

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

MINISTÈRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

ⵎⵓⵍⵓⵔ ⵎⵎⵎⵔⵉ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓ

ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓ ⵓⵏ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓ ⵓⵏ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓ

ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓ ⵓⵏ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓ

MOULOUD MAMMERI UNIVERSITY OF TIZI-OUZOU

FACULTY OF LETTERS & LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

جامعة مولود معمري - تيزي وزو

كلية الآداب واللغات

قسم الإنجليزية



Item Number:

Serial Number:

SECTOR: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

SPECIALITY: LITERATURE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

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

Title

**The Subaltern as a Victim and Hero in Athol Fugard's
Blood Knot (1961) and *My children! My Africa!* (1989)**

Presented by :

- ABDESLAM Smail

- STOUTAH Abderrezak

Supervised by:

Dr. LARABI Sabéha

Board of Examiners :

Chair: Dr. KHELIFA Arezki, MCA, Department of English, UMMTO.

Supervisor: Dr. LARABI Sabéha, MCB, Department of English, UMMTO.

Examiner: Ms. DJELLOUT Mekioussa, MAA, Department of English, UMMTO.

Year: 2021-2022

The Master domiciliation laboratory:

To our families, friends, and relatives.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude and debt to our supervisor **Dr. LARABI Sabéha** for the suggestion of the topic, support and kindness. Our gratitude also goes to **Dr. KHELIFA Arezki** and **Ms. DJELLOUT Mekioussa** for their reading, assessment and supportive attitude. We are also grateful to our teachers and all the teachers of the department of English.

Abstract

The following piece of research falls with African literary studies. It ventures to study the issue of the double representation of the Black South Africans both as 'subaltern' and 'resistant' in two selected plays namely My Children! My Africa (1989) and Blood Knot (1961) by white South African playwright Athol Fugard. Within two chapters, our work discusses Fugard's depiction of his characters as subaltern then as resistant or heroes within the Apartheid segregationist system. We rely on the theoretical grounding of Antonio Gramsci on 'Subalternity' and 'Resistance', one of the basic findings of our work is that Fugard is committed to give a faithful demonstration of the South African subaltern's resistance through education and identity.

Key words: Athol Fugard, Subalternity, Resistance, Apartheid, Education, Identity.

Table of Contents

Dedications	i
Acknowledgments	ii
<i>Abstract</i>	iii
Table of contents.....	v
<i>I. Introduction</i>	1
a) Review of the literature	2
b) Issue and working Hypotheses.....	4
c) Methodological Outline.....	5
<i>II. Methods and Materials</i>	7
1) Methods.....	7
- Antonio Gramsci’s ‘Subalternity’ and ‘Resistance of the Subaltern’	7
2) Materials.....	8
a) Athol Fugard’s Biography	8
b) Synopsis of <i>My children! My Africa!</i> (1989)	9
c) Synopsis of <i>Blood Knot</i> (1961).....	10
d) An overview of Apartheid in South Africa	11
<i>III. Results</i>	13
<i>IV. Discussion</i>	15
-Chapter one: The Subaltern as Victim in <i>My Children! My Africa!</i> and <i>Blood Knot</i>	15
a) Thami as a Victim of Oppressive Education in <i>My children! My Africa!</i>	15
b) Zachariah as a Victim of Identity in <i>Blood Knot</i>	18
c) Setting	24
1) Zolile High School in <i>My children! My Africa!</i>	24
2) Port Elizabeth in <i>Blood Knot</i>	25
-Chapter two: The Subaltern as Hero in <i>My Children! My Africa!</i> And <i>Blood Knot</i>	28
a) Thami as a popular hero in <i>My children! My Africa!</i>	28
b) The Comrades as Collective Heroes in <i>My children! My Africa!</i>	34
c) Morris as a Hero in Fugard’s <i>Blood Knot</i>	37

d) Zachariah and the Mother as Collective Heroes	42
<i>V. Conclusion</i>	45
<i>VI. Selected Bibliography</i>	47

I. Introduction

The aim of this research paper is to explore the ambivalent position of the black South Africans during the Apartheid, in South African playwright Athol Fugard's *My Children! My Africa!* (1989) and *Blood knot* (1961). The selected plays present a pertinent demonstration of the subaltern's position. The work has the concern of shedding light and denouncing oppression, social and political injustice that the Afrikaners inflicted to the indigenous ethnic groups of South Africa, and how the latter managed to resist it.

Oppression has always been the way to take control to the detriment of others. The egocentric nature of the human being has allowed him to be creative in terms of installing techniques that could lead to the potential success to dominate, the Apartheid system has adopted several way in the domination of the native blacks, one of the main strategies, is to weaken their education through a legislated segregation which was established through the Bantu Education act, 1953, it was the Apartheid's most offensively racist law, the Black students were only initiated to their mother tongue along with traditions, with a low access to fundamental course that the white schools offered at the time.

Throughout history, the subordinate classes have always been muzzled through the quelling the freedom of speech and of thought. Freedom of speech is easily controlled by practicing all kinds of repression using force, and by propagating the upper class narrative making it seem as the absolute truth. Freedom of thought needs a more relevant strategy as required need is to control the ideal and the thoughts of whole generations, and to limit their access to any intellectual substances.

In fact, oppression and hegemony have always been the concern of intellectuals, notably philosophers and theorist. Every shift in the social structures throughout history had been accompanied by all kinds of literary and philosophical movements, the most relevant

example could be the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The impact of literature is not less eminent in the modern era, Fugard is a true example of commitment as he dedicated his career denouncing the Apartheid system and to contribute to the emancipation of the blacks in South Africa.

As mentioned previously, Athol Fugard's *My Children My Africa* (1989) and *Blood knot* (1961) expose the Apartheid system's segregationist policies through both education and identity. The purpose of this paper is to approach the issue of the subaltern's position within the Apartheid social structure as it is presented in both plays. The work deals mainly with Fugard's attitude in denouncing the system through a subjective representation of the black characters, from two ambivalent perspectives.

a) Review of the literature

Athol Fugard's *My children! My Africa!*(1989) and *Blood knot*(1961) are two plays that have been the subject of several critics from different perspectives.

To start with, Mwihi Margaret Njoki and Dr Collins Ogogo wrote in their article entitled '*A critical analysis of Athol Fugard's social vision in four selected plays*' (2014). In this article, Ogogo analyses *Blood knot* from a sociological perspective. He identifies two entities in the play: the 'persecutors' who are the whites and the 'persecuted' who are the blacks (Ogogo and Njoki, 2014:63). The Black characters are given the disadvantaged role to rise sympathy among the audience towards them, the white characters on the other hand are portrayed negatively to make the audience feel alienated to them(ibid:65). In fact, Njoki and Ogogo assume that Fugard's vision emphasizes the fact that the Blacks should realize that they are under oppression by the whites politically, socially and economically (ibid:66).

As still another piece of criticism, in his article entitled '*Manichean and Dichotomous Opposites in Athol Fugard's Blood Knot*' (2015) Shunayfa Mohammed Al-Qarni assesses the moral aspect in Fugard's plays. According to him, Fugard is a white man who praises the possibility of a new era of equality and justice in South Africa (Al-qarni,2015:2). The character of Morris is portrayed with morals and a mission in life which are showed in this sense of guilt and in the fact that he chose his black brother side over the privilege that the Apartheid social structure offers him(Ibid:6). Indeed, Fugard is depicted as a humanistic and a sincere universal thinker who's work explores not only apartheid but also relationship of human being to each other(Ibid:11)

Nicolas Visser in his article entitled '*Drama and the Politics in a State of Emergency (1993) argues that My children! My Africa!*' presents all kinds of liberal values , according to him, The play is full of examples that demonstrate Fugard's liberal thinking, such as the debate and the dictionary, which are considered by the liberals as being the legitimate forms of politics (Visser,1993:486-487). Furthermore, Visser supposes that Athol Fugard has misrepresented the Apartheid era, in addition to the restoration of the liberal values (ibid:496). In this article, Visser introduces many examples of distortion in order to maintain his argument, that is to say that the critic thinks that Fugard neglected the death of Mr.M despite the fact that he was one of the principal characters in the play (ibid:498), he makes it insignificant and a less important situation. The death of Mr.M represents the outcome of discriminatory politics in South Africa in general and the protest of black youth in particular .For this, ,Visser expresses his frustration towards Fugard, that he blames black people instead of white ones (ibid:500).

Another critic is Amy Kotkin in her article '*Fugard's My children! My Africa! at WSG still Speaks Urgently*'(2021) which deals with the extraordinary play written just before the end of Apartheid in South Africa. In fact, the critic confirms that *My children! My Africa!*

should be considered a period of piece; From this point, Fugard uses his skills to discover the sensible subjects such as hope, despair and strife during the apartheid era(kotkin,202:3). Kotkin argues that Mr.M remains at the wrong side of history ; he has the dilemma of his inner personality knowing that he has a limited life living (ibid:4-5).another assumption that kotkin makes is that Thami who is a young black student, wants a radical change in the situation of black people in general, and the boycott of the Bantu school for youth in particular(ibid7-8).Isabel who is a white student, dedicates herself to racial harmony ,it is clearly seen when she invites Mr.M and Thami to her parents house for tea (ibid:9). Furthermore, Kotkin views that the play has too frequently long monologues by each of the characters (ibid:12).

b) Issue and Working Hypotheses

Many literary critics have undertaken *My children! My Africa!* (1989) and *Blood Knot* (1961) from different perspectives.. By our acknowledgment of the content of the literature written on Fugard's plays, it is necessary to report that most of the work done previously mainly focused on literary criticism and political analysis, without extending to the psychological and sociological assessment of the subaltern's position and consciousness , so it remains our priority to undertake the issue in depth, in the quest of reaching a decent analysis.

In this research paper, our task is to highlight the aspect of oppression and injustice as presented by Athol Fugard in in *My children! My Africa* and *Blood Knot*, we intend to investigates further his vision and representation of Apartheid as an oppressive structure and the subaltern's position inside it as a victim and then as a hero as presented in each of the two plays. We attempt also to highlight the notions of heroism that each play presnets, since it

has a great thematic dimension on a universal level, as it is one of the main values of Marxism and nationalism in general.

The two suggested plays are considerably adequate with the issue, since they both represent an effective reflection of Fugard's standpoint towards Apartheid, especially the oppressed blacks who are considerably highlighted. One could easily deduce that Fugard considers the South African black community as his compatriots despite their different ethnicity. He indeed makes use of his theatre to make a fair representation of the subaltern's position as a victim of a racist ideology, he also demonstrates their value as humans and citizens by highlighting their ideals and their consciousness about their subjection, it is mostly like he gives them a voice through his works as if he shared the same concerns and situation as them all in the aim of freedom.

Finally, our aim is to highlight Athol Fugard's commitment and his faithfulness in demonstrating the historical reality of Apartheid as a segregationist and oppressive system, but most importantly, our task consists of arguing that the subaltern is presented as both a victim and a hero in *My children! My Africa* and *Blood Knot*.

c) Methodological outline

This piece of our paper is undertaken using the IMRAD system. The introduction establishes the topic focus, includes our review of previous literature and states our issue and working hypotheses. The methods section explains the concepts of 'subalternity' and 'resistance' as developed by Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison note books*. The materials part provides a biography of Athol Fugard, a synopsis of *My Children! My Africa!* (1989) and another of *Blood Knot* (1961), then comes the results where we present our findings. The discussion contains two chapters, each one with a perspective on the subaltern's position in Fugard's *My children! My Africa!* and *Blood Knot!*; the first one is concerned with

exploring the issue of the subaltern being a victim relying on Gramsci's concept of 'subalternity', the second one discusses the subaltern's heroism, making reference to Gramsci's concept of 'resistance'. In the conclusion, we restate the most important points of the discussion.

II. Method and Materials

1) Methods

This section of our dissertation explores Antonio Gramsci's concepts 'subalternity' and 'resistance' in his *Prison Notebooks* (1948). Antonio Gramsci is an Italian philosopher, theorist, and writer of the twentieth century, he was also one of the founders and a one-time leader of the Italian Communist Party. He wrote more than 30 notebooks of history and analysis during his imprisonment from 1926 to 1937. He is one of the most influential figures that brought an immense contribution to Marxism mainly with his theories of 'subalternity', 'hegemony' and 'resistance' which have the ideal of a classless society, he explains how the ruling class maintains its position and argued that the proletariat must develop its own counter-hegemony, so he does not only give an assessment of the reality of the class struggle, but gives also pragmatic solutions.

The majority of Gramsci's writings are in fact implicit criticism of the whole fascist ideology. The concept of 'subalternity' which praises the ideal of a classless society has in fact multidimensional aspects; that is to say that it can be applied on a universal scale, Gramsci in his prison notebooks comments on this concept as following:

The subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a "State": their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society, and thereby with the history of States and groups of States (Gramsci, 1999:202)

here, Gramsci categorizes the subalterns as a non-structured civil society, which means that they are under the control of a higher power which is unlike them, official, organized and structured. Their unification is only possible once they identify as members of the same group, carrying the concerns, and most importantly the same cause which could then represent a potential rivalry to the oppressor.

After defining Gramsci's concept of 'subalternity', we turn to his concept of 'resistance'. Gramsci means the mechanical sequence that leads the subaltern groups to revolt, he writes: "the 'subaltern' forces, which have to be 'manipulated' and rationalised to serve new ends, naturally put up a resistance" (Gramsci,1999:561) Gramsci explains how the constant oppression leads to a mechanical reaction of the subordinate groups. He adds that The policies that the oppressor applies to maintain hegemony may be pragmatic to maintain on the short run, but it ends with the subaltern taking conscious of the situation and starts seeking emancipation.

Gramsci does not only give an assessment of the subaltern's state, but expresses explicitly his disagreement with neutrality when the political and social state is characterized with hegemony. He says in his article entitled *La Città Futura* (The Future City) (1917) :

The indifference operates passively, but it operates. It is fate, that which cannot be counted on. It twists programs and ruins the best-conceived plans. It is the raw material that ruins intelligence (Gramsci,1917)

by depicting indifference as a negative attitude , Gramsci gives systematically high value to resistance which is according to him not only a matter of will and devotion but a duty of any citizen that identifies as so(ibid).

2) Materials

a) Biography of Athol Fugard

South African playwright Athol Fugard is known for his subtle description and rejection of Apartheid. Fugard is a playwright, novelist, actor and director, his plays which are typically political are still a great subject of literary criticism. He was born in June 11th 1932 in Middleburg South Africa, to a father of English origins, and an Afrikaner mother. Despite his social status as a white man, he is one of the most reputed advocates of black South

Africans rights, his works constitute a vivid description of the subaltern's position inside The Apartheid system, it can be observed in works such as *Sizwe Bransi is dead* (1972), *The Island* (1973) and *The Road to Mecca* (1987), which are only a few examples. Hence, *My children! My Africa!* (1989) and *Blood Knot* (1961) provide a perfect reflection on the subaltern's reality. Many of his work engendered controversies, notably *Blood Knot* (1961) which had been banned after a single performance where authorities arrested its two interracial actors, then the government passed censorship laws prohibiting racially mixed casts, this shows how Fugard managed to disturb the South African government and to have an eminent impact on the political issues of South Africa

b) Synopsis of My Children! My Africa! (1989)

My children! My Africa! is a two act play set in small township classroom in Zolile high school in South Africa, towards the end of the Apartheid era. The first act starts with a discussion between Thami, a black student who represents the Bantu school, and Isabel who represents the white school about old versus new ways. In South Africa, the educational system is segregated as stated in the Bantu Education Act; bantu education consists mainly on teaching Bantu language and the native culture only making it inferior compared to the white education which has a diverse set of subject notably science, physics and math. At some point in the discussion Isabel expresses her will to live without any racial or social barriers, on the other hand, Thami argues that the mix of both cultures will bring about a negative impact on his native one. Later on, Mr.M asks Isabel to join a regional competition along with Thami, the award would be divided between the two schools, at first, everything seemed to be going well between the three, but as things went on, the relationship between Thami and his teacher started getting bad ,Thami expresses explicitly his disagreement with Mr.M in his monologue where he addresses the audience.

In the first scene of the second act Thami leaves to join a rebellious group aiming for an equal educational system which guarantees the same rights for the black students as for the white ones through boycotting School. Further in the play, Mr.M expresses his disappointment on Thami's leaving school and advises him to reconsider his decision, but Thami does not submit to his teachers suggestion and prefers to follow the path of rebellion , he then makes it clear for Mr.M that offering the boycotting mob to the police could lead to disastrous consequences, but the latter does not consider the outcome of his actions ,towards the end of the paly, Mr.M gets killed by the mob exactly as Thami predicted it .At the end ,Thami tells Isabel about his plan to go abroad in fear of being arrested by the police. The play closes up with Isabel expressing her optimism for the future in her monologue.

c) Synopsis of Blood Knot (1961)

Athol Fugard's ***Blood Knot*** is a three-act play set in a non-white location in Port Elizabeth, South Africa .The play features two half-brothers sharing the same mother, Zachariah is a black man, while Morris is light-skinned allowing him to pass as white during an era of racial segregation which is Apartheid,. They have shared the same one-room shack for about twelve months. Zachariah's Job as gatekeeper was typical for black men at the time; his task is to prevent his fellow black people from entering the White only park.

Having lived as a white man for a long time, Morris chooses to return to his brother's side, he saves money that Zachariah earns so that they will be able to buy a two-man farm.. Meanwhile, Zachariah is desperate for female companionship, he struggles with his pen pal relationship with a girl, he fantasizes about a real relationship of mutual love, but Morris is skeptical assessing the fact that this relationship breaks one of the major rules of the Apartheid system, Interracial relationships were illegal as stated in the prohibition of

mixed marriage act. Zachariah is left with no choice but letting Morris pose as him for his rendez-vous with the white girl since he can easily pass for a white man.

Morris spends a significant amount of money that was meant to be put towards their dream on buying typical white men's clothes preparing for the rendezvous, as he wears the clothes, his tone changes instantly as he begins to fit the role of a typical white man, the more he fits the role, the more he became arrogant towards his brother treating him almost like a servant. The rendezvous is canceled by the girl explaining in a letter that she has changed her mind, but this does not stop the two brothers from continuing the role playing to the extreme. at the end, Zachariah expresses his desire to end his brother's life.

The main assumption of play's conclusion is that despite the fact that they continue to live together, they are unable to bridge the disconnect that their skin-tone has caused despite being brothers.

d) An overview of Apartheid in South Africa

Apartheid is an Afrikaans name given by the white-ruled South Africa's Nationalist Party in 1948 to the country's institutionalized system of segregation. It stated that the citizens from white descent had to be on the top of the hierarchic system, having always the priority over the blacks who were considered as second class citizens. So blacks lived in segregated areas, their children studied in segregated schools.

Apartheid imposed heavy burdens on the black community, its oppression covered nearly every aspect of life; on an economic scale, the gap between the wealthy white community and the black one was considerably large, black people's condition was characterized by poverty, malnutrition and disease. The second aspect of oppression besides the economic state concerns the humanistic dimension, the oppressed identity of blacks

which was the outcome of the South African's government Eurocentric ideology was legally presents since it was stipulated by the South African constitution. This extremely disadvantageous condition of the subaltern group led them to develop ideals of national identity and the will for emancipation.

III. Results

Throughout our work, we attempted to discuss the subaltern's position as a victim and a hero in Athol Fugard's *My children! My Africa!* and *Blood Knot*. We relied mainly on the theoretical concept developed by Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci which is subalternity. The choice of the concept is done after an assessment of what is most suitable for the analysis. Principally, the study considers that Fugard uses a well-selected content to denounce the reality of the Apartheid system, and to give a fair and realistic depiction of the black South Africans position under a hegemonic government, and their heroic revolt against subalternity.

Our research on the issue under study has resulted in interesting findings. First, our dealing with both plays revealed that Fugard focuses so much on giving a faithful historical reality. His selection of characters is done thoroughly, in order to give the nearest depiction of the environment of South Africa during Apartheid, and the position of the black community in it. They are indeed presented as being the victims of a segregationist and white supremacist system, in *My children! My Africa!* the subaltern is indeed presented as a victim of segregated education, while in *Blood Knot* he is presented as a victim of identity. Moreover, the setting is typical, and most importantly very thematic, which makes it a source of a clear perception on the oppression that blacks had to bear in South Africa during the Apartheid era.

The second major finding that resulted from our research is Athol Fugard's celebration of the revolutionary and heroic deeds of the subaltern. In fact, Fugard does not only present the black characters as just victims unable to be critical about their situation, instead, he features some characters to show that the black community is capable of assessing and denouncing the injustice it was subject to. Fugard remarkably puts forward the notion of

‘popular heroism’ along with ‘collective heroism’ in *My Children! My Africa!* and *Blood Knot*, he explores heroism of both the individual and the community. Therefore, these interesting findings lead us to discuss in depth Fugard’s depiction of Black South Africans’ subalternity and heroism in his *My children! My Africa!* and *Blood Knot*.

IV. Discussion

In this part of the paper, we will focus on the position of the subaltern inside the Apartheid social and political structure as presented by Athol Fugard. Indeed, both *My children! My Africa!* and *Blood Knot*. The first chapter deals with the position of the subaltern as a victim of an oppressive regime; we are going to highlight Fugard's depiction of the oppressed blacks. The second chapter is concerned with the position of the subaltern as revolted and heroes of their own emancipation, our goal is to shed light on how Fugard reinforces the resistance of the subaltern by presenting the black characters as conscious and committed individuals capable of emancipation. As the main concern of the discussion is the subaltern's position, we intend to borrow Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'subalternity' and 'resistance'.

Chapter one: The Subaltern as a Victim in Fugard's My Children! My Africa! and Blood Knot.

The main concern of this chapter is to show how the subaltern is represented by Fugard as the victim of a white supremacist institution, in order to reach this point, we will proceed to an analysis of the characters and the setting; the character analysis focuses on education in *My children! My Africa!* and on identity in *Blood Knot*.

a) Thami as a Victim of Oppressive Education in My Children! My Africa!

In *My children! My Africa!* Athol Fugard introduces the issue and highlights it to be the main reflection of oppression, Thami who is the central character is a student in a Bantu school which is Zolile high school. Thami's subalternity is the result of the 1954 Bantu education Act which subordinated black students. This tendency to weaken education is

typical of oppressive regimes, since the aim of any hegemonic organism is to maintain the subordinate mass under cultural hegemony, Gramsci argues:

every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes (Gramsci,1999:527)

The fact that the play opens with a debate between Thami and Isabel who is a white student, shows how Thami as black student has a significant disadvantage since he received inferior education compared to her, so he is the victim of the debate itself (Fugard,1990:1).

Mr.M who is Thami's teacher, sees a light of hope in him, he encourages him to explore his full potential in order to succeed and to have high social status in the future, but the fact that he constantly deters him from taking his fellow peoples position may be used by Fugard to represent the national party's hegemonic narrative, which consists of propagating the idea that the black man can never surpass or come close to the white man's position so it is better for him to be passive. So this discourse represent the manipulation that young talents like Thami are victims of ,in act two, scene one, Thami defends his boycotting comrades ,the response of Mr.M is perfect example of the manipulated narrative of the South African institutions back then , he says:

Then listen carefully Thami. I have received instructions from the department to make a list of all those who take part in the boycott. Do you know what they will do with that list when all this is over....because don't fool yourself Thami, it will be. When your boycott comes to an inglorious end like all the othersthey will make all of you apply for readmission and if your name is on that list....(*he leaves the rest unspoken*)(Fugard,1990:59).

Through this passage, it is obvious that Thami is treated like a non conscious individual, Mr.M puts pressure on him and is clearly trying to frighten him and make him grasp the idea of his inferiority compared to the Afrikaners, this discourse shows how black students like Thami are under psychological pressure and constant manipulation by the white

institution, after a heated debates with his teacher Mr.M about the importance of education, he says:

THAMI: Yes. Yours were lessons in whispering. There are men now who are teaching us to shout. Those little tricks and jokes of yours in the classroom liberated nothing. The struggle doesn't need the big English words you taught me how to spell (ibid:58).

Here we can deduce that instead of being ambitious about building his future, Thami is constantly distracted by his situation and by the fact that the education he receives from Mr.M is inferior; this is shown through his degrading language towards Mr.M as he describes what the content of the lessons he receives from the segregationist Bantu education.

Thami's social situation represents a considerable disadvantage, and is one of the main reasons that prevent him from accomplishing his goals. Like most individuals of the black community, his financial and living conditions are very mediocre, making him lack the primary elements for a good education ,besides the fact that his a student in an inferior and segregated institution which is the Bantu school, the following conversation between thami and Isabel who comes from a white background reflects both the typical life style of Thami as a black man, but also his negative experience in the white neighborhoods notably the big cities which he expresses with a tone of humor:

Isabel: Let's start with your family.

Thami: Mbikwana!(*he clears his throat*) Mbikwana is an old Bantu name and my mother and father are good , reliable, ordinary, hard working Bantu speaking-speaking black South African natives. I am the one-hundred-thousandth generation.

Isabel: You really like teasing don't you.

Thami: Amos and Lilian Mbikwana. They're in Cape Town. My mother is a domestic and my father works for the railways. I stay here with my grande mother and married sister. I was sent to school in the *platteland* because it so much safe you see than the big city with all its temptations and trouble (ibid:11).

Fugard focuses so much on showing the background of Thami in order to emphasize the typical life style that most black students have, his parents' jobs are typical of the

subalterns, Fugard may have used this intentionally to show that Thami is a victim of low financial situation as the majority of black students considering that a suitable education requires a certain outcome. Moreover, just the fact that Mr.M puts all his hope in the award that Thami and Isabel might win the debate competition in order for Thami to get a scholarship, shows the insignificant opportunities that black students like Thami had, it is seen when Mr.M expresses his enthusiasm for the eventual award, he says to Isabel:

I've got a small confession to make. In addition to everything I've already said, there's another reason for this idea of mine. When you and Thami shine at the festival, as I know you will, and win first prize and we've pocketed a nice little check for five thousand rands, I am going to point to Thami and say and know ladies and gentleman, a full university scholarship if you please (ibid:25)

Mr.M focuses only on Thami, even though both him and Isabel will eventually win the prize, Fugard may have used this to show the immense difference in opportunities between the whites and the subalterns, Thami's subalternity makes his chances to make it to college very little, the enthusiasm of Mr.M for an eventual scholarship for Thami shows how desperate he is to see a black student succeed.

Thami is a subaltern of an intentionally elaborated segregationist system of education, that tends to weaken the intellectual entity of the subaltern group making the access to information very restricted, and represses the freedom of thought by imposing a narrative which advantageous to the whites. So Thami represents valuably the subaltern class who wants to educate themselves, but get repressed as they represent a threat to the hegemonic system of South Africa during Apartheid.

b) Zachariah as a Victim of his Identity in Blood Knot

Segregation and oppression has always been the outcome of the extreme ideologies, based generally on the differentiation of ethnicity, discrimination, prejudice and racism, black men in South Africa during Apartheid were mainly subjected because of the white descendent

Eurocentric perception of the word, black people were profiled as uncivilized savage driven by their instinct, incapable of using reason, Gramsci argues:

to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society—bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a “universal” plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups. It is true that the State is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favorable conditions for the latter’s maximum expansion (Gramsci,1999:406)

so the main source of oppression is ideological hegemony, and the intellectual unity which represents in a primordial tool to keep the upper position and the domination over the subordinate groups.

In Fugard’s *Blood Knot*, the main characters are the epitome of the oppressed black community; nevertheless, the notion of Morris’s light skin may represent a privilege. One of the major reflections of the paradox that the black people lived under Apartheid in the play, is Zachariah’s job as a gate keeper, the irony of it resides in the fact that his task is to keep his fellow black people from entering the White only park. His job reflects the misery and the harsh condition the blacks were confronted to, this following conversation is a reflection on the issue:

Morris: sorry, Zach. How did it go today?

Zachariah: he’s got me standing again.

Morris: at the gate?

Zachariah: Ja.

Morris: but didn’t you tell him, Zach? I told you to tell him that your feet are Calloused and that you wanted to go back to pots.

Zachariah: I did.

Morris: And then?

Zachariah: He said: Go the gate or go to hell (Fugard, 1964:12-13).

From the above conversation, it is clear that during Apartheid, the blacks in South Africa were not only given harsh tasks with no regards to the physical suffering, but also were treated like less than humans in the work places, sSo for black men back then, seeking income equals bearing not only physical pain, but also constant humiliation, a fact which worsens their state of subalternity .

We notice also in the conversation that Morris takes his brother's side despite his light skin which could let him take advantage of his inherited white privilege. This could symbolize awakening and hope, as if Fugard is trying to awaken white people's consciousness to cease being indifferent to the discrimination, and to draw attention to the position of the black man as a victim of prejudice.

In fact, Morris clearly loses a big advantage by choosing to take his brother's side, but he never really experiences this extreme discrimination that his brother was facing every day, it shows that it is all a matter of color tone, the black skin is seen as a symbol of incivility and savagery in the white supremacist ideology, it is seen when Zach comments his white boss response after he asked him if could possibly shift from standing all day which causes him intense pain:“ Ja, that's what I think it is. My inhumanity for him. “Go to the gate or go to hell.” What do you think I am?” (ibid:13). Therefore, the exclusion of the blacks from any relevant position is a result of an ideology of absolute and systematic racism and conviction about the whites' superiority over the other.

The fact that the white descendents succeeded in institutionalizing the race based segregation, shows how the blacks are victims of educational manipulation on the matter of the systematic superiority if the white over the black man, In this context, Gramsci comments on the intellectual manipulation that occurs from the beginning of interaction between the European and the native African, he illustrates it as following:

One got the impression that it was all rather the first contacts of English merchants and the Negroes of Africa: trashy bubbles were handed out in exchange for nuggets of gold (Gramsci,1999:636).

Even Zachariah at some point in the play, unconsciously idealizes the white man as the civilized elegant being, despite the fact that he is aware of the awful injustice. In scene four, Morris is about to meet Zachariah's pen pal white girl whose name is Ethel instead of his dark-skinned brother, Zachariah advises him to behave like an elegant white man, saying:

Now this is it.You're wearing a pretty-smart-for-a-meeting-with-the-lady type of suits.(MORRIS, clutching the tin to his chest, closes his eyes. ZACHARIAH creeps closer.) shiny shoes, white socks, a good shirt and a spotty tie. And the people watch you go by and say: Hey, Hey! Who's you? There goes something! And Ethel says: "Who's this coming? Could it be my friend, Mr. Pietersen?" And you say : "Good day to you, Miss Ethel. May I shake your white hands with my white hands" " of course, Mr. Pietersen." (ZACHARIAH has reached MORRIS . He takes the tin.) Thank you, Morrie. (MORRIS doesn't move. ZACHARIAH opens the tin, takes out the money and then callously throws the tin away. He takes the money to the table where he counts it.) (Fugard, 1964:61)

Clearly, Fugard draws the character Zachariah to emphasize explicitly the impact the ideology which resulted in a wicked social and institutional segregation ,in the above passage ,the usage the term white repeatedly may symbolize the ideal and the prototype that the Eurocentric ideology has established, which consists mainly of white equals good and beautiful, in contrast ,dark equals evil and crude. Over all, Fugard assumes that the South African subaltern, is in fact a victim of an Eurocentric white supremacist ideology. Moreover, The impact of skin tone is so much highlighted by Fugard , throughout the play ,words such as white, white-skinned, dark-skinned are repeatedly mentioned ,Fugard may have used this to show the impact of Zachariah's skin tone and to emphasize the issue of racism.

Another aspect which reflects Zachariah's subalternity besides lacking materials comfort, is his emotional state, his despair for female companionship shows his intense feeling of loneliness, as a atypical black man, he lacks one of the major elements for a good

self-esteem which is social status, being the majority of the time at work. He is constantly confronted to humiliation, and always treated like less than a man, so just the idea that a woman could be interested in him awakens a desperate hope inside him, he says to his brother Morris after the latter insinuates that his pen pal is a bad plan:

Zachariah: Wait . . . wait . . . wait . . . not so fast. I'm a sort of slow man . We were talking about this letter, not her. Now tell me, what's wrong with what you did read? Does she call me names? No. Does she laugh at me? No. Does she swear at me? No. Just a simple letter with a little bit of this and a little bit of that. Here comes the clue. What sort of chap is it that throws away a few kind words? Hey, Morrie? Aren't they, as you say, precious things these days? And this pretty picture of a lovely girl? I bum it! What sort of doing is that? Bad. Think of Ethel, man. Think! Sitting up there in Oudtshoorn with Lucy, waiting . . . waiting . . . for what? For nothing. For why? Because bad Zach Pietersen burnt it. No Morrie. Good is good, fair is fair and I may be a shade of black, but I go gently as a man (ibid:39-40).

His brother keeps on trying to dissuade him by insinuating again, but this time, it is about the issue of color, he tries to make him reasonable about the disconnect of his color and hers, but Zachariah's desperate hope makes him argue with an angry tone saying:

Zachariah. You want to hear me say it? {MORRIS says nothing.} It's because she's white! I like this little white girl! I like the thought of this little white girl. I'm telling you I like the thought of this little white Ethel better than our future, or the plans, or getting away, or foot salts or any other damned thing in here It's the best thought I ever had and I'm keeping it, and don't try no tricks . Like trying to get it away from me. Who knows? You might get to liking it too. {MORRIS says nothing. ZACHARIAH comes closer.} Ja. There's a thought there. What about you, Morrie? You never had it before that thought? A man like you, especially you, always thinking so many things! A man like you who's been places! You're always telling me about the places you been. Wasn't there ever no white woman thereabouts? I mean . . . You must have smelt them someplace (ibid:40).

He refuses to admit that his color and Ethel's one represent the whole problem the South African system back, when he talked about his boss saying: "My inhumanity for him. "Go to the gate or go to hell." What do you think I am?" (ibid:13), he was considerably realist, assessing the fact that his color is perceived as a sign of inhumanity, but when it comes to his pen pal, he seems to fantasize about a real relationship as if the issue of his color never existed. This shows the social misery and the sadness that Zachariah carried inside him, as a

result of his worthiness in the eyes of the white man who was always treating him with no regards for his emotions.

Another major element that Fugard uses to show the Zachariah's suffering is his foot sores, it is indeed significant illustration of the backs exploitation by the white descendants, it is very highlighted throughout the play as it is represent one of the most salient symbols in it, for instance when Zachariah exchanges a conversation with Morris complaining about his feet, and pointing out how his superior shows no empathy:

Zachariah. I tried to go back to pots. My feet, I said, are killing me.

Morris. And then?

Zachariah. He said go to the gate or go to hell . . . Boy!

Morris. He said boy as well?

Zachariah. He did.

Morris. In one sentence?

Zachariah. Prejudice and inhumanity in one sentence! (He starts to work off one shoe with the other foot and then dips the barefoot into the basin of water. He will not get as far as taking off the other shoe.) When your feet are bad, you feel it, man (ibid:33)

Further in the play, Zachariah mentions again the issue of foot sores, but this time in some memories about his mother that Morris recalls:

Morri.: No, Zach. I meant the top. I can't remember that top. And what about her, Zach? There's a memory for you. I tried it out the other day. Mother, I said, Mother! A sadness, I thought.

Zachariah: Ja.

Morris.: Just a touch of sadness.

Zachariah: A soft touch with sadness.

Morris.: And soapsuds on brown hands.

Zachariah: And sore feet. {Pause. MORRIS looks at ZACHARIAH.} (ibid:43).

That the fact that Zachariah brings back this memory with a tone of sadness, shows that harsh exploitation is not just an exception for him, it is indeed the case of any black person in south Africa during Apartheid.

The state of subalternity and the misery that Zachariah has ever experienced, is due to the fact of him being a black man, in a nation where it is perceived as a sign of primitiveness and savageness, and where black people are isolated and devoid of any sort of authority, as their ethnicity is perceived as systematically inferior in the ideological hegemony of the white descendants. Throughout play, it seems clearly that Zachariah's life is all about his color, his job condition, the place where he lives, his emotional states and even his relation with brother is directly influenced by the color of his skin, that is to say that he is the victim of segregation and extreme racism.

c) Setting as Symbol of Subalternity in My Children! My Africa! and Blood Knot

The setting in *My Children! My Africa!* and *Blood knot* is well selected by Fugard, in order to fit the historical reality of Apartheid, he succeeds in illustrating the apartheid structure by choosing typical places which reflect the most the misery of subaltern group caused by the white hegemony. In fact, the setting in both plays is quite different in terms of impact and them. To note, the setting of blood knot which is set in Port Elizabeth, is quite common in Fugard's plays ,the ones that are set in this city are known as the 'Port Elizabeth plays'.

1- Zolile High School in My Children! My Africa!

My children! My Africa! is set in Zolile high school, very symbolic of a segregated education setting, the particularity of the setting's impact is that it emphasizes the segregated

education; most of the dialogues in the play are set in Zolile High school for black students, located in Cambedoo, a small South African Town. It is a segregated school following the policies of segregationist Bantu Education Act of 1953, which stipulates clearly the separation of education institutions according to race, whites attend descent schools with good working conditions, and full access to information, blacks on the other hand, go to schools with mediocre infrastructures, and most importantly a limited access to information, being taught only the Bantu language along with getting initiated to traditions. The setting is very pertinent as it paves the path for the treatment of the intellect manipulation issue, and the oriented education which tends to target the elite in order to control their potential, this tendency of the ruling class to install and oriented access to knowledge is assessed by many Marxist thinker, according to Gramsci, the most important function of the hegemonic state is:

to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important State activities in this sense: but, in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end—initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes (Gramsci,1999:526).

moreover, what makes the Bantu educational system unique in its harshness, is that the South African National Party took the approach of oriented education to the extreme, since it is an explicit racial segregation. So the fact that the majority of the dialogue in *My children! My Africa!* is set in a this segregated school, reflects Fugard's highlighted symbolism on the harsh racial segregation.

2- Port Elizabeth in Blood Knot

Port Elizabeth as a setting in Athol Fugard's *Blood Knot* greatly contributes to depiction of subalternity, The impact of the setting in is considerably different from *My children! My Africa!*. As we stated before, Port Elizabeth is so relevant in terms of providing

a good substance for treating the issue of subalternity, as it is a real city that used to be characterized with racism, as it was principally inhabited by white citizens. Indeed, the majority of Fugard's plays have the particularity of denouncing segregation; this explains why Port Elizabeth is used in many of his plays as the principal setting. Moreover, besides speaking of the importance of Port Elizabeth as a thematic setting, it necessary to mention that most of the play is set in the one-room shack that the two brothers share.

The significance of this one-room shack, resides in its efficiency in illustrating the subaltern's misery, the thematic aspect of the setting is concerned mainly on segregation and poverty. Most black people in South Africa during Apartheid lived in miserable conditions just like the two brothers in the play. Throughout the play, we notice the two brothers' ambition to leave for an eventual good future somewhere else but the one-room shack, as Morris suggests it:

Morris: (MORRIS watches ZACHARIAH surreptitiously from the table.) I been thinking, Zach. It's time we started making some definite plans. I mean . . . we've agreed on the main idea. The think] now is to find the right place, (pause) Zach? (pause) We have agreed, haven't we?

Zachariah: About what?

Morris: Hell, man. The future. Is it going to be a small two-man farm, just big enough for you and me; or what is it going to be?

Zachariah. Ja.

Morris. Right. We agree. Now, I'm saying we got to find the right place, (pause) Zach! What's the matter with you tonight?(Fugard,1964:16)

Just the Idea of leaving the one-room shack brings about hope for the two Morris and Zachariah, the latter does not even question his brother's suggestion, as if all that matters is to leave the place that contains all their misery. Finally, the one-room shack as a setting provides a faithful historical reality of the poverty and misery of the South African subaltern during Apartheid, caused by segregation.

To conclude the chapter, it is clear from our analysis of the issue of subalternity in both *My children! My Africa!* and *Blood Knot* that Fugard's depiction of his characters and setting is faithful to South Africa of the Apartheid era and area. Yet as we will demonstrate it in the second chapter of our work, Fugard does not limit himself to the depiction of his characters as victims. He engages himself to show the ways into which they are resistant to and revolted against the ties of subalternity.

Chapter two: The Subaltern as Hero in My Children! My Africa! and Blood

Knot.

The concern of this section of the discussion is to examine the extent to which the characters represent heroic devotion in both *My children My Africa!* and *blood Knot*, each one of the plays provide significant notions of heroism, therefore, it is our concern to highlight these notions and to reinforce the idea that the subaltern is represented as a hero in each of the two selected plays.

In *My children! My Africa!* and *Blood Knot*, the heroic resistance of the subaltern is given great importance by the playwright. The subaltern's consciousness and ideal of rebellion are highly put forward by Fugard. It is not the outcome of hazard that this kind of thematic views are highly presents in Fugard's plays since his theatre tends to adopt a Marxist vision. In fact, Marxism gives high value to consciousness and resistance and condemns indifference which is seen often by Marxist ideologues as submission, which engenders the increase of exploitation and oppression. In his article entitled *La Città Futura* ('the future city') which was a recruiting pamphlet in newspaper Gramsci argues:

The indifference operates passively, but it operates. It is fate, that which cannot be counted on. It twists programs and ruins the best-conceived plans. It is the raw material that ruins intelligence. That what happens, the evil that weighs upon all, happens because the human mass abdicates to their will; allows laws to be promulgated that only the revolt could nullify, and leaves men that only a mutiny will be able to overthrow to achieve the power(Gramsci,1917:3)

with reference to the issue under study, Gramsci means that resistance is not a choice but a duty of any citizen that identifies as so.

a) Thami as a Popular Hero in My Children! My Africa!

As we have explained it before, Thami is the protagonist in Fugard's *My children! My Africa!*. Thami is depicted as a subaltern, victim of the Bantu Education segregationist

Act. Yet, Fugard depicts him as a revolted hero who resisted through education.

Every act of revolution and rebellious thoughts throughout history was the outcome of belief and most importantly sense of belongingness, emancipation is often the result of long bearing of community subjection, this feeling of belongingness is number one factor for abstract on concrete partisanship in the subjected entity against the hegemonic one, Gramsci writes:

I hate the indifferent. I believe that living means taking sides. Those who really live cannot help being a citizen and a partisan. Indifference and apathy are parasitism, perversion, not life. That is why I hate the indifferent (ibid).

so in order to be a citizen and a partisan, one must share the same concern and popular opinion with his fellow people to construct an intelligent entity capable of standing against any eventual subjection.

IN *My children! My Africa!* the notion of popular heroism is exceedingly put forward by Fugard, it appears to be the most important thematic substance in the play as most of the dialogue revolves around it. Throughout the play, Fugard highlights the subaltern's ideal and conviction about their reality through Thami's vision of the social and political situation of his country.

In act one, scene one, Thami makes clear his disagreement with Isabel's initiation of a topic which is according to him the last concern to discuss in an African country, especially South Africa with the court system at the time, Isabel attempted to denounce the sexual exploitation and to argue in favor of women's liberation, but Thami disapproves saying:

The opposition has spoken about sexual exploitation and the need for women's liberation. Brothers and sisters these are foreign ideas. Do not listen to them. They come from a culture, the so-called Western Civilization that has meant only misery to Africa and its people. It is the same culture that shipped away thousands of our ancestors as slaves, the same culture that has exploited Africa with the greed of a vulture during the period of Colonialism and the same culture which continues to exploit us in the twentieth century under the disguise of concern for our future (Fugard,1990:3).

His devotion for his native culture and total rejection of the western ideals shows how aware he is of the subjection that he and his fellow people are trapped in , the fact that he addresses his class mates telling them not to listen to this women liberalism kind of discourse show how he determines his belongingness to the native African entity against the white hegemonic entity.

Thami shows a lot of maturity in his way of seeing the opposition of the native and white culture, he sees rebellion as a duty towards his fellow patriots that is worth scarifying all personal infest, his dreams of becoming a high educated person have become worthless as the fight for freedom in his eyes is the ultimate priority, when he refers to the school boycotting mod against the Bantu education system, he employs the word comrades; the term sends a very thematic message about his sense of belongingness and his devotion to residence for instance when he tells Mr.M about the conception of the boycotting group's struggle, he says:“The comrades are imposing a discipline which our struggle needs at this point”(ibid.,57)

Mr.M replies:

Oh Thami... you learn your lessons so well! The “revolution” has only just begun and you are already word perfect. So then tell me, do you think I agree with the inferior “Bantu education” that is being forced on you? (ibid.,57-58).

Thami then replies: “you teach it.” he explicitly confronts his teacher as he represents in his eyes the product of the segregationist system since he does not take the side of rebellion. Thami's devotion is very symbolic, he represents the elite that is greatly invested in the quest for freedom, despite the fact that it may result in failing the standard life success.

The position of Mr.M makes Thami ambiguous about what to do, the bond between him and his teacher is very strong, but at the same time his conviction about rebellion are absolute, the boycotting is a pragmatic action in the eyes of Thami, but he encounters a big problem, Mr.M receives orders to inform about the members of the boycotting mob which

makes him a clear target, Thami tries to convince him to follow the cause, he tells him: “they will kill you.” Mr.M replies with clam saying:

"They will kill me." That's better. Remember what I taught you... if you've got a problem, put it into words so that you can look at it, handle it, and ultimately solve it.They will kill me! You are right. That is very serious. So then... what must I do? Must I run away and hide somewhere?

THAMI: No, they will find you. You must join the boycott (ibid:65)

Mr.M asks Thami why he is trying to save him and the latter responds:“ I'm not doing it for you (*avoiding Mr.M's eyes*). I'm doing it for the Struggle. Our Cause will suffer if we falsely accuse and hurt innocent people, it's not about you”(ibid.).

After Thami joins the boycott officially, the comrades kill Mr.M as Thami predicted it, although he regrets the death of his teacher, he does not condemn his comrades, he simply sees it as an act of resistance and never qualifies it as a murder. When Isabel starts arguing on how this action is an atrocity, Thami explain its legitimacy, the following conversation illustrates his vision on the death of Mr.M,

Thami: It was an act of self-defense.

Isabel::By whom?

Thami: The People.

ISABEL (Almost speechless with outrage): What? A mad mob attacks one unarmed defenseless man and you want me to call it-

Thami: (Abandoning all attempts at patience. He speaks with the full authority of the anger inside him): Stop Isabel! You just keep quiet now and listen to me. You're always saying you want to understand us and what it means to be black .well if you do, listen to me carefully now. I don't call it murder, and I don't call the people who did it a mad mob , I do expect you to see it as an act of self-defense-listen to me!-blind and stupid but still self-defense.and He betrayed us and our fight for freedom. Five men are in detention because of Mr. M's visit to the police station (ibid:73).

according to Thami's discourse, the end justifies the means. Resistance is war therefore counter attack is primordial. His sense of belonging to his people and native land make him

very pragmatic unlike Mr.M whose intellect is very but with low conviction, civil law for Thami does not worth anything, since it is in the same constitution that stipulates the systematic superiority of the white settlers over him and fellow black people , it is also the same constitution that made the Bantu school education, he explains to Isabel the law she is talking about has excluded him, that's why Mr.M's death is the equivalent of an official sentence he says:

Try to understand, Isabel. Try to imagine what it is like to be a black person, choking inside with rage and frustration, bitterness, and then to discover that one of your own kind is a traitor, has betrayed you to those responsible for the suffering and misery of your family, of your people. What would you do? Remember there is no magistrate or court you can drag him to and demand that he be tried for that crime. There is no justice for black people in this country other than what we make for ourselves. When you judge us for what happened in front of the school four days ago just remember that you carry a share of the responsibility for it. It is your laws that have made simple, decent black people so desperate that they turn into "mad mobs." (ibid:74).

The above passage summarizes Thami's convictions that made choose to take action against oppression that he and his fellow people had to bear for long time, he supposes that this white hegemony needs to be counter attacked in the most ferocious ways if needed, his devotion to his culture, history and land made him understand the true meaning of being a part of a whole and how important it is to defend. Fugard emphasized and highlighted the aspect of heroism through Thami's convictions and actions in order to reflect the reality of resistance in South Africa during Apartheid, he gave it high value and put forward its importance in overcoming hegemony.

Gramsci explains is in his initiation to his concept of subalternity, he writes:"The subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a "State" "(Gramsci, 1999:202). So as long as the subalterns remain immobile in terms of social and political activism, the hegemony will remain. For Gramsci, intellectual Activism represent the most primordial element that the subaltern groups need in order to construct a certain counter hegemony, he argues on this matter:

the mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence [...] but in active participation in practical life, as a constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator (ibid:141).

this notion of active implication, which is necessary in the construction and the propagation of resistance Ideals, is very highlighted in *My children My Africa!* , Thami and Mr.M represent the ultimate opposition in this matter, Mr.M being the conscious but passive individual, and Thami being the active source of resistance and persuasion leading him to take the position of a true militant in the quest of freedom for him and his natives.

Thami's love and devotion for his native land ,traditions and culture makes him carry the mentality of true martyr, at such a young age he is not scared of being the opponent of a well installed power, he trivialized the danger that authorities represent for any typical person of his caliber, he talks about the police with a such cold tone and confidence ,his bravery and courage are one the true symbols of revolution that Fugard attends to shed light on ,notably in his conversation with Isabel about what is coming for him after he participated in the boycott, and indirectly in the death of Mr.M who has become an eventual informer,

ISABEL: Are the police really looking for you?

THAMI: Yes. Some of my friends have already been detained.

They're pulling in anybody they can get their hands on.

ISABEL: Where are you going? Cape Town?

THAMI: No. That's the first place they'll look. I've written to my parents telling them about everything. I'm heading north (Fugard,1990:76)

Throughout history, no resistance has begun with a position of force; constant defeats actually reinforce the will for resistance. Thami's position as a wanted individual makes him even more lucid and more determined for revolution, towards the end of the play ,he tells Isabel about his plan for becoming a true devoted resistant, he says:

I am going to join the movement. I want to be a fighter. I've been thinking about it for a long time. Now I know it's the right thing to do. I don't want to end up being one of the mob that killed Mr. M but that will happen to me if I stay here (ibid)

he clearly knows that his position is very disadvantageous, but he shows in his discourse a flame of hope determination. Fugard's use of the word fighter is very thematic as it represents devotion, determination and most importantly courage which are typical qualities for a revolution hero, his plan of devoting his life for his cause reinforces the idea that a cause needs time, and the defeats are just regular phases in the path of emancipation, Thami seems to fully understand this notion of believing in victory regardless of the fact that it might be on a long term and after a long resistance, Gramsci states: "I have been defeated for the moment, but the tide of history is working for me in the long term."(Gramsci,1999,p.646) that is to say that when the subaltern ends up experiencing instant defeat, mechanical determinism becomes a tremendous force of moral resistance, of cohesion and of patient and obstinate perseverance..

So it is not the mere coincidence that Fugard ends his play with such a meaningful discourse that Thami expresses, indeed, he intentionally attributes this ideal to Thami in the aim to demonstrate the mentality and conviction that any black South African or any subaltern in general who identifies or attempts to become a revolution hero must carry. Finally, all the elements that could represent Thami in *My children! My Africa!* are typical for a popular hero.

b) The Comrades as Collective Heroes in My Children! My Africa!

In *My children! My Africa!* the comrades are not concretely present in the play ,nevertheless, they represent one the most significant symbols of revolution in it, they are constantly mentioned in the dialogues by the lead characters each representing them through a different perspective.

From a Marxist point of view, popular organization is primordial for any fight for emancipation, in order for hegemony to exist; there must have been a mutual agreement

between different parts to result in a powerful position, there for, the resentence must adopt the same approach in order to compete as a counter hegemony considering the fact that the hegemony is always well installed and has tremendous assets and prerogatives over the subordinate class, Gramsci argues:

The traditional ruling class, which has numerous trained cadres ,changes men and programs and, with greater speed than is achieved by the subordinate classes, reabsorbs the control that was slipping from its grasp. Perhaps it may make sacrifices, and expose itself to an uncertain future by demagogic promises; but it retains power, reinforces it for the time being, and uses it to crush its adversary and disperse his leading cadres, who cannot be very numerous or highly trained (Gramsci,1999:451).

Gramsci demonstrates the advantaged a hegemonic power has over the subordinate class, in another passage of his notes, he explains how important it is for the subordinate groups to exert power despite lacking the constitutional legitimacy and the required resources to compete, he writes:

A social group can, indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this is indeed one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well.(ibid:196).

The comrades in My children! My Africa are perfect example of the notion of popular organization, against a constitutional power having legal authority even in the eyes of international institutions.

The terminology employed in the play when referring to the boycotting members has a very meaningful dimension as it reflects both the white people's and the black people's perception and position towards this popular organization, Mr.M who has appeared to be pro-constitution repeatedly refers to the boycotting with a derogatory language, for instance when he tells Thami about his vision of this idea of boycott, he says:

Tell them the difference between a man and an animal is that man thinks, and he thinks with words. Consider the mighty ox. Four powerful legs, massive shoulders, and a beautiful thick hide that gave our warriors shields to protect them when they went into battle (Fugard,1990:58-59).

he speaks of them with a tone of superiority as if they were unconscious of what they are doing, using the world animal may be done in purpose by Fugard to show that opposition is always perceived as an act of incivility characterizes with intellectual weakness by the hegemonic ideology, the fact that it is coming from the mouth of an eventual traitor of the subaltern's cause reinforces the idea that the boycotting members have a true sense of resistance.

Isabel who is white, has shown considerable solidarity with the black people's cause; she manifests it several times throughout the play, but ones the comrades passed to action, she condemns it using extremely derogatory words to describe them and their actions in a conversation with thami:

Isabel: Oh? Which one don't you like? Murder ? What do you want me to call it . . . "an unrest-related incident"? If you are going to call him an informer, then I am going to call his death murder!

Thami: It was an act of self-defense.

Isabel: By whom?

Thami: The People.

Isabel (Almost speechless with outrage): What? A mad mob attacks one unarmed defenseless man and you want me to call it-(ibid:73).

The usage of the words such as murder and mob may represent the propaganda that the hegemonic government used to launch in order to discredit the movement for emancipation. In the other hand, Thami employing an expression such as he people is very symbolic as it gives legitimacy to the actions the comrades did. Moreover, the word comrades represent the common cause of the South African subaltern group and their complicity as one people.

This popular organization that the comrades established is presented by Fugard with high value, it appears to be very sacred in the eyes of its members to an extent that nearly equals a real constitution, so this gives a valuable reflection on the notion on their devotion

and conviction about their cause, one of the most pertinent examples of strictness and sacredness of the comrades' consensus would be when Isabel asks Thami to get their relationship further to a real friendship:

Oh... I mean, you know, like anytime. Next week!(Pause) I'm not talking about the competition Thami. I accept that it's dead. I think it's a pity . . . but so what. I'm talking now about you and me just as friends (ibid.,55)

she adds:“and of course that is such a big crime!”(ibid.,56) she refers with irony to the supposed prohibition of interracial contact, Thami replies:

In the eyes of the location. yes! My world is also changing Isabel. I'm breaking the boycott by being here. The Comrades don't want any mixing with whites. They have ordered that contact must be kept at a minimum (ibid.)

she then asks him about what does these rules represent for him saying:“and you go along with that.”(ibid.) he instantly confirms his agreement with these instructions by saying: “ Yes. I go along happily with that!!”(ibid.). this show the importance of the mutual agreement between the comrades and how their cause represent a significant aspect in their lives. In fact, their boycotting may reflect how the elite in South Africa conducted actions of resistance in the detriment of their own lives considering the fact that the South African authorities reserved harsh punishment and persecution for any act of rebellion during Apartheid.

c) Morris as a Hero in Fugard's Blood Knot

Although Athol Fugard does not provide an explicit representation of rebellion and resistance in *Blood Knot* as it is the case in *My children! My Africa!* The characters' personalities tend to draw attention to the ideal of emancipation and resistance throughout the play. This not uncommon in Fugard's plays since he is committed to defend and to give high value to the subaltern's conviction and rebellion.

Morris who is one of the two lead characters represents the notion of heroism in a tremendous way; his journey, his vision of the black community's situation and his

relationship with his brother reflect the ideal of a conscious and a just man who feels and understands the meaning freedom, and who is aware of the importance of leaving with dignity and having the same rights with any other human being despite of the eventual difference in color and ethnicity.

Morris's journey before returning to his brother may be meant by Fugard to explore the two different worlds and to draw attention on how a man like Morris lived this experience among the white society and how does he view the different aspects of their life considering the fact that he is acquainted to the black life model. When he and Zachariah had a conversation about Zach's pen pan it was clear that Morris has a high sense of observation and is fully aware of the different aspects of segregation:

Morris: Miss Ethel Lange to you!

Zachariah: I looked. Now what!

Morris: Can't you see, man! Ethel Lange is a white woman! (Pause. They look at each other in silence.)

Zachariah: (slowly) You mean that this Ethel . . . here . . .

Morris: Is a white woman!

Zachariah: How do you know?

Morris: Oh for God's sake, Zack, use your eyes. Anyway, that paper you bought was white. There's no news about our sort.

Zachariah: (studying the photo) Hey—you're right,

Morris: You're damn well right. And this white woman has written to me, a hot-not, a swartgat. This white woman thinks I'm a white

man. That I like! (ZACHARIAH bursts into laughter. MORRIS) jumps forward and snatches the photograph out of his hand.)(Fugard,1964:.35-36).

Morris as a man who has been around white people before definitely knows how the white citizens view the black ones, the fact that he referred to him and his brother saying "our sort" reflects his consciousness about the truth of the Eurocentric ideology and how he identifies as member of the subordinate group.

Further in the play, Morris explains to Zach the awful prejudice that the whites carry and how they are ruthless especially when it is about a black person after Zach assumes that there is nothing wrong with dating a white women:

Morris: What have you thought, Zach! That's the crime. I seem to remember somebody saying: "I like the thought of this little white girl." And what about your dreams Zach? They've kept me awake these past few nights. I've heard them mumbling and moaning away in the darkness. They'll hear them quick enough. When they get their hands on a dark-born boy playing with a white idea, you think they don't find out what he's been dreaming at night? They got ways and means, Zach. Mean ways. Like confinement, in a cell, on bread and water, for days without end. They got time. All they need for evidence is a man's dreams(ibid:53)

Morris seems to have a great experience to know the wicked ways that the white authorities apply on the subordinate blacks; he describes them with such a hard language which shows his conviction and condemnation of this injustice, he seems also very worried about his brother's safety being black man in country where it is almost a crime to be born so.

Moreover, Morris's compassion towards his brother is one of the most important ideas that Fugard put forward repeatedly in the play, he feels sorry that his brother's skin makes him a target of the harshness of the white class, this may be done by Fugard in purpose to make the white people realize their whole system is a pure injustice. This compassion is shown through the Morris's devotion to take care of his brother after coming back from work, a work which symbolizes the inhuman exploitation of the black citizens, no wonder that Fugard introduces the play with Morris heating some water and putting some salt in it for his brother's feet that appear to be in a disastrous condition after coming back from work (ibid:9), Zachariah then says to Morris:"not as hot as last night, hey?"(ibid:10) this draws attention that it is not an exception that Morris prepares a basin of hot water for his brother but it is his daily mission to take care of him. The following conversation reflects Morris's compassion and how he feels about his dark-skinned brother:

Zachariah: Ja. That's what I think it is. My inhumanity from him: "Go to the gate or go to hell." What do they think I am?

Morris: What about me?

Zachariah: (anger) Okay. What do you think I am?

Morris.: No, Zach! Good heavens! You got it all wrong. What do they think I am, when they think what you are . Yes. I'm on your side, they're on theirs. I couldn't be living here and not be on yours, could I, Zach? (MORRIS is helping ZACHARIAH off with his coat. When ZACHARIAH is not looking, he smells it.) (ibid:13).

Here it is very symbolic that Morris uses the expression "what do you think I am?" instead of "who", it shows that Morris considers the white community as heartless beings devoid of human soul treating black people with no empathy, he also emphasizes that he and his brother are in one side against the whites who represent an eventual enemy.

In terms of internal state, Morris represents well the notion of optimism, he is full of hope and determination and this could symbolize hope for emancipation for black people, he constantly encourages Zachariah to establish plans for the future in order to live with dignity far from the hostile environment infested with racism and the extremism of the white Eurocentric community, for instance when he suggest the idea of leaving the one room shack for a better future:

I been thinking, Zach. It's time we started making some definite plans. I mean . . . we've agreed on the main idea. The think now is to find the right place, (pause) Zach? (pause) We have agreed, haven't we? (ibid:16).

He adds:

I want to show you something. You want to know what it is? A map of Africa. Now, this is the point, Zach. Look there . . . and there . . . and down here . . . Do you see? Blank. Large, blank spaces. Not a town, not a road, not even those thin little red lines. And, notice, they're green. That means grass. I reckon we should be able to get a few acres in one of these blank spaces for next to nothing, Zach. (ZACHARIAH, bored, goes to the window and looks out.) You listening to me, Zach? (ibid:16-17).

After Zachariah shows his disinterest, Morris emphasizes a significant issue; he insinuates that is not the norm to live in a one room shack arguing that their living condition is

miserable, he also draws attention to how the white community is making their life impossible:

This is not just talk, you know. It's serious. One fine day, you wait and see . . . We're going to pack our thing in something and get to hell and gone out of here. You say I don't want to go out? My reply is I do, but I want to get right out. You think I like it here more than you? You should have been here this afternoon, Zach. The wind was blowing again. Coming this way it was, right across the lake. You should have smelt it, man. I'm telling you that water has gone bad. Really rotten! And what about the factories there on the other side? Hey? Lavatories all around us? They've left no room for a man to breathe (ibid:17).

One of the major elements in the play, is the notion of Morris's light-skin, the whole play revolves around the impact that color tone has in a country where the number one criterion of a person's value. Morris could have kept away from his dark-skinned brother and take the tremendous advantage of the aspect of his skin color but he chose to live with him ignoring the white privilege that his color provides him with.

The possibility of having the choice to be on the hegemonic side makes Morris's position very symbolic, he chose to avoid indifference and to be on the subordinate side even if it may be a great disadvantage for his life; this reflects his sense of justice and equality. This notion of denouncing while having the choice not to be on the subordinate side is put forward by Gramsci in his article entitled *La Città Futura* ('the future city'), he writes:

I also hate the indifferent because of that: because their whimpering of eternally innocent ones annoys me. I make each one liable: how they have tackled with the task that life has given and gives them every day, what have they done, and especially, what they have not done. And I feel I have the right to be inexorable and not squander my compassion, of not sharing my tears with them (Gramsci,1927:3).

Gramsci here focuses on the fact that one does not need to be the target of oppression in order for him to deny it, he also says: "indifferences the deadweight of history, the indifference operates with great power on history" (ibid.); that is to say that it has major impact on maintaining oppression and on reinforcing it.

Morris constantly reassures Zachariah about them being the same targeted entity, although in some passages he explains to Thami that he is not as discriminated as him, for instance when he argues about why the supposed pen pal was not for Thami: “You’re damn well right. And this A white woman has written to me, a hot-not, a swartgat. a This white woman thinks I’m a white man. That I like!”(Fugard,1964:.36), but for him it is only a matter of perception, the society may perceive him as white but he identifies himself as a member of the subordinate blacks, at the end of the play ,when he and Zachariah seem to be carried away with the role playing and Zachariah starts doubting about his relation with Morris ,the latter replies:“ No. You see, we’re tied together. Zach. It’s what they call the blood knot . . . the bond between brothers.”(ibid:85), the fact that Fugard reserves this as a final line is very significant, it is a whole reflection on the connection that should be sustained between subalterns, Morris makes his brother understand that he represent everything for him, he is a part of his word , if Zachariah’s life is miserable being a black under a white supremacist hierarchy then he is on his side.

d) Zachariah and the Mother as Collective Heroes in Blood Knot

Fugard in his *Blood Knot* provides an ambiguous depiction of the relation between Zachariah and his mother, she does not concretely take part in the dialogue, however, we can assess through the flash backs of Morris and Zachariah that she is a positive prototype of the south African subaltern during the Apartheid era, and her common features with Zachariah are very significant in reflecting the subaltern’s struggle.

The mother died when Zachariah and Morris were young, in scene one, Morris Recalls her saying:

She died and we were young. That’s the trouble with “Mother.” You know Zach. We never said it enough. {He tries it.} Mother. Mother! Yes. Just a touch of sadness in it, and maybe a grey dress on Sundays, and soapsuds on brown hands(Fugard,1964:24).

he seems to recall her with nostalgia ,throughout the play he tends to remember her with such a vision that could be characterized with a lack of subjectivity unlike Zachariah who recalls all the misery that she went through as it could be assessed in one of the two brothers' conversation:

Morris. No, Zach. I meant the top. I can't remember that top. And what about her, Zach? There's a memory for you. I tried it out the other day. Mother, I said, Mother! A sadness, I thought.

Zachariah. Ja.

Morris. Just a touch of sadness.

Zachariah. A soft touch with sadness.

Morris. And soapsuds on brown hands.

Zachariah. And sore feet. {Pause. MORRIS looks at ZACHARIAH.}

Morris. What do you mean?

Zachariah. There was her feet (ibid:43).

the first thing that Zachariah mentions about her is her feet's condition since it is the same problem that he faces every day at work, this memory seems to represent a lot for him , they continue their conversation:

Morris. Who had feet?

Zachariah. Mother, man.

Morris. I don't remember her feet, Zach.

Zachariah. {serenely confident} There was her feet, man. The toes were crooked, the nails skewd and there was pain. They didn't fit the shoes.

Morris, {growing agitation} Zach, are you sure that wasn't somebody else?

Zachariah. It was mother's feet. She let me feel the hardness and then pruned them down with a razor blade (ibid)

here Zachariah explains how his mother used to let him feel her feet's condition and it may be in the aim of make him conscious of what to expect in the future as dark-skinned under the segregation. Finally, Zach and his mother may represent the subaltern's struggle as they share

the same typical notion which is dark-skin, this demonstrates the fact that they both kept struggling despite the harshness of life under the Apartheid oppressive system.

Our analysis of the subaltern's resistance and heroism in Fugard's *My children! My Africa!* and *Blood Knot* is evidence of the playwright's commitment to the defense of Black South Africans. He does not only depict them as victimized subalterns, he instead shows their potential of resistance as long as their education and identity are conserved.

V. *Conclusion*

This research paper has allowed us to explore the subaltern's position as victim and hero in South African playwright Athol Fugard's *My children! My Africa!* (1989) and *Blood Knot* (1961).

As many of the committed playwrights, Fugard does not deceive in illustrating the truth as he is devoted to defend the subordinate groups and to give a realistic and fair historical reality. In fact, our analysis of characters and the setting shows the playwright's engagement to defend the South African subalterns.

After dealing with the two suggested plays relying on the selected theoretical framework, we have come to consider that both plays are pertinent representations of the subaltern's position under the oppressive South African system during Apartheid. As the main purpose is subaltern's position, we come to the conclusion that Fugard's representation of black South Africans fits the ambivalent perspective which consists of the position of the subaltern as victim and hero.

In order to explain this notion of victim and hero in both plays, we have first undertaken the victim notion. We have conducted an analysis of the characters' personalities, vision and actions along with an analysis of the setting as presented by Fugard to reinforce the idea that the black characters are depicted and portrayed as victims of extreme racism and segregation. In the second part, we have discussed different notions of heroism which are mainly popular, individual and collective heroism through analyzing the ideals and actions of the black characters and by drawing attention to their consciousness about their.

Through our work, we hope that we have conducted the research in a proper way that gives a clear representation of the subaltern's position during the apartheid, and provide relevant perspectives for eventual future research.

VI. *Selected bibliography*

Primary sources

- Fugard, A. (1964) 'Blood Knot'. New York: Samuel French, INC.
- Fugard, A. (1990) 'My Children! My Africa!' London: Faber and Faber limited.

Secondary sources

- Al- Qarni, S. M. (2015) 'Manichean and Dichotomous Opposites in Athol Fugard's Blood Knot' [Master dissertation] , Abha (KSA): King Khalid University. pp.1-12. Available from:
<https://www.academypublication.com/issues2/jltr/vol06/06/09.pdf> [accessed 19 June 2022].
- Gramsci, A. (1999) 'Americanism And Fordism', in Hoar, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks* , 2nd ed, London: ElecBook, pp. 561-563.
- Gramsci, A. (1999) 'Analysis Of Situations. Relation Of Force', in Hoar, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks* , 2nd ed, London: ElecBook, pp.397-536.
- Gramsci, A. (1999) 'History Of Subaltern Classes': Methodological Criteria', in Hoar, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks* , 2nd ed, London: ElecBook, pp. 202-207.

- Gramsci, A.(1999) ‘Observations On Certain Aspects Of The Structure Of Political Parties In Periods Of Organic Crisis’, in Hoar, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks* , 2nd ed, London: ElecBook, pp. 450-462.
- Gramsci, A.(1999) ‘Notes On Italian History’, in Hoar, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks* , 2nd ed, London: ElecBook, pp. 191-201.
- Gramsci, A.(1999) ‘Some Preliminary Points Of Reference’, in Hoar, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks* , 2nd ed, London: ElecBook, pp.626-656.
- Gramsci, A.(1999) ‘The State’, in Hoar, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks* , 2nd ed, London: ElecBook, pp.524-536.
- Kotkin, A. (2021) ‘Fugard’s My children! My Africa! at WSG still speaks urgently, *Washington Stage Guide*, pp.3-12, [online], 15 November 2021. Available from: <https://dctheaterarts.org/2021/11/15/fugards-my-children-my-africa-at-wsg-still-speaks-urgently/> [accessed 3 July 2022].
- Njoki, M.M. and Ogogo, C. (2014) ‘A Critical Analysis of Athol Fugard’s Vision in Four Selected Plays’ , *Journal of Education and Social Research*, pp63-68.[online],January2014.Availablefrom: https://www.academia.edu/en/9145060/A_Critical_Analysis_of_Athol_F

ugards Social Vision in Four Selected Plays [accessed 06 June 2022].

- Tiso, G. (2013) 'I hate the indifference', *Overland* [online] , 13th March 2013. Available from: <https://overland.org.au/2013/03/i-hate-the-indifferent/> [accessed 19 September 2022].
- Visser, N. (1993) 'Drama and Politics in a state of Emergency: Athol Fugard's *My Children! My Africa!*', *Twentieth Century literature* [online] , pp. 486-502. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/441583> [accessed 23 June 2022].