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Title

***'SUBALTERNITY' and 'RESISTANCE' in Athol Fugard's Sizwe
Bansi is Dead (1972) and The Island (1973)***

Presented by:

-Linda BENNAMANE

- Celena BOUDJAOU

Supervised by:

- Dr. LARABI Sabéha

Board of Examiners:

Chair: Ms. BENSABI Hassiba, M.A.A, Department of English, U.M.M.TO.

Supervisor: Dr. LARABI Sabéha, M.C.B, Department of English, U.M.M.TO.

Examiner: Ms. ABDELLI Fatima, M.A.A, Department of English, U.M.M.TO.

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To our families, friends, and relatives.

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Abstract:

*The present dissertation discusses the issue of ‘Subalternity’ and ‘Resistance’ in South Afrikaner playwright Athol Fugard’s **Sizwe Bansi is Dead** (1972) and **The Island** (1973). Relying on the Italian Marxist and theorist Antonio Gramsci’s concepts of Subalternity and Resistance from his **Prison Notebooks** (1948). Our dissertation investigates the ways into which this committed white playwright depicts the Black South Africans not only as victims of the discriminatory system of the Apartheid, but also as resistant to it. The first chapter discusses Subalternity through identity and Passbook in the first play. It shows the dehumanizing implications of the oppressors against the Blacks. Then we have demonstrated the injustice applied on the prisoners and the brutality they have faced in the prison of the Island in the second play. The second chapter handles the issue of the main characters’ act of resistance through death in **Sizwe Bansi is Dead**, and in **The Island** the characters portray their resistance through brotherhood by showing their solidarity and through art by making reference to **Antigone**. One of the main findings of this piece of research concerns Fugard’s denunciation of the Apartheid segregationist system and his voicing of the Black South African’s agency for resistance.*

Key words: *Apartheid, Subalternity, Resistance, Identity, Passbook, opposition, Art, Brotherhood.*

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I. Introduction:

Apartheid or Apartness in the language of Afrikaans was a racial segregationist system under the all-white government. This system was based on a series of laws and policies to separate racial groups physically and alienate them socially and politically. Blacks were excluded from societies and forced to live in isolated areas from whites. In addition, they were prohibited from all their rights for example, they were banned to make mixed races or in other words to marry other races than blacks. Moreover, they did not have the right to vote or have a political space in public, even education was segregated at that period. In 1953 for example Bantu Education Act did not aim to provide a variety of knowledge to different racial groups. Instead, it was a tool of racial segregation, and discrimination that sought to reinforce the Apartheid system in South Africa. However, blacks had to deal with their own health taxes and education prices, also the use of the mother tongue for blacks in schools was not an advantage for them because they had a lack of scientific concepts and orthography. This was the plan of the Apartheid system to subjugate the blacks and render them inferior economically, politically and socially through education.

Further in the history of South Africa, white Afrikaners did not allow blacks from the use of public facilities such as restaurants, cinemas and sport facilities. Additionally, during the Apartheid era the whites had imposed the law of the 'Passbook', as a fundamental document that contains personal information, including details about employment. Therefore, it is a segregationist tool which reinforces the discrimination and racism of the oppressors. Indeed, the whites required it to control and manipulate the oppressed black population, and exclude them from all social and political activities.

By the 1980's with all the banning of the political organization, resistance movements grew stronger with the birth of the (ANC) The African National Congress, led by Nelson

Mandela. The aim of this Association is to obtain the freedom of black people in a political way, against the segregation of the Apartheid regime. But soon, most of the members of these movements had been captured in Robben Island prison in South Africa, among them Nelson Mandela.

In literature, committed black and white South African novelists and playwrights as Mandela himself, Steve Biko and Athol Fugard produced literature of resistance to show their denunciation of the Apartheid segregationist laws and practices.

In the case of the playwright Athol Fugard, his being white Afrikaner did not prevent him from commitment not only to the depiction of the state of Subalternity of the black South African but also to the voicing of the resistance of the oppressed blacks through a variety of ways. It is therefore the task of our study to discuss Athol Fugard's depiction of the issues of 'Subalternity' and 'Resistance' in two of his masterpieces namely *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973).

a) Review of the literature:

Athol Fugard's theatrical production has been considered as a concrete example of committed literature that denounces the Apartheid regime in South Africa. His plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973) received considerable critical attention from different perspectives.

To start with, Obiora Eke and Alloy Nnamdi Obika, in their article entitled "*Apartheid Laws and the Oppressed in South Africa, Read Fugard's Sizwe Bansi is Dead (2018) from the Historical and Socio-political Perspectives*". Their article discusses the socio-political aspects and the effects of the Apartheid laws on South Africans, as depicted by Fugard's plays mainly Sizwe the protagonist in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*. Both critics assert that blacks resisted to the racial discrimination, social injustice, and submission to the white man's laws in their

fatherland. The authors claim: “The majority of the blacks lived under the oppressive Apartheid regime, designed, manipulated, and controlled by the white minority” (Obiora & Aloy,2018, p.5). Both critics add that despite the violence, exploitation, and exile, blacks as depicted by Fugard are marginalized and alienated because of their identity. They take the case of Sizwe's struggle for a job, his obligations towards his family, and the importance of having a Passbook as prior things to find a job in Port Elizabeth (Obiora & Aloy,2018, p10). They argue:

Individualism becomes the after effect of social isolation in South Africa because of their predicament. This is the height of social discrimination on the individuals in their own land. In addition, racial discrimination has fostered kind of psychological imprisonment of the oppressed in this society (Obiora & Aloy, 2018, p07).

With reference to their analysis of Fugard's play, the two critics argue that Apartheid had a huge impact on black South Africans due to the trauma and lack of freedom caused by the whites.

Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972) has also been criticized from a social and psychological dimension. The perspective is Chitra Jayathilake's, in her article ***“Political Killings in the Contemporary World: Sizwe Bansi is Dead through Psychological Lenses (2018)”***. Through her deep study of the play, Jayathilake develops the idea of political killings due to segregation and racism in the contemporary world of South Africa. By ‘bio political’ killings she means the blacks who are oppressed and segregated in their own land by the government and the Apartheid policies (Jayathilake, 2018, p.2). Therefore, she contends that: “Apartheid rules are easy way of exterminating the oppressed by concentrating them” (Jayathilake,2018, p.6). Moreover, the same critic argues that political killings stand for the indirect death, or psychological rather than the physical one (Jayathilake,2018, p.02). The critic illustrates with Sizwe's adoption of the dead Robert Zwelinzima's identity, seeking for his family's survival by finding a job, then by Styles' struggles in the Ford factory for six years before opening his photography studio under the whites' authority. Jayathilake believes that: “This is a stark

depiction of racial prejudices and pejorative attitudes experienced by black individuals both in America and South Africa, this discriminatory and prejudiced identification implies psychological persecution experienced by black workers” (Jayathilake,2018, p.03).

Other critics of Fugard’s theatrical production handled his play *The Island* (1973). To start with, Staff Reporter’s article entitled “*Finding Freedom in Captivity*” (1995) is a study of Fugard’s play *The Island* (1973) from the socio-historical perspective. This article discusses the struggle and the hard life of the South African prisoners during the Apartheid era in the same prison where Mandela was jailed that is Robben Island. The critic says that the main protagonists, John and Winston fight for their liberty is symbolical of Fugard’s inclusion of *Antigone* as a reflection to the Greek mythology (Reporter, 1995). Antigone’s rebellion to Creon’s decision is depicted in South Africans' resistance to Apartheid and white authority. As Reporter asserts: “The production of Antigone by the prisoners is a powerful statement about the redemptive and liberty role that theatre can play in a society subject to intense repression and confinement.” (Reporter, 1995). Moreover, from a political perspective, within “the prison context” the depiction of social reality by the two African actors John Kani and Winston Ntshona, as claimed by the critic: “two angry bulls in a corral representing for the world the power of black resistance to apartheid.” The same critic adds that symbolism also is used by Fugard as a means to convey and transmit the hardness of the situation, and make people aware of its injustice (Reporter,1995).

Last but not least, another article entitled “*Athol Fugard's The Island (2022)*” is produced by David Willers. Willers’ perspective in this article varies from theatrical, cultural, to political. His critique conducts Fugard's position against Apartheid by adapting *Antigone's* play to an African setting, as asserted by Willers:

Fugard had long had it in mind to draw on Antigone and reports that Nelson Mandela had performed it in Robben Island. The

difficulty, though, was that it was almost impossible in those 1973 days of censorship, to write or perform anything that referred even indirectly to prison life in South Africa (David, 2022, p.05).

Furthermore, the critic adds that *Antigone* is used as a classic to enhance Fugard's use of morality in his play, and the dilemma between the consciousness and the individuals. Willers mentions that "*The Island* is a play charged with moral meaning. [...]The moral imperatives of life in the face of death, rather than any especially socio-political concern" (David, 2022, p.10). Additionally, the critic believes that through his theater which develops his real position, Fugard advocates humanism by seeking to voice the Blacks' quest for their liberty as prisoners, as he asserts: "This is what makes Fugard an optimist about the human condition, a believer in the triumph of the human spirit, ultimately, even the characters in his township plays are so often portrayed as stunned and barely surviving witnesses." (David, 2022, p.10). He adds: "After all, it was theatre, with its ability to articulate ideas of freedom even in the most unlikely settings, such as Robben Island, which had the most powerful impact on the public imagination." (David, 2022, p.12).

b) Issue and Working Hypothesis:

It is clear from our review of the literature that both Fugard and his plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973) have received considerable critical attention. While some of the criticism handled both plays either from the psychological or literary perspectives, other critics studied each play apart from other angles. However, the criticism reviewed remains limited in perspective as it does not deal with the issue of Subalternity in both works. It remains therefore our task to undertake this piece of research as to investigate Athol Fugard's depiction of the issues of 'Subalternity' and 'Resistance' in both *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*. To do so we have formulated the following Working Hypothesis.

First, and as concerns the playwright, the main hypothesis centers on the commitment of a white Afrikaner playwright to the denunciation of the Apartheid. So what then has pushed

Fugard to show not only the state of Subalternity of the black South Africans, but also to side with them and depict them as resistant and intelligent with agency to change their state.

Second to what extent is Gramsci's Marxist theory on Subalternity relevant to Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*?

The last but not least hypothesis concerns Fugard's characters' resistance. Given the harshness of the Apartheid system, what then are the means of resistance Fugard endows his black protagonists with to overthrow and change their state of subalternity? The answers to these Working hypotheses and the discussion of the issue under study will be in both the results and discussion sections of our work.

c) **Methodological Outline:**

Our research is based on using the IMRAD outline format. our work is divided into five sections. The first section is devoted to the general introduction where we presented the general ideas of our dissertation, and the two works that we will discuss. In the review of the literature, we cited some previous literary critics gathered around the two plays. Then we have raised our issue to complete the gap by our own study. The second section deals with the Method and Materials, where we intended to introduce the theory of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's 'Subalternity' and 'Resistance'. Coming to the Materials part, we are going to present the biography of Athol Fugard and a brief synopsis of both plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972)* and *The Island (1973)*. The third section focuses on the results, where we present all our findings through the research. The fourth section exhibits the discussion that contains two chapters in relation to Fugard's plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972)* and *The Island (1973)*. The first chapter will show how the subaltern were discriminated and dehumanized. This subaltern groups are victims of the white authorities, with reference to Gramsci's theory of 'Subalternity' and the second one explains the resistance of the Black South Africans with reference to Gramsci's theory of 'Resistance'. The last section of our study will be devoted to the general conclusion,

which is a summary of the most important points in the whole project and a restatement of our main findings.

II. Methods and Materials:

1)Method:

This section of our dissertation handles the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci's theory as he develops it in his *Prison Notebook* (1948). We intend to borrow only those concepts of relevance to our work namely "**Subalternity**" and "**Resistance**".

Antonio Gramsci is an Italian Marxist philosopher, theorist and writer, a political activist and founder of the Italian Communist Party. This main struggle was for the defense of the subaltern classes and his opposition against the ruling class during the Fascist politics in Italy. shows his stand and his resistance, his production contains 2840 pages that have been interpreted after his death as Gramsci's *Prison Notebook (1948)*.

a)- The concept of Subalternity:

Antonio Gramsci's concept of '**Subalternity**' concerns subaltern groups, non-hegemonic groups or classes who are also called by Gramsci "subordinate groups". He explains that subaltern groups are unified, and are elements of civil society. Their unity can only occur if they achieve power within the state, as Gramsci's definition says:

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, p. 202).

According to Gramsci, the term '**subalternity**' is applied to those groups in society lacking autonomous political power (Smith, 2010, p. 39). Indeed, Gramsci did not focus on the state in the sense of the term, it is just the power of one group that organize themselves to meet their common interest. He argues:

The birth of new parties of the dominant groups, intended to conserve the assent of the subaltern groups and to maintain control over them; the formations which the subaltern groups themselves produce, in order

to press claims of a limited and partial character". (Gramsci,1999, p. 202).

Gramsci adds that the subaltern has to extend the consent for opposing classes and subaltern classes to consent to their authority, as he says: "Among the subaltern groups, one will exercise or tend to exercise a certain hegemony through the mediation of a party; this must be established by studying the development of all other parties too" (Gramsci,1999, p. 203). Antonio Gramsci was interested in the questions of race, classes, history, political and social theory. His analysis of subaltern groups in this sense is made through a methodological criterion. In fact, Gramsci highlights the experience of the subaltern class and their struggles in the society. He also says:

Therefore, the history of the parties of the subaltern groups is very complex too. It must include all the repercussions of party activity, throughout the area of the subaltern groups themselves taken globally, and also upon the attitudes of the dominant group; it must include as well the repercussions of the far more effective actions of the dominant groups upon the subaltern groups and their parties (Gramsci,1999, p.203).

In addition, Gramsci notices that this class of people are literally excluded and marginalized from the society. Therefore, Gramsci claims that the subaltern groups should be observed in order to integrate themselves to the society. Indeed, to empower themselves subaltern groups must have a critical conception of their activity and their consciousness are ways to overcome their position of subordinations as he mentions:

Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up: only "permanent" victory breaks their subordination, and that not immediately. In reality, even when they appear triumphant, the subaltern groups are merely anxious to defend themselves (Gramsci,1999, p. 207).

b)-The concept of Resistance:

The second concept of relevance to our work is Gramsci's concept of '**Resistance**'. Antonio Gramsci sees Resistance as a form of opposition to oppressive power structure that exist within society. He defines it as follows: "designates an historical phase in which a given

group moves beyond a position of corporate existence and defense of its economic position and aspires to a position of leadership in the political and social arena” (Gramsci,1999, p.20).

According to Gramsci, the concept of ‘**Resistance**’ is a fundamental part of the struggle for social change, as it challenges the dominating ideology of the ruling class. He claims:

The reformists should seek to engage the latter that is in forms of common action; only thus could they win a majority in the working class-which has a fundamental interest in unity, whether in defensive or offensive action (Gramsci, 1999, p.63).

Moreover, Gramsci’s concept of ‘**Resistance**’ focuses on both individual and collective action to oppose and challenge the oppressive power. His writing is based on the empowerment of the subaltern class by giving them the right to revolt and defend their position in the society.

2)Materials:

a) Biography of Athol Fugard:

In this dissertation, the interest is on Athol Fugard as an ideal of the 'Anti-Apartheid'. Fugard (1932-2013), raised in Karoo village, Cape province, South Africa was an Afrikaner playwright, director, actor, and the novelist. He was committed to denounce and overthrow the institutionalized system of the Apartheid. His works are best known for the exploration of the political and social realities of Apartheid in South Africa through artistic and theatrical productions. His theatre was ‘Epic’ following the tradition of Brecht: *Master Harold and The Boys* (1982), *The Road to Mecca* (1984), and his reputation includes two plays in collaboration with the South African actors John Kani and Winston Ntshona, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972), and *The Island* (1973). Because his plays are committed to attack the Apartheid system, Fugard was repressed by the Afrikaner government and his literature was forbidden in South Africa. His passport was banned for five years and his play *The Blood Knot* (1961) was censored. The two plays under study *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island* were written in the same period but depicted the Apartheid in different manners.

b) Synopsis of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972):

Sizwe Bansi is Dead, is a political and anti-Apartheid play. It was written by Fugard in collaboration with the two African actors John Kani and Winston Ntshona. It is a one act play performed on October, 8th 1972 at the space, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth. It shows and portrays the struggle for identity, racial discrimination, and mistreatment of native blacks in South Africa.

The opening scene starts at Styles photography studio set in Port Elizabeth, while Styles reads the headlines of a newspaper. Styles addresses the audience at the same time and tells them about his past life when he was working in the Ford company, and the visit of Mr. Ford. However, the black workers submitted the discrimination by the white supremacy. Through this flashback, Fugard shows the miserable situation of black South Africans mainly and workers in particular. Styles then decides to quit the factory and manages his own business which is a photography studio. Even though he suffers, but he does not give up his dream.

Sizwe, another black South African who is obliged to move from King William Town to New Brighton, Port Elizabeth to look for a job, but unfortunately because of the bad conditions he faces many troubles since his '**Passbook**' is not valid. This is why the white administration orders him to go back to his home town. However, Sizwe decides to confront this problem and asks for Zola's help. Meanwhile Zola sends him to his friend Buntu, all along the conversation between him and Sizwe, he explains his hard situation. The solution Buntu finds is to exchange his identity with that of a dead man named Robert Zwelinzima. At the beginning Sizwe refuses but he then accepts because of his desperate situation and his need for a job. This pushes Sizwe to abandon his real identity and assume the identity of 'Robert Zwelinzima', through his use of Zwelinzima's Passbook. Styles as a professional photographer helped Sizwe to replace Robert Zwelinzima's picture with Sizwe's picture.

c) Synopsis of *The Island* (1973):

The Island is a play written by Athol Fugard, Kani and Winston Ntshona. This play is set in South Afrikaner prison named Robben Island where both men John and Winston are jailed in Robben Island. The play begins with the daily work of John and Winston while they break rocks under the heat of the sun exhausted with hard work. The two men have a performance to make about Sophocles' play *Antigone*, they daily repeat their roles in their dark cell.

Winston plays the role of the female Antigone who defies the laws of state to bury her brother, and John performs the King Creon who is attached to his throne and leadership. The reason why Fugard integrates this Greek ancient play is because both men and *Antigone* play have similar points, for example Winston and John want freedom from the racial system, and they want to have a normal life without criticism about their race and skin color, Antigone wants liberation for her brother from the malcontent and unfair king Creon. In this stage the problem of the individual versus state is shown because the two men are alone against the Apartheid system. In their dark cell, John and Winston discuss about their future plans once they are set free. It is their only place to make dreams and be free to express their feelings and needs. They have a slight hope to hold on until they are informed that Winston's play has been prolonged and they will not be able to go out from jail together but rather separately, and they will not be able to realize their dreams together. The play ends with the image of John being forced to leave his friend behind him alone.

III. Results:

This piece of research discussed the subaltern's position as victim and hero in Athol Fugard's plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973). To do so, we relied on the theory developed by the Italian Marxist, theorist Antonio Gramsci on 'Subalternity' and 'Resistance'.

The first finding concerns the commitment of Athol Fugard to denounce the Apartheid system. In order to expose the realities of this system, he uses a carefully chosen historical background. For instance, the historical facts of the "Passbook" in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) as a racist document, that reduces the black South Africans to subalterns in their quest for job. In which they find themselves victims by the Apartheid practitioners. We came to the result as well, that Fugard uses the character of Styles to highlight his commitment to depict the resistance. He uses the setting of Robben Island in *The Island* (1973) as a symbol of repression, in which the two politicians John and Winston are jailed. The motivations behind Fugard's depiction of the state of subalternity of the black South Africans, reveal a deliberate intention to not only showcase their living conditions, but also to align with them and depict them as resilient, intelligent and possessing the agency to transform their circumstances, by defending themselves, and fighting against the white supremacy.

The second result concerns Gramsci's Marxist theory of Subalternity and its relevance in both *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*. This theory concerns the subaltern groups or classes who are unified elements of civil society. By examining the relevance of the theory to Fugard's works, we found that, there is a strong relation between the plays and Gramsci's theory, as it focuses on the oppressed and discriminated groups in society. It appears to resonate with Fugard's depiction of black South Africans and their subjugation during the Apartheid era. As for *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, the relevance of the theory is in the oppression faced by the black

South Africans characters. For instance, the conversation that happened between Buntu and Sizwe on the “Passbook”, in which he said that it is a tool, used by the whites to belittle the black dignity. In *The Island* on the other hand, the relevance of the theory explains the oppression that the political prisoners John and Winston undergo. Being a prisoner himself, Gramsci as Fugard advocates for supporting the oppressed people like the Black South Africans, and denouncing the controlling class that impose discrimination over subalterns.

The third finding concerns both plays characters’ resistance of being victims of the Apartheid system. Their overthrowing and changing their state of subalternity reveal that they display various forms of resistance against their oppressive circumstances. By highlighting Fugard’s depiction of these characters in both the plays, we came to the result that their struggle against discrimination and injustice from the Apartheid illustrates the multi-faced nature of resistance within the context of the Apartheid period. In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* the character of Styles demonstrates a form of subtle resistance through his storytelling and humor. In *The Island*, the characters of John and Winston employ physical and emotional resistance through their performance of *Antigone*, in which we came to the result that by performing it, the playwright claims that it is the great example of social protest against the Apartheid unjust rules. He assimilates the character of Antigone to South Africa setting, by comparing the injustice of Hodoshe and King Creon. The resistance is portrayed as well in their pursuit of self-expression. Sizwe’s decision of adopting the identity of the dead Robert, since it serves as a mean to improve his situation and escape the rules imposed by the white authority. John and Winston’s resistance through art, which according to Fugard is a powerful mean of resistance to stand against subalternity.

The last important finding concerns Fugard’s theatre. His choice of Robben Island and Port Elizabeth as settings for his plays make his theatre popular. What we mean by this is that we can easily say that Fugard’s plays belong to Brecht’s concept of ‘**Epic theatre**’ that Bertolt

Brecht has developed as a break from the traditional drama. His ideas aimed to engage the audience intellectually and politically, creating a critical thinking and social awareness. Therefore, Fugard's theatre deals faithfully with the real events that are related to the Apartheid and shows the cruel reality of the black South African who suffer from this discriminatory system. Both *Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972)* and *The Island (1973)* are significant works in the canon South African theatre and are known for their powerful message and memorable characters, as they focus on the struggle for freedom and human dignity, this also reinforces the relevance of Antonio Gramsci's concepts of '**Subalternity**' and '**Resistance**' to our piece of research.

IV. Discussion:

In this part of our dissertation, our purpose is to highlight the subalterns' position as victims and then as resistant during the Apartheid era in South Africa, as represented by Afrikaner playwright Athol Fugard in his two committed plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island*. (1973). This section is divided into two chapters. The first chapter discusses the position of subalterns as victims of the repressive Apartheid regime. The center of interest is on Fugard's portrayal of the oppressed black South African. We will also discuss the characters and settings in both plays. Our objective is to show how Fugard uses theater to depict the social reality of South Africans. The second chapter will discuss the subaltern's resistance and their liberation. The two chapters will be undertaken with reference to Antonio Gramsci's concepts of 'Subalternity' and 'Resistance'.

Chapter One: The Subaltern as a Victim in Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973).

The main concern of this chapter is to show how the subalterns are presented by Fugard as victims of the Apartheid institutionalized system. We will show that while Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* focuses on the issue of Subalternity in the working place in Port Elizabeth through the 'Passbook', *The Island* handles Subalternity in black South African's identity as prisoners in Robben Island.

a) Sizwe as a Victim of the Passbook and Identity in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972):

In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, Fugard presents the case of the main protagonist Sizwe and emphasizes the major problem of identity concerning the black oppressed workers in Mr. Ford's industrial site. Indeed, he includes the Ford factory as a symbolic place, where the

majority of the black workers are exploited harshly with very low pays. Fugard presents the 'Passbook' as a racist document that reduces the black South Africans to subalterns in their quest for a job. Moreover, the major racist, segregationist practice that Fugard denounces in his *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* is the 'Passbook'. The Afrikaans required the passbook as the only possible means that blacks can have to have access to white working areas. It is also a tool by which they control the Blacks. This turns native South Africans to victims in their working places as Fugard says:

When the white man looked at you at the Labor Bureau what did he see? A man with dignity or bloody Passbook with an N.I. number? Isn't that a ghost? When the white man sees you walk down the street and calls out, Hey, John come here'... to you Sizwe Bansi ... isn't that a ghost? (Fugard,1972, p.38).

This passage explains clearly the discrimination that the blacks underwent during the Apartheid era. Throughout the conversation between Buntu and Sizwe, we can understand that Buntu is trying to convince him that the 'Passbook' is just a tool that the whites use to belittle the Blacks' dignity. The importance they give to this 'Passbook' has worsened the life of the black citizens and reduced them to Subalterns. Despite Sizwe's hesitation, he is tired of being mistreated since the obstacle that deprives him to get a job is having no permit that is no Passbook. Sizwe, in his letter to his wife, narrates:

After a week with Zola, I was in trouble. The headman came around, and after a lot of happenings which I will tell you when I see you, they put a stamp in my Passbook which said I must leave Port Elizabeth at once in three days' time. I was very much unhappy, Nowetu. I couldn't stay with Zola because if the headman found me there again my troubles would be even bigger. So Zola took me to a friend of his called Buntu, and asked him If I could stay with him until I decided what to do (Fugard, 1972, p.22).

In fact, this passage explores the protagonist's struggles because of the stamp the whites put in his passbook actually. Sizwe illustrates his difficult situation, through narrating the events in a letter that he sends to his wife. For the same reason, Fugard mentions Zola's name as Sizwe's friend in order to make reference to Emile Zola, the French writer, social and

political activist whose position stands to voice the miserable condition of the working class during the French revolution in the Nineteenth Century. Just like Fugard, in his novel *Germinal* (1885), Emile Zola portrays the social injustice, industrialization, and the exploitation that the working class undergo under the unjust controlling forces. He defends the exploited workers and their rights; “As a result, the working class was deprived of their economic power, and the class struggle and conflict escalated” (Jacobson, 2021). Therefore, Emile Zola in his novel voiced this working class by giving them power to resist against the injustice applied on them. “Zola was one of the most influential. In order to cry out for the justice for the proletariats, Zola writes *Germinal* which depicts the unfair hardship experienced by them in naturalistic way” (Jacobson, 2021). Consequently, in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, Fugard uses Zola’s conception of the working class and pictures it in South African background. As Fugard illustrates: “MAN. I don’t want to work on the mines. There is no money there and it’s dangerous, under the ground. Many black men get killed when the rocks fall. you can die there” (Fugard,1972, p.26). Sizwe refuses to work in the mines, because he knows the hard consequences, and that he may die there so he refuses to risk his life for something that he is sure will not help him. Indeed, Fugard uses Zola as an ally for Sizwe that will guide him in his experience. Zola’s experience in Port Elizabeth is an advantage that would serve Sizwe to find a job. Sizwe in his letter says:

As you know, when I left the railway Compound I went to stay with a friend of mine called Zola. A very good friend that, Nowetu. In fact, he was even trying to help me find some job. But that’s not easy, Nowetu, because Port Elizabeth is a big place, a very big place with lots of factories but also lots of people looking for job like me. There are so many men, Nowetu, who have left their places because they are dry and have come here to find work! (Fugard, 1972, p. 22)

In this passage, Fugard shows the gratefulness of Sizwe towards Zola’s help. Through this quotation Fugard exposes the situation of all black South Africans who immigrate to Port Elizabeth looking for a job to survive. It is true that there are many factories and places for work, but during the Apartheid era not everyone could have access to find a job easily. The

obligation to carry a 'Passbook' which is imposed to the South Africans has worsened their condition as immigrants and as oppressed victims under the system of the Apartheid.

Furthermore, Sizwe's situation becomes harder, because living without a 'Passbook' in the white area complicates his life as a black South African. Therefore, while he stays in Zola's house, he faces the injustice of the headman who drags him out. Fugard adds:

I was staying with Zola, as you know. I was very happy there. But one night...I was sleeping on the floor ...I heard some noises and when I looked up, I saw torches shining in through the window ... then there was a loud knocking on the door. When I got up Zola was there in the dark ...he was trying to whisper something. I think he was saying I must hide. So, I crawled under the table. The headman came in and looked around and found me hiding under the table... and dragged me out. (Fugard,1972, p.23-24)

The quotation above shows Zola's empathy towards Sizwe. However, his case as an illegal worker becomes delicate, because of the whites' attitude towards him. Therefore, Fugard translates the oppression which Sizwe lives, and the whites' intolerance to his presence in Port Elizabeth without a 'Passbook'. This causes him many troubles. He adds:

I just managed to grab it as they were pushing me out ... I finished dressing in the van. They drove straight to the administration office ... and then from there they drove me to the Labour Bureau. I was made to stand in the passage there, with everybody looking at me and shaking their heads like they knew I was in big trouble. Later I was taken into an office and made to stand next to the door... The white man behind the desk had my book and he also looked at me and shook his head. Just then one other white man came in with a card... (Fugard, 1972, p.24).

Furthermore, this passage explores the harsh realities of the Apartheid regime. For the same purpose, Fugard interprets the cruelty and the superiority of the Afrikaners towards the oppressed individuals. The same case as Sizwe who faces the difficulties to get a permission in his 'Passbook' so he can stay in Port Elizabeth and find a job.

Indeed, Black South African find it difficult to survive in their own country. The laws imposed by the whites make them victims of oppression and racial discrimination as Sizwe says: 'Buntu, you know what you are saying? A black man stays out of trouble? Impossible,

Buntu. Our skin is trouble' (Fugard,1972, p.43). Being black reveals their position as subalterns.

Fugard expresses solidarity with the victims by mentioning Buntu, another black South African who once had the same experience as Sizwe. He is one of the main characters that symbolizes humanity despite their dehumanized state. As Styles says: 'very good somebody that one. Came here for his wedding card. Always helping people. If that man was white they'd call him a liberal' (Fugard, 1972, page 18). He is a trustworthy person who shows solidarity and sympathy with Sizwe, since he shares the same struggles too. Fugard says:

BUNTU. Hai,
Sizwe! If I had to tell you the trouble I had before I could get the right stamp in my book, even though I was born in this area! the trouble I had before I could get a decent job ... born in this area! the trouble I had to get this two-roomed house ... born in this area (Fugard, 1972, p.27).

This passage demonstrates the difficulties Buntu meets as a native born in that area to get a 'Passbook'. For this reason, Buntu understands perfectly Sizwe's case and the discrimination he lives in Port Elizabeth. Besides, in the play he represents a symbol of solidarity at the same time a guide for the protagonist. He also fights against the marginalization of the oppressed individuals and embodies the struggle for dignity. Buntu tries to explain for Sizwe that looking for a job in Port Elizabeth is not easy. Instead he is telling him that every black South African should carry a 'Passbook', that will serve him to work legally. Buntu also tells him that no one can hire a black man easily especially during the Apartheid era. Fugard says:

MAN. I can't read

BUNTU. I'll tell you what the little white ladies say: 'Domestic vacancies. I want a garden-boy with good manners and a wide knowledge of seasons and flowers. Book in order.' Yours in order? Anyway what the hell do you know about seasons and flowers? (*After a moment's thought.*) do you know any white man who's prepared to give you a job?

MAN. No. I don't know any white man. (Fugard, 1972 p. 25)

In fact, this passage explains exactly that surviving in the city of Port Elizabeth requires a lot of important basis such as Passbook. Therefore, with the hard living of the black South

Africans, the whites do not give them opportunities to work and gain money. In addition, Buntu explains for Sizwe that it is not easy to survive in a big city like Port Elizabeth without a 'Passbook'. The aim from this passage is that Fugard exposes the discrimination and the injustice imposed on black South African victims during the Apartheid legacy. While Sizwe is trying to find a solution, Buntu faces him with the truth that without a valid Passbook, there is no possible solution. Fugard says:

BUNTU. Who is going to lend money to a somebody endorsed to hell and gone out in the bush? And how you going to buy your potatoes at the market without a Hawker's Licence? Same story, Sizwe. You won't get that because of the bloody stamp in your book. There's no way out, Sizwe. You're not the first one who has tried to find it. Take my advice and catch that train back to King William's Town. If you need work so bad go knock on the door of Mines Recruiting Office. Dig gold for the white man. That's the only time they don't worry about Influx Control (Fugard, 1972, p. 26).

This quotation explains that even if the Blacks try to resist against oppression to find a way to survive, they always find themselves victims of a Passbook by which the Apartheid practitioners marginalize them. Therefore, Fugard, through Buntu's words, conveys the importance of owning a Passbook in Port Elizabeth. Hence, the only work where the whites recruit the Blacks without 'Influx Control' is working in the mines. This means that the danger that the black workers might endure in the mines does not matter, all what matters is the satisfaction of the white Afrikaners who exploit the Blacks and deprive them from their rights. The reason that pushed Sizwe to leave his home town is the possibility to find a noble job, so that he can offer a better life for his family. Fugard says:

MAN. The place where we stay is fifteen miles from town. There is only one shop there. Baas van Wyk. He has already got a woman working for him. King William's Town is a dry place Mr. Buntu... very small and too many people. That is why I don't want to go back. (Fugard, 1972, p. 27)

We can understand from this passage that poverty is the major problem that pushes the black South Africans to leave their home town in order to move to Port Elizabeth. The big city where they can find better opportunities to work and survive. Yet, the discrimination and

exploitation they submit because of their identity indicate that they are not out of troubles. Thus, this discrimination shows their position of subaltern who struggle to survive in an Apartheid area.

Moreover, Fugard in this play develops another important theme in which he makes reference to life and death. Additionally, Fugard through his drama transmits to the audience the social reality and humans' struggle to survive because of their identity. In fact, he discusses the troubles that all subaltern groups face, the same case as Sizwe, Buntu, Styles, and all Black South Africans during Apartheid era. Fugard says:

BUNTU. (...) started by saying that the first man to sign the Death Contract with God, was Adam, when he sinned in Eden. Since that day, wherever Man is, or whatever he does, he is never without his faithful companion, Death. (Fugard, 1972, p. 28)

Furthermore, through this quotation Fugard includes the themes of life and Death that symbolize the political death rather than a physical one. It explains that the white rulers discriminate the black populations through letting them struggle and impose their authority over them. As Chitra Jayathilake argues: "Black people are expelled from the history of the country; their contribution to the nation is marginalized and trivialized." (Jayathilake, 2018, p. 4). In addition, the black individuals are politically killed which means that the segregationist system of the Apartheid dehumanizes the Blacks and separates them from the white areas. Indeed, Chitra adds: "This statement about the exclusion of a people in history is a testimony to expulsion in political killings. The removal of a group of a people from its history represents their political death: a form of genocide" (Jayathilake, 2018, p. 4). To sum up, the Apartheid segregates the Blacks for their identity; therefore, it excludes them from their homelands. Fugard adds: 'BUNTU. That's it brother. The only time we'll find peace is when they dig a hole for us and press our face into the earth.' (Fugard, 1972, p.28). Finally, the white supremacy considers the black South Africans as slaves and inhuman people who do not deserve to live peacefully like normal people.

Moreover, the play begins in Styles' own photography studio where he takes a newspaper and starts to read the headlines, and laughs out loud. This highlights Fugard's commitment to depict Resistance as hope from the start. Through a flashback styles narrates the miserable life of the workers. The depiction of the Ford factory shows how the black South Africans work in miserable conditions because they are 'non-white'. They suffer from all kinds of racism and economic oppression; Styles says:

...never any expansion to the pay packet. Makes me fed up. I know what I'm talking about. I worked at Ford one time. We used to read in the newspaper... big headlines...'So and from America or London made a big speech: '... going to see to it that the conditions of their nonwhite workers in Southern Africa were substantially improved.' 'The talk ended in the bloody newspaper. Never in pay packet. (Fugard,1972, p. 4)

This passage explains what the workers of the factory submits because of the whites, with the visit of Mr. Ford and how the whites consider the black workers inferior and exploit them. As Styles says: "Dangerous world that. Big machines one mistake and you are in trouble." (Fugard,1972, p5). Since the workers do not have the same skin color as the whites and they do not belong to the same race and the same identity they have been devaluated and objected by the white supremacy. In addition, the audience remembers and narrates the struggles he faces everyday while going to work Styles asserts: "Come on, Styles, you're a monkey, man, and you know it. Run up and down the whole bloody day your life doesn't belong to you. You've sold it" (Fugard, 1972, p. 9). He adds: "A bloody circus monkey selling most of his time on this earth to another man. Out of every twenty-four hours I could only properly all mine the six when I was sleeping." (Fugard, 1972, p.9). In this monologue, Styles asks himself questions about the life he lives under the Afrikaner repression, and the way Styles and the black South African workers are exploited, He does not live for himself but to serve the whites only. The mistreatment of the workers by calling them 'monkeys' is a reference to the state of dehumanization of the Black workers in the Ford factory, their treatment as savages testifies that the Apartheid practitioners consider them as slaves or animals not as humans.

b) John and Winston as Oppressed Prisoners of Robben Island in Athol

Fugard's *The Island* (1973):

Social and political segregation have always been the extreme policies of the Apartheid, that were applied on the oppressed black South Africans. As long as it was arranged by the whites to impose their rules over black people. Even prisoners are oppressed by the all types of physical violence and moral abuse. Therefore, Fugard's play *The Island* discusses the main issue of the political prisoners who are anti-Apartheid activists. Eventually, they are held in Robben Island which is considered as a symbol of repression where Nelson Mandela was jailed for 27 years. In *The Island*, Fugard portrays the harsh situation which the anti-Apartheid activists endured during this era by employing the imagery of the ancient Greek mythological Sophocles' play *Antigone* as a symbol.

The two main protagonists John and Winston are political prisoners jailed in Robben Island the setting of the play. John has been imprisoned for his rebellion against the Apartheid in South Africa, while Winston has been imprisoned because he has burned his Passbook in front of the police showing his opposition to the regime.

To begin with, Fugard starts the play using a note in which he says: "*The Island* began with the notes and ideas I had accumulated over many years relating to Robben Island" (Fugard, 1973, introduction). The quotation mentioned above explains how Fugard focuses first on the setting to convey the suffering of the two prisoners, and then in the opening scene, he describes it as: "A raised area representing a cell on Robben Island. Blankets and sleeping-mats the prisoners sleep on the floor are neatly folded. In one corner area bucket of water and two tin mugs" (Fugard, 1973, p.47). He gives a great importance to the details related to Robben Island, since it is a symbolic place where Mandela was jailed. Moreover, he continues the description of the prisoners' image in the cell as follows:

The long drown-out wail of a siren. Stage-lights come up to reveal a moat of harsh white light in the cell. In it the two prisoners John stage-right and Winston stage-left – mime the digging of sand. They wear the prison uniform of khaki shirt and short trousers. Their heads are shaven. It is an image of back-breaking and grotesquely utile Labour (Fugard, 1973, p.47).

This passage aims to demonstrate Fugard's emphasis on the image of the prisoners, that has a great impact in depicting the miserable survival of John and Winston, in the prison as subalterns of the dominant system of the Apartheid. Fugard's use of Afrikaans languages Xhosa and Zulu stresses his interest in giving a huge importance to employ symbolic cultural background and characters in his play (Keuris, 2010, p. 34). Starting with, Hodoshe for instance signifies the green carrion fly which is the name that John and Winston use to call the guard. As Fugard mentions: "The only sound are their grunts as they dig, the squeal of the heel-barrows as they circle the cell and the hum of Hodoshe, the green carrion fly" (Fugard, 1973, p.47). Therefore, Hodoshe symbolizes the brutality of the regime. His presence shows the sound of piercing prison whistle. Fugard continues:

A whistle is blown. They stop digging and come together, standing side by side as they are handcuffed together and shackled at the ankles. Another whistle. They start to run ... John mumbling a prayer, Winston muttering a rhythm or their three-legged run (Fugard, 1973, p.47).

Hodoshe is the most abusive and unfeeling of the prison guards, and the two men fear him and his punishment (Barrington, 2018). Fugard says:

They do not run fast enough. They get beaten ... Winston receiving a bad blow to the eye and John spraining an ankle. In this condition they arrive finally at the cell door. Handcuffs and shackles are taken off. After being searched. They lurch into their cell. The door closes behind them. Both men sink to the floor. A moment of total exhaustion until slowly, painfully, they start to explore their respective injuries...Winston his eye, and John his ankle (Fugard, 1973, p.47).

Indeed, this passage explains the inhuman behavior of the guard who beats the prisoners; it is also another way of considering them as savages that do not deserve to be and feel like normal humans. However, they submit all kinds of violence and the highest degree of suffering;

their own cell is the only place where they can heal each other. The dehumanization with which Hodoshe treats the prisoners, they are forced to endure harsh living conditions. Fugard says:

(limping around the cell looking for their washrag.)

WINSTON. Haii. Man! You got no wife here. Look for the rag yourself.

JOHN. *(finding the rag beside the water bucket)*. Look where it is. Look! Hodoshe comes in here and sees it. 'whose *lappie* is that'? then what do you say?

WINSTON. 'It is his rag sir!'

JOHN. Yes? okay. 'it's my rag sir. When you wash, you use your shirt.

WINSTON. Okay, okay 'It's our rag, sir!'

JOHN. That will be the bloody day!

Shit, today was long. Hey, Winston, suppose the watch of the chap behind the siren is slow! We could still be there, man! *(he pulls out three or four rusty nails from a secret pocket in his trousers. He holds them out to Winston.)* hey there. (Fugard, 1973, p. 50)

This conversation between John and Winston tackles the exhaustion after a long day in the Island, and the time they spend working despite their tiredness. Therefore, Fugard portrays the oppression and subjugation of the prisoners under the force of Hodoshe who symbolizes brutality. Additionally, their fear of Hodoshe demonstrates their position of subaltern who face discrimination from the dominant system of Apartheid. John reminds Winston of the strict orders that Hodoshe imposes to the prisoners, in order to avoid the beating and the bad treatment that influence their physical and mental health. For the same purpose, Fugard centers his attention on the struggles of the black down trodden class. Therefore, the dominant system that is imposed over them makes the prisoners subjects to the injustice. Fugard says:

JOHN. Hell, ons was gemoer vandag! News bulletin and weather forecast. Black Domination was chased by white Domination. Black Domination lost its shoes and collected a few bruises. Black Domination will run barefoot to the quarry tomorrow. Conditions locally remain unchanged thunder storms with the possibility of cold showers and rain. Elsewhere, fine and warm (Fugard, 1973, p.48).

Fugard in this passage uses a metaphor "Weather forecast" to refer to the impossibility of change in the Black South Africans condition. His reference to the 'storms', 'rain', and

‘thunder’ refer to worsening of the conditions imposed over the black subalterns, since they must submit subjugation and brutality.

As political prisoners John and Winston, who share the same experience, receive an extreme brutality from Hodoshe as narrated through a flashback. Fugard puts it:

JOHN. Anyway, it as Daddy’s turn today. (Shaking his head ruefully)
Haai, Winston, this one goes on the record. Struesgod! I’m a man,
bother. A man! But Hodoshe had kept us at those wheelbarrows five
minutes longer...! There would have been a baby on the island tonight.
I nearly cried
WINSTON. Ja.
JOHN. There was no end to it, except one of us!
WINSTON. That’s right.
JOHN. This morning when he said: ‘you two! The beach!’ ... I thought,
Okay, so it’s my turn to empty the sea into a hole. He likes that one. But
when he pointed to the wheelbarrows, and I saw his idea ...! (Shaking
his head) I laughed at first. Then I wasn’t laughing. Then I hated you.
You looked so stupid, *broer!* (Fugard, 1973, p.49).

Hodoshe’s dehumanization to the prisoners makes him feel superior. Therefore, the way he pushes them to work hardly shows the inhuman side of his, as Fugard asserts: ‘WINSTON. Broken us. Men get tired. Hey! There is a thought we’re still alive because Hodoshe got tired’ (Fugard, 1973, p.49). This means that every single step they move depend on Hodoshe’s orders. Also, it demonstrates the ways he is exploiting and discriminating the prisoners knowing that they should obey him. In this context, Gramsci’s insists that:

The history of subaltern social groups is necessary fragmented and episodic. There undoubtedly does exist a tendency to (at least desperate functions not subordinated in any way a situation which in periods of crisis highlighted with extreme clarity the phenomenon of ‘dual power’. The only group excluded from any organized collective life of its own was that of the slaves (Gramsci, 1999, p. 206)

Therefore, Gramsci explains the position of the subaltern as victims who are marginalized from social and political dominant groups. Indeed, Gramsci stresses his interest to voice the victims that are suppressed and considered as slaves.

Fugard’s *The Island* aims to reach the audience’s consciousness and make it aware of the seriousness of the situation by denouncing the injustice of the Apartheid system in South Africa.

Indeed, his inclusion of Sophocles' canonical play *Antigone* manifests the modern times' social change, especially for black South Africans victims to the racial segregation imposed by the Apartheid laws in South Africa (vs gourelli, 2020).

Along the conversation between John and Winston who are about to prepare for the performance of a version of The Trial of *Antigone*, Fugard affirms: "WINSTON. The state lays charges against Antigone" (Fugard, 1973, p.54). In this quotation, he claims that Antigone is a victim of king Creon's law. His aim is to distinguish the social and political issue; he assimilates *Antigone* to South African setting by comparing the injustice of Hodoshe and Creon. Fugard says:

JOHN. Hodoshe's talk, Winston! That's what he says all the time. What he wants us to say all our lives. Our convictions, our ideals ... that's what he calls them... child's play. Everything we fucking do is 'child's play'... when we run all the day in the sun and pushed those wheelbarrows, when we cry, when we shit... child's play! Look, brother, ... I've had enough. No one is going to stop me doing Antigone... (Fugard, 1973, p.62).

While they are trying to prepare for the performance of the play, Hodoshe is mocking and minimalizing the prisoners' convictions and beliefs. In fact, the only way for the prisoners to transmit their hard living and the harsh attitude of the government is by performing the play *Antigone*. Therefore, to denounce the conflicts between the black victims and the government, John decides to perform the play even though he faces problems in convincing Winston. He believes that he will stay in that prison for the rest of his life. His desperate case concerning his freedom makes him hopeless. Fugard says:

WINSTON. That's not what I'm talking about. When you go to the carry tomorrow, take a good look at old Harry. Look into his eyes, John. Look at his hands. They've changed him. They've turned him into a stone. Watch him work with that chisel and hammer. Twenty perfect blocks of stone every day. Nobody else can do it like him. He loves stone. That's why they're nice to him. He's forgotten himself. He's forgotten everything... why he's here, where he comes from. That's happening to me John. I've forgotten why I'm here (Fugard, 1973, p. 71).

In this quotation, Winston wants to express his mixed feelings by comparing his life in the Island with an old prisoner called Harry. He wants to transmit a message for John that the prisoners there are no more humans. Fugard explains that the time spent in the quarry changes the prisoners into their worse condition, he even compares them to stones. The authorities have reached their goal in transforming the prisoners into heartless people, so they manipulate, exploit, and consider them as slaves who are obliged to work only as they wish. Certainly, the prisoners are deprived from all their rights including their freedom, a state from Subalternity. The segregationist Apartheid system succeeded in changing them. In fact, Winston's fear to become a 'stone' is like a frustration especially when he receives the news of John, that he would leave in three months. He sees his future through looking to Harry's eyes and knows that throughout the time he will end up like him. Winston's mixed feelings show the degree of suffering the prisoners attain, fear and loneliness which push him to be desperate and hopeless. Additionally, the prisoner Winston submits different types of discrimination. Despite the exploitation of Hodoshe, he feels also discriminated by John laughing at him. The fact that he is obliged to perform the role of a woman bothers him that is why he refuses to perform Antigone. Fugard says:

JOHN. Please, Winston, just stop talking and listen to me.

WINSTON. No! you get this, brother, ... I am not doing your Antigone! I would rather run the whole day for Hodoshe. At least I know where I stand with him. All he wants is to make me a 'boy' ... not a bloody woman. (Fugard, 1973, p. 60).

For Winston performing the role of a woman is much harder than working in the island under the orders of Hodoshe. Fugard in this passage wants to transmit for the audience that Winston's pride for being a man is so important for him. The fact that John laughs at him makes him feel inferior and alienated. It is worth reminding that Gramsci developed his theory on '**Subalternity**', he says that:

The greatest danger for any political prisoner is that under the impact of his new situation the very reasons for his past struggles and his present plight will come to lose their validity for him. Prison is so finely-wrought a file that it destroys thought utterly. It operates like the master craftsman (Gramsci, 1999, p.124).

This quotation emphasizes Gramsci's position towards the subaltern groups especially the prisoners'. In this case he develops the concept of subalternity to explain the oppression that the political prisoners undergo. Indeed, Gramsci has been a victim of fascism whose imprisonment last for life. Through his experience in the prison, Gramsci advocates for supporting this class of oppressed people and denounces the controlling class that impose their domination over the subaltern groups. Through a flashback, the prisoners remember the last visit of their families, and how this affect them being far from their relatives. Fugard says:

JOHN. Those bastards will do anything to break you. If the wheelbarrows and the quarry don't do it, they'll try something else. Remember that last visit of wives, when they lined up all the men on the other side. ... 'Take a good look and say goodbye! Back to the cells!' (Fugard,1973, p. 65).

John in this passage describes the hard situation of the prisoners, their routine in Robben Island going to the quarry, working there so hard and coming back to the cell. They know that they are not allowed to see their families whenever they want, they share only flashbacks between each other in the prison which permits them to forget their state of subalternity. An instance on flashback is when John and Winston meet for the first time. Fugard says:

JOHN. Hell, Winston, at the end of these three months, it will be three years together in this cell. Three years ago I stood in front of that magistrate at Kirkwood—bastard didn't even look at me: 'Ten years!' I watched ten years of my life drift away like smoke from cigarette while he fidgeted and scratched his arse. That same night back in the prison van to the cells at Rooihel. First time we met (Fugard,1973, p. 65)

John's flashback reminds him of the decision taken for his condition; it shows the degree of discrimination that he submits from the white authorities. Therefore, both prisoners share nearly the same experience during the Apartheid era which brings them together in the same prison cell.

The state of subalternity and victimization that both prisoners John and Winston undergo is due to their identity and the rules imposed by the whites. Black South Africans were isolated from their own nation, since the Apartheid legacy and repressive laws impacted their lives and deprive them from their rights and freedom. Fugard's *The Island* demonstrates how South Africans were subjected to social, political and racial discrimination that considered them inferior and subaltern to ideological hegemony of the white descendants. In addition, Fugard also insists that the physical exploitation causes psychological disturbances which affects negatively on the prisoners' thinking, surviving and feeling.

c) Port Elizabeth and Robben Island as Symbols of Subalternity in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973):

The setting in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island* is well chosen by Athol Fugard in order to depict the reality of the Apartheid policy which reflects the suffering of subaltern groups caused by the white government. However, the setting in both plays is different; while the setting in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* is in New Brighton Port Elizabeth, and *The Island* was set in Robben Island historically known as two symbolically Apartheid segregationist areas.

1) New Brighton Port Elizabeth in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972):

Port Elizabeth is a vibrant coastal city situated in the southeastern coast of South Africa with a rich history and a diverse cultural heritage and the influence of the Xhosa and Afrikaans. It is the largest city in the eastern cape province known as 'the Windy City', one of the country's largest seaport. The city was originally founded as a settlement for British emigrants. During the 1980's the eastern cape suffered from the Apartheid violence.

Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972) is set in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth in South Africa located in the Southeast coast of Africa. In 1820, Port Elizabeth was founded as a British settlement to strengthen border between the Cape colony and the Xhosa people. Port Elizabeth portrays the

struggle for identity, racial discrimination, and suffering of black people in South Africa from poverty and less opportunities for surviving. It is also historically known as one of the most racist and segregationist Apartheid areas. In the play we see that Sizwe Bansi struggles for having his Passbook which is a permit that must be carried by all black people, moving or working in white areas, and anyone caught without this pass is immediately arrested. Parson affirms:

A Passbook is a document similar to a passport, containing details on the bearer such as their fingerprints, photograph, the name of him/her employer, his/her address, how long the bearer had been employed, as well as other identification information, employers often entered a behavioral evaluation, on the conduct of the pass holder (Ran O J Parson, 2010.p. 9).

Fugard shows racial discrimination through both characters: Styles and Sizwe Bansi. The latter suffered to find a job because of their skin tone. Sizwe is so desperate that he has to exchange his name with a dead man Robert Zwelinzima to gain a job. Port Elizabeth was an important center and a home to the South African workers, they were employed in the manufacturing sector they were the poorest in the country because they had a low budget for a hard work and they have been discriminated and badly treated.

Athol Fugard depicts Subalternity in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and denounces the whites' injustice, segregation in the setting of New Brighton Port Elizabeth. Nowadays, Port Elizabeth is a popular tourist destination known for its wildlife and the city has several museums including Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum.

2) Robben Island in *The Island* (1973):

Robben Island is a low lying lozenge of rocks and sand. It may be the most significant historical site in South Africa today, paradoxically it symbolizes both the repressiveness of the Apartheid and the strength of those who oppose it (Deacan,1990). In the 17th century, Robben

Island served as a larder for sailor passing on the long route to the east to trade in spices and slaves (Jorjan, 1998, p.10).

The Island (1973) is a play which is set in Robben Island prison in South Africa. Robben means ‘Seal’ in Deutsch language; it was inhabited by wildlife including birds and penguins. There, both John and Winston live their hardest days, working daily under the sun. They want freedom from this jail and its injustice towards them. The buildings on the Island are a reminder of its sad story and shows the power of the human spirit and the victory of the democracy. It is worth mentioning that Robben Island is a very symbolical racist segregationist prison in South Africa that served as a prison from the 17th to the 20th century for Political Activists such as Nelson Mandela who was jailed for 27 years. Mandela was subject to harsh labor, insufficient food and limited communication; he even wrote a book called *Conversation with myself* (2010) in his dark cell to describe the severe situation that he has been through. Robben Island was also used as a mental hospital for military croups and it was also reserved for those who were viewed as misfits in society. In addition, the prisoners suffered from injustice and intolerance and they were prohibited by any kind of communication with the outside world. Robben Island is a symbol that portrays alienation from society because it is surrounded by water. It also symbolizes the triumph of human spirit, and democracy over oppression. In 1999, the Apartheid was rejected and all the prisoners gained their freedom.

Robben Island is a vital part of South Africa’s collective heritage, how do we reflect the fact that the people of south Africa as a whole, together with the international community, turned one of the world’s most notorious symbols of the resistance of oppression into a world-wide icon of the universality of human rights, of hope, peace and reconciliation (Nelson Mandela, 1997, p. 12).

In 1846, Robben Island was closed and the prisoners were sent to do hard labor in mainland convict stations. Today, Robben Island is declared by the UNESCO to be the world heritage site and a tourist destination and also it serves as a museum to remind the world about

the struggles and the harsh situation that the prisoners submit against the Apartheid and how the segregationist break the spirit and suppress their resistance.

For this reason, the setting of Port Elizabeth and Robben Island in Athol Fugard's both plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972)* and *The Island (1973)* play a fundamental role in the exploration of themes and characters. On the one hand, Port Elizabeth setting illustrates the black's population struggle during the Apartheid with limited opportunities and racial prejudice. Therefore, characters in both plays experience the tough realities of detention, loss of freedom, faith, the ongoing fear, and violence. Yet the setting also becomes a site of resilience where the oppressed political prisoners discover methods to reclaim their resistance through acts of disobedience. On the other hand, Robben Island is historically significant prison during the Apartheid era which symbolizes the oppressive regime and the dehumanization of the black South Africans. The milieu of the prison including the cells and the segregated atmosphere contributes a sense of confinement and subjection.

Chapter Two: Resistance of the Subaltern in Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973).

This chapter discusses the Subaltern's resistance in Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*. Fugard analyzes the content in which the subalterns resist against the state and the government's repression. The black South African in Fugard's committed plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973), aim to denounce the realities of the oppressive system of Apartheid by illustrating heroism in different context. Therefore, our purpose is to give emphasis to these notions in order to reinforce the conception of resistance that the subalterns are exhibited as being heroes in every selected plays.

a) Resistance through Identity in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972):

In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972), as it is noticed in the previous chapter, Styles is one of the main protagonists who symbolizes not only the subalternity of the working class under the rules of the whites during the Apartheid era but also most importantly Resistance.

Death as a Rebirth in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972):

After a long discussion between Sizwe and Buntu, Sizwe's suggestion to help the dead man shows the humanity and compassion that highlights the solidarity of the Blacks. However, Buntu as a native who lives in the Apartheid area recognizes the consequences of helping the dead man. This is why Buntu refuses totally because he knows that Sizwe and him will be the suspects. Indeed, Buntu checks the dead man's Passbook in order to have some information about him. Sizwe's ambition and dream depend on his Passbook. Fugard affirms:

It will tell you in a good English where he stays. My passbook talks good English too ...big words that Sizwe can't read and doesn't understand. Sizwe wants to stay here in New Brighton and find a job; Passbook says, 'No Report back.' (Fugard, 1972, p. 33)

Sizwe feels hopeless, there is no solution and the situation is just getting worse. After a while Buntu suggests to exchange Sizwe's real identity with the dead man's one. It is the only solution Buntu finds for Sizwe to survive in the first time he hesitates, yet Buntu's arguments push him to accept later on. The segregation against the blacks has always been the major problem, since the whites did not give any opportunity for him to survive in Port Elizabeth. Fugard says:

BUNTU. A fool who is not taking his chance.

MAN. And my children! Their father is Sizwe Bansi. They're registered at school under Bansi...

BUNTU. Are you really worried about your children, friend, or are you just worried about yourself and your bloody name? Wake up, man! Use that book and with your pay on Friday you'll have a real chance to do something for them (Fugard, 1972, p. 37)

This quotation explores the arguments that Buntu uses to convince Sizwe to adapt the identity of the dead Robert. In fact, Robert's identity serves as an opportunity for Sizwe to improve his situation, and at the same time escape the rules imposed by the white authority. Therefore, Buntu believes that abandoning his real identity of Sizwe Bansi can be an opportunity for him as Robert Zwelinzima to start a new life. In addition, Buntu insists on exchanging the identities of the two oppressed South African, in order to improve Sizwe's situation. Fugard says:

(Buntu's house, as earlier. Table and two chairs. Buntu pushes Sizwe down into a chair. Sizwe still muttering, starts to struggle back into his clothes. Buntu opens the two reference books and places them side by side on the table. He produces a pot of glue, then very carefully tears out the photograph in each book. A dab of glue on the back of each and then Sizwe's goes back into Robert's book, and Robert's into Sizwe's. Sizwe watches this operation, at first uninterestedly, but when he realizes what Buntu is up to, with growing alarm. When he is finished, Buntu pushes the two books in front of Sizwe) (Fugard, 1972, p. 35-36)

Meanwhile, in one way or another Sizwe manages to find a way to survive thanks to Buntu who proposed to him to adapt the identity of the deceased Robert Zwelinzima. Even though it is illegal, there is no other chance for him. Therefore, Sizwe's resistance is shown through

exchanging identities. Indeed, Fugard's portrayal of Life and Death has a great impact; therefore, the death of Robert Zwelinzima represents the rebirth of Sizwe. For Buntu, the importance of surviving in Port Elizabeth is much more important than keeping the real identity that causes only troubles for Sizwe. Fugard says:

BUNTU. (angry). All right! Robert, John, Athol, Winston... Shit on names, man! To hell with them if in exchanging you can get a piece of bread for your stomach and a blanket in winter. Understand me, brother, I'm not saying that pride isn't a way for us. What I'm saying is shit on our pride if we only bluff ourselves that we are men. (Fugard, 1972, p. 43)

Furthermore, in this passage Fugard mentions a list of names to make reference to the protagonists who are devoted to overthrow and resist against the oppressive system of the Apartheid. Then, Fugard shows Buntu's good intention and his solidarity with Sizwe. It is clear that the real identity represents the pride of the individuals, but in Sizwe's case it is ambiguous.

Therefore, Buntu's are arguments based on changing his identity for a better condition for Sizwe and his family. Fugard adds: "look, brother, Robert Zwelinzima, that poor bastard out there in the alleyway, if there are ghosts, he is smiling tonight. He is there, with us, and he's saying: 'Good luck, Sizwe! I hope it works.' He's a brother, man". (Fugard, 1972, p.43). Fugard believes that even the dead Robert shares his solidarity indirectly with Sizwe by providing his identity for Sizwe. In fact, Fugard portrays the solidarity of the oppressed black South Africans who undergo the harsh racial discrimination, as a key to mark their resilience against the white oppressors and the Apartheid system. Sizwe's acceptance for the new identity is a new step he moves in his life as Robert Zwelinzima. Fugard says:

MAN. So Nowetu, for the time being my troubles are over. Christmas I come home. In the meantime, Buntu is working a plan to get me a Lodger's Permit. If I get it, you and the children can come here and spend some days with me in Port Elizabeth. Spend the money I am spending you carefully. If all goes well I will send some more each week. I do not forget you my dear wife. (Fugard, 1972, p. 44)

This passage demonstrates the power of Sizwe's resistance against all the troubles he faces, while arriving at Port Elizabeth because of his identity and endorsed 'Passbook'. Fugard then, empowers Sizwe's determination to accomplish his mission as a black oppressed, and as a responsible man, who has some obligations towards his family. Therefore, Fugard through the character of Sizwe wants to transmit to the audience and for the black South Africans in general, that challenging the oppressing system of the Apartheid proves their resilience, humanity, and solidarity. In fact, the solutions that might solve the problems of the oppressed South Africans depend on their willingness. For the same reason, death represents rebirth for Sizwe. Despite the difficulties, the struggles, and different social and political issues, that the oppressed black population undergo during the Apartheid legacy. Fugard affirms:

(As he finishes the letter, Sizwe returns to the pose of the photo. Styles Photographic Studio. Styles is behind the camera)

STYLES. Hold it, Robert. Hold it just like that. Just one more. Now smile, Robert Smile Smile (Camera flash and blackout) (Fugard, 1972, p. 44)

After finishing his letter to his wife, he starts a new life as Robert Zwelinzima instead of Sizwe Bansi, the immigrant who moved from his home town to Port Elizabeth to look for a job. As Buntu says: "it is your only chance!" (Fugard, 1972, p.36). In this way Buntu exposes the injustice of the Apartheid since he opposes to the laws imposed by the white government, especially the necessity of owning a Passbook. In fact, Fugard includes imagination as a form of resistance, by which the black South Africans escape the harsh reality and resist against oppression. Fugard says:

Look, have you ever walked down the passage to the office with the big glass door and the board outside; 'Manager Bestuurder'. Imagine it, man, you, Robert Zwelinzima, behind a desk in an office like that! It can happen, Robert. Quick promotion to Chief Messenger. I'll show you what we do. *(Styles produces a Philips' class-room map of the world, which he hangs behind the table as a backdrop to the photo)* (Fugard, 1972, p.19-20).

This passage explains the power of imagination that contributes in changing the life of the black individuals. Therefore, Fugard gives a huge importance to imagination, since it is considered to be a form of resisting the oppressors for the issue of a 'Passbook'. In addition, Styles shows empathy and solidarity to Robert (Sizwe) by comforting and relaxing him. The detail that Fugard mentions about Styles hanging a map behind the table is a symbol of Styles' rich knowledge; his interest centers to know what is happening in the world and gather information. Fugard adds: "Look at it Robert. America, England, Africa, Russia, Asia!" (Fugard, 1972, p. 20). As an intellectual, Styles knows very well how to manage his business of photography, the most important is his interaction with the clients. It is clear that during the Apartheid, it is hard to find someone who can help the oppressed to fight for their identity, freedom, and be hopeful. Eventually, Styles with his sympathy wins Robert's trust. Fugard says: "Mr. Robert Zwelinzima, chief Messenger at Feltex, sitting in his office with the world behind him. Smile, Robert. Smile! (*Studying his subject through the viewfinder of the camera.*)" (Fugard, 1972, p. 20). Fugard wants to transmit to the audience the humanity shared between the black South Africans. Their support for each other demonstrates their power to confront the discrimination and oppression of the Apartheid practitioners.

Accordingly, Fugard portrays Styles also as a symbol of insubordination who resists against the authority of the whites in Ford factory. He uses his language as a means by which he resists against the 'Baas'. Fugard says: (*Styles mimics Mr. 'Baas' Bradley. A heavy Afrikaans accent*) (Fugard, 1972, p. 4). The use of mimicry is a very strong point to resist as an intellectual and intelligent man. Styles makes fun of his boss in front of him because of his bad accent Fugard adds:

'Styles!'

'Yes, sir!'

(*Mr. 'Baas' Bradley's heavy Afrikaans accent*) 'What do you say in your language for this? Eye Protection Area.'

It was easy, man!

'Gqokra Izi Khuselo Zamehlo Kule Ndawo.'

Nobody wrote it!

Don't bloody fool me, Styles!

No, sir!

'Then spell it ... slowly.'

(Styles has a big laugh.)

Hey! That was a moment, man. Kneeling there on the floor... foreman, general foreman plant supervisor, plant manager... and Styles? Standing!

(Folds his arms as he acts out his part to the imaginary figures crouched on the floor.) (Fugard, 1972, p. 5-6)

Styles' faithfulness for the use of his language is shown through his translation also mimic mimics the bosses who are listening to him and trying to understand. Styles of what he says in English into Zulu sarcastic way of translating the expressions is another way of resistance. His laughter demonstrates that he is intelligent in fooling the bosses, because he realizes that they are manipulating them. Therefore, he allows himself to insult them using some expressions such as: 'fool', 'big bastard', 'old fool', 'bigger fool', 'American monkeys' (Fugard, 1972, p.07).

Indeed, Styles' insistence to create his own photography shop is a strong shift that occurs in Styles' life as a black South African. Fugard argues: 'Daddy, if I could stand on my own two feet and not be somebody else's tool, I'd have some respect for myself. I'd be a man' (Fugard, 1972, p. 10). In this citation, the decision that Styles takes to realize his dream has a great impact in the development of his life. Second, his strong stand against his father who refuses to support the idea of becoming a photographer is the first step to face the struggles of the outside world especially the injustice of the society. Third, his strong personality plays a major role in building his identity, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Therefore, he knows that he deserves to be a respected man, in spite of the discrimination he submits and being a 'tool' under the authority of the whites; he is fighting for gaining his status.

Moreover, his love to photography never dies, Fugard says: ‘Photography! It was my hobby in those days. I used to pick up a few cents on the sides taking cards at parties, weddings, big occasions.’ (Fugard,1972, p. 10). Yet, due to his ambition, he succeeds to surpass all the obstacles. He adds:

I didn’t let that put me off though. Said to myself: ‘This is your chance, Styles. Grab it.’ Some kids helped me clean it out. The dust! *Yo!* When the broom walked in the Sahara Desert walked out! But at the end of the day it was reasonably clean. I stood here in the middle of the floor, straight! You know what that means? To stand straight in a place of your own? To be your own... General Foreman, Mr. ‘Baas’, Line Supervisor—the lot! I was tall, six foot six and doing my own inspection of the plant (Fugard,1972, p. 11).

Indeed, this passage proves that styles’ self-motivation helps him to reach what he wants. At the same time, Fugard uses photography as a weapon by which Styles stands against the white authority (bosses) as he mentions them above. Fugard says:

This is a strong-room of dreams. The dreamers. The dreamers? My people. The simple people, who you never find mentioned in the history books, who never get statues erected to them, or monuments commemorating their great deeds. People who would be forgotten, and their dreamers with them, if it wasn’t for Styles. That’s what I do friend (Fugard,1972, p. 12-13).

This passage explores Fugard’s defense of the marginalized South Africans. In order to take their chance, he wants to convey a message to the audience through Styles who stands courageously to manage his own photography business. Styles’ name may be read as interpret as ‘reshaping’; that is, giving new form or identity. This is what he does in the play. He reshapes the ‘dead’ identities of South African subalterns, as he did for Sizwe. Fugard argues: “STYLES. (*exaggerated admiration*). At least! the kind of man I like. Not one of those foolish young boys who come here to find work and then forget their families back home. A man, with responsibility!” (Fugard,1972, p. 19). In this quotation, Styles expresses his admiration for Sizwe’s struggle to find a solution to his problem, his gratitude and responsibility towards his family. Even though he faces many troubles in the city of Port Elizabeth, Sizwe succeeds to find a job and a way to survive there. Fugard adds: “Come on, Robert! You want your wife to

get a card with her husband looking like he's got all the worries in the world on his back? 'My poor husband is in trouble!' you must smile!" (Fugard, 1972, p. 19). Styles tries to comfort Robert (Sizwe) and asks him to smile. Indeed, it is a manner to fix his self-confidence and his adaptation to the new identity. Sizwe's use of the dead man's Passbook means rebirth for a new life, without the struggle he used to face with the bureaucracy. Fugard continues: "*(Robert shamefacedly relaxes a little and starts to smile, he relaxes still more. Beginning to enjoy himself. Uncertainly produces a very fancy pipe from one of his pockets. Styles now really warming to the alignment.)*" (Fugard, 1972, p. 19). His relaxation means that he starts to assume his new identity and accepts it as if it is his. In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* Fugard demonstrates the black South African's ability for rebirth and resistance even from death. Sizwe challenge the oppressive Apartheid system through his adaptation of a dead person's passbook. Styles help Sizwe regaining his confidence. Therefore, he uses his craft to help the oppressed blacks through reshaping their identities and picturing through his camera. Fugard says:

(The camera flash goes off; simultaneously a blackout except for one light on Robert, frozen in the pose that will appear in the picture. We are in fact looking at the photograph. It 'comes to life' and dictates the letter that will accompany it to Nowetu in king William's Town.)
(Fugard, 1972, p.22)

Through Robert's narration of his experience to Styles, Fugard's conveys resistance of the black South African workers in a strange city under white authority; he says: *(Tells his story with the hesitation and uncertainty of the illiterate. When words fail him he tries to use his hands.)* (Fugard, 1972, p.23). Thus, Robert (Sizwe) always finds a way to explain his struggle in order to be helped. His aim to find a solution pushes him to make efforts just for the sake of his family.

b) Resistance in Fugard's *The Island* (1973):

It is clear that in the previous chapter in the part devoted to Fugard's play *The Island* (1973), we have discussed the issue of victimization of the prisoners. This chapter of our dissertation discusses Athol Fugard's depiction of the resistance of the black South African subalterns through the rebellion of the oppressed prisoners of Robben Island John and Winston. In fact, he makes reference to *Antigone* as a symbolic play that represents a heroine character who defies the laws of the state to fulfill her consciousness and her duty towards her brother Polynices. In addition, Fugard's dramatic work *The Island* reflects his denunciation of the Apartheid legacy toward political activists. Moreover, this play highlights John and Winston resilience, and determination to maintain their humanity in front the dehumanization of the white authority.

1) John and Winston's Resistance through Brotherhood:

To begin with, as prisoners John and Winston, who share the same cell, show their solidarity based on their friendship. Indeed, the power of this friendship holds up the prisoners' struggle against the injustice of the oppressed government in Robben Island represented by Hodoshe.

While Winston is in the cell with John, he seems to be furious because of Hodoshe's harsh behavior. Fugard says: "WINSTON. I want Hodoshe. I want him now! I want to take him to the office. He must read my warrant. I was sentenced to life brother, not bloody Death!" (Fugard, 1973, p. 48). This quotation shows Winston's protest against Hodoshe's; though he knows that his imprisonment would last forever, he refuses to die without resistance. We have already mentioned the reason why Winston and John are imprisoned is due to their political activism for their identity against the Apartheid practitioners. Fugard employs Zulu expression that stresses on the bravery of the black South Africans, as he mentions: "WINSTON. *Nyana we Sizwe!*" (Fugard, 1973, p. 48). Thus, it is the organization to which the Anti-Apartheid

activists belong to. This slogan means “Brothers of The Land” or “Son of The Land” (Robert, 1985, p. 5). It refers to the solidarity of the citizens against the rules of the Apartheid. Fugard uses it to show the importance of collective heroism and their fighting for their rights, identity, and dignity against discrimination, exploitation, and oppression.

In *The Island* the power of imagination and the role of flashbacks are ways that helped the prisoners resist against exhaustion and exploitation. Fugard says:

WINSTON. Sand! Same old sea sand I used to play with when I was young. St George’s Strand. New Year’s Day. Sand dunes. Sandcastles...

JOHN. Ja, we used to go there too. Last... *(pause and then a small laugh. He shakes his head.)* the Christmas before they arrested me, we were down there. All of us. honey bush. My little Monde played in the sand. We’d given her one of those little buckets and spades for Christmas (Fugard, 1973, p. 48).

This passage shows the influence of flashbacks on the prisoners’ mood. It is a mixture of positive thinking and despair at the same time that pushes them to survive despite the difficulties. Indeed, the good memories of John and Winston shared in the cell make them escape from their real life, which proves the power of their manhood.

The power of brotherhood is also a sign of fortitude that connects the two prisoners. Fugard says: *(John puts a hand on Winston’s shoulder. Their brotherhood is intact. He gets slowly to his feet.)* (Fugard, 1973, p. 49). Even though, they are not blood brothers, their support for each other is a strong feeling that link them. Fugard adds:

WINSTON. *(with calm resignation)*. We’ll see.

(Pause. John looks at Winston.)

JOHN. *(with quiet emphasis, as if the other man did not fully understand the significance of what he had said)*. I hated you Winston

WINSTON. *(meeting John’s eyes)*. I hated you. (Fugard, 1973, p.49).

This passage proves the strong friendship of the two prisoners that started with hatred, then grows and becomes brotherhood. This brotherhood is a power by which they resist the harsh oppression, and physical violence they endure in the Island. John’s and Winston’s support for each other is transformed to hopelessness and motivation that unites the prisoners

to confront the injustice of Hodoshe. John and Winston in their cell create an atmosphere to escape the reality of their living as a way to forget their daily routine in the prison. Fugard says:

(he is now seated on his bed-roll. After a moment's thought he holds up an empty mug as a telephone-receiver and starts to dial. Winston watches him with puzzlement.)

Operator, put me through to New Brighton, please... yes, New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. The number is 414624.... Yes, mine is local Local....

WINSTON. *(recognizing the telephone number)* The shop!

(He sits upright with excitement as John launches into the telephone conversation) (Fugard, 1973, p. 56).

This passage explores resilience of the prisoners through sarcasm, which means their opposition to the oppressive environment has deprived them from their rights. Indeed, their faithfulness for their identity pushes them to create an imaginary conversation. Actually, it allows them to escape the cruel reality, express their feelings of missing their relatives, and remember the old days in Port Elizabeth. Fugard adds: “*(Winston, squirming with excitement, has been trying unsuccessfully to interrupt John's torrent of words and laughter. He finally succeeds in drawing John's attention.)*” (Fugard, 1973, p.56-57). Winston's excitement creates a fun atmosphere in the cell with John hoping to communicate with their friends and families to exchange news with them. This joyful moment permits them to forget the dehumanizing environment where they survive. At least, this friendship illustrates their solidarity, unity, and supporting each other to find a way to overcome the pressure and moral abuse that they are subjected to. In addition, the strong friendship of the two prisoners John and Winston depicts the support of John for Winston about John's release. Fugard says through John: “Look, in the cell we're going to forget those three months. The whole bloody thing is most probably a trick anyway. So let's just forget about it. We run to the quarry tomorrow together. So let's sleep” (Fugard, 1973, p. 67). Therefore, this citation shows John's empathy and understanding for Winston's feelings and disappointment.

2) Resistance through Art in *The Island*:

According to Fugard, the use of art is a powerful means of resistance through which both protagonists John and Winston show their stand against subalternity. The prisoners expose the hypocrisy of the oppressors and denounce the Apartheid regime. As it is illustrated, the name Hodoshe, that John and Winston use to call the guard, has a meaning of carrion fly which symbolizes the brutality of the system.

Moreover, the emphasis on *Antigone*'s play is done on purpose, since in Sophocles' play of the same name is rebellious. She defies the laws of the state and opposes the king Creon decisions. Therefore, John wants to perform this play because it is their only way to convey their opposition to the laws of the Apartheid government. Fugard says:

JOHN. Hey, don't start any nonsense now. You promised. (*limps over to Winston's bed-roll and produces a half-completed necklace made of nails and string.*) it's nearly finished. Look. Three fingers, one nail... three fingers, one nail.... (*places the necklace beside Winston who is shaking his head, smoking aggressively, and muttering away.*) don't start any nonsense now, Winston. There is six days to go to the concert. We're committed. We promised the chaps we'd do something. This *Antigone* is just right for us six more days and we'll make it (*He continuous washing*) (Fugard, 1973, p. 50)

This passage shows how John insists to perform the play. This is why he is encouraging Winston to learn it correctly. Indeed, John being optimistic believes that with this play, they can convey their resistance against the oppressors. Through his rebellious act of burning his 'Passbook' in front of a police officer with other oppressed blacks, Winston explains the resilience of the prisoners as citizens first and then as heroes who are committed to defy injustice and discrimination. Additionally, Fugard gives importance to art, culture, and traditions of the South Africans. Therefore, while other prisoners prepare for their performance in their cells, John is angry because of Winston refusal of performing the role of Antigone. Fugard says through John:

JOHN. Stop moaning and get on with it. Shit, Winston! What sort of progress is this? (*abandoning his wash.*) Listen. Listen! Number42 is practicing the Zulu War Dance. Down there they're rehearsing their songs. It's just in this *moer* cell that there's always an argument. Today

you want to do it, tomorrow you don't want to do it. How the hell must I know what to report to the chaps tomorrow if we go back to the quarry?

(Winston is unyielding. His obstinacy gets the better of John. Who eventually throws the wash-rag at him) (Fugard, 1973, p. 51).

This part of the dialogue demonstrates the extent to which Fugard includes the traditions of the South Africans by mentioning Zulu War Dance that is to mean that the black South Africans use their Zulu language as a powerful means of Resistance. According to some researches, South Africa's largest ethnic group, the Zulu, is the subject of a lot of anthropological and historical interest. In fact, The Zulu have a rich cultural history that they take pride in 'Indlamu', the dance that inspired Zulu warriors during the Anglo-Zulu wars. It is one of the most famous dances in the continent (Nunoo, 2021). Though primarily associated with the Zulu, the dance originates with the Nguni and is based on Zulu battles from the 17th century (Godoso, 2021). Fugard's inclusion of this dance in *The Island* testifies of the power he gives to the language of the black South Africans as a means of Resistance. He highlights the cultural identity with the dance that represents the heritage and the solidarity of South Africans. It expresses a form of protest and resistance against the repression of the Apartheid regime. So John wants Winston to learn his part perfectly to expose their shared struggles and evoke unity through using art. John's ambition to perform the role of the king Creon motivates him to encourage Winston as well. Indeed, Fugard says:

JOHN. And don't throw the rag there! *(retrieving the rag and placing it in the correct place.)* Don't be so bloody difficult, man. We're nearly there. You'll be proud of this when we've done it. Look. Winston, look! Creon's medallion. Good, hey! *(hang it around his neck.)* I'll finish the necklace while you learn that *(he strings on the remaining nails.)* Jesus, Winston! june1965

WINSTON. What?

JOHN. This, man. *Antigone*. In New Brighton. St. Stephen's Hall. The place was packed, man! All the big people. Front row ... dignitaries. Shit, those were the days. Georgie was Creon. You know Georgie?

WINSTON. The teacher?

JOHN. That's him. He played Creon. Should have seen him, Winston. Short and fat, with big eyes, but by the time the play was finished he was as tall as the roof (Fugard, 1973, p. 53-54)

Furthermore, in this passage Fugard indicates that *Antigone* is the great example for social protest against the Apartheid's injustice rules. In fact, Fugard wants to convey resistance of the political prisoners through the use of art, to fight for their freedom and identity as black South Africans. For the same reason, John and Winston want to interpret their resistance not only for other prisoners and prison officials, but also to transmit their protest for the whole world in order to realize the consequences of Apartheid in South African. Fugard portrays John's and Winston's determination through the performance of *Antigone*. Indeed, Creon's medallion (necklace) that John mentions in this passage symbolizes the domination of the king Creon and his power over the state. Thus, remembering the performance of the play by Georgie motivates him more to imitate Georgie's performance. John's imitation for Georgie who played the role of Creon in June, 1965 (Fugard,1973, p. 53) depicts the imitation of power. Fugard says:

(onto his legs in an imitation of Georgie's Creon.)

'My Councillors, now that the Gods have brought our city safe through a storm of troubles to tranquility....' And old Mulligan! Another short-arsed teacher. With a beard! He used to go up to the queen.... *(another imitation)* 'your Majesty, prepare for grief, but do not weep.'

(the necklace in his hands.) (Fugard,1973, p.54).

Indeed, in this passage Fugard uses imitation to portray John's aim that is to feel himself free just as the king Creon is. The latter is known for his Hubris, that while John is imitating his pride to denounce the government's injustice is just evolving. Moreover, Fugard adds: "JOHN. *(very excited)*. He got it! That's my man. See how easy it is, Winston? Tomorrow, just the words." (Fugard,1973, p.55). John being excited expresses his encouragement and motivation to Winston which increases every day. Winston hates the idea to perform the role of a woman because he knows that other prisoners would laugh at him just like John does. But the aim of John by laughing at him is to prepare him for what the prisoners' reaction could be when they will see Winston like a woman with titties and hair. Fugard says:

JOHN. Sure I laughed. Ja ... I laughed. But can I tell you why I laughed? I was preparing you for... stage fright! You think I don't know what I'm doing in this cell? This is a preparation for stage fright! You know those bastards out there. When you get in front of them, sure they'll laugh... Nyali Nyah! ... they'll laugh. But just remember this brother nobody laughs forever! There'll come a time when they'll stop laughing, and that will be the time when our Antigone hits them with her words. (Fugard, 1973, p. 60-61)

Through this passage, John wants to transmit a message for Winston, which is that even if they will laugh and mock him, it is not important. Here Fugard focuses on the solidarity and the understanding that John shows to Winston and this demonstrates how brotherhood is a powerful means of resistance. Moreover, the performance of *Antigone* will be a means by which they will convey their resistance against the discrimination of the Apartheid system against prisoners through art. In addition to their pride in defending their identity and dignity, this reveals their faithfulness towards their nation as being black South Africans. Through the performance of *Antigone* in Fugard's play, John shares his joyful moment with Winston. The good news that he receives changes his life completely. His release will be soon as he achieved his purpose through resisting. Fugard says:

JOHN. I'm telling you. Prinsloo himself, man. We waited outside for a little bit, then Hodoshe pushed me in. Prinsloo was behind his desk, busy with some papers. He pulled out one and said to me: 'you are very lucky. Your lawyers have been working on your case. The sentence has been reduced from ten years to three.' (Fugard, 1973 p.64)

At this point, Fugard tries to say that the freedom of John symbolizes hope and resistance for all the other prisoners. Even though they submit all kinds of segregation, racism, and hard detention conditions, they finish by reaching their objective. Eventually, Winston shares his happiness with his brother, yet his confinement serves as a continuation of the ongoing struggles that he still faces. Fugard adds: "WINSTON. (*quietly*). You stink, John. You stink of beer, of company, of poes, of freedom.... Your freedom stinks, John, and it's driving me mad" (Fugard, 1973, p. 71). Winston's isolation is intensified with the release of John. Fugard adds:

WINSTON. Why am I here?

JOHN. You put your head on the block for others.

WINSTON. Fuck the others.

JOHN. Don't say that remember our ideals....

WINSTON. Fuck our ideals...

JOHN. No Winston ... our slogans, our children's freedom...

WINSTON. Fuck slogans, fuck politics... fuck everything, John. Why am I here? I'm jealous of your freedom, John I also want to count. God also gave me ten fingers, but what do I count? My life? How do I count it, John? One... one... another day comes... one... help me, John! (Fugard, 1973, p. 72)

Indeed, Winston lost his freedom because of his rebellion against the political system which imposes the laws of the 'Passbooks' on the blacks. He defies the laws and obeys his consciousness, his duty towards the land and the South Africans. Therefore, his long journey in the Island is not finished yet. As we have already mentioned either in *The Island* or in his other masterpiece, Fugard uses theatre that is art to show his commitment against the Apartheid. Therefore, the performance of the prisoners exposes their resilience against oppression and their state of subalternity. In addition, he assimilates Winston's character to Antigone as being strong and rebellious. Fugard affirms:

WINSTON. Then let us not waste any time. Stop talking. I buried my brother. That is honorable thing, Creon. All these people in your state would say so too, if fear of you and another law did not force them into silence. (Fugard, 1973, p. 76).

In this passage through the borrowing of the *Antigone* imagery, Winston wants to say that he does not regret his act of revolution against the white authority, when he burned his passbook in front of that police station. In fact, he accepts totally his punishment facing the government just as Antigone did with Creon. Fugard in *The Island* wants to transmit a message for the audience about the injustice of the government under which the subalterns are suppressed. Fugard adds:

WINSTON. (*to the audience*). Brothers and sisters of the land! I go now on my last journey. I must leave the light of day forever. For the Island. Strange and cold, to be lost between life and death. So, to my grave, my everlasting prison, condemned alive to solitary death. (Fugard, 1973, p. 77).

Winston addresses the audience as *Antigone* does in the original play. This is a form of protest, as he sacrifices himself for his moral values. Indeed, his solidarity and humanity with the victims make him a hero. In fact, Fugard makes reference to life and death in this passage which explains that the lives of the subalterns are always manipulated by the superior authorities and their corrupted government. Fugard adds:

(*tearing off his wig and confronting the audience as Winston, not Antigone.*)

Gods of our Fathers! My land! My home! Time waits no longer. I go now to my living death, because I honored those things to which honor belongs (Fugard, 1973, p. 77)

This citation shows the bravery of Winston facing the audience himself. His status of hero reveals his support for his nation and especially the identity of the black South Africans. For this reason, true freedom is not achieved until the prisoners are liberated from injustice. *The Island* can then be as a drama of political and social protest through which Fugard voices his denunciation of the Apartheid and his defense of the subaltern.

In the play, Fugard explores the theme of life and death as a symbolic representation of the prisoners' resilience. The rebellion against the Apartheid system's injustice for their freedom and identity. In one hand, Fugard includes the death as a symbol of rebirth, through which oppressed South Africans convey their refusal to be subject of Apartheid dehumanizing system.

Moreover, life represents the new changes that the prisoners experience in Robben Island, such as John's release which symbolizes physical and moral freedom. John and Winston submit physical and moral abuse as political prisoner. Yet, the faithfulness of their belonging,

identity, and nation never dies. Their beliefs and convictions have shown their strength and commitment against the Apartheid practitioners. Fugard says:

(the two men take off their costumes and then strike their 'set'. They then come together and, as in the beginning. Their hands come together to suggest handcuffs, and their right and left legs to suggest ankle-chains. They start running... John mumbling a prayer, and Winston a rhythm for their three-legged run. The siren wails. Fade to blackout)
(Fugard,1973, p. 77)

For the same reason, this passage demonstrates the main achievement of John and Winston. Together, they succeed to transmit their opposition to the Apartheid in front of all the prisoners. consequently, they succeed to resist their state of subalternity through art. Their courage and resilience turns Robben Island, one of the most oppressive and dehumanizing prisons in the human history, to a place for hope and resistance.

V. Conclusion:

This piece of research has allowed us to investigate the issues of ‘**Subalternity**’ and ‘**Resistance**’ in South Afrikaner playwright Athol Fugard. Fugard’s master pieces *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973).

In the first chapter we have studied the issue of **Subalternity** in both committed plays *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972) and *The Island* (1973), in which we have analysed the main protagonists’ subaltern position. According to the basic findings of our research, our study consists of examining the oppressed black South African population as victims of the ‘passbook’ and identity during the Apartheid era.

In fact, Fugard centres his attention on the historical facts and social realities of the South African areas. On one hand, Port Elizabeth and the state of the oppressed workers according to their identity and the obligation of carrying a ‘passbook’ in the first play *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*. On the other hand, Robben Island the symbolic prison concerning the state of the political prisoners such as Nelson Mandela who submit also racism and segregation in the second play *The Island*. Both settings remain symbolical places of discrimination and oppression of the white oppressors.

Fugard as an Afrikaner playwright demonstrates his strong stand to overthrow the Apartheid system and denounce its segregationist practices over the black South Africans, through his theatrical productions. Indeed, in the second chapter we have analysed the issue of ‘Resistance’ in both committed plays, emphasizing the opposition of the main protagonists against the Apartheid. In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, the protagonist Sizwe has been the victim of identity because of his endorsed passbook. He, then, succeeds to resist against the oppression of the whites, thanks to his friends Zola and Buntu. Exchanging his identity with the dead Robert Zwelinzima represents his powerful stand against the injustice he faces concerning his

identity. Therefore, death symbolises the rebirth of Sizwe as a new person adapting the new identity. On the other side, Fugard has also portrayed the resilience of the oppressed prisoners in *The Island* through the use of Art, as a means to convey their opposition against the institutionalized system of the Apartheid. Moreover, the inclusion of Sophocles' mythological play *Antigone* as a symbolic tool played a major role in showing the resistance of the two prisoners John and Winston who are cellmates.

One of the basic findings of this piece of research is that Fugard's theatre has always been a way to convey his stand and empowerment for the oppressed black populations. Despite being a white South Afrikaner, this did not prevent him to denounce the oppression and segregation of the Apartheid system. Furthermore, in this dissertation, we have dealt with Antonio Gramsci's concepts of '**Subalternity**' and '**Resistance**' which empowers Fugard theatre.

The scope of this piece of research did not allow us to deal with other issues in Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972)* and *The Island (1973)* though they are still rich ground for further investigations. Therefore, we invite other researchers to explore the issues of poverty, socio-economic problems, corruption, and South African settings.

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