houseboys and kitchenmaids as potential outriders to hordes of rampaging barbarians. Apprehension scuttled like mice behind the decorative curtains, and each creak of a floorboard, the crack of loose parquet, as a peal of alarm bells summoning the paranoia of perpetual siege. (49)

This is a basic reaction to a perceived threat to the self and is one with which we are familiar on some level. The reader is drawn into the language of fear, and except for the "black houseboys and kitchenmaids," the fear has no face or cultural tags linking it to a specific source, for a "rampaging barbarian" is anyone who threatens our care for the self. In and of themselves paranoia and fear do not have a distinct characteristic that links them to any one culture; they are universal in their signification for the human 'being.' Fear affects everyone, as we see in the following quotation from *In The Fog of the Season's End* where an illegal meeting is taking place and Buekes fears being overrun by the South African secret police:

'Are you nervous?' Elias asked, smiling.

‘Hey, nervous as a bugger,’ Beukes confessed, smiling back wryly with his long upper lip, his eyes like moist copper. ‘But should we have met so soon after? But then, I reckon I will never get used to this.’ Elias’s mention of an alarm had made his stomach cold.

‘None of us gets used to it, boy,’ Elias said. ‘All the time we have to take the chance. But just remember, right out the back and run, run, run.’ (142-43)

Again the language denotes fear. A fear that has no culturally distinguishing features, yet it strikes a sympathetic cord within the reader. Through universal emotions, like fear, La Guma is attempting to draw the reader into his view of the legitimate personhood of the native South African by showing a link between the self of the ‘civilized’ European and the self of the ‘uncivilized’ native. This is possible because care for the self forms the “referential context of significance” for being in the world with others as discussed in chapter 1.

ii. Future implications for the fictional self

Implicit in both of the above quotations is the legitimacy to protect and care for the self in a society that promotes these rights. Now the reality of the situation is that one group does not recognize the other as a legitimate people. As a result, that group has been written out of the country’s constitution. La Guma’s fiction, as a reflection of his and South Africa’s social reality, term the nonwhite as the disadvantaged *illegal* peoples. This easily recognized official segregation works to consolidate those nonentities against the common enemy, the White government; it gives anti-apartheid writers and social commentators a clear target for their writing. *Shaping the social consciousness*, which is, as you recall, La Guma’s philosophy for the role of the writer, gathers force against an easily identifiable enemy. But what happens when the

subtle fragmentation of a capitalist-based democratic government replaces the easily identifiable enemy? Will the same universality of spirit that forged an “authentic alliance” in the face of oppression remain to cement the peoples under the new constitution, keeping in mind the diverse ethnic groups forming the ‘colored’ populations in South Africa? If people are linked through common emotions stemming from a concern for the self, as shown in the above examples with fear, what happens when that process, the concern for the self, identifies new groups of people who do not see themselves represented in the post-colonial government? Using the theoretical foundations of Wittgenstein and Heidegger, coupled with the universal appeal to *being human* in La Guma’s fiction, the post-apartheid bond between the revolutionaries should probably hold and guide the conduct of the new government. But why should the writing of one man hold together a multiracial community, or better still, how is a literary type, like fiction, given power to shape and collect the ‘care’ of a large number of people?

I believe the answer to this lies in Heidegger’s idea on the *thematization* of our being-in-the-world with other beings. He uses the example of how science, especially mathematics, has developed an *a priori* “structure of conceptuality” from which it projects its course of study. In Wittgenstein’s theory this “structure of conceptuality” forms the basic interpretive structure of a language game, and all activity conducted within that game must follow the rules established in its *a priori* structure. As you recall in chapters one & two, Heidegger states that the basic constitution of being is our taking care of the self as expressed in our potentiality-of-being while being-in-the-world with others. In this instance the *a priori* “structure of conceptuality” of our being is our basic need to take care of the self while living in a world defined by current social parameters. In taking care, Da-sein naturally tends towards those activities defined by a

language game which reflects favorably on our image of self. And our choices for the image of self are influenced by the social and cultural “structure of conceptuality” defined in our language games. Heidegger defines *thematization* as:

The articulation of the understanding of being, the definition of the subject-matter defined by that understanding, and the prefiguration of the concepts suitable to these beings, all belong to the totality of this projecting that we call *thematization*. (332)

Although Heidegger is speaking specifically about the development of scientific inquiry for studying ‘beings’ in the world, his study of the human ‘being’ in *Being and Time* explicitly projects human being as thematically taking care of the self while being in the world with other beings.

To tie this into La Guma’s fiction one must understand his *thematization* of the Colored being whose “structure of conceptuality” is defined by a history of segregation, alienation and economic exploitation. Writing from within this structure, with the hope of writing his way out of the binding fragmentary language game of colonial oppression and capitalism, he presupposes a being who is free to pursue his potentiality-of-being projected into being in the world with others. This world is defined by a superiority based superficially on color, where the true value of being is measured in currency and where the care of the self is artificially constructed as a social commodity, specifically labor, in direct competition with others. This is clear in this chapter’s opening quote where the Blacks have become ‘servants’ and an inexpensive means of production for the profit interests of the ruling White ‘master.’ Color is a convenient means of drawing the line between those who work and those who receive the financial benefits of work. Although La Guma turned to the international community for support, he realized how some countries were benefitting from cheap South African labor. For instance, in a 1971 address to a

general audience in the former German Democratic Republic, he singles out the United States as a country that theoretically rejected apartheid while continuing to support the South African economy:

Very recently Richard Nixon, President of the United States, claimed that he and his government are against apartheid and racism in South Africa: "Racism is abhorrent to my administration and to me personally. We cannot be indifferent to apartheid." This is a lie. In the first place the ruling class of the United States cannot be against racism in South Africa and at the same time condone and encourage it in the United States. Secondly, the United States of America is the second biggest foreign investor in South Africa and millions of dollars in profits are being sucked from the marrow and blood of African exploitation in South Africa. (77)

Although not explicitly expressed in the quotation, there is the implication that the 'master-slave' economic *thematization* is responsible for the perpetuation of apartheid as long as Western countries continue to profit from the situation. However, the social fragmentation that 'naturally' occurs in Western democratic economies, does not necessarily need color to demarcate between 'master' and 'slave.' It can always rely on simple economic covetousness under the guise of taking care of the self. What this does is to isolate the individual within a cultural paradigm where most of our social relations have been reduced to economic considerations in taking care. Recall the indifference toward the 'person' in the earlier example of Edgar Stopes.

Economic fragmentation has implications for the role of the writer, as defined by La Guma, "to guide the morals, perspectives, and the objectives of the community." La Guma was writing as a member of the group defined as 'servants' within a capitalist structure divided by the 'color bar' and his language expresses the "we" of those who are not the "they." Though the "we" and the "they" are collective terms, the individual contained in each group is clearly

defined by La Guma as a person like ourselves, pursuing the best “care” for the self. However, the care for the self is constructed by the social reality defined by a profit oriented consumerism and the resulting fragmentation of the individual. Inevitably, the “I” as different from the “they,” will make itself known in any conscious expression of the collective “we.” It is my contention that the “I” as prefigured in a democratic capitalists society will, in general, isolate itself from the collective ‘we’ in favor of the interests of the “I.” At first glance this is the case in the following quotation from La Guma in his interview with Cecil Abrahams:

I believe that if the writer can no longer write about one situation he has got to go and write about another situation. He is a writer first. He is a South African writer because of circumstances, but if he is a writer with imagination he can write about other scenes, project the same ideas that he is trying to project on other stages.[...] It is the writer’s individual interests which comes into play. That certainly appears in all kinds of works. If the writer is interested in pursuing his talent he should be able to do it anywhere, project himself into any situation. (25-26)

It appears that La Guma has moved from the active pursuit of shaping the social consciousness ‘of his people’ to pursuing the basic right of the writer to comment on any situation that appeals to his imagination. However, I believe that the pressures of living and writing in South Africa forced him and his family to move to a place where he could continue to incorporate his view of the writer as sympathetic voice for the authentic self. La Guma’s “talent” lies in his clear expression of care, an expression that must be universal. In the same interview with Cecil Abrahams as cited above La Guma explains why he left South Africa:

[The decision to leave South Africa in 1966] was more of a mixture of decision and requirements of political struggle. It was felt that after having spent four years under house arrest and going into the fifth year with the prospect of another five years, there was no point in remaining locked up in one’s home indefinitely, one could be more constructive outside. So we came to Europe to carry on what we were doing on another front. (25)

The writer is invariably influenced by the society from which he writes, and when this society prohibits the very essence of the writer, it becomes clear that the writer must find a society that will embrace his efforts. Since La Guma wrote from South Africa and to the international community, moving closer to those who support his views seems logical. I do not believe he turned his back on South Africa by moving to Europe, but that he continued to address the wrongs of apartheid and the denial of the authentic self in his writing. La Guma's physical move from South Africa to Europe serves as an apt transition from the study of the authentic self in La Guma's novels to the broader context of the formal language games of international law, the UN Charter and the new post-apartheid South African Constitution. In the formal drafting of these documents the authentic self remains obscured by the language game of free-market globalization. In the final chapter I will examine the new language game developing in post-apartheid South Africa trying to combat the profit driven inauthentic self of capitalism. However, La Guma's novels will continue to provide apt examples of what is missing in the theoretical presentation of people(s) in these documents, that is the 'person.'

iii. Self-determination in international law

There is little doubt that La Guma's concept of self-determination and equal rights were greatly influenced by the definition of these terms under international law. As a writer in exile, he was able to draw on this concept and use it in his writing without interference from the South African government. Although the United Nations' influence in shaping international law has helped

colonized peoples gain independence, it fails clearly to define the essential characteristics of a “people.” It is my contention that this lack is due to the dominant, Western capitalist *thematization* of “peoples” as commodities in a free-market economy. In this system a commodity gains value as it increases in number and free-market demand, ultimately, with the objective of maximizing profit for the few at the expense of the many. As stated in chapter one, social power is generated by people and increases proportionally as the number of people following a particular language game increases. While numbers fuel the drive for social change, the power of numbers, specifically the free-market commodification of individuals as producers and consumers, works against the post-colonial revolutionary from the perspective of self-determination. Economic fragmentation of the revolutionary collective occurs, and is replaced with a capitalist profit collective where “peoples” become individual shares in a free-market economy. For evidence of economic fragmentation let us look at the current United Nations definition of self-determination and its implicit conception of “peoples” as viable economic units.

In *Akehurst's Modern Introduction To International Law*, edited by Peter Malanczuk, self-determination is best defined by the United Nations in:

The Friendly Relations Declaration of 1970[...] stipulating that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples includes the right of all peoples ‘freely to determine, without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social, and cultural development’ and the duty of every state ‘to respect this right in accordance with the provisions of the [UN] Charter.’ (327)

In theory, this appears to be an acceptable definition of self-determination and equal rights under international law. But there is one glaring omission that continues to disrupt post-colonial governments: that is the definition of “peoples.” Given that self-determination is granted to

“peoples,” is it not then necessary, for any successful social application of self-determination in international law, that a clear legal definition of “peoples” be provided? Nowhere in the United Nations Charter is a “people” explicitly defined, but there seems to be an underlying assumption that a “people” must have a minimal number of members before it can be internationally recognized. For instance *Akehurst's Introduction To International Law* cites the United Nations refusal to grant self-determination to the Falkland Islands “perhaps because the 1,723 British settlers on the islands are too few to constitute a people” (332). In contrast, the United Nations granted the right to self-determination to all of the ‘peoples’ of South Africa because apartheid failed constitutionally to recognize more than two-thirds of its population, approximately forty-five million in 1994. We see a numerical implication in the constitution of a “people.” The question must be asked; why would an international organization, like the United Nations, base the recognition of something as basic to the creation of a nation as self-determination and civil rights for its citizens, on some invisible presupposed idea of an *acceptable* number?

Again for the answer to this question I must refer to my extrapolation of Wittgenstein’s language game and the idea that social power is produced by people collected under the ideology of a shared language game. The physical structure of a language game, taking the form of a tangible set of rules formed around a dominant ideology, contains the individual will of its followers and multiplies it in the formal institutions built to reflect, perpetuate and protect the image of self expressed in the adopted ideology. This becomes a very powerful physical presence in a society and gives the impression of a cultural power that is far greater than the individuals forming its founding ideology. And since a relative ‘few’ are needed for direct control of the social language game monolith, it is no wonder that ‘most’ will not feel directly

involved with the continued functioning of the institution, feeling that their initial power investment is lost in the greater collective of the institutional 'they.' So what has happened, in a democratic capitalists system, is that the 'few' who control the institutions of the 'many,' have taken over the power of the 'numbers' forming the collective expression of the self in the founding ideology of the institutional language game and used it to accentuate the existing awe the individual has toward the physical representation of the founders self and the individual expression of the current self. This creates a helplessness in the individual, a feeling that one person cannot possibly change the system. Fortunately, La Guma and others saw the importance of the self within the system and the importance in fighting to change the system.

Power is collected through the tangible expression of a people's will, in an institution, and redirected *laterally* among those who give the institution power in the first place. Inherent in this lateral dispensation of power is the affect of giving each individual, who 'sees' themselves represented in the language game of the institution, a sense that they have a right to have their interests protected. This is the beginning of the social and ideological fragmentation inherent in a profit driven society as currently held by the civilized Western states. And in order to maximize profit, an institution must maximize the number of people investing their power of will into that institution without giving the individual any real power.

For a clear example of the importance of numbers in Western society I will cite an example from *Akehurst's Introduction To International Law* that clearly shows an implied correlation between numbers and the right of a 'people' to self-determination, and civil rights afforded under nationhood. The following passage is rather lengthy but I feel it is needed to highlight the relationship between 'peoples' and an unexpressed presupposition that a legitimate

‘people’ must first be a viable economic entity:

In the literature, one finds a variety of proposals for an interpretation of the right of *minorities* to self-determination which go beyond these results. Some propositions are rather radical, trying to turn the fact that the world has recently seen an increasing number of victorious secessionist movements into a general right under international law, by advocating the need for a new interpretation of a ‘post-colonial right of self-determination.’ Such proposals, however, are neither desirable, nor are they realistic. They are undesirable because the prospect of an infinite cycle of the creation of numerous new states, many of which seem hardly viable in economic and political terms, would undermine the international order— in the absence of an unlikely world government— and strangle the existing international institutions. If we have 3,000 or more ‘minorities,’ in- or excluding ‘indigenous peoples,’ are we to support the idea of having as many entities claiming the right to become states and members of the United Nations and still expect the organization to function? In addition, in many cases the recognition of the right of secession of *minorities* would lead to new *minorities* then being submitted to the rule of the separatist government. It is also not realistic because states are unlikely to agree to dig their own grave and accept a general entitlement of internal groups to secession as a legal principle threatening their territorial integrity. (339-340)

The obvious concern here is to prevent the fragmentation of institutional power at the expense of individual rights. I have highlighted the word ‘minorities’ to show the numerical presupposition underpinning the definition of self-determination. From this follows the fact that in any organized state, as currently recognized by the United Nations, a number of minorities will not have their interests expressed in ‘international institutions.’ Here we see a movement to protect the *lateral power configurations* typical of western democracies by setting a ‘number-bar’ that divides a people’s right to self-determination and nationhood and their continued existence as a ‘minority.’ In order for a new state to exist it must be “viable in economic and political terms” which implies a minimum number of people necessary for the generation of profit. This is the capitalist ‘master-slave’ western ideology which La Guma draws on to support the right of self-determination for the nonwhite majority in South Africa. His plea for the destruction of

apartheid was eventually realized, due in large part, to the overwhelming numerical advantage the nonwhites held in South Africa, approximately two thirds of the population. Although a new South Africa has emerged with power given to the nonwhite majority, the problem of a concrete definition of a 'people' remains and will create social unrest given the minority groups and diverse native ethnic groups collected under the term 'nonwhite.' For instance, in Nigel Worden's book *The Making of Modern South Africa* the creation of the 'Black Consciousness' group in the 1960's in South Africa "refused to countenance such organizations as Inkatha, founded by Buthelezi in 1975 and based on KwaZulu ethnicity, despite the apparent similarity of emphasis on the distinctiveness of black culture and the need for self-pride" (118-119). The certainty of internal conflict in South Africa is given by the implicit social fragmentation of the individual under international law reflected in its refusal to clearly define a "people," while implicitly defining a "people" by an economic "number-bar" based on Western power structures. If my theory of implicit social and economic fragmentation under international law as an expression of Western capitalist ideology is correct, then a close examination of South Africa's post-colonial constitution should support my thesis. This is the object of chapter five, and in chapter six I will examine current South African writing for evidence of social fragmentation, and will consider whether these concerns are being addressed by the post-colonial writer and social commentator.

CHAPTER 5

Nowadays everybody was very conscious of the necessity to show the white people in a good light in relation to the black population, and Meneer Meulen's actions did not help. Inside the country certain liberalistic elements and Communists would capitalize on such mishaps as this, and overseas the enemies of the country like the Communists there as well as the OAU and the United Nations would also take advantage of such events for their attacks.
La Guma Time of the Butcherbird (77)

In this chapter I will examine the inherent social fragmentation in the Western model of democratic capitalism and how this fragmentation is reflected in both the U.N. Charter and the current South African Constitution. The epigraph above suggests La Guma is very conscious of the efforts made by the international community to end apartheid, especially those human rights groups sponsored under the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). What may not have been as obvious to La Guma is the insidious economic fragmentation running through the United Nations' and the Western practice of a 'civilized' society, an influence which manifests itself in both the United Nations Charter and the post-apartheid South African constitution. As mentioned in the previous chapter, capitalism promotes an image of the self as being in competition with others for supposedly limited market commodities. While the individual is constructed as a separate, competitive unit, the unifying language game driving capitalism is the maximization of profit. In such a system the self receives its value directly

through the ability to purchase and accumulate market goods. Personal success is measured in material and monetary accumulation. With this capitalist's construction of the self there is a distinct alienation from the social and cultural consciousness of the people as promoted by the fiction of La Guma. In this image of the self, La Guma is trying to create a universal language game that identifies all people as having an inherent value simply because they are human beings with similar feelings and needs, and who, as such, should be respected. We saw this in the previous chapter in the fear experienced by both Blacks and Whites in La Guma's writing. Unfortunately, La Guma's reliance on the Western model of a civilized society carries with it a deep-rooted social fragmentation actively and deliberately working against a unified consciousness.

i. Social fragmentation in the U.N. charter

In this section I will look at the inherent economic and social fragmentation underlying membership in the United Nations. This is important given the reliance on the U.N. Charter as a civilized model for the development of the current South African constitution and how this fractured image of the self is reflected in the lack of a clear definition of what forms a "people" or "peoples" in both the United Nations Charter and the SA constitution. As mentioned earlier this suggests that the writer, if seen as a collector and promoter of a social consciousness, will find it very difficult to hold together a population through fictional representation. After examining social fragmentation in the UN Charter and the SA Constitution I will present a

fictional scenario detailing a possible civil crisis in South Africa stemming from the social and cultural pitfalls inherent in a Western model of civilization. In chapter six I will look at current South African literature for evidence supporting my theory that Western capitalist society divides a potentially unifying social consciousness along the profit number bar.

ii. Economic basis for U.N. membership

Since South Africa is a member of the United Nations, it is important to look at the ‘thematic structure of conceptuality,’ as given by Heidegger, that defines the understanding, interpretation, and prefiguration through which civilized western society perceives the human being. This will reveal the basic interpretative lens through which a ‘civilized’ society sees itself and defines those institutions created to preserve this image of the social self. It is my contention that western democratic governments create social fragmentation by isolating and defining the individual as an economic commodity in direct competition with other commodities for limited resources, such as money, food, and material market goods. We attain status and significance because of what we can afford and not for any inherent human qualities. In contrast, La Guma writes to promote the human as distinct entities living within a system. ‘Affordable’ status is obvious in the official language games of western institutions and organizations built to protect the *thematization* of civilized society. For instance, Chapter IV, Article 19 of U.N. Charter places continued membership within the organization on a financial commitment. It states:

A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial

contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.

Considering the fact that each member of the United Nations have one vote, removal of that privilege renders it powerless in the international community. To think that this can occur simply because one cannot pay reduces the importance of the image of the self, here the collective self of a country, to a merely monetary standard. Countries, peoples, and individuals become little more than a means of financing the social, cultural and government institutions theoretically constructed to protect and promote a positive image of the self. Why would an international organization created to promote the “principle of equal rights” base involvement in that organization on a country’s ability to contribute money annually to maintain their voting status? The principle of equal rights seems to equate rights of the human being with the value of money, so that poverty ‘naturally’ devalues those beings suffering under such conditions and places them outside the organization’s mandate to promote equal rights. This is social fragmentation on an international scale and establishes the contextual framework from which the institutions constructed to contain a positive image of the civilized self interpret the individual. This is a very poor model from which to establish a post-apartheid constitution where payment for membership is more important than being *the being* which, in principle, the organization was established to protect.

Also, this systematic fragmentation of society works directly against the unifying efforts of the writer who wishes to share and celebrate universal kinship based on the human element and not an economic standard. La Guma shows us fear and hope, emotions that cannot be bought

and sold on the open market, hoping to draw all of us, despite color, into the same favorable light. The idea of equal rights becomes easier to grasp when the subjects of equal rights are recognized as equal beings. Now the question must be asked, can the writer become an effective catalyst for social reform, despite the economic and social fragmentation written into democratic capitalism? La Guma's descriptive *type* of writing and international distribution illuminated the social chaos and human rights violations suffered under apartheid. This, in its turn, provided a link between the basic humanity portrayed in La Guma's fiction and the humanitarian consciousness of civilized Western society. Most politicians see *fiction*, as opposed to the *facts* of politics and economic necessity, as not being a formalized political language game that can effectively challenge the well established *lateral power configurations* of Western democratic economies. Therefore, the writer of fiction must work with established 'civilized' language games developed explicitly as vehicles for social change to carry their universal consciousness toward reform. In chapter six I will focus on a conference held in South Africa called the "Conference to Build Civil Society Alliances" in which twenty-nine non governmental organizations representing workers, women's groups, churches, disabled people, youth groups and others from eight out of South Africa's nine provinces, met to plan a strategy against free-market globalization and economic fragmentation. The point here is that non governmental organizations (NGOs) are needed to carry the message of the writer, into the international political arena to affect a more 'civilized' economic policy recognizing the *human* in human rights. I see this movement as a natural progression from the 'universal brotherhood' promoted in La Guma's personal philosophy and expressed in his writing.

The principle of equal rights based on monetary value infers a basic minimum financial

contribution from which human rights can be awarded or at least recognized. I touched on this in Chapter 3, where I spoke of the United Nation's refusal to grant self-determination to the Falkland Islands because the number of British settlers on the islands was too small to consider a "people." It is my contention that they refused self-determination because the 1,723 settlers did not meet the minimum financial standard required to become a viable member of the international community. Because western capitalist societies equate human beings with market commodities, it is no wonder that free market-forces determine the rights of the person. We have become conceptualized, interpreted, understood and valued in an economic system where the natural existential importance of the individual and the *care-for-the-self* is determined by an economic/profit value system. That is why it is so difficult to pin down an explicit definition of collective entities known as 'peoples' within the United Nations Charter and the South African constitution.

iii. Self-determination and the vague concept of peoples

When we perceive people as economic commodities we lose sight of the human in human being. Under this system of social and cultural interpretation the individual "entity" gains importance only when totaled as a part of a larger sum, one which has collective importance only when it meets or exceeds a minimum numerical standard of value. This is democracy's way of turning the inherent social power, generated by people having the same perception of the self, into a social and cultural consciousness that unifies individuals under the misleading notion that we are unique individuals and that our self has precedence over all others. Nevertheless, as Heidegger

states, our being and taking care of that being is unavoidably linked to living in the world with others, and any consideration for the welfare of our being must take into account the existence of our neighbor. In theory this is the mandate of the United Nations; however, there is an implicit homage paid to a basic economic standard which serves as a minimum standard for being considered a legitimate “people.” For instance, Chapter IX, Article 55 of the Charter states:

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

- a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- b. solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- c. universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

The first thing that jumps out from this statement is the noncommittal generality of the language, leaving it open to a large and diverse number of interpretations. For instance “with a view to” speaks of a time in which these conditions may be achieved without making a definite commitment in the present. This serves constantly to defer the achievement of these goals to a never-realized future while acknowledging the status quo. Secondly, we see that the principle of human rights is based on “stability,” “well-being,” “friendly” and “peaceful” relations “among nations.” With this we see the importance of the individual human being eclipsed by the larger, (i.e., above the minimum economic standard), entity of the nation. What this implies is that to facilitate peaceful relations among nations, which by the way are also conducive to international commerce and economic exploitation, small pockets of “peoples” within a nation may be refused the protection promised under the principle of human rights.¹ That is why the U.N. Charter and the post-apartheid South African constitution fail clearly to define ‘peoples.’ In the

interest of maintaining the economic integrity of a nation, “peoples” within that nation are fragmented by the language of the nation’s *lateral power configurations* all in the interest of maintaining friendly economic relations among nations. To support this claim, look at subsection ‘c’ of Article 55, where they theorize human rights to everyone while at the same time granting it to no one. When you eliminate ‘race,’ ‘sex,’ ‘language’ and ‘religion’ from the definition of being human, you are eliminating all those essential elements that form the human being as a being in the world with others.

At this point I would like to introduce the work of Theodore Adorno, a founding member of the Frankfurt School. Although I have mentioned, in an endnote to chapter two, that I could not resolve Adorno’s view of ontology into my thesis, I feel that his concept of “false generalizations” is particularly useful to my analysis of the concept of ‘peoples.’ In his book “Gruppenexperiment” (1955) he comments on how ‘systems,’ here the Fascism of World War II, could deny the “authentic being” of ‘persons:’

We know the role that cliché, rigid and therefore false generalization, plays in totalitarian thinking. Anti-Semitism, which transfers a number of negative stereotypes to a whole group with no regard to the persons concerned, would be unthinkable without the method of false generalization. (*The Frankfurt School*, 475)

Although Adorno does not provide a clear definition of “false generalizations” his usage of the term suggests a social phenomenon whereby ‘popular opinion,’ generated by systems such as religion, myth, tradition, or Fascism, become accepted over time as a self-evident truth. In twentieth century documents, the theory of human rights has been abstracted and generalized to such an extent that the necessary elements of being are removed from the concept of the person. How can we speak of the person when we remove “sex,” “color,” “religious belief,” “race,” or

“language,” from the discussion? These characteristics belong to the totality of “being-in-the-world with others” as Heidegger states it ontologically. When La Guma presents a ‘person’ in his novel he must develop the person’s character within a particular social environment. “Sex,” “religion,” “color,” and “race,” are the socially contextual language games that gives meaning to the basic idea of the ‘person.’ When you systematically ‘hide’ the authentic being of the ‘person,’ the person may then be reinterpreted as an ‘enemy’ or an “anti-something.”² This prevents the individual from consolidating a communal relationship with those sharing at least one of the above characteristics, effectively removing any basis for a collective expression of social power that may be used to initiate social reform. Take note that nowhere in the introduction to Article 55, quoted above, is there a definite legal statement granting “equal rights” and “self determination” only a “respect for the principles of...” so that withholding human rights cannot be effectively argued against because it has never been explicitly granted under international or constitutional law. By not defining the rules on ‘who’ is to be protected by the ‘promise’ of equal rights, universal exploitation of the nebulous entity called “peoples” will continue to occur in the interest of free-market profit.

To help explain the premise for economic fragmentation as given in the vague reference to ‘peoples’ and the removal of all those ‘basic’ characteristics that defines human culture, let us look at the example of the specific language game of the endangered list. In this instance an animal species gains special political status once it has been officially listed as being on the brink of extinction unless immediate action is taken to avoid the disaster. This focuses the institutional power contained in organizations like the World Wildlife Federation on a particular animal or ecosystem giving the drive to save the species a well defined ‘front.’ Language has

power and this power increases proportionately to the number of members following the founding ideology behind the language game. Sustained, focused power is much more effective than random, diluted power. This is what is happening in the official language game on equal rights and self-determination where there is no specific definition on what it is to be a person (peoples) subject to human rights. Removing cultural and social tags such as 'race,' 'sex,' 'language' and 'religion' is equal to removing the right of the World Wildlife Federation to name specific species from the 'endangered' list while also effectively removing the very existence of the concept behind the 'endangered' list. Globalization and the free-market economy cannot function as they do now if the above 'human' elements are given their rightful consideration. It is the task of the writer and social commentator to reveal the human faces covered over by the ruthless commodification of free-market globalization and to articulate the human, as constructed by La Guma, as an endangered species in need of protection. Given the example of social fragmentation of 'peoples' within the U.N. Charter let us look at how the language of the post-apartheid South African constitution reflects this fragmentation.

iv. Social fragmentation in the South African constitution

In this section I will examine two areas within the South African constitution that reflect the economic social fragmentation of 'peoples,' as evident in the UN Charter. These are the treatment of international and national customary law in the South African constitution, and secondly, the limited recognition of and continued fragmentation of 'peoples' in the language of

the SA constitution, particularly within its Bill of Rights. As we will see, both areas draw on the Western ideal of a civilized democratic society as expressed in the general and idealistic language of the UN Charter with respect to human rights, while maintaining the social and economic thematization of the human being as a market commodity perpetuating its own servitude in an isolated *taking-care-of-the-self* without regard for others.

v. Customary international law

This topic is important because it used as a model for the treatment of people within the international community and within individual countries. It also perpetuates the fragmented model of society necessary for the economic viability of a nation as a successful player in international commerce. Countries within the UN functioning under the rights and privileges afforded to it under international customary law, may choose to honor its internal customary law over international customary law and still function within the principle of human rights set out in the UN Charter. As we will see in another section of the current chapter, South Africa makes a clear distinction between its national customary law and international customary law, giving preference to the dictates of its own constitution over the UN Charter. This will have implications for the way “peoples” are treated in the SA constitution.

Akehurst's *Modern Introduction To International Law* cites as a source of international law the “international custom, as evidence of a general practice accepted by law . . . formed by two elements, the objective one of a ‘general practice,’ and the subjective one ‘accepted as law’” (39). For instance, it is customary in international law for ships in distress in international waters

to expect help from any near-by ship despite its country of registry. This has been the general practice of mariners for generations and continues to be followed today. It is customary international and 'universal' law to treat all human beings with respect and dignity as stated in the principle of human rights given in the UN Charter. However, the actual legal power of international custom can be effectively subsumed under the constitution of an individual country. Sovereign states are allowed to follow their own customary laws in the drafting of their constitutions especially with respect to the way they conduct the economy, define and administer human rights within their borders. Akehurst states that "under customary law states have always been regarded as free to regulate their economic and monetary affairs internally and externally as they see fit" (223). With respect to human rights the UN Charter has little legal power to effect change in individual member states:

There are other provisions in the Charter which mention human rights, but all of them are weak and there is no enforcement mechanism laid down. There is also Article 2(7) stating that nothing in the Charter shall authorize the UN to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state. (Akehurst, 212)

From the above examples member states clearly have the upper hand when determining the economic well being of its citizens and the interpretation of human rights afforded under a democratic capitalist system. From this system we see the destruction of the individual as human being only to become reinterpreted as a market commodity controlled by a state language game oriented toward maintaining a stable economy. This is going to create problems in post-apartheid South Africa where economic hardships will force 'minority' groups to lay claim to the rights and privileges as promised under the new constitution. I will explore this at the end of this chapter through a fictional scenario using the issues discussed in this chapter.

vi. Customary law and human rights in the South African constitution

As stated, above individual member states within the United Nations are free to set rights and limitations to civil rights within their constitutions to foster a stable social environment conducive for positive economic growth. In the construction of the post-apartheid constitution, South Africa on one hand associates itself with the ‘civility’ of Western law and on the other hand allows constitutional distancing from any binding effects of customary international law. For instance, Chapter 14, Section 232 *Customary international law* states “Customary international law is law in the Republic unless it is inconsistent with the Constitution or an Act of Parliament.” Here South Africa arranges for the reasonable interpretation of its internal affairs distinct from international customary law while ‘in faith’ allying itself to the civilized spirit of Western democracy. This gives South Africa a wide interpretive range in creating economic and human rights legislation distinct from any international customs, especially the Charter on human rights. As we will see later in this chapter, South Africa has specific distinctions within its Bill of Rights that are inconsistent with the UN Charter on Human Rights.

In keeping with international customary law, Chapter 14, Section 233 *Application of international law* states “When interpreting any legislation, every court must prefer any reasonable interpretation of the legislation that is consistent with international law over any alternative interpretation that is inconsistent with international law.” This must be taken within the context of the recognition of international custom within South Africa as limited by the South African constitution as delineated in Section 232. The two sections of the Constitution do not conflict, as such, but there is a clear indication that the internal affairs of South Africa are

their sole responsibility and will be conducted as they see fit beyond any deference to international customary law. Since every branch of the judicial system is established in and controlled by the constitution, the executive branch of the South African government will give final interpretation of any legislation as deemed reasonable under the constitution. This means that legal recognition of “peoples” within the diverse culture of South Africa is left to the legislative discretion of the government to the extent that their existence does not interfere with the ‘business’ of the country as a whole.

Although the SA constitution does not explicitly define the social parameters of a “people” it does recognize the existence of its diverse communities. However, it is an acknowledgment within the rules of the language game set down by the official constitution. For instance, Chapter 12, Section 211, subsection (1) *Recognition* states “The institution, status and role of traditional leadership, according to customary law, are recognized, subject to the Constitution.” For example, in case of conflict between the community of the Khoi peoples and the SA Constitution the government may recognize the existence of the group but will defer legal rights to its existence only within the limits of the constitution. The Khoi people do in fact exist as a distinct minority and as a minority is granted limited rights within the constitution. As in the international community the dominant language game of Western democratic civility limits the rights of peoples as defined by capitalism. Another example of the limited rights of ‘peoples’ is found in Chapter 14, Section 235 of the SA Constitution which states;

The right of the South African people as a whole to self-determination, as manifested in this Constitution, does not preclude, within the framework of this right, recognition of the notion of the right of self-determination of any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage within a territorial entity in the Republic or in any other way, determined by national legislation.

“Recognition of the notion of the right of self-determination” is so general in its language that deriving any practical legal rights of peoples from this statement is impossible and gives the executive branch of the government total control over the legal status and definition of all ethnic groups living within the country. Although section 235 comes close to defining “a people” there is no clear legal definition of “a people” with inherent human rights that must be ‘officially’ acknowledged and provided by the state. This will have implications for a country that recognizes, in its constitution, eleven official languages in a population of approximately forty-six million, especially when economic resources become scarce. For now it is important to note that the lack of a clear definition of ‘peoples’ in the SA Constitution stem from the desire to create and maintain a system of viable economic entities within the global economy. This is reflected in the next section where I explore social fragmentation inherent in the SA Constitution as stated in the country’s Bill of Rights.

vii. Potential for conflict in the South African constitution

The purpose of this section is to highlight possible sources of conflict between the SA government and its ‘peoples.’ The social and economic fragmentation of the individual in a capitalist society becomes apparent in the prioritization of human rights within the Bill of Rights. First, let us look at the power dynamics between the national legislative body and the provincial legislative body. In Chapter 16, Section 146, subsection two (c), *Conflicts between national and provincial legislation* national legislation “prevails over provincial legislation” and

that;

- (c) The national legislation is necessary for —
 - i) the maintenance of national security;
 - ii) the maintenance of economic unity;
 - iii) the protection of the common market in respect of the mobility of goods, services, capital and labor;
 - iv) the promotion of economic activities across provincial boundaries;
 - v) the promotion of equal opportunity or equal access to government services; or
 - vi) the protection of the environment.

Note, that the first four out of six “necessary” functions of national legislation, which is the main law making body in the country, is the promotion and maintenance of the country’s economic integrity with respect to the “common market.” People are mentioned only indirectly as those who buy “goods,” consume “services,” generate “capital” and provide “labor” within the country and fall under the jurisdiction of the National Assembly. One would think that the primary legislative body in the country would be responsible for interpreting something so basic as the rights of the individual as set out in the spirit of the constitution that “affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom” as stated in Section 7, subsection (1) of the South African Bill of Rights. Again we see the worth of a human being determined by economic considerations; this is the source of the social fragmentation that will be responsible for future social conflict in South Africa.

Another source of potential conflict in South Africa is the limitations to the Bill of Rights. Chapter 2, Section 7, subsection (3) of the SA Constitution states; “The rights in the Bill of Rights are subject to the limitations contained or referred to in section 36, or elsewhere in the Bill.” Section 36, subsection (1) states; “The rights in the Bill of Rights may be limited only to the extent that the limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society

based on human dignity, equality and freedom, taking in to account all relevant factors . . .” As we have already noted, the “law of general application” refers to customary law and is the sole jurisdiction of the country’s constitution free from the obligations of international customary law. So, in effect, a country is within its power to limit, as it sees fit, any of the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights in a democratic country where the treatment of its citizens is based on a stable society necessary for trade in the “common market.” Echoes of “Universal Products” and Edgar Stopes rings through in South Africa’s constitutional emphasis on creating a viable economic state where profit is paramount. Take for instance the following conversation in the *Time of the Butcherbird* between Stopes and a shop owner:

So there he was coming in regularly each month to fill in the order book so Missus Barends could top up the supplies of the shop. ‘Nice little business you got here, ladies,’ he smiled, licking the point of his pencil. ‘A good business, that’s the thing I always say. Money in the till, money in the bank. You’ve got to have *here* to run a nice place like this.’ He tapped his dark blond hair with the pencil. ‘In God we trust and all others cash, that’s my motto.’ (34)

Under apartheid, profit and the exploitation of the individual formed the foundation of its economic policy. A white salesman can travel through remote areas in a country where the majority of its citizens live in poverty only if the government has tight control over its population. The conduct of business and profit are viable only in a region where goods can be exchanged for money without disruption. With apartheid abolished there remains in South Africa today the emphasis on profit facilitated by a peaceful society, although not necessarily a just society.

Besides the limitations outlined in section 36, are the limitations to human rights under a state of emergency. These are designed to maintain peace at the expense of individual freedoms.

As stated in Chapter 2, Section 37, subsection (1);

A state of emergency may be declared only in terms of an Act of Parliament, and only when—

- a. the life of the nation is threatened by war, invasion, general insurrection, disorder, natural disaster or other public emergency; and
- b. the declaration is necessary to restore peace and order.

Here we see the well-being of the “nation” being protected against disruption of the status quo to “restore peace and order.’ Nevertheless, what is the “life of the nation” if not the life of the people making up the nation? Political boundaries delineating a country’s borders mean nothing without people, just as language is dead without people to express it. So what happens if a group within the population, large enough to disrupt peace and order, but too small to be designated a legitimate economic entity according to the invisible economic number bar, perceives its rights to be discriminated against? Under a state of emergency their rights can be curtailed indefinitely until the state is satisfied that peace and order have been restored. Again this is possible because in both the UN Charter on human rights and the SA Bill of Rights there is no official provision for and definition of a “people” only that it is different from the individual and therefore not covered by the spirit of human rights.

With this important legal loop-hole in place, discrimination against “peoples” will occur while the state will claim that the rights of the individual are being protected with the restoration of peace and order typical of an open democratic society. Of course the rights of the individual are easier to protect because, as mentioned in the earlier chapters, the idealized unique, totally individualistic subject does not exist in a civilization linked by language. However, when the number becomes more than “a few” the power of an institution with its jurisdictional language game becomes threatened by the power of numbers. That is why a potentially important social

power entity like a “people” is not explicitly defined in national and international language games: because of its disruptive force to the unity of a nation. Using the collected power contained in institutions and their language games to disrupt the collective power of those supposedly represented by such institutions is easier than to recognize the existence and rights of these “peoples” and risk fragmentation of the nation. This is achieved by presenting the illusion that we are ‘free’ independent entities in a society that represents a positive image of the self while splitting potential solidarity among people through individualized consumerism.

With respect to discrimination against “peoples” the SA Bill of Rights allows for what they call the existence of “fair discrimination.” Chapter 2, Section 9 *Equality* subsections (3) and (5) states the following;

(3) The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

(5) Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.

The opening statement in subsection (3) intimates that fair discrimination may exist under the constitution with subsection (5) confirming its existence as established under the constitution.

Nowhere in the constitution is fair discrimination explained or what criteria determine fair discrimination. As outlined in section 36 of the Bill of Rights, rights of the citizen may be suspended or limited to the extent deemed necessary for the peace and prosperity in “an open and democratic society.” What makes a capitalist, democratic country peaceful and economically viable other than economic prosperity? Since in a democratic, capitalist society the human being is constructed as an economic commodity according to the dual standard as

supplier of labor and consumer of goods produced, it is no wonder that fair discrimination against the citizen is permitted given the dominant cultural language game espousing profit and civility. Therefore, it is no accident that in Chapter 2, section (9), subsection (3) cited above, stating the ground against which discrimination cannot occur, there is no mention of an economic ground for equality upon which unfair discrimination cannot occur. Given the inverse pyramid of wealth to population in Western democratic societies and the thematization of beings as market commodities, it is *logical* that the constitution of a country proclaimed as a Republic inherits the basic grounds for interpreting the citizen as commodity, and keeps within the dominant language games of western, civilized society. Law and order must be maintained to protect and promulgate the profit machinery of capitalism.

viii. Constitutional obstacles for the South African writer

Given the national and international restrictions on human rights, the social construct of the citizen as economic entity and the diverse cultural composition of South Africa with its eleven official languages, what is going to happen when the optimistic social atmosphere and political euphoria realized in the establishment of the post-apartheid republic falls into economic hardship and a substandard quality of life for half its forty-six million people? What will be the issues discussed by the South African writer? Who will be the 'enemy'? Who will listen to their

voices? As we noted, the United Nations lacks of any real legal power to enforce the principles inherent in the Charter on Human Rights, and a country's interpretation and implementation of human rights is left entirely to their discretion. Whom will the writer appeal to when international conscience cannot be mustered for financial and political support?

Alex La Guma wrote to shape a collective consciousness against the clear economic, political, racial and ethnic discrimination against three quarters of South Africa's population by the remaining one quarter. This very tangible mass human rights violation was on the minds of every Black and colored citizen in South Africa along with a large section of the international community during La Guma's lifetime. This gave writers ample grounds for social commentary through fiction and established a solid core around which writers could collect and shape the collective social conscious. Now that the obvious discrimination centering around the "color bar" is all but eliminated, what becomes of the writer's voice and on whose behalf will that voice speak? Rallying it against the political policy of apartheid is easy, but how will a writer, citizen or politician invigorate the consciousness of people to action when the 'wrongs' committed against them are as insidious and socially invisible as the economic number bar, especially when the country's constitution implicitly supports and protects the open market measuring stick for human rights? The writer's task as catalyst of social change will become more difficult as the number of citizens hurt by economic discrimination increases, seemingly at the hands of an invisible enemy. The social fragmentation underlying the profit culture will see increased tensions within traditional 'tribal' relationships, among different tribal people, between Non-Whites, Whites, Blacks, Chinese, Portuguese, and Indian, within the family, among neighbors, with an increased hostility against the many lateral power forms of

government. This will call for a writer who is adept at detailing the complex social issues within his/her particular community while relating these issues to the larger cultural discrimination inherent in a capitalist society. As such there will be no overt enemy of the people, no easily identifiable 'other' and given the material demarcation of the human being in a capitalist society, the 'they' who 'have' will become the enemy of those who do 'not have.' People will kill not for political freedom but for a monetary freedom bought for the price of another being's life. Let me emphasize this in the following fictional scenario.

In the northern section of South Africa, known as the Transvaal, diamond and gold mines use 'local' labor for uncovering and processing its gems. This has, since the early 1900's, generated considerable capital for South Africa and continues to do so now. Now the Transvaal region is the traditional home of the native Venda people who still inhabit the area today. In contrast, the southern part of South Africa from Cape Town inland to the plateau region formerly known as Cape Colony, is primarily an agricultural society home to a number of native peoples, particularly the Khoi and San. Based on reasonable geological information, a European mining conglomerate receives permission to open-pit mine a large section of what is now rich agricultural land and home to a large population of Khoi and San people. Much to the pleasure of the Europeans and the South African government, who stand to receive large sums of money for every diamond mined, the quality of the gem is higher than anticipated. This forces the traditional diamond mines in the Transvaal region, who now mine a lower quality of diamond, to shut down its operations. Now we have the situation where large numbers of Africans are forced to move from the Transvaal region south into the Cape region. Since the mines were first proposed in the Cape region, the Khoi people, concerned with their traditional farming culture,

have resisted all plans for mining the area. Their pleas have fallen on deaf ears, for the government realizing the need for large sums of capital to improve the country's infrastructure, including adequate housing, education, water and sewer, roads and communication, continue to rationalize the mining as necessary for the improvement of the country as a whole. As a result, the Khoi people must compete with the northern peoples for jobs, housing, food and supplies; and given the farming history of the Khoi as opposed to the recent mining history of the Transvaal peoples, the Khoi has a difficult time in securing a mining job and competing with the more experienced northerners. Families are disrupted by violence, poverty increases, violence between the Khoi and the northern peoples increases, all resulting in a disruption in mining. At this point the government declares a state of emergency to restore peace and stability in the region so that the much needed capital will continue to flow from the mines. The government, as punishment for civil disobedience, incarcerates Khoi 'dissidents' in forced labor camps building roads for the mining company. Keep in mind that forced labor is permitted under the current SA Constitution. Although this measure may go against international customary law, South Africa has no legal obligation under international law to obey international customary law, and as stated in the constitution the laws of the state supercede international law.

Now as stated above, the government recognizes "the notion of the right of self-determination of any community" but that is as far as it goes. The Khoi, seeing self-determination and self-government as the only way to secure their traditional homelands, are denied distinct political status by the South African government citing the "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion" [SA Constitution, Chapter IX, Article 55, subsection (c)]. In citing

“universal respect” the government is calling on its constitutional mandate to provide peace and stability within the country to foster economic growth to the benefit of all forty-six million South Africans. Again we see the “invisible economic number bar” come into play with the Khoi people’s 850,000 population being insufficient against the “well being” of forty-six million. People are not discriminated against based on race, religion, sex, or language, for these are protected under the constitution, but on economic grounds. What is the role of the writer now? Who is the enemy, since the government proclaims that it is protecting the rights of all South Africans by ‘sacrificing the few.’ Who will the writer call on for support in the plight of people if international law will not intervene and the government has the constitutional right to support their actions?

In retrospect writers in La Guma’s time had a clearly defined ‘enemy’ and international support for their obvious plight. Shaping the consciousness of the people against this injustice was easy compared with the cultural camouflage surrounding the insidious and pervasive economic social and cultural fragmentation inherent in a democratic, capitalist society. However, in all fairness to the complexity of La Guma’s social reality, it must be acknowledged that he had to deal with the economic fragmentation inherent in apartheid. This is evident in the following passage from *Time of the Butcherbird* where a couple of Afrikaans farmers speculate on the future profitability of land currently occupied by the native Bantu:

‘Well, the corporation has accepted the geologist’s report. They accept that the land in question must hold certain mineral deposits.’

‘*Goed, geod,*’ Steen nodded. ‘That is one blessing.’
Meulen held a lighter to his pipe and puffed. ‘They will set up the company, fifty-two per cent held by the government through them and the other forty-eight will be offered to the public. I, of course, pointed out that you and I were interested in buying a substantial amount of those shares.’

'Allemagtig, you did well, boy.'

'As soon as the kaffirs are moved—'

'We call them Bantu now, boy,' Steen said and smiled again. 'Things have changed.'

Meulen smiled. *'As soon as the Bantu have been moved, the development of that area will commence. As you know, by request of the people here I myself went to the magistrate to ask that they be moved. He in turn referred it to the Chief Commissioner who required a list of names. The magistrate supplied the names, all of them, and then the matter went to the Department of Community Affairs. The surveyor's report helped, naturally.'* (61)

This type of economic exploitation is possible within the new SA Constitution as theorized with the Khoi peoples. However, the obvious color bar in apartheid policy will be replaced with the not so obvious economic number bar.

The best way to combat the new 'enemy' is to force the United Nations to provide a clear legal definition of a 'person,' detailing the rights granted to that person as deduced from the legal definition. This definition will go a long way to developing a clear language game defining the basic ontological foundation for the realization of a 'universal brotherhood.' This is the task of next generation of South African writers and commentators, becoming an extension of La Guma's desire to present a picture of the global authentic self. In the next chapter I will examine current South African writing for evidence supporting my claim of social and cultural fragmentation under democracy in post-apartheid South Africa.

CHAPTER 6

That the will of the people is the basis of the authority of government is a principle universally acknowledged as sacred throughout the civilized world, and constitutes the basic foundation of freedom and justice. It is understandable why citizens who have the vote as well as the right of direct representation in the country's governing bodies should be morally and legally bound by the laws governing the country. It should be equally understandable why we as Africans should adopt the attitude that we are neither morally or legally bound to obey laws which were not made with our consent, nor can we be expected to have confidence in courts that interpret and enforce such laws. (*Readings in Legal Philosophy* 474)

This statement from Nelson Mandela's "Speech from the Dock" (1962), clearly defines the authority of a democratic government as the power held within the collective "will of the people." Again we see the word "people" without any indication as to the parameters that define the social entity of a 'people.' As given in Chapter 1, we see the inherent social power in numbers when a group of individual beings share in a common image of the self as constructed by being in the world with others and their efforts to protect and promulgate that image through language games. In his statement, Mandela uses the legal language game, the 'one vote one voice' of the democratic language game and the universal language game of basic human rights as expressed in international law, the United Nations' Charter on Human Rights and the post-apartheid South African Constitution. Now, social unrest develops when the 'will of the people' and the positive image of the self expressed in the collective, as guaranteed, in principle, in the

constitution of a democratic government via basic human rights, does not agree with the lived reality of its citizens. Conflict will occur because the positive image of the self written about in universal human rights documents is different from the fragmented consumer depicted in the democratic capitalist culture. As noted in chapters 1&2, the positive image of the self is in large part constructed by the social reality of being in the world with others, in this case a social reality defined by the fragmentation of the individual in a very competitive profit-orientated culture.

Within this culture we find the conscientious social commentator pushing the language game of the intrinsic value of the human being ahead of the fragmented commodification depicted by consumerism. In La Guma's era the intrinsic value of being was clearly devalued and deferred by the racial/economic government policy of apartheid and it was an easy task to comment against this injustice in his writing. Nevertheless, now in post-apartheid South Africa the representational illusion of "one vote one voice" gives lip service to the will of the people in its constitution, while nurturing the economic fragmentation and exploitation of the 'people' inherent in all capitalist economies and governments. Social and cultural discrimination has become 'invisible' in that it has no face or color and remains officially invisible in the SA Constitution in statements on "universal rights" proclaiming that the state "may not unfairly discriminate" based on one or more of the following grounds; "race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth" [Chapter 2, section 9, subsection (3)]. This removes everything that is a human being, making it a faceless, peopleless, nonentity, completely without those characteristics expressed in a positive image of the self as a being with

others in our world. This nonentity then becomes the focus of the 'principle of human and equal rights' which sets the stage for universal exploitation and fragmentation, free from the ties of a humanitarian consciousness. If the theory of equal rights, as expressed in protecting citizens against discrimination, promises these rights to a nonhuman entity then the social realization of equal rights to people who must possess 'color,' 'race,' 'sex' and a 'name' will never crystalize into hard laws. As in my example of the endangered species list in the previous chapter, a *person* cannot be protected if that person cannot be identified in the legal language game of human rights. Because of this *not-naming* economic exploitation is indirectly protected in the SA Constitution in its very absence from the possible grounds of unfair discrimination and in the priority of the stable economically viable state entity over individual rights and freedoms. This is the enemy the new South African writer must confront. The questions that must be asked now are: i) What strategies are post-apartheid writers and social commentators using to expose the insidious economic fragmentation that threatens to envelope South Africa into large scale social unrest? ii) How will they 'motivate' those people disadvantaged by economic policies geared toward profit, against a government sworn to protect the human rights of all people in South Africa? These questions form the topics for the remainder of this chapter.

i. Exposing the fragmented self in a democratic free-market economy

Examining current South African writing must now validate the theory behind the fragmented self as presented. It is my contention that South Africa's new-found democracy is based on a

model of international capitalism where profit is more important than the person and that our importance in a global democratic capitalist system lies solely in providing labor toward the realization of capital gain and a profitable bottom line. Though the democracy is 'new' in South Africa, the economic fragmentation of the individual is evident in La Guma's fiction. *In the Fog of the Seasons' End* gives a clear instance of this Elias, a fellow revolutionary of Beukes, reflects on the commodification of people as units of labor with respect to the existence in South Africa of camps for 'surplus labour':

He recalled that camp now, seeing in his mind's eye the bleak rows of shabby prefabricated huts, flapping like broken wings. It had been crowded with displaced persons, the discarded unemployed; people who no longer had permission to work in the 'White' areas; labourers who had broken their contract for some reason or another; ex-convicts who had been refused leave to earn a living in the towns. Whole families had occupied the bleak, grey one-roomed houses: the wives and children of 'surplus labour' had moved there to join their menfolk, rather than remain separated. (154)

A clear statement of the inhumanity cultivated by a free-market system that exploits people as a source of cheap labor and a unit of consumption necessary to support large profits. Not only this, but the fact that a large number of black South Africans were not even given the status of consumers, but only the status of an inexpensive source of labor to be disposed of with the least cost to the state.

As it stands in South Africa today there are three levels of social economic policy in which fragmentation of the individual citizen occurs. The first is at the international level where global economic policy is determined by organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The second level involves current South African government economic policy specifically the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The third level, the practical social application of economic policy, illustrates the failure of this to address

the individual importance of citizens by seeing them more as pawns in the game of international capitalism rather than people whose vote and voice must be heard in the formation of economic and social policy. In fact these rights are promised in the new SA constitution that forms the cornerstone for the republic. However, for the most part, only the very elite, namely those in the African National Congress (ANC) executive and other high ranking government officials, have experienced direct benefit from the post-apartheid government. Now let us look at specific instances of social fragmentation in each of the above.

Democracy promises one voice, one vote for all of its adult citizens and representation in all aspects of government to present a fair and equitable system of presenting the concerns and care of all of its citizens. A wonderful principle in theory, but what happens when this basic democratic ideal plays second fiddle to the importance of profit for the few? The lateral distribution of power from the citizen to the organizations constructed to protect and promulgate the care of the citizen is twisted into a language game constructed, not on basic human dignity and respect, but on the commodification of the individual as a free-market asset. Take as proof the ‘democracy’ expressed in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, institutions purportedly constructed to ensure the fair distribution of the world’s wealth and national resources. The following quotation is taken from Akehurst’s *Modern Introduction To*

International Law:

Developing countries, initially critical of the alleged insensitivity of these Western institutions to poverty and problems of economic development in the Third World, gradually participated and began to play an important role in those organizations which operate on the basis of the one-state one-vote principle. The influence of industrialized countries remained overwhelming, however, in central institutions, such as the IMF or the World Bank, which make decisions according to a weighted voting system reflecting the amount of capital input into the organizations and which thus dispenses with the

principle of the sovereign equality of states. (224)

Here we see democracy deferred in favor of capital which sets the practical operating principle behind the global free-market economy. In this instance the “sovereign equality of states” can be paralleled with the sovereign dignity and rights of the individual citizen within the state where each vote has a role to play in the construction of the nation’s social and economic policies. In a further parallel it can be shown that it is the role of the writer as social commentator and author of a nation’s consciousness to present the case for the “sovereign dignity and rights of the individual” within the republic. To do this successfully the writer must, as it were, ‘set the stage’ upon which non governmental organizations working with those disadvantaged by government economic and social policy meet to create a language game of ‘ability’ based on *care* for their *potentiality-of-being*. In this partnership the writer acts as the ‘photographer’ for the national and international community, writing literal snapshots of those people suffering under unfair free-market policies, just as La Guma gave a face to those suffering under apartheid. Drawing from the institutions established by the dominant international language game of global capitalism, post-apartheid South African economic and social policy inherits, unwittingly at first, the insidious fragmentation of the collective will expressed in the above statement. It is this inequality which the post-apartheid writer and social commentator must speak against with the hope of bringing back the revolutionary spirit that cast the individual being in the positive light of dignity and respect inherent in all people. This is nicely summed up in the words of the South African social commentator Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane:

The move from protest to challenge to reconstruction in South Africa has been accompanied at the literary level by a shift from the literature of surface meaning—dependent entirely upon spectacular events—to the literature of

interiority with its concern with introspection and the inner life. The literature of interiority is concerned, too, with the entire human personality in all its complexity— and not only with the status of victim and victimizer. It is this turn away from the surface and the venture into the interior which will usher a new dawn for South African literature and society. (27.1 (1996): 18)

In this move from surveying landscape to a closer study of those inhabiting the land, the sovereignty of the individual is shown as the common thread that binds all humanity and forms the cultural and social foundation for the universality of human rights. Because of the insidious nature of economic fragmentation a closer look at the 'self' as constructed under free-market policy must be taken to identify the 'enemy' and to develop resistant strategies. This is the aim in my examination of international economic 'philosophy,' international law and their manifestation in the economic foundations of the SA constitution.

Post-apartheid economic policy aims toward the fair redistribution of South Africa's wealth and national resources to provide a "decent living standard" for all of its citizens. This is the purpose of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme the RDP. I will quote the first two principles in the organization's mission statement:

The central goal of reconstruction and development is to create a strong, dynamic and balanced economy in order to:

- * eliminate poverty, low wages and extreme inequalities in wages and wealth generated by the apartheid system, and to meet basic needs to ensure that every South African has a decent living standard and economic security.

- * develop the human resource capacity of all South Africans so the economy achieves high skills and wages. (*The Economy and the RDP*, <<http://home.microsoft.com/intro.html>>.)

In the first statement the South African citizen is given priority over the social and economic inequalities generated by apartheid policy. This reflects a positive view of the self and attributes

a basic respect for the human being as promised in the constitution. Again apartheid is the visible ‘enemy’ of the people and the new government promises to do everything in its power to eliminate that legacy. In this sense the constitutional language game of democracy is very much in line with the revolutionary aspirations of writers like La Guma. However, the democratic ideal enshrining a positive view of the self is shattered against the hard reality of international free-market policy as expressed in the second mission statement. Here we see the economy as the beneficiary of a developed human resource so that the economy and the individuals forming the skilled workforce achieve “high skills and wages.” The human resource is developed to maximize profit within the economy so that South Africa can become a viable player in the international free-market economy. Within this language game of free market globalization the promise of individual human rights based on the sovereignty of the individual must systematically defer to the pursuit of profit.

It is this commodification of the individual against which the post-apartheid social commentator and writer strive against. In the *Southern Africa Report*, a quarterly published by the TCLSAC, the Toronto Committee for Links between Southern Africa & Canada, Dale T. McKinley, a writer for the South Africa Communist Party, comments on the entrenchment of democratic capitalism in the economic policy of the ANC and the South African government. In his article *The ANC’s 50th Conference: Power to Whom?* McKinley points out that the ANC have become ardent followers of a “technocratic ‘market democracy’” modeled after the “capitalist financial speculator extraordinaire, George Soros”:

As hard as it might be to take seriously the hypocritical philosophizing of a man (Soros) who almost single-handedly ruined the lives of millions of workers in Asia in a frenzy of speculative profiteering, the important point is that the ANC leadership does so. The

reason is simply because this leadership views the ANC's mission of carrying out the oft-mentioned "national democratic revolution" as theoretically and practically consistent with capitalism (albeit a capitalism that is at once deracialized and "more humane"). (13.2 (1998):11)

Despite the "deracialized" and "more humane" economic policy outlined in the government's RDP guidelines, those living in South Africa experience a different, less humane, economic policy.

An example of South Africa's 'less humane' economic policy in which the individual care and concern for the self is ignored in favor of the "speculative profiteering" inherent in a free-market system is given in the current crisis enveloping the education system. In an article written by David Chudnovsky, in the same edition of the magazine cited above, he comments that the government's GEAR (Growth, Employment, and Redistribution) policy is adversely affecting the educational systems ability to provide quality education to all South Africans as promised in the constitution:

With the unveiling of a new government macro-economic strategy in 1996, the GEAR (Growth, Employment, and Redistribution), the focus of government policy has changed. The GEAR is characterized by a focus on deficit reduction, conventional monetarist policies (inflation is a principle concern), private sector growth policy, and trade liberalization. This all too familiar approach has had the inevitable effect of squeezing public services, and threatening public sector jobs. (13.2 (1998): 29)

With both articles we see a departure from official government statements on the proposed benefits to every South African, ensuring all a "decent living standard and economic security" and the practical application of these economic strategies. These policies will not work simply because they follow the standards of the invisible economic number bar against which the human is measured and quantified in a system of commodification and profit utilization. The value of the self is lost in the free-market valuation of the human 'resource' as constructed in the

capitalist language game. This is the enemy which the post-apartheid writer and social commentator must face and overcome so that the aspirations of the revolutionary spirit can be realized in the new republic.

ii. Strategies against the economic fragmentation of the self

Once the writer has identified the 'enemy' working against the positive image of the self, the task becomes the shaping and direction of the public consciousness against the enemy. This task is currently being realized in South Africa through non-political organizations constructed to combat the inequalities of international democratic capitalism. In keeping with the finite temporal nature of human being as mentioned in chapter three, it is important to note that the power encapsulated in official language games and tangibly represented in 'physical' institutions outlives the individual life span and, therefore, organized language games must be used to combat the equally long-lived capitalist institutions. This is the strategy adopted by the "Conference to Build Civil Society Alliances" created to move against the social fragmentation inherent in a global free-market economy. Again I turn to the *Southern Africa Report* [13.3 (1998)] for a post-apartheid view on the economic and social reality as lived by most South Africans. In a report on the Conference meeting of 12-15 March 1998, the author, whose name is not given, gives an overview of the negative social effects of a macroeconomic free-market government policy:

The negative impact of globalization on South Africa has been manifested, through the

fiscal squeeze and through market oriented policies that have stifled economic growth and redistribution, in job losses, crisis in education, closure of hospitals, widening loopholes in the social security net, water cut-offs, the worsening housing shortage, and persistent malnutrition and poverty, in a context of deepening inequality in what is already the second most unequal country in the world. (23)

Obviously the government's principles of a "fair standard of living" and a "decent wage" for all South Africans as outlined in the official RDP strategy has failed. The reason is that you cannot expect to treat everyone with dignity and respect when the only thing that is important to the government is the establishment of a viable economic entity struggling to become a competitive player in the international free-market system. Such a system does not promote the basic *care for the self* as expressed in Heidegger's philosophy of being and will inevitably result in social revolution, because it serves the interests of a few along with the personal devaluation of the 'many.' Measuring a person's worth against an invisible, yet all-pervasive economic number bar, will confine that person's image of self and potentiality-of-being within the capitalist social construct. However, the move by non-political organizations in South Africa to "build civil society alliances" against such personal devaluation is a positive step in reclaiming the intrinsic importance of being and the care needed to nurture and develop that importance.

Apart from the 'non-political', in the sense of being 'non governmental', efforts to elevate the individual to the revolutionary status of universally deserving human beings, we see the work of South African writers working to shape the collective consciousness of their communities against economic fragmentation. I will look briefly at the writing of South African poet Kelwyn Sole and how he attempts to de-construct the individual as a capitalist commodity and reconstruct the South African in the same spirit of critical defiance that shaped collective will against apartheid. It is my contention that the writer and the non-political social activists

must work together to solidify a conscious, deliberate social movement against economic fragmentation. This task is complicated given the well-worded intentions of a 'same race' government promising equality for all in the new SA constitution. Blaming a government is difficult, which, unlike the previous regime, mirrors the person pointing out the injustice. The discriminatory social subtleties associated with a democratic-capitalist culture that honors the dollar above all else and that runs a parallel course with international support and adherence to this very culture, makes it exceedingly difficult for those opposing it to 'expose' a vulnerable underside for attack.

Yet the picture of economic fragmentation is becoming clear. For the South African poet, Kelwyn Sole, the picture began to develop during the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid government. In his poem "The Face and the Flag" (1993), Sole speculates on the creation of a new social elite where the emerging South African republic will be little more than a 'civilized' adaptation of Western exploitative capitalism within the cultural context of the global free-market economy. He asks the apartheid revolutionary:

you, who want to lean forever
on the comfort of your victories
your defeats...

and what you once had fought for
begins to slide from what
you now perceive; slides
into the frown on your own brow
puzzled at its new surrender

as everyone except you marches anew
in a democracy of shapes and colours
for socialism

(you have so much to lose)

comrade, traitor, lover friend—
will you dismount into the street? (27.1 (1996): 115)

The “new surrender” that puzzles the poet’s textual interlocutor represents the insidious social and cultural fragmentation inherent in a democratic capitalist culture. Sole identifies the post-apartheid enemy, complacency, given in the hesitancy of his friend to protest anew so soon after achieving a long sought victory against the oppressive social and economic policy of apartheid. Reluctance to fight again is due in large part to the constant well-intended shape shifting of the new, non-racial government. Sole is asking his “comrade” as does Mzamane in his comment regarding “interiority,” to examine what has become of the revolutionary ‘self’ where the rights of the human being were at the forefront of social change. It is this critical introspection of being human as presented by the poet Kelwyn Sole working with non-political social organizations indicative in the above mentioned “Conference to Build Civil Society Alliances” that will shape the direction of the new revolution. The theoretical underpinnings of current free-market economic globalization must be exposed and identified as a threat to the practical implementation of universal human equality. Currently we see democratic governments world wide offering the placebo of ‘one vote-one voice,’ miming equal representation for all, when in fact those who control national economic and social policy via international economic policy determine the ‘rights’ and representational limits of its citizens.

Nelson Mandela stated that the foundational focus of power for any democratic government is the will of the people fairly represented in the country’s constitution and that any citizen who feels government is not representing them may refuse the legitimacy of the constitution. This view will plague the new South African government. Is it then not logical to

expect the citizens in post-apartheid South Africa who have good cause to feel they are not being represented by the current government to rebel? Will Nelson Mandela's speech on democratic representation and individual rights come back to haunt his civilized democratic government and form the new revolutionary mantra? It is my contention that the large disadvantaged and economically exploited 'peoples' will gather in defiance of the economic fragmentation fermenting severe human rights depredation. As stated in Heidegger's observances on human being, it is natural to our *being-in-the-world-with-others* to pursue our potentiality-of-being toward the most positive view of the self. Who among us would accept the label of a 'second class citizen,' 'inferior being,' 'necessary labor,' 'supply and demand factors,' 'free-market commodity,' 'race-less, person-less bodies,' confounded and compounded by a global free-market economy? As collector and sculptor of a positive social consciousness the writer and social commentator must elevate the status of the human being above the inhuman commodification implied in Western democratic capitalism. This is the task of the new revolution in South Africa, a revolution that will succeed if an international movement against exploitative capitalism coalesces into a universally positive image of the self.

CONCLUSION

This thesis is an attempt to examine the motivation behind the fiction of Alex La Guma. Why would this author write against the system of apartheid knowing the great personal risks? Why did he feel the need to address the issue of a 'universal brotherhood' in both his personal philosophy and his fiction? In support of this examination, I use the concepts of Wittgenstein's language game with its attempt to clarify the motivation behind language, and Martin Heidegger's social examination of "being." These concepts then provide the grounds from which our image of self evolves and allow us to understand more clearly the pains La Guma takes to preserve and promote that image specifically through works of fiction. All of us, in one way or another, feel that we are unique beings and that we should be granted certain basic human-rights considerations because of this. To what extreme would we go to protect those rights, and if we felt we were not receiving full consideration under these rights, what would we do to initiate change?

Writers, like Alex La Guma, were willing to risk their lives for the fair promotion of human rights by showing the rest of the 'civilized' world that they, nonwhite Africans, were unique beings who also deserve human dignity and respect. Now that apartheid is gone, the post-apartheid writer and social activist face a new destroyer of human dignity and that is the social fragmentation and isolation resulting from profit driven capitalism. Discrimination now finds its home, not in the color of one's skin, but in the invisible profit "number-bar" against which human dignity is measured. This insidious commodification of human dignity measures all of us and it will take a universal effort to eliminate the fragmentation. What is needed is a clear legal

definition of a 'person' within the United Nations Charter, one that realizes La Guma's belief in a universal brotherhood. I would like to leave you with a powerful message of hope from La Guma's last completed novel *Time of the Butcherbird*:

It seems that the air, heavy with heat, begins to move. It has weight; it moves soundlessly and heavily, gathering momentum. The blanket of heat yields to great pressures. Something has created a movement of the hotter air that must find its way upward, to give place to the cooler air that must find its way down. The wind signals its rising with a low moan which precedes many other. The movement of the wind builds up and carries the stinging dust; the veils of dust cross the land like the smoke from lines of artillery and the moaning of the wind rises to a roar that is the sound of a blast furnace carrying a myriad needles of fire. The land bends and sags under the power of the moving heat. Then the thrust of the wind lessens and the difference in air makes life possible again. The roaring dies away.

The yellowing afternoon light puts a golden color on the land. A flight of birds swoop overhead towards a water-hole. (119)

ENDNOTES

Chapter One

1. In 1924, James La Guma and Wilhelmina Alexander marry. Alex La Guma was born February 20, 1925 in District Six, Cape Town. In 1933, his only sister Joan is born. James La Guma organized a branch of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union while working in South-West Africa. In 1924 James La Guma registered as a member of the Communist party. This was to have a great impact on Alex's political and philosophical outlook as is evident in his fiction. At the age of thirteen La Guma volunteered to serve in the international brigade in the civil war in Spain on the side of democracy. He was refused service. At the outbreak of World War II, La Guma at the age of fifteen, volunteers to fight the Nazis in Europe. Again he was refused because of his 'skinny' physique. In 1948 he joins the Communist party of South Africa and in 1950, under the Suppression of Communism Act, is listed as a known Communist. In 1954 he marries Blanch Herman, a nurse and midwife. In 1956, he and 155 anti-racist leaders are arrest and charged with treason against the state. The trial lasted until 1960 with the judge dismissing the charges. He is arrested in 1963 along with his wife, and again in 1966 on suspicions of helping the underground movement against apartheid. In 1966 he and his family were permitted to leave South Africa. In 1985 Alex La Guma dies of a heart attack while writing *Zone of Fire*.

2. I chose La Guma's later novels because they depict a sense of urgency in the struggle against apartheid and highlight the process by which a person or persons who do not see their concerns addressed by the existing language game actively seek to change that language game

with open resistance. This is particularly true of *In the Fog of the Season's End* where the underground printing and distribution of anti apartheid pamphlets are coupled with armed resistance. There is also a sense that La Guma is making an international appeal for support against apartheid in these novels in his depiction of his characters as 'universal entities' and not simply a collection of isolated revolutionaries. By contrast, his earlier novels particularly *A Walk in the Night* (1962) and *And a Threefold Cord* (1964) detail the colored district in which La Guma lived. As Cecil Abrahams notes in his "Preface" to *Alex La Guma* (1985) La Guma "consciously sat down to be the social historian of the Cape colored people." His third novel *The Stone Country* (1967) deals with his experiences in a South African prison and the unjust apartheid policies that place him and thousands of others in detention without having to provide 'evidence' against them. The one thing the above novels have in common is that they do not deliberately depict an anti apartheid resistor as a type of 'universal' character actively seeking to reclaim their right to basic human dignity and respect. They tend to focus more on the people and history of the Cape people.

3. The question may arise, *What is the essence of a language game?* The answer given by Wittgenstein is that there is no one essence of a language game. In *Philosophical Investigations* language games exist as a "complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing" forming a "thread we twist fibre on fibre." (31) And the "strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibers." (67) Language is a community phenomenon where meaning takes its cue from those who speak or write in a particular social setting. La Guma makes the point that the 'community' is defined by the universal desire by all people to be respected and afforded a basic degree of

dignity. He does this in his novels by adopting the ‘fictional’ language game of the story teller within the larger context of the political activist writing for the recognition of universal brotherhood. Thus the language games of human rights, constitutional freedoms afforded the individual, the right of free speech and democracy, intertwine to reflect a positive view of the self. In my thesis, the legitimacy of La Guma’s and Wittgenstein’s thought is affirmed in Heidegger’s concept of the self as a ‘being-in-the-world’ with others having the common goal of taking *care* of that self. It is my hope that by threading these three language games together—Heidegger’s language game of a positive image of the self, Wittgenstein’s ‘community’ of language games, and La Guma’s ‘universal brotherhood’— will help to clarify the motivation behind the La Guma’s novels.

Chapter Two

1. At this point I would like to explain why I choose Heidegger to promote La Guma’s idea of universal brotherhood founded on reasonable respect for the self in the context of an exploitive free-market consumerism. It has been suggested that the Frankfurt School may be a more apt ally in my defense of universal brotherhood. However, there is a basic problem in the School’s very ontological foundations. In Rolf Wiggershaus’s book *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance* (1984) two of the School’s most influential members Adorno and Horkheimer express an antithetical relationship between thought and nature and that humanity’s salvation depends on thought dominating nature. Wiggershaus reconstructs this motif as follows:

The primitive world was mere nature. Even human beings, in so far as they then existed,

were natural, trapped within nature, ruled by instincts obscure to them. The first decisive step was taken when people began to think. Thinking meant interrupting the immediate texture of nature at a single point and raising a barrage, which would from then on divide inward nature from outward nature. (334)

Because I want to study the intent behind La Guma's writing, I need to establish a clear interpretation of the self in relation to its social environment and being in the world. The Frankfurt School cannot do this for me because I cannot resolve the conflict between "thinking" and the "texture of nature." What is the texture of nature and why is it in opposition with thinking? How do I interpret thinking in relation to being in the world? Is it merely an adversarial relationship where the happiness of humanity depends on the domination of nature? It is my inability to resolve these questions in any satisfactory manner that I could not use the Frankfurt School as an ontological foundation for my exploration of 'intent.' In contrast Heidegger sees the "I" as having meaning only in the context of "being-in-the-world." He states that "ontology is possible only as phenomenology... as a "self showing" forming the 'hermeneutics' that makes possible "every ontological investigation." (33)

Chapter Five

1. The question may arise; Do you see a conflict between the authentic self and the need for self-determination? My answer is no. Heidegger's idea of the authentic self focuses on the interaction between people in a world where we are striving for the same thing, and that is care for the self. This involves recognizing that every "I" must be respected, loved and cared for with

a basic degree of dignity. Heidegger 'comes' to this realization from a very basic look at the nature of the human being in its 'natural' habitat. The simplicities of his ontology, the simplicity of Wittgenstein's language game as an analytical tool in studying the motivation behind language use, and the beautifully clear depiction of the human being in La Guma's novels, enforce the dignity of the "I." When dignity is missing from the lives of a group of people who identify themselves by the very fact that they lack the dignity that they see given to those around them, then the question of self-determination arises. Unfortunately, twentieth century capitalism confers dignity primarily through material and monetary accumulation. It is my contention that the question of self-determination would not even exist given a universal recognition of the authentic self, or as La Guma called it the 'universal brotherhood.'

2. To support Adorno's concept of "false generalization, I draw on Heidegger's concept of systematic "distortion." The following is taken from *Being and Time*:

This covering up can be total, but more commonly, what was once discovered may still be visible, though only as semblance. However, where there is semblance there is "being." This kind of covering up, "distortion," is the most frequent and the most dangerous kind because here the possibilities of being deceived and misled are especially pertinacious. Within a "system" the structures and concepts of being that are available but concealed with respect to their autochthony may perhaps claim their rights. On the basis of their integrated structure in a system they present themselves as something "clear" which is in no need of further justification and which therefore can serve as a point of departure for a process of deduction. (32)

My point is that a system, such as democratic capitalism, distorts the authentic being recreating that being into a market commodity with the power to consume. With the systematic removal of 'care' from the image of the being it is easy to discriminate against the basic rights of that being.

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