

## Challenges to Black African Immigrants' Ethnicity in Johannesburg as Depicted in Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aimed at exploring the devastating impact on Black African migrants' ethnic identity in South Africa as depicted in Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country. The study illustrated how various linguistic forms were not in favour of the down trodden when it came to their ethnic identity as well as the powerful white South Africans. The researcher has adopted a check list as a tool for data collection as well as other CDA approaches such as emphasizing positive things about us, and emphasizing negative things about them used to express ideology as well as cause and effect. The paper revealed the following important findings: the African immigrants are not in favor with the cultural dimension, and it accounts for (80%) while 60% of the white settlers are in favor with the cultural dimension, most of the Black African immigrants are not in favor with the economic dimension which represented (75%) whereas the white settlers accounted for 100% in favor with the economic dimension.

**Key Words:** Checklist, Ethnic Identity, White hegemony, Power, Ideological Expressions.

### المستخلص

هدفت هذه الورقة الي استكشاف الآثار المدمرة للهوية الإثنية على المهاجرين الأفارقة السود في جنوب أفريقيا كما صورها الروائي آلان باتن في رواية أبك يا وطني الحبيب. أوضحت الدراسة كيف أن السمات اللغوية لم تكن في مصلحة المستضعفين عندما يتعلق ذلك بالهوية الإثنية كما هو الحال عند الأقوياء من البيض في جنوب أفريقيا. تبنت الدراسة قائمة المراجعة كأداة لجمع البيانات بالإضافة الي العديد من الاساليب اللغوية المستخدمة في التحليل النقدي للخطاب. علي سبيل المثال ابراز الاشياء السالبة عنهم اى السود في جنوب افريقيا والموجبة لدى البيض في جنوب افريقيا وقد استخدم ذلك للتعبير عن الايدلوجية. وأوضحت الدراسة النتائج التالية: لا تخدم البعد الثقافي للسواد الاعظم من السود وتمثل نسبة 80% بينما 60% من المستوطنين البيض لديهم مصلحة في البعد الثقافي، والغالبية العظمي من السود الافارقة ليس لهم مصلحة في البعد الاقتصادي والتي تمثل 75% حيث ان البيض لهم مصلحة تمثل نسبة 100%.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المراجعة، الهوية العنصرية ، سيطرة البيض، القوة، التعبيرات الايدلوجية.

### INTRODUCTION.

There are various ways in which linguistic features can depict the ordeal of the vast majority of black South Africans in Johannesburg as portrayed by Alan Paton in his novella, Cry, the Beloved Country. However, the black South Africans were forced to adopt a new home far away from

their home lands. They involuntarily took up new jobs and new ways of life that had undermined their ethnic identity. The African immigrants are ignored in immigration studies. The factors that cause Black African immigration are repressive government, hunger and natural disasters. When black



South Africans entered Johannesburg they were faced with many challenges: to replace their identity with the new emerging identity, some of them decided to discard their well-established ethnic identity in favour of the repressive regime as a surviving mechanism. But black South Africans managed to put up a strong resistance as depicted by the author of this novella. In Johannesburg, black South Africans faced many challenges such as lack of opportunities: youth dropping out of schools, a need to pick up a new language (English), family break-down and the fear that youth may become gang members. So to survive they work in many types of work.

**Aims and scope of the study** A major concern of this paper is to explore how a language has been adopted by the vast majority of black South African as a tool to resist the repressive regime as portrayed in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*. The extracts are drawn exclusively from the Alan Paton's novella. Moreover, the texts are based on two dimensions, namely the cultural and the economic ones. The aim of the paper is to investigate how language forms are used to resist the repressive regime in South Africa. The study is hoped to provide practical help in decoding literary work by prominent white South African who favoured the down trodden black Africans

#### **Theoretical framework:**

#### **CDA and the Present Study:**

Critical discourse analysis is a generally term for a number of approaches to analyze written vocal, or sign language use, or any significant semiotic event. It is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of

social practice. Scholars working in the tradition of CDA generally argue that (non-linguistic) social practice and linguistic practice constitute one another and focus on investigating how social power relations are established and reinforced through language use. Different types of power may be distinguished according to the various resources employed to exercise such power: the coercive power of the military and of violent men will rather be based on force, the rich will have power because of their money, where as the more or less persuasive power of parents, professors, or journalists may be based on knowledge, information, or authority. Note also that power is seldom absolute. Groups, may more or less other groups or only control them in specific situations or social domains. Moreover, dominated groups may more or less resist, accept, condone, comply with, or legitimate such power, and even find it natural. Gramsci (1971) states that "the power of dominant group may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits, and even a quite general consensus, and this take the form of what he called "hegemony" class domination, sexism, and racism are characteristic examples of such hegemony. Essed (1991) notes that power is not always exercised in obviously abusive acts of dominant group members, but may be enacted in the myriad of taken-for-granted actions of everyday life, as is typically the case in the many forms of everyday sexism or racism similarly, not all members of a powerful group are always more powerful than all members of dominated groups; power is only defined here for groups as a whole.

For analysis of the relations between discourse and power, first it is found that access to specific forms of discourse, e.g. those of politics, the media or science, is itself a power resource. Secondly, action is controlled by our minds, e.g. their knowledge or opinions. We indirectly may control some of their actions, as we know from persuasion and manipulation. Closing the discourse power circle, finally, this means that those groups who control most influential discourse also have more chances to control the minds and actions of others.

**Questions of the Study:**

**The study uses the following questions for collecting the data relevant to the present study:** 1- To what extent can a language be employed by black South Africans to resist the repressive regime as embedded in Alan

Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country? 2-To what extent can whites' hegemony shape the black Africans' ethnic identity as depicted in Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country?

**Hypotheses of the study:**

1- Language can be employed by black South Africans to resist the repressive regime as embedded in Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country.

2- Whites' hegemony of black Africans can shape the Blacks' ethnic identity as depicted in Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country.

**Methodology of the study:**

A variety of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Approaches have been used for analyzing the resistant discourse created by black South Africans. Fairclough's method is adopted and a content analysis is adopted as well.

**Instrument of African immigrants and white settlers in Johannesburg**

Aspects	African immigrants		White settlers	
	In favour	Not in favour	In favour	Not in favour
<b>1.Cultural dimension</b>				
• The use of African languages	√			√
• Christian religion		√	√	
• African names	√			√
• the use of novella to resist white hegemony	√			√
<b>2-Economic dimension</b>				
• Working in mines		√	√	



• Liquor seller		√	√	
• Deserting home land		√	√	
• Gang members		√		√
• Destruction of natural economies				
Total : out of 9 sub-dimensions				

### A checklist

This paper has adopted a check list as an instrument for data collection focusing on Africans immigrants and the white settlers in Johannesburg as portrayed in Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country. Furthermore, relevant extracts are drawn exclusively from the above-mentioned narrative

This study has also adopted the overall strategy of ideology expression. Van Dijk (2000. 44) expresses this in a conceptual square known as the ideological square.

- \*Emphasize positive things about us
- \*Emphasize negative things about them
- \*Emphasize negative things about us
- \*Emphasize positive things about them.

The data analysis of this study (Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country) is based on qualitative and quantitative analysis in CDA. The quantitative data is based on the instrument developed for this study and titled Dimension of the African immigrants and the white settlers in Johannesburg (DAI&WS). At least two raters complete the

checklists and the most agreed upon rate will be taken as the most acceptable rate.

The texts examine under the sub-dimension mentioned in the taxonomy of the research instrument (DAI&WS). The result of the tallying up of the checklists is tabulated and presented in graphs. The second instrument will be adopted to analyze the ideological expressions embedded in Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country. This instrument is based on taxonomy developed by (van Dijk, 2000).

Mayrin (2000) argues that content analysis analyses not only the manifest content of material, but also the latent (hidden) content as well. He distinguishes between levels of content; Themes and main ideas of text as primary content (manifest), and content information as a latent content.

Content analysis is defined as an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts. One of the problems of the qualitative data analysis is the reduction of material to manageable proportions (Cohen, et al, 2007).



### Instrument of African immigrants and white settlers in Johannesburg

Aspects	African immigrants		White settlers	
	In favour	Not in favour	In favour	Not in favour
<b>Dimensions</b>				
<b>1.Cultural dimension</b>				
• The use of African languages	√			√
• Christian religion		√	√	
• African names	√			√
• the use of novella to resist white hegemony	√			√
<b>2-Economic dimension</b>				
• Working in mines		√	√	
• Liquor seller		√	√	
• Deserting home land		√	√	
• Gang members		√		√
• Destruction of natural economies				
Total : out of 9 sub-dimensions				

**The following are the extracts drawn exclusively from Alan Paton’s novella**

A major concern of this study is to explore how African immigrants use linguistic means to resist the white domination. However, This has been illustrated in Alan Paton’s Cry, the beloved country when Msimangu (one of the characters in this novel) said in chapter five after he welcomes Kumalo to Johannesburg,

while discussing the troubles of Gertrude and Absalom (also characters in this novel).

1- “The white man has broken the tribe. And it is my belief- and again I ask your pardon- that it can’t be mended again- but the house that is broken, and the man that falls apart when the house is broken, these are the tragic things. That is why children break the law, and old white people are robbed and beaten.”

2- “I see only one hope for our country, and that is when white men and black men... desiring only the good of their country, come together to work for it ....I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they are turned to loving, they will find we are turned to hating.”

Msimangu speaks these words in chapter seven immediately after he and Kumalo meet with John.

3- “This is no time to talk of hedges and fields, or the beauties of any country...cry for the broken tribe, for the law and the custom that is gone. Aye, and cry aloud for the man who is dead, for the woman and children bereaved- cry, the beloved country, these things are not yet at an end.”

This quotation from chapter eleven, stand in contrast to the novel’s early tendency to dwell on the lush South African landscape and urges sorrow instead.

4- “The truth is that our civilization is not Christian; it is a tragic compound of great ideal and fearful practice, of high assurance and desperate anxiety, of loving charity and fearful clutching of possessions allow me a minute.....”

These words are written by Arther Jarvis and read by his father in chapter twenty-one.

5- “And now for the all people of Africa, the beloved country,(NKOSiSiKelel) (iAfrika,) God save Africa. But he would not see that salvation. It lay a far off, because men were afraid of it. Because to tell the truth, they were afraid of him, and his wife, and Msimangu, and the young demonstrator. And what was their evil in their desires, in their hunger? That man should walk up right in the land where they were born, and be free to use the fruits of the earth what was their evil in it? They were afraid because they were so few. And such fear could not be cast out, but by love.”These thoughts are part of the novel’s conclusion as Kumalo keeps his vigil on the mountain.

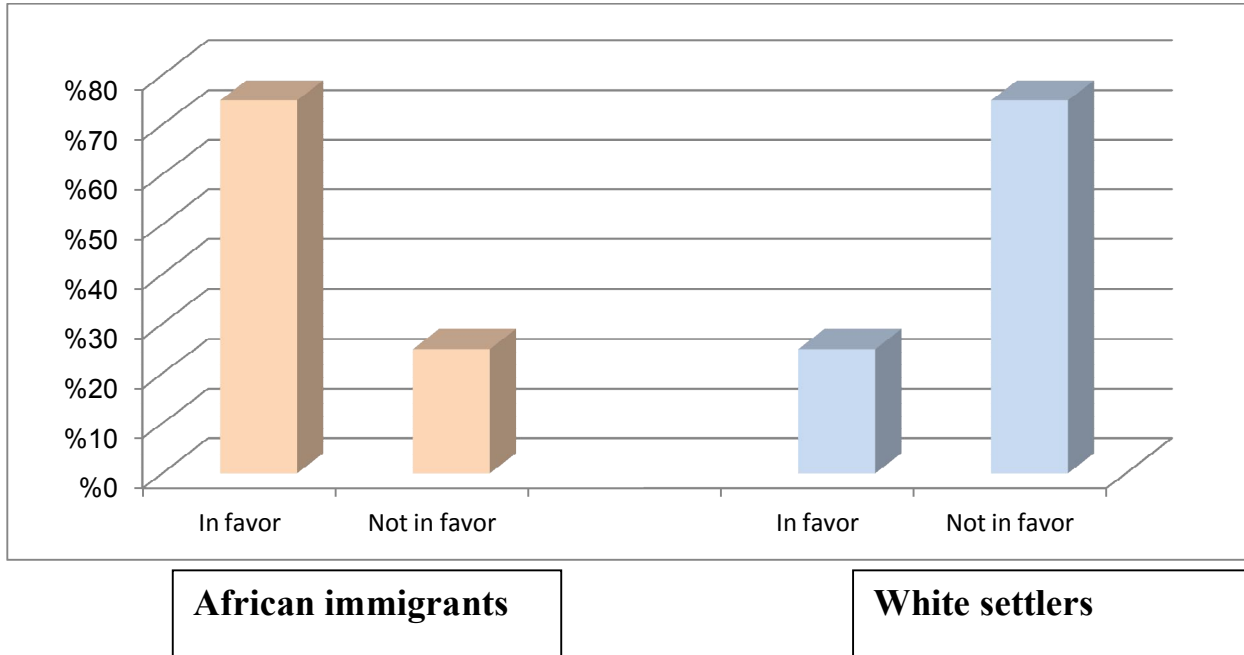
While Alan Paton is a white man he writes for the sake of black men. Some critics considered him as decolonization. He adopts the African language when he mentioned these expressions “Aye” “NOSiSikelel” “I Afrika” “umfudisi”. He satires some Christian people who say that it is God’s will that black South Africans remain unskilled workers. Trying to educate them would be an unchristian action.

### Results and discussion:

Table (1.1) the frequency distribution for the respondents according to economic dimension

Aspects	African immigrants		White settlers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
In favor	3	75%	1	25%
Not in favor	1	25%	3	75%
Total	4	100%	4	100%

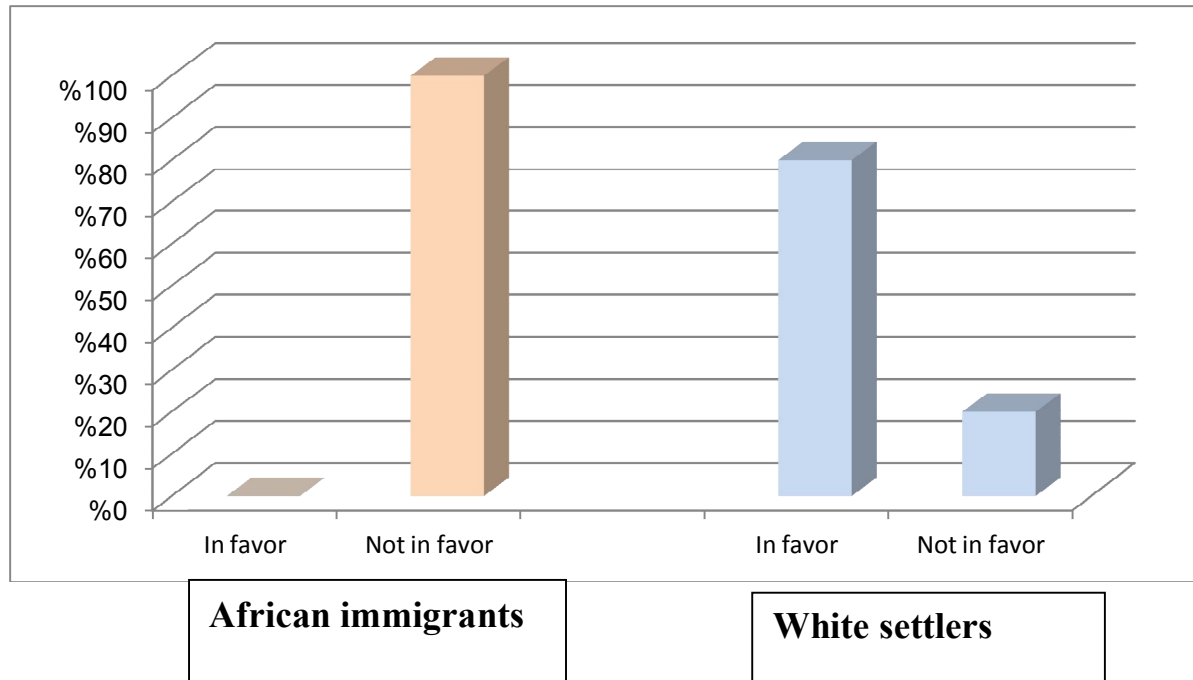




From the table and figure(1.1) it is obvious that most of the African immigrants are not in favour of the economic dimension, the number of those was (3) with percent (75%). and there was only (1) person with percent (25%) was not in favour. Also for the white settlers it is clear that 100% of them are not in favour of the economic dimension.

Table ( ) the frequency distribution for the respondents according to cultural dimension

Aspects	African immigrants		White settlers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<b>In favor</b>	0	0%	4	80%
<b>Not in favor</b>	5	100%	1	20%
<b>Total</b>	5	100%	5	100%

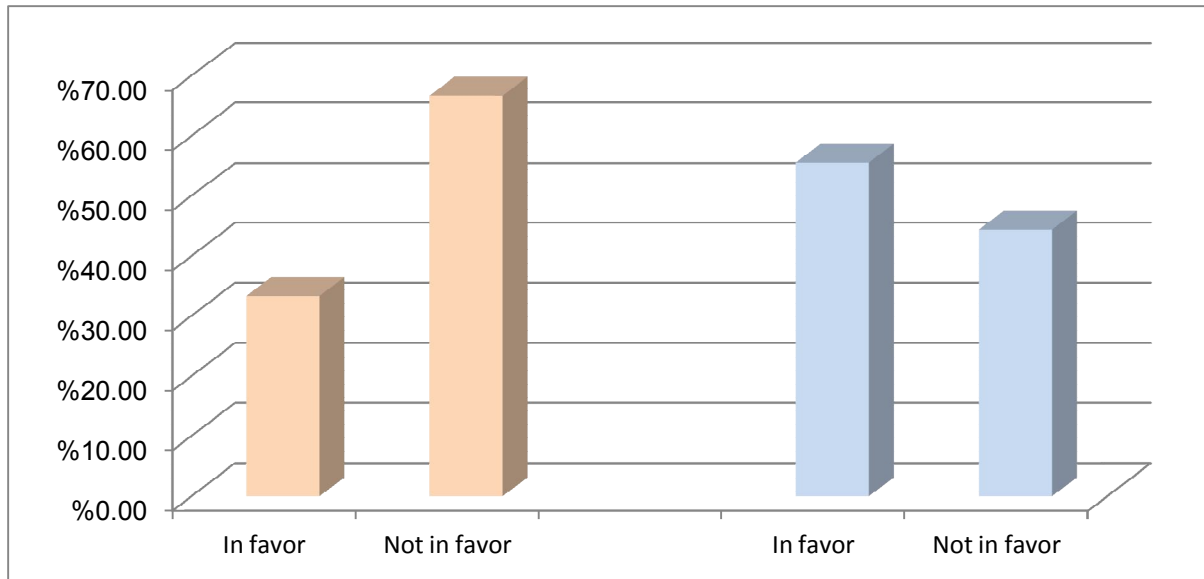


From the table and figure (1.2) re it's obvious that most of the African immigrants are not in favor of the **cultural dimension**, the number of those was (4) with percent (80%). and there was only (1) person with percent (20%) was in favor of the cultural dimension. Also for the white settlers it's clear that 60% of them are in favor of the cultural dimension.

**Table (1.2) the frequency distribution for the respondents according to overall dimensions**

Aspects	African immigrants		White settlers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<b>In favor</b>	3	33.3%	5	55.6%
<b>Not in favor</b>	6	66.7 %	4	44.4%
<b>Total</b>	9	100%	9	100%





**African immigrants**

**African immigrants**

The table above shows the distribution of the respondents for all dimensions

The following extracts are therefore drawn from (Alan Paton's Cry, the beloved country):

In the opening chapter Paton, there is an encounter between the Reverend Stephen Kumalo (SK) and the small child (SC). Here is:

(SC) "I bring a letter, **umfundisi**,"

(SK) "A letter, eh? Where did you get, my child?"

(SK) "From the store, **umfundisi**

Here the author integrates words from the native language may be to give a text a local flavor or identify himself with the suffering black South Africans. *Umfundisi* is a Zulu word for priest, a title of respect. So this is in favour of the Black South Africans' ethnic identity as portrayed by the Alan Paton in his novella.

1-"The white man has broken the tribe, and it is my belief- and again. I ask your pardon- that it can't be mended again. But the house that is broken, and the man that fall apart when the house is broken, these are the tragic things. That is why children break the law, and old white people are robbed and beaten."

Msimangu "a character in Alan Paton's Cry, the beloved country makes this statement in chapter five after he welcomes Kumalo to Johannesburg, while discussing the troubles of Gertrude and Absalom. Msimangu explains to Kumalo what he believes has gone wrong with their country; the tribal bonds have been broken, giving young men and women no reason to stay in their villages. These youth then go to Johannesburg when they inevitably lose their way and became morally corrupt.

**Cause and- Effect Relationship:**



Here, Alan Paton portrays Msimangu explicitly and uses the cause and-effect relationship that he perceives between the deterioration of black culture and crimes against whites. As such, he expresses the novel's central preoccupation with the matter of tribal structure and its important role in holding the country's black population together. As such this relationship does not favour the Black South Africans' ethnic identity. The deterioration of black culture and crimes against whites can be attributed to the economic system designed by the oppressive system in South Africa during the minority rule by Whites, which does not favour both communities as depicted by the writer. 2- "I see only one hope for our country, and that is when white men and black men....desiring only the good of their country, come together, to work for it....I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they are turned to loving they will find we are turned to hating." Msimangu speaks these words in chapter seven immediately after he and Kumalo meet with John. Msimangu doubts John's convictions, and instead of calling him a champion of justice, Msimangu calls him an example of power corrupting influence. Msimangu warns that power can corrupt black people as much as it corrupts white people. It is exactly this corruption that keeps South Africa in its predicament, and in this text Msimangu unveils his dream of a selfless Christian faith that will bind all people- black and white-together. Msimangu's fear that by the time "they" the whites turn to loving "we" the Whites these words are written by Arthur Jarvis and read by his father in chapter twenty-one

blacks- will have turned to hating calls attention to Kumalo's sense of the shift in black attitudes toward whites. Although Kumalo and Msimangu, members of an older generation, do not wish to cause strife, younger men such as Napoleon Letsitsi are less willing to tolerate white oppression. The willingness to be reconciled exists among both blacks and whites, Msimangu suggests, but never at the same time. Though Msimangu, Paton hints at all the sad irony of a nation in which justice and racial equality are stymied by poor timing rather than bad intentions. 3- "This is no time to talk of hedges and fields, or the beauties of any country .....cry for the broken tribe, for the law and the custom that is gone. Aye, and cry aloud for the man who is dead, for the women and children bereaved. Cry, the beloved country, these things are not yet at an end." This quotation from chapter eleven, stands in contrast to the novel's early tendency to dwell on the lush South African landscape and urges sorrow instead. By breaking out of this pattern and addressing us with such urgency, the narrator reflects how grave and ingrained South Africa's problems are the quotation's ominous last line is a note of prophetic foreshadowing of Absalom's death, and though it certainly reflects the pessimism Kumalo and his brethren may feel, it also informs us that this episode is one of many blows that South Africa has yet to endure. 4- "The truth is that our civilization is not Christian; it is a tragic compound of great ideal and fearful practice, of high assurance and desperate anxiety, of loving charity and fearful clutching of possessions. Allow me a minute....."

Arthur contrasts a Christianity that supports the notion of black people as inferior with a true



Christianity that rejects white superiority. Some Christians say, argue that it is God's will that black South Africans remain unskilled workers. Trying to educate them would be an unchristian action, and therefore wrong. Arther urges, however, that every human being has the right to develop his or her God given gifts. Because South Africa ignores this principle, Arther argues, it is not a truly Christian state.

#### **The Ideological Expression:**

The above text is consistent with what van Dijk (2000) has stated with regards to the ideological expression, that is, "emphasizing positive things about us and emphasizing negative things about them. Furthermore, here the white men paint a positive picture about themselves and negative picture about the Black men. Here Christian religion is used ideologically to suppress the Black majority in South Africa despite the fact that the vast majority of black south Africans in the novella have adopted the Christian names like John and Stephen.

The cut-off sentence that closes Arther's statement is especially poignant for his father, as these are the last words that Arther writes before going down stairs to his death. Ironically, Arther Jarvis is on the verge of envisioning a new South Africa when the problems of the old one cut him down. This tragic turn of events indicates the dire need for change.

"The white man has broken the tribe. And it is my belief that it cannot be mended again" Here, Msimangu utters this statement when he met the Reverend Stephen. This shows a clear indication of total destruction of

the natural economies as depicted by the writer as well as the very members of local community deserting their home land to seek for jobs in Johannesburg.

The youngsters joined the rank of gang members. This is consistent with what has been stated in Paton (1990: 19): Msimangu: "When the house is broken, these are the tragic things.

That is why children break the law and old white people are robbed and beaten"

#### **Euphemistic Language**

The one- to one meeting between Msimangu and Stephen regarding Kumalo's sister who becomes a liquor seller and a bad woman: the writer has employed a euphemistic language instead of using an unpleasant or offensive one: here is the extract: Msimangu said gravely "Yes, she is very sick. But it is not that sickness. It is another worse kind of sickness.

I sent for you firstly because she is a woman that is alone.... Msimangu went on to say: "She is one of the liquor sellers. This shows clearly that Stephen's sister who went to look for her husband has ended up in Johannesburg. Furthermore, stephen's brother has become a great politician in Johannesburg. Here is the extract:

#### **Ideological Stance Adopted by Kumalo's Brother towards the Church:**

Your brother has no use for the church any more. "He says that what God has no done for South Africa, man must do it" this is indicative of the ideological stance adopted by Kumalo's brother towards the church



because it has done little to elevate the suffering of black men in south Africa.

“Do you mind if I speak in English? I can speak these things better in English” Paton (1990: 26) This is an encounter between the two brothers in Johannesburg where John Kumalo, the great politician asked his brother to speak in English. This is indicative of the fact that his brother has transformed culturally. As such it favours the process of the white men domination in South Africa. This is ideology in making.

#### **Conclusion:**

Ethnic identity is a dynamic construct that evolves and changes in response to: firstly, the cultural realities or rather the ideological stance adopted by the oppressive white system minority regime in the South Africa as depicted in Alan Paton’ novella. However, the Black South Africans were forced to desert their homelands to seek for opportunities in the gold mines designed by the white men in South Africa. It is a known fact that man can be shaped by the environment he/ she lives in. So, Black men’s customs, religion, names, and language have undergone transformations. This was designed to cripple the Black men’s native economy as well as to advance the white men’s superiority. Finally, the Black men in South Africa managed to stage a strong resistance against the white

domination in South Africa but it was a weak one. The author of this novella has cleverly painted the picture of the two groups in clash as it is the task of critical analyst to decipher the literary text so as to unmask the hidden ideology adopted by the powerful class. Therefore, it vitally important to revisit the past so as to know the present as it is the case in South Africa.

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