

Racism and Exploitation in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's and Micere Githa Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* and Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*

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Abstract

The study reveals racism and exploitation as portrayed by Ngugi wa Thiong'O' and Micere Githa Mugo in the trail of dedans kamahi and Athol Fugard in his Sizwe Bansi is Dead. In the Trial of Dedan Kimathi Ngugi and Micere reveal racism and exploitation in Kenya, where the European acquired more land than the indigenous Kenyan and turned them into slaves in their own country, in Sizwe Bansi Is Dead. Athol Fugard portrays various aspects of racism and exploitation in South Africa where the movement of black are restricted by the use of passbook. The blacks are denied job opportunities, they can only employ in the mines on how wages which is barely enough to sustain them and member of their families. The study veils the struggle gallant Africans in their fight against colonialism.

Keywords: Racism; Dead; Ngugi wa Thiong'o's; Kenya; Africa.

Introduction

Ngugi wa Thiong'O and Micere Guthea Mugo playwrights and authors of *The Trial of Dedan kimathi* and Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* are well known in the Domain of literary studies. Chimalu Nwankwo in the work of Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes that:

one common quality of Ngugi's works, drama, prose, is the persistent effort in the process of his search to remind people of Kenya, about the nature of the road it traveled to independence (87).

The statement relates very well to the concern of the authors in *The Trial of Dedan kimathi*; in the recapture of his heroic deeds and in the beginning of his ordeal in the hand of the imperialist. Ngugi and Mugo portray him as a Martyr or sacrificial lamb. The purpose of this is to create awareness in the mind of their people and reader about the violent travails of people of Kenya passed through in their quest for independence. The fight for independence was more violent in Kenya than in some other Africa countries. The Kenyans had to fight the white to get their land back. Taking away land from the Kenyans was like removing their spiritual essence, that which gives them a sense of being. The Kenyan fought violently, especially through the Mau-mau, the guerrilla arm of the war against foreign domination. In *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* Ngugi and Micere portray the struggle against racial discrimination and exploitation in Kenya headed by Dedan Kimathi. The British administrators in Kenya have accused Dedan Kimathi of possessing fire arm. Kimathi was tortured, humiliated, intimidated, bruised and incarcerated so that he will plead guilty to the charges against him. The play shows the humiliation the Blacks passed through in the hands of the White imperialists while in the Kenyan soil. The Judge sitting on the bench orders the court registrar to read the charge thus:

Dedan Kimathi s/o watchiru alias prime minister or field marshal of no fixed address are charged with the following offences: that on the night of Sunday, October the 21st day, 1956, at/near Ihururu in Nyeri District, you were in possession of fire arm namely, a revolver, without license, contrary to section 89 of the penal code which under special emergency regulation constitute a criminal offence, guilty or not guilty (3).

Dedan Kimathi was sentenced to death by hanging by the imperialist count of the British administration Athol Fugard in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island* portrays the conditions of the black in apartheid South Africa in south Africa, at the apartheid regime, the three basic necessities of man as a living being – shelter, clothing and food and security are being denied the blacks, the white colonists denied Africans of their right as human beings. They are subjected to punishment of various types. An aspect of man's inhumanity to man. Fugard in his portrayal of the level of discrimination and exploitation in apartheid South Africa, paints a picture of black in need of employment. A number of people have to leave their home land in search of jobs in cities in the southern part of the country. Sizwe Bansi, a character in the play *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* had left his town King Williams's town in search of employment in Port Elizabeth. He could not find employment because his passbook made it impossible for him to reside or seek for employment at Port Elizabeth. Sizwe Bansi reports that to his wife about the state of affair as it affects employment, he says in letter to Nowetu:

I've got wonderful news for you in this letter. My troubles are over, I think, you won't believe it, but I must tell you. *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* ... as you know, when I left the railway compound, I went to stay with a friend of mine called Zola. In fact, he has been trying to help me find some job, but that it is not easy, Nowetu, because port Elizabeth in a very big place with host of factories but also hot 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! (22).

Sizwe Bansi could not find a job until he adopted the name of the dead man Robert Zwelinzima. Fugard has demonstrated to what extent laws are enforced to the detriment of blacks in apartheid South Africa. In *The Islands* Fugard mirrors the ills of unjust laws in South Africa. In the enforcement of these laws human dignity is neglected. Hence people are made by man to suffer for minor offences. Since man made the laws, no reference is made to what would be right in the sight of God at any time. Winston and John are jailed, Winston for life as prisoner of conscience, just waiting to assert himself. Fugard uses the character of John to talk about domination and oppression of the blacks in South Africa at the apartheid regime and even beyond if not addressed. Before John's speech, he and Winston had been miming the hard labour of miming to which they had been subjected. Winston would not take the joke of the labor any longer. So, he would want hocl she to read his warrant. He knew he had been sentenced to life not to bloody death. Then John as Winston tended his wounded ear through drenched teeth says:

News bulleting and weather forecast black domination was chased by white domination. Black domination lost its shoes collected a few bruises. Black domination will run barefoot to the quarry tomorrow. Condition locally remained unchanged, thunder storms with the possibility of cold showers and rain. Elsewhere fire and warm (68).

Through the speech of John, Fugard portrays the difficulties the blacks are always subjected to even in prison. It is true that they are in prison but not to be dominated and treated as worthless human beings. Not only are blacks ill treated in the prisons, their lot in life is not better too. Beside physical pain, the emotional trauma prisoners go through is more painful to some of them as presented by Winston. Not only were the black subjected to hard labor, out in quarry when they return to their cells, they are expected to rehearse some kind of entertainment which they would present for the benefit of their white overlords. This rehearsal pains Winston more than anything else. He complained to John "Jesus John! we were down on the beach today Hodoshe made us run. Can't you just leave a man?" (51). At the height of Winston's exasperation he says; "Jesus Christ! learn to dig for Hodoshe learn to run for Hodoshe and what happens when I got back to the cell learn to read Antigone" (51). Fugard has in *The Island* exposed the South African society in its attitude towards prisoners. Prisoners are maltreated. In addition, he shows the unjust laws that are used to govern the people. Joseph Okpaku's *The Art and Civilization of Black*

African People (1984) view the helplessness of the Africans. He sees the Africans as a people that are denied the basic necessities of man as human beings. Okpaku view Dedan Kimathi with utter cynicism. He feels that Kimathi is a nondescript, and a man without address. This shows the level of homelessness that existed in colonial Kenya. He states further that:

In torture of Kimathi, we see an absence and inhuman system that colonialism is, it intimidates, cheats, bribes and causes the individual into accepting his lot as irredeemable and thus acquiescing to laws that are basically dehumanizing (135).

During the period of colonialism in Africa, the Whites intimidated the Blacks. They also cheated the Africans so much by exploiting them in all ramifications of human contemplation. By making them eat from the crumbs of their labour, they are denied the benefits and legacy of their labour and toils in their own land. Richard Wright in his *Black Boy* (1970) and *Native Son* (1942) presents what life was for the Blacks in America in the 1920s. The Negroes in America have no right in America of anything. They cannot live in descent quarters or hold descent job positions and placement. At a tender age Richard could not beat a Black boy in the implication when his fellow Blacks talk about a White man beating a Black boy. Did not his father beat him now and then? But as he grows up, he began to experience racial discrimination. Richard recalls that when he was going to Eleina in the company of his mother and brother to stay with his aunt Maggie, he discovered that there are two lines of people at the ticket window, a White line and a Black line. Even inside the train he found out that the Blacks and Whites sit separately according to him “When I boarded train, I was aware that we Negroes were in one part of the train and that the Whites were in another” (2). Even when Richard took a menial job after graduation at high school, he discovers that as a Black boy, he could not hold any job of his choice, he could not learn any trade as Negro as he could only succeed in working as “an errand boy” (22). Life for the American Negroes of the 1920s could only be equal to life of the Blacks in apartheid South Africa. Richard Wright recounts the brutal killing of his Aunty Maggie’s husband, uncle Hoskins. He was killed because a White man coveted his flourishing liquor business. Even after killing him, they could not allow wife to take his corpse. Richard notes that there was no funeral, no music, no flowers or bouquets. There were silent, quiet weeping, whispers and fear. None of the family members knows when or where uncle Hoskins was buried, his wife Maggie was not allowed to claim any of his assets. The Blacks in South America of the 1920’s were regarded as “mere idiots who act according to the way the whites want them” (33).

Walter Rodney in *African post colonial literature in English in the Post Colonial website*, illustrates how Europe undeveloped Africa. Rodney describes colonialism as “one armed bandit” (1). He claims that colonialism more than anything else under developed Africa. Colonialism, to him, is the root of neocolonialism in Africa by creating Africa’s economic dependency on the international trade community (ITC) exchange system and values created dependency and previous Africa development was blunted and turned black without offering anything as compensation value. Rodney quoted the kind of exploitation Africans experienced in Magombe

My land is rich in coffee but my father was always poor peasant man, living wretchedly in the midst of wealth, coffee was everywhere, hanging on the tree. But they stole from us in the princes; sweat was paid for with a few worthless wrens (1).

Oswald Mbuyieseni Mitshalli in *Night Fall in Soweto (1988)* describes the plight of blacks living in Soweto. According to Mitchell: Soweto is an acronym from south, west township used to describe a group of townships of more than a million people mostly Black Africans. South west township, Soweto contains some of the largest ghettos in the world. Most of the black living their work and commute to Johannesburg every day. This is a typical manifestation of racial discrimination. Black Africans were forbidden to live in Johannesburg which is luxurious in contrast to the want and deprivation in Soweto.

Most of the working blacks who live their minister to the domestic and economic needs of the white community in Johannesburg. Life in Soweto is harsh and precarious, the inhabitants not only suffer deprivation and dehumanization but are also kept under constant and strict surveillance, and the slightest sign of disturbance whether real or imagined is ruthlessly crushed. The result is that fear, violence and terror reign. The night is particularly frightening because not only does the law operate mostly then, but night provides cover for desperate to vent their frustration and anger on defenseless victims. Rather than night falls arousing hopes of pleasant relaxation after a hard day's job, it holds terror and the possibility of death. Mitsalli in his poem begins to tell us how night fall in Soweto in held with terror and misery. He states "Night fall comes like a dreaded disease seeping through the Dore of healthy body and revenging beyond repair" (257-259). *Racial discrimination and exploitation could be said to be a world phenomenon and is seen by Samuel Selvon in The Lonely Londoners* (1956) as it concerns citizens of his country who have come to London in search of greener pastures. In London, the West Indies citizens are discriminated against in places of employment. They are to do the hardest of jobs instead of giving them the job of store keeping they are put in the yard to lift heavy iron rods. In a discussion between Moses Allotteta and Galahad at the employment exchange where Moses and his friend went in search of employment, Moses says to his friend thus:

Now on all the record of the boys you will see mark on the top in red ink J.A. CoL. That means you are from Jamaican and you are black. So that puts the dark in the know right away. You see: suppose a vacancy come and they want to send a fella, first they find out one of the firms want colored fellas before they send you (30).

Racial discrimination and exploitation of the Africans was perpetrated in different style and strategies including exploitation in the name of religion. Ferdinand Oyono in *The Old Man and the Medal* perceives racial discrimination and exploitation of the Africa from the religious perspective. Meka the old man foolishly gave away his family land to the Mission and is rewarded with a medal for his services to France. Meka's day of glory ends with his being hauled off to prison by the same white colonialist who had decorated him with a medal earlier in the day. Meka had fallen asleep in the hall when the rest of the guest had left him. On his way home after gaining consciousness at night, he was picked and brutalized and detained in the cell (18-19). Mazisi kunene in his *Thought on June 26* (1988) portrays another picture of racial discrimination and exploitation in apartheid South Africa. In this poem, Kunene frowns at the conditions of the blacks in South Africa. The Blacks are not regarded as human beings by their White neighbours. The Blacks are brutalized, killed and maimed at the slightest provocation. Every 26th June in South Africa is observed as Freedom Day. It was first observed by both the African National Congress and the Indians in 1950 in memory of the eighteen people killed on the May Day demonstration of that year. In 1955, in the year United Congress adopted a freedom character against apartheid. The poem is a direct uncompromising indictment on apartheid, a malediction on the prosecutors of mankind. The theme of vengeance is clearly stated in the poem through a reasoned structure of rhetorical question which directly justifies the poet's desire for revenge. His question "was I wrong when I thought all shall be revenged?" (272-274) the poet uses the sea, ocean, and fire as images of destruction to underscore the poet's militant call for vengeance and retribution.

Whole Soyinka in his play *A Play of Giants* (1983) ridicules bad leadership and oppressive government inherent in African countries. The play explores such evil as corruption, tyranny, oppression, murder; dehumanization and exploitation among sit tight leaders. The four leaders satirized in the play are regarded as giants and tyrants who derive pleasure in humiliating, dehumanizing and exploiting the citizens. In this play Soyinka makes no serious effort to hide the identity of the real-life character who serves as models for the play. They are none other than Africa heads of state, posing for a live size group sculpture in the New York embassy of Bulgaria which include Kamini of Bulgaria (late life President Idi-

Amin of Uganda) gunman (late life president Macias Gunema of Equatorial guinea), Kasco (ex-emperor for life Jean-Baptist Bokasa of the Central Africa Republic) and Barra Tuboum (late life President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. The play ridicules power intoxication and bare faced tyranny that is the trade mark of these supermen. Their sole aim of clinging to power is not for the welfare of the masses but for their insatiable appetite for suppression and oppression of the poor masses they are supposed to serve and protect. It is this supreme need for absolute power that drives some of them to employ every possible means to have a firm grip on their subjects who seem helpless in their quest for freedom and survival. These leaders become reckless in their extravagance which immorally results in impoverishing the people they are supposed to give succour. They play and toy with the life of their people and destroy any one who goes contrary to their opinion. They believe that they have ultimate power over the people's lives and they pass a death sentence to any opposition. Kamini orders his body guard to flush the head of Bulgarian Central Bank chairman in the toilet because he refers to Bulgaria's money as not worth its size in toilet paper. He is also in possession of all Bulgaria's wealth and control welfare of his country according to his selfish desire. He sees to the printing of Bulgaria's money and travel with the money *wherever* he goes. He states "wherever I travel, I take bank of Bulgaria with me, so that nobody can steal money behind Kamini's bank" (4). The reaction of Kamini when he was denied loan by the World Bank lends credence to the existence of the vice which Soyinka seems to fight. Kamini barks:

So, they can come and send their stinking spies into Bulgaria saying they come to supervise loan project? Go back and tell them either they loan ready cash direct or I take overall remaining foreign business in Bulgaria. As for you get back to Bulgaria right away and start printing more Bulgaria bank notes. I show the bastards at least they don't control Bulgaria sovereign currency (5-6)

Soyinka also exposes the interferences of developed countries such as Russia, England, and America on the economic and political affairs of any developing country like Bulgaria. They impose their economic and cultural system on the countries they colonized. As Batey pointed out, Bulgaria is not only corrupt but, "she is still exploited by a New colonial conspiracy of multinational conglomerates which contrive to prey on developing countries in the third world" (23). These developed countries in pretence of caring for developing countries use disguise to intervene in all matters affecting these developing countries. Russia supported Kamini in his rebellious deeds. They defended his office when accused by United Nations of committing genocide and violation of human rights to gain power over Bulgaria. They also helped Kamini during war by supplying arms. They do these things so that they can possess the Bulgarian territory. When they notice that Kamini is trying to raise his status higher than that of their President Vladimir Lyushin, they make jest of him by reducing him to a little kid who needs a toy to play with. To them, his sculpture is an intimidation on the rise of a developing country.

Ferdinand Oyono in his *HouseBoy* (1967) as quoted in African Post-Colonial Literature in English says "Colonialism has denied Africans the right to cultural development and self expression. It sets up a siege that justifies with theories about cultural assimilation. "Toundi asks a question that "What are we, black men who are called French?" (58). He asked this question when he became aware that his French identity is imposed on him by colonialism and identifies him with colonial culture and values of his oppressors. Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi Wamiri in *I will Marry When I Want* (1982) note that:

Religion is not the same thing as God. When the British imperialists came here in 1895, all the missionaries of all churches held the Bible in the left hand and gun in the right hand. The White man wanted us to be drunk with religion while he in the meantime was mapping and grabbing our land starting factories and business on our sweat (56).

The European exploiters used Christianity as a tool to carry out their exploitative measures on the human and material resources in Africa. Okotp'Bitek in his *Song of Lawino* and *Song of O'col* laments a situation in which colonial education emasculates the emerging African elites. Lawino laments: My husband's house is a dark forest of books, their manhood was finished in the classroom, and their testicles were smashed with big books (117). This lamentation shows that Lawino is not happy with the way her husband handles issues. He has lost his senses as an African in White man's education, in the course of acquiring their knowledge and way of life. The woman as an African woman is not enjoying her marital life as it is supposed to be in every African home. This makes her to be in pain. Colonial education played the role for providing

Africans to serve the colonial system and subscribe to its values. He notes that class stratification which leads to neocolonialism begins with the linking of colonial education with material gain. Achebe believes that the Black man has lost his dignity and the African continent her dignity in the coming of the White man to her continent. In his essay entitled "The Black Writers Burden" (1973) he notes that:

Without subscribing to the view that the African gained nothing at all, her long encounters with Europe. One could still say in all fairness that she suffers many terrible and lasting misfortunes. In terms of human dignity and human relation the encounter was almost a disaster for the black race (85).

Achebe believes that European intrusion in this continent did a lot of harm than good. It made the Africans helpless and hopeless in the sense that they allowed them to pass through racial discrimination and exploitation. In continuation of the racial discrimination and exploitation that the blacks experienced, Achebe's rhetorical presentation of the dilemma of the African over his invasion by the White intruder who came to dig what they did not sow and to poison African religion is his reaction and response to racial discrimination and exploitation. He frowns at it in *Things Fall Apart* with his question, "Does the White man understand our custom about land before delving into settling land dispute? How can he, when he does not even speak our tongue" (160).

Racism and Exploitation in Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mungo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*

Africans experienced colonialism as a result of her contact with the Europeans some centuries ago. Such European countries as Britain, France, and Portuguese came into the continent of Africa and thwarted the peace and communal life of Africans. They subjected the Africans and made them little better than slaves in their own land by exploiting their human and material resources. Ngugi wa Thiong'O and Micere Mugo write against this backdrop of colonial activities that negatively affected their people and the violent wars they fought to gain independence. The Kenyan people had a peculiar taste of colonialism. The fight for independence was more violent in Kenya than in some other African countries. The Kenyans had to fight the colonialist to get their land back. Taking away land from Kenyans was like removing their spiritual essence, that which gives them a sense of belonging. The British imperialists occupied the land and began to oppress the people. In defense of their land, the people fought violently, especially through the mau-mau freedom fighters against foreign domination.

When the British imperial powers got to East Africa in the nineteenth century, they became impressed by the rich agricultural land and cold climate of the central area which is similar to the one they left at home. *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* is the artistic recreation of the heroic deeds of Kimathi and the Mau-Mau freedom fighters. The playwrights in the preface state that:

The most important thing was for us to reconstruct imaginatively our history, envisaging the world of mau-mau and Kimathi in terms of the peasant and workers 'struggle before and after constitutional independence (1).

Racial discrimination and exploitation are the predominant themes in this play. They are seen in the case of Dedan Kimathi who represents the Africans. As a matter of fact, the play to a large extent is dedicated to the exploits of Kenyan patriots who were active in the fight against colonialism and oppression. They suffered tremendously in the hands of the imperialist and this made Kimathi to stand his ground as a patriotic leader. The play shows the humiliation the Blacks experienced in the hands of imperialists, for instance the Judge's trumped up charges on Kimathi:

Dedan Kimathi s/o watchiru alias prime minister or field marshal of no fixed address are charged with the following offences: that on the night of Sunday, October the 21st day, 1956, at/ near Ihururu in Nyeri District, you were in possession of fire arm namely, a revolver, without license, contrary to section 89 of the penal code which under special emergency regulation constitute a criminal offence, guilty or not guilty (3).

The above is the charge against Kimathi which they wanted him to plead guilty. Kimathi was tortured, humiliated and bruised that he will plead guilty, but he stood his ground. He was finally condemned to death by hanging. It is imperative to note that the British imperialist segregated against the African even in the Court room. Africans sat on rough benches while the Europeans occupy comfortable seats on the opposite side.

To show the enormity of racial discrimination and exploitation meted to the Kenyans, the boy and the girl as portrayed in the play represent the Kenyan youth suffering the bitter agony of colonialism and the struggles to eke out a living. out of a gloomy situation boy's father dies miserably in hardness after being deprived of his piece of land by a wealthy brother, because of this, his father went to Nairobi in search of job and found job with a firm of timber merchants living in a tiny room and on a tiny salary. The man dies with his ambition of earning enough money with which to travel to Nyeri to buy a piece of land. Unfortunately, machine cut off his right hand and as a result he dies of bleeding. He received no medical care from his employers and the boy was thrown out of the room. Thus, rendered him homeless and helpless he took to the street. The girl in the play passed through untold hardship. She left school because of her headmaster's sexual harassment to her. She was taken to pick tea for Mr Jones, who abuses and punishes her. This made her to run away from Mr Jones and her father and takes to the street. For her to be sexually harassed means that she went to primary school at mature age, adult or adolescent age. She was sexually mature. Moreover, in the play, Ngugi and Mugo portray the racial discrimination and exploitation the Kenyans experienced in the course of fighting for freedom witnessed some setbacks initiated by traitors. Some Africans became friends to the colonialists thus betraying their fellow Africans in the struggle. It is so disappointing that the traitors that played vital roles are the Africans. They constitute a veritable force for the colonists in that they divulge the secrets of the Mau-Mau freedom fighters. They include politicians, business executives, Priests, bank delegates, Gatotia, Heinju, Mwon dada and Wanbarriria, Kimathi's brother.

However, the racial discrimination and exploitation caused by the colonialists is quite different from the one caused by fellow Africans. One is so disheartening because the people that are supposed to his supporters in the struggle are now the people undermining his efforts because of money. The bankers' delegation in the second trial made crucial attempt to make Dedan Kimathi plead guilty to the charges thus bringing the struggle to an abrupt end. Kimathi called the African traitors "Judas". He likened them to the Biblical Judas who betrayed Jesus Christ because of money. The politician and business executive constitute the tempters in the third trial of Dedan Kimathi. He dismisses them with these words:

Betrayal, betrayal, prophets, seers, strangers; I have always been suspicious of those who would preach cold peace in the face of violence, turn the other cheek don't struggle against those that cloth themselves as butterfly collaborators (49).

In the play it is noticed that there are two levels of religions, the African religion and Christianity, Ngugi satirizes this kind of religion that brings discrimination and exploitation on the people, the religion that preaches submission to the forces of oppression instead of attacking them. The Priest tries to weaken Kimathi by citing a Biblical passage that condemns earthly possession. Kimathi counters him by quoting a passage that justifies the struggle of the poor against the wicked oppressors. The fourth and final trial is by severe physical torture from which he emerges as a seasoned heroic figure. He refuses to betray his people and the torture and humiliation emphasizes the need for genuine independence for Kenyans otherwise they would be perpetually tortured by the colonizers. Ngugi and Mugo also use their play to portray the destruction of the African unity by British imperial powers. Africans had been united before they came and poisoned their mind and disunited them. The woman in the play signifies the fact that the people need to be united as one coming from one mother. The woman symbolizes the mother of Kenya who teaches her children about the prevailing circumstances in Kenya. She talks to boy and girl and imparted in them the idea of revolution. She tells them not to strife amongst themselves but to be united against their real and common exploiters. The boy and girl are fighting because of ten shillings given to them by an Indian tourist. Ngugi and Mugo portray Shaw Henderson as the representative of British imperialists both in speech and aggression. He is the brain behind

Kimathi's torture during the trial. He tries to persuade Kimathi into pleading guilty to the charges against him. But when he fails, he resorts to physical torture to break Kimathi's spirit. His treatment to Kimathi is an example of the evil meted out on the masses by the capitalists.

Racism and Exploitation in Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*

The people's literature evolves out of their individual and communal experiences. This is why literature from Black South Africa is essentially protested. The legal cornerstone of racism in South Africa was laid when the British government vested all the political powers in the hands of the White minority in 1910. The constitution legalized racism and prepared the ground for racial discrimination and exploitation of non- White South Africans. South Africa then became a fertile ground for international capitalism and imperialism. The combination of racism, capitalism and imperialism has made South Africa a country of a special type. The Blacks in South Africa were discriminated against and exploited immensely. They were landless and compelled to provide cheap labour to produce fabulous wealth for the White South Africans.

Athol Fugard in *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* (1973) draws the attention of the readers and the audience to the production of wealth for multinationals and wealthy South Africans. Mr. Ford is going to pay a visit to the Ford Motor Plant and there is to be general cleaning, safety regulations that had been none existent before were quickly painted on. Not only that the regulations were even painted on in the local language. Being illiterate, the Blacks would not be able to read the safety regulations written in English. So, in order to impress the Big Baas from overseas, the local language is picked from the garbage dump dusted and written out. The workers were then marched into the bathrooms to wash with hot water and soap. Towels, new overalls and brand-new tool bags were issued. The Blacks are commanded to sing as they work in order to project their "happiness". According to Styles "hide your true feelings brothers" (25); Styles had worked in the Ford Motor Plant for many years without achieving anything except a golden wrist watch. Styles decided to abandon the degrading job with little or no payments to a more vibrant profession, photography. He opens a photographic studio which he feels will bring the Blacks together and make them feel the essence of life. Fugard makes use of imagery in portraying racial discrimination and exploitation meted to the Blacks in South Africa. This he does by using cockroaches which are symbolic of the venom in the South African society without their extermination, Styles would not function properly. He speaks to them in the language of warfare. The cockroaches are paratroopers who are armed for battle. Armed with pesticide called "Doom" he wages war on them. This represents the imperialists that are exploiting the economic and political life of Black South Africans.

Fugard also uses characters like Sizwe Bansi and Buntu to portray the problems of racism, joblessness, hopelessness and unemployment in the mines. The Black South Africans are denied the basic necessities of life. Due to lack of employment opportunities for the Blacks, even when employed, their wages are scarcely enough to feed their families. Sizwe Bansi falls into this category of Blacks in dire need of means of livelihood. He leaves his town, King Williams Town in search of employment in Port Elizabeth. In Port Elizabeth, the pass laws make it impossible for him to reside and seek employment in the city and he is requested to go back to King Williams Town within three days. He however, defies the stamp on his passbook and goes with his friend, Buntu to drink beer in a local beer parlour. On their way they stumble on a dead man whose name is Robert Zwelinzima lying helplessly by the road side. Bansi wanted to help him by calling the police, but his friend Buntu stopped him and reminded him of the implications of his intended action. Buntu searched the dead man and discovers his passbook. From the passbook they found out that he lived at the Single man's quarters. This place is described as a big bloody concentration camp. They are long rows of buildings looking like train carriages. Each row has six rooms with twelve people in each room. Buntu then exchanged the passbook of the dead man with Sizwe Bansi's passbook; this now makes it possible for Sizwe Bansi to reside and look for job in Port Elizabeth. He did not want to accept the situation but after persuasions from his friend Buntu, he concedes. He also remembers his condition and that of his family. He accepts the identity of death so as to live and become a man that will look after his family properly. This is shown in his statement that:

What is happening in this world, good people? Who wants who? Who wants me? Friend what is wrong with me? I am a man. I have got eyes to see. I have got ears to listen when people talk; I have head to think good things, what is wrong with me? Look at me ... I have got a wife. I have got four children (35).

These expressions show the extent to which he had suffered to ensure that he meets up with the needs of his family as a father, since manhood is not measured in terms of many children one can father, but being able to stand up for oneself. Bansi had really suffered, that when he was telling Buntu to help him report the case of the dead man, he prayed that death will come and take him away so that his suffering in this world will end. He says, "I wish I was dead; I wish I was dead because I don't care a damn about anything anymore" (34). This tone is that of a man who has lost all hope because of rejection, abject poverty, oppression, suppression, and humiliation.

Sizwe Bansi feels the sharp pain of loss of identity and feels the impact of what he has done when he remembers his family who lost their identity. He asked a question in tears, "How can I tell her that her husband is dead?" (37). He also remembers his children and says "and my children their father is Sizwe Bansi, they are registered in schools under Bansi" (37).

Racial discrimination and exploitation of Blacks in South Africa is evident in all aspects of life. The record card as a monitoring device is used to control the movement and activities of the Blacks. It is the most potent symbol of oppression. Before a Black is eligible for any form of social amenity, the record book is brought out and examined at all times. Failure to produce it on demand is punishable with a fine. To the White man, the Black is only a member – the native identification number. The government is not really interested in the Black man as a fellow human being but as a means of cheap labour. Loss of this book means loss of identity for the Blacks because this is the only identity the White man gives to him. Even if a Black man succeeds in burning his book and he applies for a new one, the same information on the old one is fed through the computer on the new one. Before a Black man takes up residence in another town, he has to produce the book, in school, at work, on the road to buy clothes, even in church he has to carry the book. If he is lucky to die in hospital, the book is inevitably lying beside him for him to be evacuated to his home and buried. Buntu tells Bansi that "there is no way out, Sizwe, you are not the first one who tried to find out" (24).

Styles' father fought with the allies during the second World war in the far away Egypt and France. Ironically, he went to war so that the World might be free. He was not discriminated against at the war front. The war ended and he came back home, only to be striped of whatever self respect he had during these war years when he fought side by side with White soldiers, one would have expected that he would come home to have a hero's reception, sadly, the rest of the World was freed, but he came back to his cage. Buntu's wife works as a domestic help for a White family but she only comes home on weekends. One wonders who takes care of her own family. Their only son has to live with his grandmother. But he is lucky because where Sizwe lives with his family there was only one shop and the White owner already have a woman working for him. Healthy and strong looking men like Sizwe could not find a job to do there, so hope of employment for women was none existent. The only place where a Black man could easily get a job is at the mines because it is a dangerous job which is not meant for the Whites but the Blacks.

A forty- eight-year-old man had gone to take a photograph in Styles' studio. To be promoted bossboy, he was told to improve himself educationally. So, at forty-eight he has to go to back to school and get his standard six certificate. What happened when he would have gone to school as a young boy? He probably had no opportunity or his parents were too poor to send him to school. In apartheid South Africa, the Black man cannot own property. He has no patch of land to call his own. This is seen in the story of Outa Jacob, who until his death he had no rest. According to Buntu, Outa Jacob is a symbol of poverty. He never enjoyed anything as a human being. He had worked all the days of his life tirelessly for the White man. When his boss eventually died, his appointment was terminated by the son. This rendered him jobless and homeless. He could not cater for his family and he died suffering. It is this type of inhuman situation and suffering that gave rise to this kind of literature because the government is repressive. All forms of writing that touch on this subject of racial discrimination is banned. In such cases, writers and performing artists have to go on exile and fire the struggle from their place of exile. The struggle is for freedom, for equal rights, majority vote and repeal of segregation laws such that Whites and Blacks could co-exist peacefully. Fugard through this play is contributing to the struggle. His kind of work is protest literature.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Sizwe Bansi Is Dead was written when apartheid policy was at its peak in South Africa. *The trial of Dedan Kimathi* was written by Ngugi wa Thiong'O and Mugo to portray the extent of racial discrimination and exploitation meted out to the Kenyans. The two plays explore the unwholesome relationship between Africa and the British colonialists, which are characterized by racial discrimination and exploitation, and other forms of atrocities perpetrated against the Africans during the period of colonialism. According to Lenrie Peters "Africans have slept too long in the center of the World, a mere plaything eternally castrated, she has observed much folly and yet to reclaim her birth right of authority" (qtd in Kolawole Oguagbesami 20). This is the truth about African colonial experience of racial discrimination and exploitation that came as a result of political, social, economic, cultural and religious exploitation from the colonial masters. The White imperialists made the Blacks feel like slaves in their own land, through no fault of theirs, but simply because of their colour. Africans through writing, public protest and armed rebellion sought to express their dissatisfaction with their oppressors and exploiters. Almost every African literary works of these periods is lamenting this ugly trend in which bona fide citizens are reduced to slaves in their own country.

Some characters in the plays are used to portray discrimination and exploitation suffered by the Africans. In Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, Sizwe Bansi is used to portray the colonial situation in South Africa, a pathetic condition of want and deprivation. Sizwe Bansi in his quest to secure employment and give meaning to his life, and that of members of his family, has to leave King William's Town to Port

Elizaberth. In Port Elizaberth the pass laws in apartheid South Africa made it impossible for him to reside or seek employment in Port Elizaberth. Bansi has to lose his identity and take the name of a dead man, Robert Zwelinzima, before he could reside and seek employment.

In Ngugi's and Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, the playwrights used the character of Dedan Kimathi to portray the colonial situation in Kenya. Kenyans like their counterparts in apartheid South Africa suffered want and deprivation. Dedan Kimathi, a freedom fighter in Kenya, despite intimidations and false accusation by the British colonialist represented by Shaw Henderson, stood his ground in the course of emancipation of his people from discrimination and exploitation. He became a sacrificial lamb and was condemned to death by hanging just for fighting for the freedom of his country and people from colonial rule.

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