

The Active Agency of the Colonized In Athol Fugard’s “Blood Knot” and “Master Harold and the Boys”:

A Postcolonial Reading

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Abstract

The present study investigates two of Fugard’s (1932-) plays including *Master Harold and the Boys* as well as *Blood Knot* in the light of postcolonial reading. This is a bold attempt to show that colonialism is not simply a straightforward oppression of the colonized by the colonizer. The ideas of a ranking postcolonial theorist have been employed on *Blood Knot* and *Master Harold and the Boys*. Bhabha’s ideas of mimicry, stereotype, and language as a way in which colonized people have resisted the power of colonizer are applied on the plays. The central theme in Athol Fugard’s plays is fighting against the conspiracy of silence, giving voice to the voiceless and to put it simply, as the name of the thesis suggests, “ Active agency of colonized” that are represented through the main theories of Bhabha.

As we embarked on the aspect of language in *Master Harold and the boys*, the two black characters do not speak the dominant English language. They own a unique language combined with the sweetness of their culture which can be considered, as Fugard wishes, as a form of defiance and being active in making their own destiny, or not dominated or subjugated by the white power that is represented even in their language. Most of the dialogues, as the examples in chapter 3 illustrate, are in the form of songs which can be an

indication of the rich culture of Blacks that is highly praised by Fugard while putting the words into his character's mouth.

Later in chapter three, the concept of "stereotype" is elaborated, in which racist joke no more acts as an indication of the inferiority of the black but as a form of anxiety for the whites and the realization that the difference between the white and black is omitted.

Another concept that intensifies the active agency of the colonized is "Mimicry". Mimicry" is an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas. This exaggeration means that mimicry is repetition with difference, and so it is not evidence of the colonized's servitude. Mimicry reflects both the desire of colonized individuals to be accepted by the colonizing culture and the shame experienced by colonized individuals concerning their own culture, which they were expected to see as inferior.

Key words: Postcolonialism, Mimicry, Stereotype, Athol Fugard, Bhabha

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