

The Representation of Otherness in Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and Alexander Asigbo's *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*

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Abstract

The concept of otherness cuts across various disciplines – philosophy, psychoanalysis, sociology and literary theory. It has been there from the time of Plato and Aristotle, and it is a basic category of human consciousness in which one sets up the 'Other' against 'self'. This 'other' is seen as the unknown, the strange, and the aberration that must be feared and kept away as an outsider. Culture and difference are implicated in the construction of the majority and minority identities and the power relations between them, which result in 'otherness' in every human society. This research appropriates eclectic perspectives, to examine the representation of otherness in Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and Alex Asigbo's *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*. It further x-rays the essential characteristics or traits that give rise to the dichotomies of otherness, the perception of the 'Other' of his exclusion from power and resources of the society or group, and the consequences of his otherness in the two literary texts under evaluation.

**Introduction**

Otherness is a concept that exists originally in philosophy; but it is now seen in other disciplines like psychology, sociology, and literary theory. Otherness was first used by G.W.F Hegel as he sees the 'other' as the object of consciousness. As he argues in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, particularly in his 'Lordship and Bondage', where he develops his master-slave dialectic, he posits that the relationship of the master and slave, is fraught with a fierce-struggle unto death until the slave recognizes his master as his superior, and preferring life to death, accepts to subjugate himself to the authority of the victorious master (1910). As he puts it, when these two antagonists finally face each other after battle, only the master is recognizable. The slave, on the other hand, is now a dependent "thing", whose existence is shaped as the conquering other" (Hegel quoted in Ghandi 17). Jean-Paul Sartre explains further the position of the conquered slave whose inferior position is seen in, "the other holds a secret-the secret of what I am" (Sartre quoted in Gendzier 31).

Again, Jean-Paul Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness* explains how the world is altered by the appearance of another person. The French psychoanalyst, Jean Jacques Lacan, associates 'otherness' with the symbolic order in his rereading of Sigmund Freud's Oedipus Complex. Simone de Beauvoir sees otherness in the sex-gender relationship of men and women. In her rewriting of the Hegelian master-slave relationship, she sees the woman as the 'other' of man. Recently the Palestinian-born poet, writer and critic, Edward Waldie Said, claims that there is otherness in how the West perceives, represents, and defines the culture of the East or the Orientals (*Orientalism* 1978).

'The other', therefore, denotes a person other than 'self'; it is seen as the unknown, the strange, and an aberration that must be kept away. But one may wonder how the human race could build such a chasm between the individuals and the groups? In *Discourse on Inequality*, another philosopher claims that the human ancestors in their primitive settlements would have noticed the similarities and differences between them, which might be due to nature. Over time, they must have attached so much significance to the difference between them and:

In the ascription of value to certain characteristics above others, our ancestors would have transformed their natural variations into moral distinctions. They would have turned their attention upon talents of their attention upon the talents of their neighbours and also wished to be admired for their own skills. They would have come to envy or despise those persons with traits that were unlike the qualities they possessed themselves, and the unequal distribution of public esteem would thus have begun to set them apart in social hierarchies (Rousseau quoted in Robert Wokler 64).

In Jonathan Culler's analysis of "Identity, identification, and the subject", he maintains that the process of identity-formation not only foregrounds some differences and neglects others, but also "takes in internal difference or division and projects it as a difference between individuals or groups.... A difference within is denied and projected as a difference between" (*Literary Theory*, 1997:117).

It should be restated that 'otherness' is a category of human consciousness which exists in every human society or group; but the 'other' may bear different names in different geographical locations. They may be called the 'Aborigines' in Australia, the 'Maori' in New Zealand, the 'First Nations' in Canada, the 'Indigenous' in the United States of America, the 'Janajatis' in India, etc. Whatever name they are called is immaterial; what is material is the implication of their 'otherness' as the:

...specific histories of conflict and annihilation, the loss of language and neglect of intellectual traditions, the exclusion from knowledge transactions that the indigenous have to face; the question of representation as 'savages' from an external perspective; their deprivation of natural resources; denial of access to education and other measures of social justice; their excitement with life and the expression of their joy; and the creativity of the indigenous community (Devy, 2009: xiv).

There is ‘otherness’ whether in half of the English population, which Friedrich Engels describes as “unpropertied, absolutely poor people, a class which lives from hand to mouth, which multiplies rapidly” (quoted in Terrell Carver, 1981:14), or the Gando, the ex-slaves that live in Borgu in Southern Benin Republic, who are still seen as inferior human beings, even after several laws have prohibited slavery. The Gando are still “locked in an identity vacuum... and beset by an inferiority complex that together with internal status differences hindered their group cohesion and the emergence of a collective identity” (Hahonou, 2013:31). The same ‘otherness’ is reflected in the linguistic markings of the Northern Igbo proverbial discourse, which Opata says that though slavery has officially ended in Nigeria:

As long as the Igbo continue to refer to the descendants of the formerly enslaved by such terms, so long as the memories of slavery are continually nurtured through the recitation of proverbs, discriminatory practices against this group will also continue (2013:65).

The ‘other’ may be distinguished from another concept – the ‘outsider’ – seen in literature. Both the ‘other’ and the ‘outsider’ share the similarity of being the excluded and the demonized. However, the other has no choice in his exclusion, but the outsider has a choice as his ethics may have made him an outsider. Again, power relation is implicated in excluding one as the other while this is not the case for the outsider. It is believed that otherness is the process by which “societies and groups exclude ‘others’ whom they want to subordinate or who do not fit into their society.... However, it often involves the demonization and dehumanization of groups, which further justifies attempt to civilize and exploit these inferior others” (*Wikipedia*, April 2014). Michel Foucault has also argued that the process of ‘othering’ has everything to do with power, acting through knowledge to achieve a particular political agenda and its goal is domination (quoted in Garvy Gutting, 2005). Furthermore, Andrew Okolie Claims that:

Power is implicated here, and because groups do not have equal powers to define both self and the other, the consequences reflect these power differentials. Often notions of superiority and inferiority are embedded in particular identities (*Wikipedia* 2014).

Invariably, those who feel superior or the masters have the power to give values. Friedrich Nietzsche in his *Genealogy of Morality* postulates that the noble are those who are entitled to be the legislators of values because of their position. They establish their actions as good and those of the commoners or plebeians as evil. Out of the feeling of distance, they first seized the right to create values and to coin names for values (quoted in Michael Tanner 1994). The effect of the blind naming of values by those who are in power is that the other is stereotyped, and stereotyping is not only setting up of a false image, but the stereotyped becomes “the scapegoat of discriminatory practices” (Homi Bhabha, 1986: 169). Power, therefore, becomes not only the qualitative difference between those who have it, and those who must suffer it, but also “a cultural model that might be imitated and replicated” (Leela Ghandi *Postcolonial Theory 14*).

The ‘outsider’, on the other hand, shuns the struggle for political power. He is an individual who is aware of the rottenness in his society and offers unsolicited advice on the way to restore sanity and equilibrium to the decadent system. According to Chinyere

Nwahunanaya, "The outsider appears in various literatures in a variety of forms: the outcast, the alien, the rebel, the mad, the revolutionary radical, the unaccepted messiah, the quester, the cynic, and even the misanthrope" (2007:242).

Nevertheless, the 'other', like the slave in Hegelian master-slave relationship, is determined to recover his identity. According to Sartre, the revolutionary utterance of the slave in, "I lay claim to this being which I am; that is, I wish to recover it, or more exactly, I am the project of the recovery of my being" (*Being and Nothingness* 1969:35). It becomes obvious that with this assertion, the other is determined to liberate himself from the violent and oppressive system, which "produces its own special brands of victimhood and privilege" (Nandy, 1986:356). His struggle for selfhood, therefore, is not limited to a discursive level, it depends on "a day to day lived resistance, a struggle for meaning, which is in the world as well as on paper" (Boehmer, 1995: 222).

'Otherness', as we have seen, implies stigmatization demonization, dehumanization, and loss of selfhood and identity, and it is closely related to political subjectivity, which Leela Ghandi says, "has always been fraught by exclusions of gender, race, class, caste and religion" (1998:169). The focus of this research, therefore, is to show the representation of 'Otherness' as a result of race and class in Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and Alexander Asigbo's *The reign of Pascal Amusu* respectively. This is tenable through the library and internet material. But this should be preceded by the review of related and relevant literature to the topic of study.

It is evident that Western philosophers, cartographers, historians and creative writers have presented a dismal image of Africa and its people through textual discourse. They always present Africa and Africans as the 'Other' of the West and Westerners. And that is the reason Binyavanga Wainaina ironically suggests that if any writer wants the approval of the Westerners in the presentation of Africa and its people, he or she must present the continent as one country without any individuation. Again, it should be presented as "...hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving.... The Loyal Servant always behaves like a seven-year-old and needs a firm land..." (2014:305-306). In a bid to keep Africans as the other, even in their own land, Africans are stereotyped and branded as minors because of their skin pigmentation. In Chinyere Nwahunanya's critique of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* as an African tragic drama, which is concerned with the fate of man in his hostile environment, he suggests that the play focuses on various social problems, which the black South Africans face in their country as a result of the apartheid policy. He particularly states that the play is all about:

...the theme of 'independence', the individual's determination to rise above his problems and become a man in every sense of the word. Styles, we have seen, tries to become a man, an independent man, by establishing a photographic studio. In that way, he acquires some identity. This desire derives from the need to be liberated from socioeconomic and political shackles that limit individual freedom. Thus, Sizwe Bansi also wants some measure of independence. But in his own case, he wants to get a job from the whites and live in a white area while he works (2007:232).

But it is not as if Africa is a rosy place with an idyllic people. The 'othering' of the continent and its people is as a result of what the Westerners must have observed over

centuries of their contact with the people. Even “African writers have continued to critique the hearts of their nation’s, critique the state sponsored corruption, and yet marvel at the resilience of the people” (Egbunike, 2012:96).

And because African writers have not rested on their oars about the situation in the continent that places the continent and its people as the ‘other’, Gerald Ezirim and Peter Mbah beam their critical searchlight on the electoral process and political violence in Africa, particularly Nigeria, where they claim that despite the country’s democratization process, each election is marred by political violence. They recommend that for the country to experience a true democracy in 2015 general election, the following measures must be taken:

... a complete audit of the electoral and constitutional and legal frameworks, credible voters’ registration, manifest independence and integrity of the electoral management body, and significant behavioural change of the electorate and office-seekers for peaceful elections (2013 : 282).

Francisca Ojiugo Umeche also agrees with this view when she submits in her critical discourse that Nigeria is a conglomeration of more than two hundred and fifty ethnic nationalities forcefully yoked together by British colonizers for her economic convenience. She argues that more than fifty years of the country’s independence, the military have ruled for twenty-nine years. She claims that despite the fact that the country is under democratic governance, there is the absence of national integration, “with endless religious and ethnic related crisis, we can say, without fear of equivocation that Nigeria is not yet a nation. Put in another way, Nigeria is still on the part of attaining nationhood” (2013:157).

The military interregnum in the country through coups and counter-coups has not produced good leaders that can stop the country from drifting into anarchy. When Peter Onwudinjo reviews the overall image of the military in the poetry of some selected Nigerian poets, his submission is that:

... Nigerian poets generally have a negative opinion about the military rulership....The other side of the coin is the image of insensitive dictators who trampled on the rights and privileges of the Nigerian polity, and ruled with merciless impunity. Under such implacable dictatorships, the Nigerian polity became impoverished; the economy plummeted and political and social decay stared the nation in the face (2011:162).

Neither the military nor the political leaders have been able to save the country from total collapse. The social upheaval which is being experienced in every part of the country – kidnapping and robbery in the south and the scourge of Boko Haram in the northern part of Nigeria – is as a result of several decades of misrule of the nation by both military and political elites. Reacting to the Boko Haram violence that has emasculated the north-eastern part of Northern Nigeria, Abdulkareem Mohammed and Mohammed Haruna claim that the members of the sect see the cause of corruption and decadence in the society as a result of the secular and materialistic tendencies of Western education and civilization (*The Paradox of Boko Haram* 2010). And to Christian Ibanga and Bassey

Ukeme, Boko Haram is against the Northern Nigerian elite, whom they perceive as being “spiritually and morally corrupt, lacking in religious piety, and guilty of criminally enriching themselves rather than dedicating themselves to the Islamic ‘Umma’ Community” (2014:142). Despite the failure of the elite, African creative writers have inundated their fictive texts with the archetypal figure of the outsider. In Chinyere Nwahunanya’s critical discourse on the presence of the outsider in West African fiction, he suggests that the fictional characters – Okolo in Gabriel Okara’s *The Voice*, Sekoni in Wole Soyinka’s *The Interpreters*, Baako in Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Fragments* and Chigo Adaba in Ifeoma Okoye’s *Men Without Ears* – qualify as outsiders in the novels mentioned above. In each of these novels, the outsider is well-educated, with a clear vision, and has well-defined ideas with unflinching confidence; yet, he is:

Frequently rejected, he is branded ‘mad’ by people who do not want him, and he is often derisively recommended for the lunatic asylum, what the outsider seeks for is elusive though not unattainable; and the quest for this elusive ‘thing’ – usually values – alienates him from his society, especially since what he preaches in the course of his quest involves a total change from a morally objectionable way of life to a spiritually edifying one. The outsider may die at the end, or may survive as a frustrated person; but whatever the case the society is never the same after his crusade (2007:243).

In the textual analysis of the representation of ‘otherness’ in the succeeding pages, one can see how the process of ‘othering’, which is based on race in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and on class in *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*, two different plays from two different settings, is achieved through the process of social identification and the implications of such identification. And this is despite the statement of David Hume, one of the greatest English philosophers, that the “identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one” (63) and like our other ascriptions of identity proceeds from the “operation of the imagination.” (quoted in Ayer, 2000:63).

### **Textual Analysis of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Reign of Pascal Amusu***

It has been stated earlier that ‘otherness’ is a basic human category, which is also an object of consciousness, as one sets up the ‘other’ against ‘self’. The ‘other’ which has been taken notice of in several disciplines is a common figure in literature. In Athol Gungah’s *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and Alex Asigbo’s *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*, there is the literary representation of ‘otherness’, as a result of race and class respectively. In the first work under study, the South African blacks are treated as sub-humans and reduced to nothingness because of the ‘othering’ of the society. The consequences of the ‘otherness’ is that the apartheid policy promulgated several laws, which make it impossible for the black man to live a meaningful life and be a free citizen in his own country. As Sizwe Bansi, who has to do away with his name in order to use the stolen passbook of a dead man, Robert Zwelinzima, explains the situation, “A black man stay out trouble? Impossible, Bantu. Our skin is trouble” (43).

Because of the colour of their skin, every grown up South African must carry a passbook, and this passbook with the Native Identity Number is more important than the names of the black people. The lives of the blacks in the apartheid system and its policies

are reduced to numbers. It is because of the importance attached to the number that Sizwe has to take the dead man's passbook that bears the dead man's name in order to survive in a hostile environment. Buntu explains to him that "N-1-3-8-1-1-8-6-3", Zwelinzima's passbook number, he should "Burn that into your head, friend. You hear me? It's more important than your name" (39). Sizwe Bansi understands that the book controls his life and those of the other black South Africans because:

That bloody book...! People, do you know? No! wherever you go... it's that bloody book. You go to school, it goes too. Go to work, it goes too. Go to church and pray and sing lovely hymns, it sits there with you. Go to hospital to die, it lies there too (35)!

Apart from the passbook which is a second skin to the black South Africans and controls every aspect of their lives, there is also the Influx Control Law, which is used to abridge the movement or migration of the black South Africans from one part of the country to the other. Sizwe Bansi who lives in King Williams Town leaves his family there, and migrates to Port Elizabeth with the intention to get a better job. To his chagrin, he finds out that the lives of the black South Africans are gagged through the laws the white South Africans passed. Even though "Port Elizabeth is a big place, a very big place with lots of factories" (22); yet, Bansi is repatriated like an illegal alien in his own country because of Influx Control Law. He is given three days within which "to report to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, King William's Town" (24) from the date of the endorsement for the repatriation. The only time the Influx Control Law may be relaxed for the black migrant worker is if he is going to dig gold for the white man. Life as a miner has its own shortcomings, "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" (26).

Besides, the hurdle of Influx Control Law, a black South African, because of his race, has to have a Residence Permit for him to live in any of the townships. Their houses are always raided in order to evict illegal black squatters. Bansi who is staying with Zola is dragged out and driven to the administration office, where his book is endorsed for repatriation back to King William's Town. Without a Resident Permit, which will enable him to look for a job, no matter how menial, he has to either go back or change his identity to that of the dead Robert Zwelinzima in order to stay in Port Elizabeth. The late Zwelinzima has a Residence Permit, but where he lives is not an idyllic place, but is described by Buntu as a "Big bloody concentration camp with rows of things that look like train carriages. Six doors to each! Twelve people behind each door" (34)! The fact that one is born as a citizen of Port Elizabeth does not confer any advantage to him as he is still regarded as the 'other' of the white South African. Buntu tells Bansi his personal experiences of the consequences of their exclusion:

*Hai*, Sizwe! If I had to tell you the trouble I had before I could get the right stamps 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 (27)!

Moreover, the 'othering' of the black South Africans denies them decent jobs whether in the factory, or in government offices, working in the homes or offices of white

South Africans, they are employed as menial workers. Apart from working as miners for white men, where they are paid peanuts and the job a very dangerous one, black employees of blue-chip companies are not better off than the black miners. Styles has to leave his job at Ford factory in South Africa, where he works for six years, the company expands rapidly, but “Never in the pay-pocket”(4) of the black menial workers in the factory. Even in such a factory with very heavy machines, where “One mistake there and you’re in trouble” (5), there are no safety precautions for six years, except when Mr. Henry Ford is visiting the factory. Ironically, when he comes to the factory, he treats everyone like the ‘other’, including the white workers. Styles describes his visit thus, “One... two... three... OUT! Into the Galaxies and gone! That’s all. Didn’t talk to me, Mr. ‘Baas’ Bradley, line Supervisor, or anybody. He didn’t even look at the plant” (8-9)! Styles decides that he has to quit the job at the factory, if he has to be his own man and enjoy the freedom and independence that go with establishing his own photographic studio. He reflects on his life at the factory thus:

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. For what, Styles? Gold wrist-watch in twenty-five years time when they sign you off because you’re too old for anything any more? I was right. I took a good look at my life. What did I see? 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 call mine the six when I was sleeping (9)!

The black man that works in the government offices in apartheid South Africa is not better than the one that works either in the mine or the factory. All of them have been affected by their ‘othering’. A black South African comes into Styles photographic studio for a snapshot in celebration of his success as the holder of standard six certificate, third class. He excitedly narrates to Styles the story of his life, which ironically drips with the exclusion from power of the black population as the ‘other’ of the society. He says:

You see, Mr. Styles, I’m forty-eight years old. I work twenty-two years for the municipality and the foreman kept on saying to me if I want promotion to Boss-boy I must try to better my education. I didn’t write well, Mr. Styles. So I took a course with the Damelin Correspondence College. Seven years, Mr. Styles! At last I made it (14).

Even late Mr. Robert Zwelinzima, whose identity Bansi steals, is merely a chief messenger at Feltex. At least, Bansi is lucky that the late man’s passbook still has a subsisting work-seeker’s permit. Without the permit, the law denies him the freedom to be a hawker as he needs a Hawker’s Permit. It is also impossibility for him to be a domestic servant because the white ladies demand the following requirements in their newspaper advertisement, “Domestic vacancies. I want a garden-boy with good manners and a wide knowledge of seasons and flowers. Book in order”(25).

The ‘otherness’ of South African society thrust stigmatization on the black population. ‘Otherness’ as a result of race may be likened to imperialism and colonization, which have been described as not just simple acts of acquisition and accumulation, because “Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by the impressive ideological formations



which include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with that domination” (Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism* 8). In the fictive world of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, The black characters, even the adults among them, are regarded as ‘boys’. In other words, full-grown men are referred to as minors. The white general foreman, Mr. Bradley, tells the black menial labourers at the Ford factory, “Come on, boys! It’s got to be spotless” (4)! And in his instruction to Styles on how the black labourers should behave, he says, “Styles, tell the boys that when Mr. Henry Ford comes into the plant, I want them all to look happy” (7). The white women are not better than the men as can be read from the advertisement placements in the newspapers for “Job as a garden-boy” (25). The forty-eight-year-old menial labourer at the municipality has to labour for seven years to get a certificate in order to be promoted to a “Bass-boy” (14). White children also refer to the black men, no matter their age, as ‘boys’. Bansi insists he is a man, like Styles’ father, because “I’ve got a wife. I’ve got four children” (35), Buntu insists that the effect of the ‘otherness’ on the black man is enormous, because:

When the white man looked at you at the Labour Bureau, what did he see? A man with dignity or a 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? Or when his little child calls you ‘Boy’... you a man, circumcised with a wife and four children... isn’t that a ghost? Stop fooling yourself. All I’m saying is be a real ghost, if that is what they want, what they have turned us into (38).

The ‘other’ have been turned into a ghost by the apartheid system, and in order to survive his hostile environment where he is simply denoted as a number, Sizwe Bansi is persuaded to steal dead Robert Zwelinzima’s passbook, and to impersonate the late man’s identity. Bantu advises him to stay out of trouble, for if he gets into trouble and the police fingerprint him, “Sizwe Bansi will live again and you will have had it” (43). The ‘other’, therefore, lives in a society that reduces him to a criminal. Bansi and Buntu steal the dead man’s passbook and do not report his murder to the police, for the report would bring them trouble in a society where being alive only means trouble for them. The fate of the black man who is dispossessed of his identity, the passbook, is that “After three days nobody has identified him. Pauper’s Burial. Case closed” (36). And the “only time we’ll find peace is when they dig a hole for us and press our face into the earth” (28). As Styles who understands the enormous burden of the black South Africans have to bear as a result of their ‘otherness’ puts it:

You must understand one thing. We own nothing except ourselves. This world and its laws, allows us nothing, except ourselves. There is nothing we can leave behind when we die, except the memory of ourselves. I know what I’m talking about, friends. I had a father, and he died (16).

Styles actually knows what he is talking about having understood perfectly the apartheid laws that make the black South Africans the ‘other’ of the white race in South African. He had the experience of labouring for six years in Ford factory for a meager salary. He

had the gruesome experience of his father who fought in Egypt and in France “so that this country and all the others could Stay Free. When he came back they stripped him at the docks – his gun, his uniform, the dignity they’d allowed him for a few mad years because the world needed men to fight and be ready to sacrifice themselves for something called freedom” (17).

With these bitter experiences of the ‘othering’ in South Africa that deny them power and independence, Styles is to be seen as a revolutionary figure who lays claims to his selfhood, independence and manhood. Despite his father’s objection to his leaving the Ford factory, he asserts, “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”. Styles does not see “being a man” the way his father and others see it. Others see it at its denotative meaning – being a male as distinct from being a woman, being circumcised and being married. He sees it at its deeper and connotative meaning of independence and freedom. And in order to achieve this, he starts a photographic studio that fulfills two purposes. First, he will be an independent, professional photographer that earns his living and takes his own decisions. Second, his photographs of his people will immortalize them who have been denied power, demonized and written out of history. He knows that as the ‘other’ of the society, there is “nothing we can leave behind when we die, except the memory of ourselves” (16). The “Old man, the Grandfather” (14) in the family photography he has taken, who dies two days later after taking the photograph with his entire family, will be remembered by his family. The memory of the deceased will be remembered through the photograph which is also Styles’ experience after his father’s death, “when he died, in a rotten old suitcase amongst some of his old rags, I found that photograph. That’s all. That’s all I have from him” (17). In a society where the ‘other’ has nothing to bequeath on the family, where he can be killed at any time, and where being together with the family is a luxury they cannot afford, where no award for heroic deeds are given to him, a photograph is the only way of immortalizing one’s self. And this is the reason Sizwe Bansi has gone to take a photograph of himself at Styles’ studio, which he intends to send to his family at King William’s Town. Styles photographic studio, therefore, becomes a symbol of the assertion of his manhood, and immortalization of his people, the ‘other’ of white South Africans, who have been denied of meaningful identity, who have been demonized, who have been the unknown, the strange, and who have been pursued out of power in the relationship between the two races – black and white – in South Africa.

In Athol Fugard’s *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, the difference in race is implicated in ‘otherness’ where the white race, which is in the minority, defines the majority race, the black, as the ‘other’ and excludes them from power, and the resources of the society. In Alex Asigbo’s *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*, however, the root of otherness is class, that is, the class distinction between the military rulers who are in power and the civilians who are not in power. In Fugard’s play, the narration is done through the ‘other’, since it is the voice of the excluded that the reader is made to be aware of in the ‘othering’ of the South African society that denies the black South Africans power in their own country. On the contrary, the narration in Asigbo’s play is through the ‘self’ that excludes and defines the ‘other’. It is through the ‘self’, the military elite, which runs the country as a personal estate that the reader knows about the exclusion of the ‘other’ in the fictional Naijaland. The cabal and its cohorts detail their activities in coups and counter-coups which conform to an English philosopher’s opinion that:

There are various ways, including succession, conquests and the operations of constitutional laws, in which particular governments may be instituted. What is more important is the tenure of the power. No matter how a system of government comes into being, its mere persistence will generally be sufficient for its being regarded as legitimate (Hume quoted in Ayer, 2000:112).

Asigbo's *The Reign of Pascal Amusu* examines the cabal – military and civilian – that runs the fictive Naijaland and excludes everyone who is not part of their elitist class as the 'other' of the society. Naijaland, as it should be noted, is a metaphor for Nigeria and other third world countries, particularly African countries that are bugged by bad leadership, particularly military dictatorship. In the play, the military dictators – Masi, Shasha and Pascal Amusu – see themselves as the owners of the state, and the citizens are simply the 'other', whom they treat contemptuously. Each of them, except Salam, sees the government as his own possession and personal inheritance. Sasha says, "Walahi, life is good... especially when you're the ruler of a country like Naijaland.... Anyway, I am the ruler now.... I mean, duty is duty. I drove Sowole and his gang into exile. Walahi, they don't have right to demand that I hand over to Shiwo. Did I do the selection" (1-2)? And he accuses his deputy, Dayo, who is in detention, "I made you my second in command but you conspired with my enemies to try to dethrone me" (3-4). Besides, Pascal Amusu tells his subservient servant and agent, Odibo, "We own this country" (26).

The consequences of the exclusion of the 'other', particularly the civilian population from power, are many. One, the elitist class rules without the rule of law, and citizens are imprisoned or detained without trial. The stage opens with a makeshift prison where Amusu, Shiwo and Dayo are in a cage for their failed attempt to dethrone Sasha. Not only that the men are imprisoned, but they are assaulted and battered for Sasha, "Slaps him (Shiwo) through the cage" (3). It is obvious that the men would not be tried by a court-martial or a court for in a military regime, all the other arms of the government – legislature and judiciary – are emasculated and decrees promulgated to abrogate the constitutions and the powers of the two arms of government. In Naijaland under the military, the accused are at the mercy of the dictators, who are the complainants, the judges and the executioners of their sentences. Sasha tells Shiwo, "Anyway, by the time I'm through with you, you'll be begging for death" (3). And he also warns Dayo, "Walahi you're dead! And even all the traditional rulers of this country cannot save you. You're finished fa" (4). He further warns Pascal Amusu, "Walahi, not even all the religious leaders of the world can save you" (4). Anyone who opposes whoever that is in power would be executed as Sasha confides in the audience in his soliloquy, "Kai, Walahi, I say it now! I will deal summarily with anybody who opposes me" (7). Anybody who opposes them, including the civilians who are their critics are sent into exile or killed or detained. El-Ghandi, chief security officer to Sasha, reveals that, "As for Prof. Sowole and his gang, they can shout all they can from outside, his followers here are already cooling off in detention" (6-7). Even Pascal Amusu who is brought in a second time by the military cabal under a purported democratic election also crushes the opposition. The ruthlessness in his attitude to his critics and opponents is seen in his soliloquy:

We're determined to sustain the reform and sustain the regime. We will fish out and punish all trouble-makers. This regime is determined to remain in power in the interest of Naijaland. People must not test our

resolve. For those of you who are praying to see me go... my only reply is this... I dey kampe (16-17)!

Two, the military class which is in power does everything possible to perpetuate itself in power. As stated earlier, each of the military dictators sees the country as a personal estate and their leadership of the country as a 'throne', which they are ready to keep by all means. Masi cancels the election he conducted and sacks the chairman of the election committee. For the crises that follows his attempt to perpetuate himself in power, "Masi abdicates the throne" (2). Sasha also insists that he intends to elongate his tenure in office for, "Walahi, I will do my own selection and I will select myself by consensus" (2). Again Amusu sets up an agenda with the sole purpose of extending his tenure in office through unconstitutional means. He asks Sony Aninta, "I see... so has your plan to elongate my tenure not failed"? Ironically, where each military dictator's plan to extend his tenure on the throne fails, he hatches a plan that will enable his successor to be a person of his choice, whom he believes will be loyal to serve his interest instead of the interest of the electorate and the country. The loyalty of the ruler, therefore, is for the person who puts him in office. Sasha accuses Amusu, who is in detention for betrayal of loyalty, "You who ruled this land many years ago and we served you diligently. You turned your farm house into a meeting venue for the plotting of my downfall" (4). And Masi, who is the head of the cabal, and who has been short-changed by Amusu asks him angrily:

Now listen to me carefully retired General Pascal Amusu. I made you what you are today. I rescued you from the clutches of Sasha the Terror and rehabilitated you. I placed the crown on your head and now you have the guts to turn your back on me (19).

Masi eliminates Sasha and Shiwo, and installs Salam as the military head of state; he informs him, "Yes, it has been decided. You have six months in the first instance with a possible extension for another six months" (9). The same Masi, who is "called an evil genius" (12) by the populace because of his role in the enthronement of every military government cancels the democratic election that elected Shiwo as a president, instead of allowing the democratically-elected civilian government to run the country. During the crises, Masi abdicates the throne and, "To save the land that was on the brink of crises, a delegation came to me. I accepted to do the job..." (2).

The military elite ensure that the civilian population of Najaland is permanently kept out of power as the 'other' of the ruling class. Elections are cancelled to ensure that power does not shift to the civilian population. Masi cancels the election that would have made Shiwo the president of Najaland and installs another military head of state, Sasha, who says, "I paid my dues. I served Masi the Maradona faithfully..."(1). When Masi kills Sasha, he installs Salam, and instructs him, "... you're to organize a credible transition to a popular government" (9).

He further instructs Salam to free Dayo and "Pascal Amusu, rehabilitate him and hand over to him at the end of the transition. He will hand over to me at the end of his tenure" (11). In other words, power rotates between serving military heads of state and ex-military heads of state, without the civilian population, the 'other' of the Najaland, never heads the government as Shiwo, who is a symbol of democratic government in

Naijaland has his election cancelled, incarcerated and later killed because, “Shiwo posed the greatest danger to the status-quo as we know it in this country”(10).

When Pascal Amusu becomes the head of state through the election-selection conducted by Salam, Amusu reneges on the agreement he makes with them to hand over power to Masi. He fortifies his position by the establishment of Bureau for Financial Crimes Investigation, which “will be potent weapon against perceived political opponents” (15). He gets the services of Sony Aninta, a “political wizard” (14), to work for him. It is Sony Aninta who advises him to establish the bureau and to recommend Malam Rilwanu Lulu to head it. Fortifying himself with the pieces of advice from his two trusted agents – Odibo and Aninta – and through bribery and blackmail, he attempts to” railroad the legislature into approving a tenure elongation for him” (18). But when this move fails, he decides to use his power as the incumbent owner of the country, and the leader of the political party to disqualify some of his opponents, blackmail the others and bribe the corrupt ones in the country. He foists his “anointed candidate” (33) on the throne, despite the fact that he is very sick and Sony Aninta informs him, “Our anointed candidate collapsed while addressing a crowd of supporters” (37).

In his bid to ensure that the elite class clings on to power at the exclusion of the ordinary citizens who are already disenchanted with the situation in Naijaland, he sparks off a revolution for which Amusu blames his political adviser, Sony Aninta:

Can you imagine the chaos you’ve foisted on this country? Demonstrations are going on as we speak in at least ten states. Workers have downed tools and there are rumours of restiveness within the rank and file of the armed forces. I tell you, you’ve set us back at least fifty years (48)

The play ends with Amusu and Odibo fleeing the country as the ‘other’ of the country while the rank and file in the army embark on a mutiny, and the civilian population who have been excluded from power join the uprising to bring down the cabal that entrenches itself in power. The revolution by the ‘other’ is necessary in a country where the elite class that holds power is very corrupt and is ready to do anything in order to hold onto power.

The election that is calculated to foist an unpopular and sick candidate on Naijaland is a “multi-billion naira project” (45). Odibo also pays each of the judges that nullify the election that makes him the governor of his state three hundred million naira each. The police chief, who ought to have retired, is given “six months extension of service” (35), and the generals are given “contracts and barracks rehabilitation” (35). Apart from bribing the generals, El-Ghandi sees them as “...spineless and unprincipled... I mean some of them even stand to attention and salute me when I enter the room” (6). What happens in Naijaland is possible in a country where the generals, who are capable of checkmating the military leaders in power, are cowardly and servile as El-Ghandi is surprised that the generals salute him, a major, when he comes into the room where they are.

The elite class, in order to perpetuate themselves in power, also carpets the members of the legislature and the judiciary through intimidation and bribery. As if this is not enough, Masi puts it clearly that “all the power cabals in this country have always thrived on tribal sentiments” (10). Even the activist among the citizens, like Professor Sowole, “is still a tribal leader” (10). Because of tribalism, the masses are perpetually

divided and cannot unite to fight the elite class that cling to power. If tribal sentiments are not enough to ensure that the power cabal clings to power, terrorism will be used. Amusu instructs Sony Aninta to send a presidential jet to fly in a terrorist leader, Esuene Warriboko, and to “Offer him anything, as long as they step up their terrorism during the elections” (23). Besides, intrigues and scheming are not ruled out, as Amusu educates his political godson:

In the game of power, there are no rules. Promises are made to be broken. You only keep those that serve to further your interests, use every means at your disposal to achieve your objectives. Morality has no place in politics. If your brother constitutes an obstacle, crush him first and make up later. People can always be bought, so learn how to use the carrot and the stick. Finally, always keep a scapegoat to bear the blame when things go wrong (42).

Unfortunately, for the elite class, the recipe with which they keep power to themselves in Najaland fails to work when the ‘other’, the citizens who have been excluded from power reassert their selfhood. For instance, the judges whom Odibo claims to have given three hundred million each nullify his governorship election. The legislators received money from Pascal Amusu; yet, they stopped his third term agenda and Amusu is agitated that “... they insinuate that I embezzled money meant for the purchase of fuel in this country” (25). The ordinary soldiers in the barracks cannot also obey the instructions of their superiors, who have been paid to keep silent. They and the civilian population join in the uprising that ousted the despotic government run by an elite class and bedeviled with violence, corruption, ineptitude, alcoholism and sexual immorality. This is a revolution that frees them from their ‘otherness’.

### Conclusion

‘Otherness’ is a concept that cuts across several disciplines. It is a basic concept of human consciousness that involves a binary opposition, whereby the ‘self’ sets up the ‘other’ against itself. This ‘other’ is then seen as being strange, and is demonized because of perceived different traits or characteristics inherent in him or her. ‘Otherness’ is prevalent in every human society, and this is represented in Athol Fugard’s *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and Alex Asigbo’s *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*. These two plays written by different playwrights, from two different countries and at different times examine the ‘othering’ of two different fictive worlds – South Africa and the metaphorical Najaland. In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, the ‘otherness’ of the black population of South Africa is as a result of their race. In order to keep them apart and stigmatized, apartheid laws are put in place to deny them power and the resources of state. This is also the case in the fictional Najaland, where the citizens are excluded from power by the elite class that runs the state in turn, because power and resources of the state are exclusively theirs. In the two plays again, the ‘other’ assert their independence and personhood. In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, Styles’ establishment of a photographic studio that gives him manhood and selfhood and makes the heroic dreams of his people real is a revolutionary move. Also, Buntu and Bansi successfully stealing the identity of a dead man and giving it to Bansi, makes nonsense of the white man and his laws. In Asigbo’s *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*, the citizens of fictional Najaland, civilians and soldiers, cause a revolution that asserts their independence through mutiny and mass uprising that ousts the elite class and sends

them into exile. *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Reign of Pascal Amusu* present the 'other' that is virile and not ready to accept their 'otherness' as a given.

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