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**Race and Class Struggle in Peter Abrahams'
*Mine Boy***

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Dedication

Praise and prayer to Allah and peace be upon his Messenger Mohamed.

I dedicate this work

To my parents ..where life begins.. and love never ends

To my brothers and sisters .. who held me when i feel lost .. the support that stood by me at any cost

To my nieces and nephews .. here together or miles apart .. they always stay in my heart

To all my family

To my friends .. who will always care .. love, respect, and trust are things we share

To my partner .. who has given me strength to carry on .. and has offered me hand to hold on

Smail Taieb REZIKI

Dedication

I dedicate this work

To my mother.. who gave me life and became my dearest .. my greatest teacher of compassion, love, she is simply the best

To my father.. I thought to myself, that space is too small.. to write down who is he, to cover it all.

To my brothers and sisters .. together or apart, we still best friends.. ready to face whatever life sends

To all my family

To my friends.. those stars that twinkle and glow.. like oceans that gently flow.

To my partner .. words couldn't be louder.. I couldn't be any prouder

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Abstract

This dissertation endeavors to study Peter Henry Abraham's novel *Mine Boy* in order to investigate how race and social class distorted the lives of many Black South Africans. This work pays special attention to a black main character who is a miner who struggles to discover the significance of his life and to analyze how black people are treated badly as a result of their skin color ,and how do Race and class affect their lives .The results of this research have revealed that race determines one's social class , one's fate and class position, so white people gave themselves the opportunity to oppress blacks who have accepted the racist discrimination without any an objection or an attempt to make a change, Additionally Abrahams manipulates the character of Xuma to convey the readers and the society and call them to revolt against the racial discrimination that the blacks were living in by telling the story of Xuma who was able to get rid of his blackness and class position which were the main cause of being oppressed and he was able to fulfill his of making the black voice heard after many struggles.

Key words: Race, Racism, Class

List of Abbreviations

NP: National Party

ANC: African National Congress

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

No one can ignore the fact that the South African society was characterised by the separation between the races. Especially after the Apartheid era, when the government applied such a segregationist, racist system which forces some different racial groups to live separately and to develop separately, grossly and unequally, simply because they did not share the same skin color of the rulers who are the whites, those latter by their race gave themselves the opportunity to control the society since they are in the upper class, however, the poor black people were oppressed politically, socially, and economically, by the whites since they belong to the lower class.

Many black and white writers were affected by Apartheid policy, they used it as a major theme in their literary works. Peter Abrahams is one of South Africa's most prominent writers who dealt with political and social issues, especially with racism. His novel *Mine Boy* (1946), which we are about to analyse in this work, is to look at what life as a black person meant in South African society during the days of Apartheid. It is one of the first works to bring Abrahams to critical attention

Motivation

What pushes us to write this modest dissertation, is to show the struggle which Africans live to attain equal rights and to be treated as human beings with dignity. To expose the bad conditions and the obstacles that face the blacks because of their race and class positions, and to show how a black poor miner was able to get rid of that and made a change, that what might inspire many people to make their voice heard without being afraid of facing difficulties while asking for their rights. In addition to that, the novel *Mine Boy* is an interesting book, one of the first books to look at what does it mean to live as blacks in South African society during the days of Apartheid.

Aims of the Study

The aim of this research is to study the way in which the writer portrays the different races in South Africa at the time of the Apartheid. We intend to dive into the depths of the South African society to identify the impact of the Apartheid policy on the South African society and to examine the life of South African people in addition to the difficult conditions they had to endure. Besides, it can be helpful because it improves readers understanding of the Apartheid Policy and helps them explore the stereotypes and institutions that discriminate against working-class black Africans.

Research Questions

This study is based on the following questions:

1. How does Abrahams address the plight of the black man in Apartheid South Africa and make us re-live the history in a visual way?
2. How can he define the relationship between race and class?
3. To what extent does Abrahams manipulate his characters to convey his views about his society?

Statement of the Problem

South Africa is known by the segregation between races by the Apartheid, the racist regime that divided South African society into classes, thus whites gave themselves to oppress white people and treat them according to their race and class position.

Methodology

In analysing this novel, we have used two methods, the descriptive method in the first chapter; and the analytical for the second one, and we are going to use the critical concepts of Marxist literary theory, and critical race theory since they are related to the social class and race which our work is about.

The Plan

the work will be divided into two main chapters, a theoretical chapter, devoted to a brief reading in the history and literature of South Africa, with an overview of the writer's life, then we intend to explain the concepts: Race, Racism and Social Classes. Then we will move to the theoretical frame that concerns our study to identify Marxism and critical race theories.

A practical chapter; in which we make a review of Peter Abrahams' novel, *Mine Boy*; then we stylistically trace race and class in the novel, passing through phases of most events of the story; trying to find a relationship between them. And how the writer linked between the two concepts to serve a point of view or to depict a reality.

CHAPTER I

Historical Context

Introduction

South Africa is one of the most diverse countries in the African continent. The word diversity may be positive in this context, but it is difficult to see how diversity can be used to describe South African society, with the artificial differences and barriers between people in a single society. This is what we will deal with to understand South African experience.

Therefore, in this chapter, we start with a brief reading of South African history and literature focusing on the Apartheid era and literature, with an overview of the writer and his literary journey. Then, we define and explain Race and Social class and Racism concepts. After that, we discuss the Critical Race theory and Marxism.

1. History of South Africa

We will address the most important historical events focusing on the Apartheid period, which is an essential stage in the history of South Africa, and it is our concern. The history of South Africa is very rich and complex because of the juxtaposition of different nations and cultures since prehistoric times. The Bushmen have been there for at least 25,000 years and the Bantu for at least 1,500 years. They have generally coexisted peacefully.

The written history began with the arrival of the Europeans, starting with the Portuguese who decided not to colonize the region, leaving the place to the Dutch. The British disputed their preeminence till the end of the eighteenth century, leading two wars.

The victorious British suppressed the Boer States, and created the South African Union, it included Cape Town, Natal, Orange and Transvaal. A general governor represented the British sovereign, but there was a local government, the dominion system.

The twentieth century is marked by a legislative system of separation, segregation and racial discrimination, followed by the election of Nelson Mandela, the first black president of South Africa, after the country's first universal multiracial elections.

1.1. The Segregation Era

For forty years, a minority of whites imposed their segregationist laws on a majority of blacks, rejecting the country on the ban of nations. They had only one goal, to separate communities. Thus, they obliged each group to reside in predefined urban areas. Housing, services and public places were separated; The "Europeans Only", "Native only" and "Colored Only" signs became mandatory. It was a policy to allow a separate development of the various communities in the country. In fact, it was a racist ideology, based on a myth: whites would be the chosen people and would be threatened by the much larger black population.

Moreover, the country was divided into several geographically distinct areas to which each racial group was attached. Black areas were supposed to acquire economic and administrative autonomy. But they covered only 13% of the territory and they were therefore overcrowded. Worse than that, they were the poorest lands, without natural wealth and no industry. They were obliged to seek jobs from white employers with no rights, low pay, and harsh treatment. Thompson said: "Only whites were permitted to hold skilled jobs in the mining industry ... Africans would have to seek jobs from white employers, that their jobs would be the lowest paid available, and that without the right to vote they could do little to change the laws that excluded them from the political process and relegated them to the bottom of the economy" (163-165).

Despite the efforts of The Afrikaner nationalist movement, that built around the National Party, and The Black Nationalist movement, led primarily by the African

National Congress, that addressed the myriad injustices against black South Africans. However, it was further aggravated.

1.2. The Apartheid Regime (separateness)

Translated from Afrikaans, meaning 'apartness', Apartheid was the ideology supported by the National Party (NP) government and was introduced in South Africa in 1948. Apartheid called for the separate development of the different racial groups in South Africa. On paper, it appeared to call for equal development and freedom of cultural expression, but the way it was implemented made this impossible. Apartheid made laws that forced the different racial groups to live separately, develop separately, and grossly unequally too. It tried to stop all inter-marriage and social integration between racial groups, Hellmann described Apartheid as “a process of continually increasing separation in all spheres of living, and this takes place even when there is no territorial separation” (04).

In addition, Apartheid was a social system which severely disadvantaged the majority of the population, simply because they did not share the skin color of the rulers. Many were kept just above destitution because they were 'non-white'.

The South African National Party supported racial diversity, Thompson wrote: “The political success of the National Party in the general election was a turning point in the South African history; the National Party used its control of the government to fulfill Afrikaner ethnic goals as well as white racial goals” (188). With the introduction of Apartheid, the NP extended and systematized many of the features of entrenched racial discrimination into a state policy of white supremacy. Every person resident in South Africa was legally assigned, largely on the basis of appearance, to one racial group-white, African, colored, or Asian.

South Africa was proclaimed to be a white man's country in which members of other racial groups would never receive full political rights. Coloreds and Asians were to

be excluded from South African politics. By law, all races were to have separate living areas and separate amenities, there was to be no mixing.

Education was to be provided according to the roles that people were expected to play in society. In that regard, Hendrik F. Verwoerd, the leading ideologue of Apartheid and prime minister of South Africa from 1958 until his assassination in 1966, stated that Africans would be making a big mistake, if they thought that they would live an adult life under a policy of equal rights. Ross, Kelk and Nasson stated: "as Verwoerd put it... all educational institutions were to be racially segregated" (340).

Expecting considerable opposition to policies that would forever exclude the black majority from any role in national politics, and from any job other than that of unskilled and low-paid laborer; the NP government greatly enlarged police powers. People campaigning to repeal or to modify any law would be presumed guilty of one of several crimes until they could prove their innocence.

The government could list, or ban, individuals, preventing them from attending public meetings, prohibiting them from belonging to certain organizations, and subjecting them to lengthy periods of house arrest.

The government legislated lot of acts to tighten the siege on blacks like the Population Registration Act (1950) that authorized racial classification, the Group Areas Act that authorized residential segregation, The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Act (1950) that created legal boundaries between the races by making marriage and sexual relations illegal across the color line, The Group Areas Act (1950) and its many subsequent amendments, by which the government divided urban areas into zones where members of one specified race alone could live and work and so many other acts (Byrnes 55-62).

Moreover, in the field of security legislations, the government legislated the Suppression of Communism Act (1950), which “defined communism in sweeping terms and gave the minister of justice summary powers over anyone who in his opinion was likely to further any of the aims of communism” (Thompson 198). It was the cruelest and racist act Byrnes said: “The act allowed the minister of justice to list members of such organizations and to ban them, usually for five-year periods, from public office, from attending public meetings, or from being in any specified area of South Africa” (57).

Since 1960, strikes have been taking place all over South Africa in an unprecedented manner. A new generation of "outlaws of Apartheid" declared their challenge to the authorities of the racist government on a large scale. Consequently, the government has stepped up its armed repression, deploying its forces to rein in the overwhelming majority of the South African people who have opposed the laws and procedures of Apartheid (Peterson 23).

Blacks rose up in protest against Apartheid in the 1950s. Led by Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, the African National Congress (ANC) sought to broaden its base of support and to impede the implementation of Apartheid by calling for mass noncompliance with the new laws. Working together with white, colored, and Indian opponents of Apartheid, the ANC encouraged people to burn their passes, identity documents, then required of all African males and soon to be required of all African females in South Africa (Byrnes 55).

The ANC also urged people to refuse to use the separate amenities, such as public toilets, park benches, and entrances to post offices, set aside for them, to use those intended for whites instead, and to boycott discriminatory employers and institutions. Such tactics, all of them purposely nonviolent, although not successful in changing NP policies, did

attract large-scale support and won new members for the ANC (Byrnes 56). Associations and human rights organizations have also played an important role in change policies.

In February 1991, South African President Frederik De Klerk announced his intention to end the Apartheid regime that made racial segregation the keystone of the political, social and economic life of the country. Four months later, the main laws that founded white domination were abolished by Parliament, and South Africa found a place among nations. The abolition of Apartheid is the result of a combination of factors, the pressures exerted by the international community on the South African, and the struggle against racial discrimination.

1.3. The New South Africa

Although it is the most recent African country, despite the difficulties that we have seen before, but it is rich in vibrant culture and diverse wildlife, which explains why South Africa is a special place, with a rare mix of modern development, African culture and tourist attractions, as well as unbridled wildlife that will never be seen anywhere else in the world. Its economy is the largest and most developed among all African countries, and the modern infrastructure is found in almost all parts of the country. South Africa has the largest population of European descent in Africa, the largest Indian population outside Asia, and the largest black-skinned community in Africa, making it one of the most diverse countries in the African continent.

2. South African Literature

The multiculturalism within the borders of South Africa, the diversity of Western and African cultural traditions, contributed to build a rich literary heritage.

South Africa has one of the world's most extensively creolized societies: Apartheid was a last attempt to fly in the face of that reality. Each of South Africa's four interwoven communities – Khoisan, Nguni–Sotho, Anglo-Afrikaner, and Indian – has an oral and

literary tradition of its own, and each tradition is a strand in a web of literary forms around the world (Heywood vii).

South Africa has a rich oral tradition. Stories, myths, songs, proverbs, riddles and poems were passed from one tribe to another and from generation to generation through the oral narrative. The narrator was a dignified person in his tribe, possessing a special rhetorical ability. This form of expression goes back centuries and has been a device for sharing advice and remembering history.

Many people have wondered how a country with such beauty, complexity, conflict and tragedy has not inspired more literary giants. South Africa's leading novelist, Nobel Prize winner, Nadine Gordimer, gives one explanation: "Living in a society that has been as deeply and calculatedly compartmentalized as South Africa's has been under the color bar, the writer's potential has unscalable limitations" (Killam 52).

South Africa populated by diverse ethnic and language groups; it has a distinctive literature in many African languages as well as Afrikaans and English.

2.1 In Afrikaans

Most of the South African literature is written in Afrikaans (a vernacular derived from Dutch) , The romantic landscape poems , possibly the most brilliant and most frequently anthologized is *Winternag* (Winter Night), by Eug`ene Marais (Heywood 43). The Afrikaans prose writing made important strides in South African literature. The most important Afrikaans novelists were Etienne Leroux and André P. Brink and Sarah Gertrude Millin.

2.2 In English

South African literature in English effectively began in the late 19th century. There are many literary works written in South Africa. We mention, Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, *Tales from a Troubled*

Nation), Laurens Van Der Post's Story *Like the Wind*, Nadine Gordimer's *The Laying Days*, and the dramatist Athol Fugard's *The Blood Knot*, *My Children*, *My Africa*.

Also, much of South Africa's literature was written by South Africans living abroad, like Peter Abrahams who left South Africa at the age of 20. Abrahams focused on everything. He was first to find a fictional voice for the whole of South African society. In reverse order of the formation of the communities they explored, *Path of Thunder* (1948), *Wild Conquest* (1951), and *Mine Boy* (1946), recast the white literary interpretation of the modern mining (Heywood 126). This latter is the subject of our study.

3. Peter Henry Abrahams: Biography

Peter Abrahams, in full Peter Henry Abrahams Deras, is a black writer who was born on March 3rd, 1919, in Vrededorp, near Johannesburg, South Africa. His father James Henry Abrahams Deras was an Ethiopian who settled in Johannesburg to work in the gold mines, His mother Angelina Duplessis, was colored. His father died when Peter was quiet young; however, his education was interrupted by the depression and the injustice treatment that he faced as a black pupil. That's why he left the college, and was forced to seek work. He said in *Tell Freedom*, "With Shakespeare and poetry, a new world was born, new dreams, new desires, a new self-consciousness. I desired to know myself in terms of the new standards set by these books. I lived in two worlds, the world of Vrederop and the world of these books, and somehow both were equally real" (Abrahams 189).

He became determined to go to school, in *Tell Freedom* he stated: "when I can read and write I will make stories like that..." (173). So, the turning point in Abrahams' life comes when he reads the first story, learning introduced him into a new world, he finished a three years courses at colored school in Vrederop, then, he won a scholarship to the Diocesan Training College in Grace Dieu, near Pietersburg, where he began contributing poems to the magazine *Bantu world*, while working there he encountered the work of a

black American writers. He wrote in the *Tell Freedom* memories of Africa 1954, "I became a nationalist, a color nationalist through the writings of men and women who lived a world away from me. to them I owe a great debt for crystallizing my vague yearning to write and for showing me the long dream was attainable" (84).

Abrahams later studied at ST. Peter's, an elite school, one of the best South African schools for non-whites only. There, Abrahams had an experience which shaped his vision as a writer. He was exposed to works of African American authors such as: Harlem Renaissance as Langston Hughes, few time later, he was introduced to the doctrines of Marxism, he realizes the humanity of even white people, and became a Marxist, a public figure and also get involved into many political protests, he says in *Tell Freedom*: "I turned the pages of the New Negro, these poems and stories were written by Negroes, something burst deep inside me. The world could never again belong to the white people, never again" (226).

In 1939 Abrahams left South Africa with his wife Daphne, and went to England. He lived there for over ten years, where he works as a journalist on *The Daily Worker*, the official newspaper of the British communist party, from being a hopeful journalist Abrahams took the first step to be a writer. In 1956, he moved to Jamaica where started to write novels and gain more celebrity to fulfill his dream of making his voice heard. On 18 January 2017, Abrahams aged 97 years old, was found dead in his home in Saint Andrew Parish, Jamaica. A forensic examination proved that he was a victim of foul play.

Many of his earlier works were reissued or translated into other languages, they were to depict the dehumanizing effect of racism in South Africa on black and mixed-race, Abrahams is one of the most famous representatives of the Apartheid literature.

4. Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Literature

South Africa, as its nickname of "Rainbow" nation suggests, hosts a great diversity of cultures. Despite Apartheid that has stifled some of the creativity and expressiveness of the South African people, it has seen the birth of great names in literature, music, and arts, who rose up against Apartheid, from exile, or inside with covered words.

During the final years of the Apartheid era and subsequent transition to democracy, South African writers responded to the ever-present political turmoil and its daily effects on the people of that country. They chronicled or satirized state-enforced racism and explored the possibilities of resistance. Apartheid was abolished on June 30, 1991, and the great South African writers still have their place, such as Nadine Gordimer, JM Coetzee, André Brink, and Peter Abrahams who are the most famous representatives of the Apartheid literature.

Now that Apartheid is over, writers are questioning the conception of reconciliation and rebuilding. Literature that embraces these issues has helped to shape definitions of ethnic identity and national unity. Apartheid and post-Apartheid literature have become political narratives initiating a closer look at the juxtaposition of writing and ethics.

Authors discuss Apartheid in their writings in different ways, although you may not find a mention of the word Apartheid but it is still a prominent theme.

5. Race

5.1. Definition of Race

Race is a concept used to categorize humans into groups, called races or racial groups, and with distinct characteristics they are defined by the common genetic or biological characteristics and identity, which binds its members to each other on common grounds, it is recognized by others as a distinct group with common cultural, linguistic and

religious foundations, behavioral characteristics, ethnicity or race is what distinguishes individuals in a particular geographical area.

There are many interpretations made by a number of linguists and anthropologists and biologists to define the word "race" and to know its origin. They argue that racial categories correlate with biological traits, Marks pointed out: "... go to examine the genetic differences within the human species and how they have intersected with our attempts to classify people into races. Geneticists have attempted to track the evolutionary history of our species" (05). So, race is known as a group of individuals, share one or several certain genetic markers and features that distinguish them from other groups of the same species.

As we may note, this definition is flexible, as it does not specify which features are reliable to classify a particular species into ethnic groups, In addition, these features are not completely fixed, and vary from one individual to another, making the distinction between races a complex and unsafe subject.

Modern studies considered racial categories as socially constructed. The fact that race is socially constructed does not diminish its importance. They claim that race is much more important than social class in explaining inequality (Schaefer 74).

Paltridge and Starfield defined Race as "...socially constructed notion" (486). The word is used to categorize humans into large and distinct groups. So Race has nothing to do with genetic or biological taxonomic sense. A concept related to race is ethnicity. While race has a phenotypical undertone, ethnicity has to do with cultural traits such as language, religion, customs, and so on (Paltridge and Starfield 486). Thus, race is not intrinsic to human beings but rather an identity created to make meaning in a social context.

6. Social Class

6.1. Definition of Social Class

Social class is a set of concepts in social sciences and political theory focusing on models of social hierarchy, in which individuals and groups are classified on the basis of esteem and prestige, acquired mainly through economic success and accumulation of wealth.

The term *class* is etymologically derived from the Latin *Classis* which was used by census takers to categorize citizens by wealth in order to determine military service obligations (Abdellatif 79).

The social construction is, in many ways, too difficult to present as similar as the constructed nature of social categories such as gender or race. Rothenberg wrote:

The social construction of class is analogous, but not identical, to that of race and gender. Differences between rich and poor, which result from particular ways of structuring the economy, are socially constructed as innate differences among people. These differences are then used to rationalize or justify the unequal distribution of wealth and power that results from economic decisions made to perpetuate privilege. (09)

Class is a social and cultural formation which cannot be defined abstractly, or in isolation, but only in terms of relationships with other classes. A class is a very loosely defined body of people who share the same categories of interests, social experiences, traditions and value system. Class itself is not a thing; it is a happening (Gordon 97).

Charlesworth provides a philosophical definition. He wrote “class is a circumscribed way of knowing the world that they did not choose, rather they grew to live within it, they absorbed it as the space absorbed them in demanding that they comport themselves in a certain manner in order to be successful within its parameters” (64).

Definitions of social classes reflect a number of sociological perspectives, informed by anthropology, economics, psychology and sociology. The major perspectives historically have been Marxism and structural functionalism. The common stratum model of class divides society into a simple hierarchy of working class, middle class and upper class (Abdellatif 79). As it is informally recognized in many societies, there are three common social classes: Upper class, Middle class, and the Lower class.

7. Race and Class

There are many socioeconomic differences between Whites, Blacks, and those with mixed ancestry. Whites are five times more likely to complete college than those of mixed ancestry and nine times more likely to do so than Blacks. The variations between the three major groupings are similar in the proportion in professions and income levels, as well as the likelihood of youth or adults being detained by police. Socioeconomic data have uniformly confirmed that race is correlated with levels of educational attainment, occupations, income, poverty rates, and housing quality. Blacks are approximately 45% of the population, but are 66% of those in poverty or extreme poverty. Blacks make up only 15% of the top decile of income groups, but 70% of the poorest decile. Even when Blacks have professional positions, they do not receive equal salaries. Blacks are twice as likely to be illiterate and to live in houses without running water, sanitation, and trash collection. Skin color affects life chances. The socioeconomic gap between Whites and people of color is larger than ranges within groups. Blacks exhibit higher instances of maternal mortality, tuberculosis, AIDS, leprosy, and uterine and prostate cancer, as well as lower life expectancy (Schaefer 202).

This disparity and the contrast between ethnic groups have led in some way to contrast and disparity between social classes within the same society, and this seems to be called Racism.

8. Racism

8.1. Definition of Racism

Racism can be defined simply as any policy, belief, attitude, action or inaction, that raise the value of a certain group or category over other groups, based on people's abilities, typography or habits, and sometimes depend on the color of the skin, culture, language, or even beliefs. It subordinates individuals or groups based on their race; it is any feeling of superiority, a policy of exclusion, marginalization and discrimination between people on the basis of color, national or ethnic origins.

Racism is commonly held to mean discrimination with the intent to harm certain kind of people, taking into consideration the social and historical perspective, Paula Rothenberg said: "Racism involves the subordination of people of color by white people. While individual persons of color may well discriminate against a white person or another person of color because of their race... History provides us with a long record of white people holding and using power and privilege over people of color to subordinate them, not the reverse" (108).

Another form of racism in which discrimination is directed to the individual himself, this distinction refers to the unequal treatment of the individual because he is an individual, not as group member. Jonathan Marks defined Racism as "Most fundamentally the assessment of individual worth on the basis of real or imputed group characteristics. Its evil lies in the denial of people's right to be judged as individuals rather than as group members, and in the truncation of opportunities or rights on that basis" (94).

The definition of racism is almost symmetric; Richard Schaefer described Racism as a set of practices that create socioeconomic status attainment disparities. It is an aversion to critiquing the ideologies that justify existing arrangements such as equality of

opportunity and meritocracy (94). So, racism is used also to benefit one group at the expense of other groups, thus depriving them of their rights.

The word Racism first appeared in the Larousse dictionary in 1932, as a system which affirms the superiority of one racial group over the others. And The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared in 1978 that any theory claiming the intrinsic superiority or inferiority of racial or ethnic groups which would give to some the right to dominate or even eliminate others, presumed inferior, or basing value judgments on racial differences (Dei et al. 24).

Richard Schaefer wrote: "Racism is a negative reactionary sentiment that social changes demanded by people of color have gone too far..." (616). More recently, Paula Rothenberg said: "Racism is defined as a system of advantages based on race" (100). In fact, these are consistent definitions, they point to the importance of race in discrimination among people, and this is important to understand racism.

More broadly, Bulmer Martin, and John Solomos wrote: "Racism is an ideology of racial domination based on beliefs that a designated racial group is either biologically or culturally inferior and the use of such beliefs to rationalize the racial group's treatment in society" (04). According to them, Racism is an ideology; it can be distinguished from prejudice which is a matter of feeling, and discrimination which is a matter of behavior.

But Marks, he has written: "If racism is really about power, it seems to me that it should be called powerism" (139). Opinions and definitions vary, points of view and ideas differ but, the overall concept of racism remains the oppression of people, based on racial discrimination. Hence, Racism remains what many hated the most, but it is still what they mastered.

8.2. Racism and South African Society

Nelson Mandela, the fighter who, with his friends, inflamed the world with a hard struggle, restored something of right to black South Africa, the country that symbolized the racism of the white man who was and still living on the destruction of others and their identity and robbing their wealth by all means. Thanks to the strife, the struggle and resistance of the injustice, black racism was repulsed and the white dreams of the people of South Africa has restored in their land, wealth and freedom.

As we have seen previously with Apartheid, the South African society has suffered from racism a long time ago, and you do not mention racism unless you mention Apartheid, but Seekings and Nicoli said:

Apartheid policies of systematic racial discrimination and segregation had a deep and enduring influence on inequality in South Africa. But inequality predated Apartheid, and the core components of its distributional regime predated the system itself. By 1948, the state had developed a set of policies concerning welfare, the labor market, and the growth path that structured patterns of inequality. State policies shaped but did not determine the massive social and economic changes in South African societies. (49)

According to them, South Africa was typically portrayed in dualistic terms. This dualism was not that of race alone but also involved the contrast between the bustling society of the fast growing towns and the surrounding countryside, these divisions and distinction between members of society, and the racism that has spread throughout South African society, has driven into decades of tragedy and suffering.

That's why as we will see later in the next chapter, Peter Abrahams Succeeded in portraying the South African community before the policy of Apartheid.

9. Theoretical Background of the Novel

When reading a book, a poem, or listen to a song, every one of us would have a different interpretation. Thus, Literary Theory is a practical reading of literature which appeared to give the chance to the readers to understand the different literary works, and appreciate all views that are based on a careful study of literature.

Each of the literary theories has its specific principles through which we can interpret a text, therefore, applying theories on literary works leads to more adequate and actual understanding of the work, as soon as they represent a framework for a critical discussion. Actually, contemporary criticism and theory interpretations have focused on the close relationship between literary theory and practice, that is the practice of interpretation (Bertens10).

9.1. Critical Race Theory

Despite the fact that there were many efforts, Amendments, and movements to fight racism, most of blacks and colored people were still deprived of justice, as a result, many activists, lawyers and legal scholars realized that the new theory called, The Critical Race Theory which emerged in 1970s, was needed to fight all forms of racism, so It was presented by the work of Derrick A. Bell Jr. and others like Alan Freeman and Richard Delgado.

Richard Dilgado and Jean Stefancic defined Critical Race Theory as “A collection of activists, scholars, interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (25). This movement concerns with every issue that is relevant to race, its main purpose is to focus on investigating and interactions from race perspective. It dives into how these interactions affect the everyday fairness and justice of colored people. In the same sequence Tyson affirms that: “Critical Race Theory examines the ways in which details of our everyday lives are related to race, though we may not

realize it, and studies the complex beliefs that underlie what seem to be our simple, commonplace assumptions about race in order to show us where and how racism still thrives in its undercover existence” (363-369). This theory started with challenging the racial oppression, It attends to get rid of racism and get all rights.

9.1.1. Basic Tenets of Critical Race Theory:

The main representatives of this theory, Richard Delgado, and Jean Stefancic mentioned six basic tenets of Critical Race theory in a book called, *Critical Race Theory, An introduction*, thus, getting and understanding the six tenets would help to introduce and apply the critical Race Theory.

First, many white people believe that the word racism is related only to physical or verbal attacks of people of color, they pretend that racism does not exist at all. According to Lois Tyson, one of the gloomiest forms of racism is the white's denial that racism exists or has occurred in a particular instance.

Second, the father of Critical Race Theory, Derrick Bell, uses the term “Interest Convergence or Material Determinism” to highlight the idea that racism converges with interests of the white people, like when the high class of people exploit black workers and pay them less than white workers, even of their huge efforts and hard work.

The third tenet called, *The social Construction of Race*, It argued that race is a product of social thought and relations, It has no biological or genetic origins, Race is created by different societies.

The fourth tenet is *Differential Racialization* which represents the fact that whites determine racial features of different ways at different times, in response to its deceitful necessities.

The fifth tenet is *intersectionality* which holds that race intersects with class, sex and political orientation.

The sixth tenet, voice of color, holds that minority writers and thinkers could better speak and write about race and racism because they experience racism directly.

In addition to the six tenets, there are also few representative examples of racial issues that continue to engage many critical race theorists

10. Marxist Theory

A Marxist view of social class is based on a subjective notion, with social classes determined by relationships and consciousness. The early Marxist categories of social class, defined the social groups' relationships to the ownership of the means of production (Mey 953). This theory appears with a German theorist, ideologist, philosopher and one of the most influential thinkers of the nineteenth century, Karl Marx (1818-1883) who criticized the capitalist system of economics and tried to prove that this system is built upon injustice and oppression, since it gives the chance to the high class of people to benefit at the expense of the working class and from this perspective the Marxist theory started to argue that the Bourgeois, had successfully enslaved the working class, and his conflict appears in the society because the efforts of the lower class of people to gain power and the attempts of the upper class to keep what they already had, the conflict between those who own and those who own and those who labor (Ryan 52).

According to Marxist thought, "Getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political activities, including education, philosophy, religion, government, arts, science, technology, media, and so on" (Tyson 53-54).

Social, political, and ideological institutions are purely built upon an economic base; thus, the economy is the basic of social power. This is the reason why Marxists refer to the class structure as a socioeconomic class rather than economic class. Marx's beliefs were supported by his fellow the German writer, social critique and philosopher, Friedrich Engels (1820-1895).

Furthermore, the Marxist foreseeable is based on fundamental principles and tenets that are decisive for a better understanding of issues of money, class and power in any literary text, simply because literature “not as works created in accordance with timeless artistic criteria, but as ‘products’ of the economic and Ideological determinants specific to the era” (Abrahams149). Therefore, literary works reflect the social institution.

10.1. Basic Tenets of Marxist Theory

The truth is that Marxist’s main purpose is to focus on the class compositions presented in any literary work, it has many attempts to investigate how the conflict between the different classes influenced the literary texts and how literature can function in relation to other aspects of a superstructure ,so the principles of Marxist literary criticism were designed to interpret the social, economic and political ideas through a literary work, those are seen as a contributor in making the class conflict. Recently, the Marxist Theory has enhanced the manner of understanding literary texts (Dobie79). In fact, when reading a text from a Marxist perspective, it is quite important to check how the characters interact because Marxist Theory is built upon the relationship between them and this can be accomplished in accordance with a number of tenets.

First of all, the class system tenet, which is considered as the most important tenet in the Marxist criticism. The classification of people is according to their socioeconomic lifestyle. It represents the level of luxury for each person. We can take people of high class as an example; they have materials, means and money to create a business and employ many workers, but their profits are better than the poor workers, who work hard and struggle to provide better life conditions. On the other hand, there is the upper class which enjoys the luxurious life.

The second tenet is that Marxists adopt many ideologies like: capitalism, communism, humanism, religion, patriotism as a “belief system and all belief systems are

products of cultural conditioning” (Tyson 56). Those ideologies have two different aspects; negative and positive ones. The positive side is that they may contribute in the development of the whole world ignoring and forgetting about the social class. The negative side about those ideologies is the appearance of oppression and social deprivation which deceive many people. According to Dobie, the Marxist theory tries to detect these repressive ideologies that control people in order to understand how people are controlled and programmed to see things differently and to think or behave in a particular way.

Patriotism is the third tenet. It is an ideology which allows poor people to see themselves as members of the oppressed class, patriotism, as an ideology aims at making the proletariat fight against another proletariat group from other countries while the rich is the beneficial (Tyson 55).

Besides, religion is another tenet followed by Marxists, using it as a tool by the upper classes to repress and manipulate less powerful groups. In fact, that this ideology keeps the lower class as tolerant and good people who are satisfied with their lives.

Another important ideology is *Individualism*. *Individualism* focuses on the individual's attempt to fulfill his goal, but it faces many obstacles. In fact that is also a fundamental principle in the American dream (Tyson 60).

No one can ignore the fact that Karl Marx criticized the capitalist economy because of the bad aspects that it brought; it damages the human values and psychology (Tyson 62). Capitalism makes people think about owning more possessions.

To conclude, this discussion of basic tenets and the ideas required reading a literary work from a Marxist perspective, and we will try to highlight the ideological conditions that reflect the socioeconomic environment in the novel *Mine Boy*.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to introduce the history of South Africa focusing on the life during Apartheid, which, in the strict sense of the term, refers to an ideology, set of ideas, beliefs and doctrines, that is based on biological differences, or the ethnic, national and religious affiliations. We expanded our study at the Apartheid stage, to go deep down inside the South African society, to understand the conditions people had to endure. Like racial segregation, class discrimination and racism.

We also examined the role played by authors in resisting the growing restrictions placed upon the oppressed people, and how they highlighted the fact that racial mixing was more natural than racial segregation, Peter Abrahams is one of those who wrote about the injustices and complexities of racial politics, his novel *Mine Boy* is an interesting work that describes the policy of apartheid in South Africa.

This chapter is an attempt to explain the main concepts that Apartheid based on, race and class; furthermore, we defined the theoretical framework, Marxism and Critical Race theory as an analytical approach to our study.

CHAPTER II

Black Skins .. White Souls

Introduction

Race and social class have always been prevalent problems in a society. Black people cannot walk down in the street without being flouted or without hearing rude comments about their race and skin color. Their rights as human beings were ignored; their services and efforts were unnoticed, black and colored people find it difficult to live a normal life just like that of whites, simply because they were suffering from the inhuman living and working conditions, that marked their big dream as being treated fairly, and to obtain better position in life they were struggling to discover the meaning of their lives, without taking their race, skin, color, and class into consideration. Not only blacks, but also colored people suffered from racism and the discrimination especially in South Africa, just like Xuma, a black man who is the protagonist of our chosen novel, *Mine Boy*, he was mistreated and judged unfairly only because of his black skin, race and class.

1. The Novel under Study

Mine Boy is a novel that talks about the problems the African miners experienced during the Apartheid era in South Africa. It tells the story of a young man from the bush who plunged into an alienating and oppressive world of a big industrial city. Heywood said, "...and *Mine Boy* (1946) recast the white literary interpretation of the modern mining" (126). It shows the struggle of Africans to attain equal rights and dignity.

It is basically about the working class, and how this category suffered during the Apartheid, Wade said:

Mine Boy is a proletarian novel whose plot displays Marxist perspective on life. It is proletarian in the sense that it is about members of the working class and consciously stresses the idea that the conflicts and difficulties of the Africans in town life in South Africa have their basis in the class struggle. It contends that the problems of white workers are fundamentally similar. These two groups share a

common interest, when they recognize this and act together they will overcome their problems. (27)

The novel explores the stereotypes and discrimination against black South Africans. “Abrahams’s *Mine Boy* (1946) ushered in the age of black realist fiction. The text dealt as much with the dehumanizing mining industry and the subsequent beginnings of trade unionism as it criticized black political and economic marginalization” (Ross et al. 585). It poses social problems; the class struggle, the exploitation of the workers, strike, the forms of capitalist industrialization and urban life as factors of capitalist expansion.

2. The Review of the Novel

There is no doubt that literature has a practical function beyond its aesthetic value. In this sense, through Apartheid writings in the African Diaspora, novelists attempt not only to rehabilitate the image at the time, but also to affirm the identity and humanity of the colonized. This can be seen clearly in the works of Peter Abrahams, which are essentially a reflection of his South African surroundings.

This may lead us to talk about his artistic vision, and how Abrahams manipulated the characters of his Novel *Mine Boy* to give us a clear picture of Apartheid days in South Africa, Basically, Xuma; the protagonist.

According to Oneya, Abrahams examines the impact of the South African City life on Xuma, not forgetting the impression he has about the people he meets, from matriarch Leah whom he becomes inextricably involved with from the beginning and whom he loves as a child loves its mother, and who calls him a “fool with people” , but slowly introduces him into urban survival and challenges he will face, to the alienated Eliza who wants to be like white people, to the gay , kind and loving Maisy who finally finds her way into the heart of Xuma and finally the Irishman Paddy who teaches Xuma the philosophy of liberation from color.

Abraham attempts to focus on the way Xuma confronts and deals with racist society of colonial South Africa. Oneya said: “The novel does not simply capture the maturation of Xuma vis a vis economic and political awareness but also dwells on the fate of the rural migrant worker in the face of racial segregation comes in the shape of enforced residence, barriers to social intermingling, separates social amenities and separate education”.

The writer portrayed corruption, treachery and racist police officers to take us to that time and place. Indeed, his manipulation of characters and events created vivid scenes of what people suffered in that dark era in the history of South Africa, and makes the reader sympathize with one personality, or oppose another, like living the moment. *Mine Boy* is often cited as the first African novel in English to draw international attention.

Our main focus in this thesis is just like Peter Abrahams; it is to center our attention on a black character who struggles in order to provide better life conditions and to be treated fairly without looking into his black skin, race and his class.

3. Race in the Novel

Through his novel, *Mine Boy*, Peter Abrahams draws the gloomy image of racism that black and colored people suffer from, he presented the blacks by the character of a black mine worker, Xuma, who has come from a village in the North to Johannesburg in search for better conditions of life, exactly a job in the mines. The novel opens with his entry to Johannesburg which was described by him as a “dark and awful city” (Abrahams 3), not what he had expected to find. He was taken by Leah to her home since he does not have a place to go to. When she knew about his reasons behind coming to this city, Leah warns him, and asked him to forget about that. Leah said: “For you as a black man, the mines are no good, Xuma. Later on you cough and then you spit blood and you became weak and die...I’ve seen it many times, a black miner is young and strong, but tomorrow he is thin and ready to die” (Abrahams 4).

At first, Leah told Xuma about the dangers that a black worker would face, just because she already knows the hard working conditions which may lead a person to lose his health, youth and freedom, but nothing was changed, so Leah finds herself obliged to teach him the law of black survival in the city. Leah told Xuma, "A black must fend for himself, black has no hope, black cannot afford the luxury of worrying about others because one's own immediate responsibilities and needs are so great" (Abrahams 5).

Indeed, Leah gives some advice from her own experience. She does not want him to feel the same feeling she had when she first came to Johannesburg simply because she does not want him to be shocked or be disappointed because of the bad treatment that he would receive from white people.

The next day, Xuma was taken into a walk with Joseph, Leah's brother who tried to introduce the city to Xuma, but before finishing his speech there was a crowd of people fighting over something, on the other side there was a thief who stole a woman's bag and runs away, but the policeman left all those and comes directly to Xuma, and asked him about his passport: "-Do you know about something called a pass? -But why? -How dare you ask? Negro!" (Abrahams 06).

Hence, Abrahams demonstrates the fact that it is an offensive way to call black people « Negro », using this term from the policeman to make Xuma feel less human and less worthy, in addition to asking him about the passport, expecting that a black man does not even know the meaning of the word pass, but Xuma shows his passport to him this what shocked the policeman who strikes him with his stick. Then Joseph asked him to run away. Although Xuma did not make anything wrong, he felt himself deprived of justice treatment of policeman who strikes him for no clear reasons.

- What about the robber?

What about those who were fighting? Asked Xuma.

- You do not have to ask such question Xuma, this is the first rule.

(Abrahams 07)

Moreover, in his conversation with Joseph, Xuma wonders what would happen if Joseph did not tell him to escape and run far away from that police man who was trying to provoke Xuma, then takes him to the jail.

- Is it because I'm a black man? Or just because I'm a strange person?

Do I look guilty?

- Told you man, you have to expect such things, your black skin is going to make some troubles in this city, deal with It. (Abrahams07)

Besides, the feeling of being underestimated by white people led Xuma to think about himself in a very bad way, however Joseph asked him to accue with this issue and to expect the worst.

In fact, most of the white people cannot accept blacks in their lives, they dislike them for unclear reasons, when Leah introduced Xuma to Johannes, the mine boss worker, and he offered him a job in the mines where Abrahams describes the different bad situations of the black workers. "Small, thin, black has many lines on his face, though he was not old, his eyes were red, he kept coughing, a dry cough which destroys the lungs and he works!" (Abrahams 30).

Abrahams paints very well the difficult health conditions that black miners, work in. Despite the fact of their diseases and tiredness, they work hardly, without taking a rest. Johannes asks one of the miners to teach Xuma how to use the machines, after hours of learning, Xuma felt tired and he asks for a rest. He said: "We are forced to work from sunrise to sunset without any right for taking a rest or complain" (Abrahams 31).

Moreover, those miners work without a rest to gain little money, they lose much more than what they gain, they lose their health which is the most precious thing in this world,

Xuma advises the sick miners to visit a doctor. The following quotation highlights the idea that there are no qualified hospitals for blacks, any patient goes there would not heal.

Go to the hospital, said Xuma

To see our people lying on the floors, they lie close you cannot step over them.

But It they who dig the gold for three shillings a day!

Everybody coughs badly and their brow is as hot fire, answered the sick black miner. (Abrahams 32)

Despite the fact that everything is telling Xuma to run away and forget about that mine, he did not change his mind, he only wanted to work there and get a better position. Blacks were segregated and mistreated by white people who couldn't accept them. They even separate all the annexes and create specific schools, hospitals in addition to the homelands. Abrahams uses very expressive words to describe the special homelands of the mine workers that Xuma is taken into. "Xuma was shocked by its shabbiness and dirtiness. It is better to call them tombs rather than homelands!" (Abrahams 45).

Furthermore, in his next conversation with Johannes, Xuma wonders because he did not meet any white folk in this mine and all workers he meets were black once. In fact, white people only work on the offices, under great work conditions since they are the owners of this mine and its manager engineers. This is the reason why Xuma did not find any white worker, but only black workers who don't know how to read and write and they work underground.

"- I've considered only black movement in the mines. Do white people hate this work or something?!

- They only use the computer and give orders " (Abrahams 48).

At first, the racist treatment and the oppression of the white South African white folks led Xuma to feel less human and worthless; however, working on the mines brings a different feeling for him. It could be argued that Xuma's mystery of mine space unmasks the real

material dependency of whites on black labor. In the mines, Xuma does not fear white men or their judgments, because they cannot do anything without the black workers efforts.

The only place where he was completely free was underground in the mines. There he was a master and knew his way. There he did not even fear his white man, for his white man depended on him. He was the boss boy. He gave the orders to the other Mine Boys. They would do for him what they would not do for his white man or any other white man. (Abrahams 61)

Far away from the mines Xuma lives a love story with Eliza, Leah's niece, a black woman who is lost between her love to Xuma and for her pressing dream to love a white man this dream comes from the bourgeois aspiration she has. Abrahams stated: "That one likes you but she's a fool. It is going to school. She likes you but wants one who read books and dresses like the white folks and speaks the language of the whites and wears the little bit of cloth they call a tie. Take her by force or you will be a fool" (66).

The following quotation shows that Eliza is in the unfortunate position of being caught between two worlds, the white educated, well dressed men; on the other hand, there is Xuma, the black, poor, illiterate man. "Something hard drives me, one minute I know what I want, the next minute, I do not know " (Abrahams 87).

Xuma's pain is brought on by the realization that he is not a white man, and a black man like him is not good enough for Eliza who is mad with wanting the same things that only white man owns, even she is a black woman.

Inside me there is something wrong. And it is because I want the things of white people. I want to be like the white people and go where they go and do the things they do and I am black. I cannot help it. Inside I am not black and I do not want to be a black person. I want to be like they are, you understand Xuma. It is no good but I cannot help it. (Abrahams 89)

Abrahams sheds light on the idea that racism does not only faces Xuma in the street or in the mines, but also in his relationship with the girl he loves, Eliza, the black girl who is looking only for the luxurious life of white people that what Leah tells to Xuma.

I am no good and I cannot help myself. It will be right if you hate me. You should beat me. But inside there is something wrong. And it is because I want the things of the white people. I want to be like the white people and go where they go and do the things they do and I am black. I cannot help it. Inside I am not black and I do not want to be a black person. I want to be like they are, you understand Xuma. It is no good but I cannot help it. It is just so. And it is that that makes me hurt you. Please understand. (Abrahams 89)

In contrast to the despairing perceptions Xuma had earlier in this novel, he moves from being disappointed into being someone who had largely accepted the racist structures imposed by whites, and deals with it, and he begins to feel comfortable enough with white people, thus, his personality grows in depth as he learns how to make responses to the different experiences. Ma Blanka, Leah's mother is talking about him, "Yet when he first came to the city, he was scared and weak, but he understood too much and became strong and courage, he learns everything, even reading and writing" (Abrahams 99).

In his next conversation, with Xuma is telling Di his white boss, about his sufferance in this city and how he was arrested by the policemen at each time he goes to a walk: "You say you understand," Xuma said, 'but how can you? You are a white man. You do not carry a pass. You do not know how it feels to be stopped by a policeman in the street. You go where you like. You do not know how it feels when they say: Get out! White people only!" (Abrahams 172).

Abrahams demonstrates that the title of justice and fairness will not be realized through the story of Xuma who thinks that everyone in this city is going to accept him and

correct the wrong judgments about his race after they know that he is a good person, but at each he meet white people in this city, they treat him badly, and through the story of Leah, who is a moonshiner, she has been jailed for nine months for brewing beer, that is why Xuma wonders. Through the different pages of this novel, it is mentioned that white people sells beer illegally, but nothing was done to them; however, when the police get informed that a black person sells beer, they directly jail him. Xuma wonders: "Why is it wrong if Leah sells beer and right if a white person sells beer" (Abrahams 168).

Despite the fact that Xuma is discouraged by the monotony of the job and the grueling labor, he was able to impose himself as a mine worker; he makes huge efforts and wins the respect of his red boss, Paddy and the rest of the miners. Few days later, Xuma arrives at work to find that a disaster has struck, most of black workers died while they were digging the gold, a machine falls over their heads. "Xuma and paddy descend and return with dead bodies of their friends, the manager engineers believed that panic is unnecessary and they ordered the miners to back underground, however, Xuma demands that repairs should be made first" (Abrahams173).

Although Paddy and Xuma reported a safety dangers before that catastrophe happens, but the white bosses ignore, they does not care about finding solutions to protect the rest of the miners ,and they ordered them to get back underground to finish their work as if nothing has already happened. The white boss said: "They are just Mine Boys ... Yes. Grand, but not human beings yet. Just mine boys" (Abrahams 174).

After that Xuma asks for repairs, the rest of the black miners scream for a strike against the bosses and the managers of the mines, Paddy who is a red man joins Xuma and his fellow workers, he said: "Xuma is right! They pay you a little! They don't care if you risk your lives: Why is it so? Is not the blood of a black man red like that of a white man? Does

not a black man feel too? Does not a black man love life too? I am with you: Let them fix up the place first!” (Abrahams 181-182).

The mine owners call the policemen who jail all people who were making a strike, however, Xuma kept convincing them to do not give up or feel scared when asking about their rights; he wants to make their voice heard. Xuma yelled: “The red one is there, he is not a black man, but he is going to jail for our people, how can I not go? There are many things I want to say too. I want to tell them how do I feel and how white people feel ” (Abrahams184).

Abrahams describes the huge change which happens to Xuma’s personality, and the way he deals with the different problems that faces him because of his skin color and race and he mentions that he learns how to read write, not because his lover rejects him, and wants him to be like white people, but the feeling of separateness forces him into a state of invisibility and non-existence, thus he tries to give his life meaning through reading and writing.

4. Class in the Novel

South African society has seen different types of class systems, accompanied by complex class phenomena such as class struggle, social repression and social transition. This is the fact that has characterized South African society on the basis of the class system in a single society that consists of different social roles. These roles define social status and class affiliation.

Class struggle and social injustice were being dealt within the novel *Mine Boy*. The main quest here will be to evaluate to which extent Peter Abrahams dealt with this topic in the novel. Class is one and most flagrant topics in the novel. Abrahams tried to eliminate borders and differences within a single society, defending the idea of integration as a way of bringing about equality among blacks and whites, the idea of creating a society that is based on equality and solidarity, that understands, recognizes and values human rights, which confirms

the writer's attitude towards racism and class discrimination. He allowed his characters to suffer, to effectively promote his ideas of social justice. He wrote:

The real-life situation of the workers was even more excruciating. From their barrack-like existence, they could not stir without permission, and their wives and children were not allowed to visit them. They were often fed well, but only like valuable beasts of burden. Their protests, when the food was bad, were frequently greeted with contempt by the mine authorities. (Abrahams 56)

As a matter of fact, the novel is based on the Marxist theory, according to Abrahams' point of view toward the black cause in terms of class, in terms of the white supremacy and black support. Abrahams described urban lifestyle and the human condition, reflecting relative affluence of the population, social class, income stratification and poverty, cultural diversity, and myriad other factors that define the urban macro-fabric on which the daily lives of individuals play out.

Furthermore, Abrahams emphasized the question of class. He ignores the fact that a white man in a racist situation has the consciousness of the ruling class even if he is part of the working class like the Red one. Abrahams makes the Red one launch a fight against the unjust treatment of the black miners, since it was already assumed that being black, they were ignorant. He schooled them into revolting against the unjust treatment of the black miners or the working class. The Red One said: “-Xuma is right! They pay you little! They don't care if you risk your lives!” (Abrahams 181).

Abrahams when makes the white couple condemn the ruling class they are part of, he tried to refer to the rejection of class discrimination among the members of one society. This can be found in Abrahams' view to the question of class over again. when he manipulated the characters to fit the fact that black color is used for the exploitation of the working class in the society , But The Red, being a white man was part of the ruling class, therefore he could not

help being arrogant and condescending in the way he expressed his concern for blacks. His whole attitude was commending. He simply dictated what was good for the blacks. Xuma said: "The Red One is there. He is not a black man but he is going to jail for our people" (Abrahams 184).

The proletariat or the working class was described in *Mine Boy* as the most exploited black majority. These people were the poorest, they were salaried or unemployed and often lived in dark, filthy and overcrowded leprous buildings and sometimes in questionable neighborhoods, the current equivalent of which would be shantytowns, Abrahams portrayed the working class living conditions in *Mine Boy* as squalid. He described the working class members, "walking down the street ... lying with each other to pounce upon dirty edibles, and fighting each other" (Abrahams 77).

Equally important, Abrahams presented a rural African consciousness towards the working class. We try to situate ourselves within the debate concerning the Marxist frame of *Mine Boy* with particular emphasis on the ways in which class manifests in representations of South African society, mine workers precisely.

Some critiques consider the novel as a proletarian novel, it displays a Marxist perspective. Others argue that the novel displays a liberal humanism reflective of African National Congress policy at the time. We partly align ourselves with the first contention that *Mine Boy* is a novel of cross-racial solidarity along class lines and should be understood as a Marxist narrative of coming into political maturity, which is to say, class consciousness.

By the same token, Abrahams' depiction of the effects of the economic organization on its social structures, and making Xuma as a representative of his class, allies his perspective with an aesthetic that finds the typical experiences of class consciousness in the individual condition. This is what led us to assert that Abrahams has Marxist strands in his thinking that will manifest repeatedly in Xuma's walks through Johannesburg.

Abrahams' class perspective and his use of characters as class representatives essentialises them as categories of persons locked into a broader social conflict rather than ordinary persons. Abrahams depicted Xuma in a portrayal of individual experience that strongly connected to a social part or class: "His white man had even tried to make friends with him because the other Mine Boys respected him so much. But a white man and a black man cannot be friends they work together. That's all " (Abrahams 61). Abrahams succeeded using conditions that are individual and specific to realize the literary engagement with the economic.

Abrahams' purpose was to show how individual experiment can facilitate class and race consciousness against the social segregations. Xuma's growing self-awareness is linked to his experiences through Johannesburg's life style; and through working in mines. We can argue that Xuma's mastery of the mine work unmask the real needs of whites on black labor, like promoting the inferior class upon the leading one. In this sense, Abrahams wrote: "The only place where he was completely free was underground in the mines. There he was a master and knew his way. There he did not even fear his white man, for his white man depended on him. He was the boss boy " (61).

The use of the term 'boss boy' represented a contradiction of demeaning white representations, because the working class or the mine workers are the bosses under the ground, and thus, For Abrahams this means more than an identification based on class. Abrahams described Xuma: "He gave the orders to the other Mine Boys. They would do for him what they would not do for his white man or any other white man " (61).

In the same manner, the novel centers around Xuma's growing awareness, since the events of the story inspired by the reality of Apartheid era, so the demands of the writer went beyond the fight against Apartheid and social class and equality, to self-awareness of life,

Abrahams tried to deliver an idea that when Black or white view their racially different neighbors as a different class, no social equality is possible. His aunt Liza tells Peter:

- You are colored. There are three kinds of people: white people, Colored people, and black people. The white people come first, then the Colored people, then the black people.

- Why?

- Because it is so. (Abrahams 44)

Thus, Abrahams insisted on the necessity of modernity for the blacks as a means to the working out of a collective identity embedded in class. For Abrahams, the big city is the only place in which an awareness of class and thus, a drive for realizing a social change. In practical terms, Abrahams understands the realizations of humanism in the context of class, so, he propelled Xuma towards class consciousness and this has come from social ideas with a Marxist background. "They are not of the city; they come from the farms" (Abrahams 34).

Furthermore, Xuma's fight represented his interior movement towards a class consciousness, an improvement manifested through his personality. Xuma's attitudes have been ways for an increasing self-reflexivity and cultivation. Trying to realize his thoughts, he was running towards a future in which its principles will be challenged. This reality may signify the loneliness of the leadership role he has taken on for himself but he cannot achieve personal freedom outside the framework of class solidarity, this represents a full coming into awareness in class and individual terms. "I am a man first. I want you to be a man first and then a black man. [...] When you understand that you will be a man with freedom inside your breast. It is only those who are free inside who can help free those around them" (Abrahams 172).

As we have seen, Abrahams did not seek to distort the image of the city and urban life, so the distinguishing characteristic of his style is his insistence on the city as a means for

black experience. Xuma's beginnings were rural but the narrative ended with his self-realization as a member of the urban society, but still in the working-class. But Abrahams expressed his negotiation of modernity through a realist aesthetic, by his style that explained the materialistic specificities of the city as part of a critique of the class ideology. "Behind him, far behind, lay all the things he knew and understood. Ahead, rushing on to meet him, lay the big city of Johannesburg and new ways he had to learn and the new people he had to learn to understand" (Abrahams 12).

At the same time, we can feel that Abrahams' vision for the city sought to wholly transcend race and class affiliations to obtain a society centered on individual. In *Mine Boy*, class consciousness is the catalyst for the city's transformation, and in this regard, Abrahams' aim was to confirm black identity within equality, rejecting the class and race concepts. That's why we argue that *Mine Boy* is not entirely Marxist, but it is an ideological hybrid that paired the success of black society by being outside the social class frame. Xuma said, "I came from my people, but I am no longer of my people. It is so in the city and I have been here many years. And the city makes me strange to the ways of my people" (Abrahams 23).

Abrahams reoriented Xuma's experiences in terms of class consciousness again in the mine through his ability to affirm his personality as a member of a lower class and as an individual. We see this clearly in his courageous attitudes, he insisted on calling for a strike when the beam collapsed inside the mine, killing his white boss Chris, especially when the administration refused to take responsibility for this. "We are men!" he shouted. "It does not matter if our skins are black! We are not cattle to throw away our lives! We are men!" (Abrahams 163).

Consequently, *Mine Boy* encourages us to see social class as an outmoded concept, and that we must consider the struggle to achieve a social justice. Xuma is a poor man within an oppressed class but he is a real man, this is what Abrahams concluded.

5. Race and Class Struggle in the Novel

5.1. The Relation between Race and Class

How can we avoid the question of race and class in *Mine Boy*, crucial elements for Abrahams who wants a better life for the South African society? The aspects facing the struggle for the transformation of socio-economic structures in South Africa remain the nature of black working class and white leadership.

South African society was divided by class. Interracial class differences persisted by deracialization. Discrimination within classes by race, exaggerated the effect of inequalities between classes. Abrahams' *Mine Boy* shows his fictional perspective toward the black working class discrimination during the Apartheid, which made class inequality become the driving force of overall inequality.

From the conception of capitalism to the present postcolonial period, there has been a dialectical and organic link in South Africa between the element of social class and that of race, Abrahams central argument in his novel is that the Apartheid regime in South Africa has long served to privilege one section of the population while excluding others based on their race, their skin color .This article is concerned with the organic and dialectical link between the question of social class and race, that Abrahams wanted to show through his novel, *Mine Boy*.

Confrontations and interactions of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and religion are social forces that disrupted the South African society, The Apartheid distributional regime provided full employment for white people, while channeling cheap African labor to unskilled jobs in the mines, Seekings and Nicolli said : “But the very success of this regime in advantaging white people allowed the basis of exclusion to shift from race to class: white South Africans acquired the advantages of class that allowed them to sustain privilege in the market and ,ceased to be dependent on continued racial discrimination” (6). This is reflected in the

Abrahams' style when he insisted on the organic and dialectical link between the question of social class and race in the South African society.

Clearly, both race and class were important in shaping the South African society. The relation between race and class is that almost all of the poor working class are blacks, unlike whites who are the wealthy upper class, Abrahams, like other South African writers focuses on the urban reality of black miners, he emphasizes on the inevitable fate of the black man, imposed by the Apartheid policy based on his color, Abrahams evokes the work of the *Mine Boys*, underlining the literalness of the truth that South African society is built upon the sweat of its black population. These interactions of race and class struggle must be anchored in the conviction that no one, apart from ourselves, can and must liberate and develop our country as ourselves, this is what Abrahams fought for.

Again, Abrahams focuses on the question of race and that of class. He shows that to the extent that they are structurally defined as factors of control, domination and exploitation, they are also factors of political, economic and ideological struggle. In *Mine Boy*, this was framed by a picture that transcends class and race, Abrahams depicted a black poor miner boy with a strong sense of affiliation, Living a different experience, in a different environment, trying to find himself, to become a different person eventually and to fight for justice and rights for all peoples without distinction of color, race and class.

With this in mind, the position of Abrahams, in his analysis of the organic and dialectical link between the element of race and social class, in the novel *Mine Boy*, is important in the study of the dialectical and organic link between race and social class in South African society, and the rest of the world. The dynamic relation between the question of social class and that of race must be seen and examined from a dialectical point of view, he depicted perfectly through the novel.

We deduce from the analysis of the dialectical and organic relationship between race and class in *Mine Boy*, the division of social classes structurally strengthens racism, that calls for the separate development of the different racial groups, and divides them into classes, Abrahams never lost sight of the importance of the class struggle and racial factors in his vision of the South African society, he also consistently emphasized the implications of rural experience. The important thing is that the racial and class questions are fundamental in *Mine Boy*, Abrahams recognized this problematic, formulates this reality as follows:

- The question of race is important as the question of social class in the South African society; Abrahams exposed the condition of black South Africans under a white regime based on two concepts, race and class.
- Abrahams weaved a relationship between the racial element and that of the social class, and never lost sight of the importance of the racial factor and the class struggle in the policy of socio-economic changes in South Africa, as we can see in the last five chapters of the novel when he explored the stereotypes and institutions that discriminate against working-class black Africans and how could they resist and survive.
- Abrahams, referring to the combination of the class struggle and the racial segregation in South Africa, concluded that South Africa, a place of concentration as much of resistance as of domination, is a mirror of a global struggle between capital and working class, and between colonized and colonizer, between racialized and racialism, it is about wealth and power versus freedom and Liberation.

The question of the class struggle and its relation to the racial segregation is important in this analysis of the black identity and white domination, from the point of view of Abrahams through *Mine Boy*. This is also important for the analysis of the nature of the

relationship between black labor and white capitalism in South Africa. This is true because of the importance of the organic and dialectical link between the element of race and that of social class, Abrahams depicted the persecuted black South Africans in a way that brings together the race and the class, so that they cannot be differentiated, this dialectical relationship determined the nature of the despotic racist regime that bedeviled the South African society.

As we have seen previously, Abrahams succeeded in portraying society in the days of Apartheid, portraying the suffering of miners, in the contexts of, daily life, individual challenges, and transformation of socio-economic structures, for a better life. One of the aspects facing the struggle for this remains the nature of black labor and white capital. In view of the domination of the economy of South Africa by some whites, it is generally accepted that black labor is subordinated to white capital. This is why Apartheid had a deep and enduring influence on inequality in South Africa. However, in the Marxist frame for socio-economic change, the main problem is not so much that black labor is subordinated to white capital, but that they are dependent on each other.

This is much better, both white and black workers are confronted and subjected to in the economic policy of South Africa. Black labor and white capital are thus essentially South African capitalism. It is the beginning of the cultural awareness as we have seen in Xuma's calls for strike and other events in the story.

Despite the dialectical relationship between class and race elements that structurally strengthens racism in South African society, Abrahams suggested many solutions for a better life, including class consciousness and modernity, Abrahams provides a model for a new African black man that stands up for his rights and rejects the racial discrimination. He also advocates a non-racialist regime that transcends racial divides and focuses on the struggles facing working class blacks. In this sense how is it possible that the racial debate is not an

essential factor for desiring a better life for all South Africans? Or the denial of the importance of the class struggle in politics, and the structural transformation of South Africa?

Conclusion

One can learn a lot from mine boy, as we have seen previously Mine Boy is a novel that poses social problems, class struggle, exploitation of the miners, racial discrimination during the days of apartheid in South Africa. It shows the struggle of black people to attain equal rights. It reveals more of the injustice and racism against black people.

Mine Boy exposes the discrimination within classes based on their race and skin color, Abrahams clearly shows that Apartheid regime provided full employment for white people, while channeling black labor to unskilled jobs in the mines, and divided the society into classes, black people belong to the low working class , but whites belong to the wealthy upper class.

This leads us to ask a question. Does race have anything to do with class? We traced this in order to find out the relationship between the two concepts in the novel, to eventually understand the reality that race determines men's social class.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Historically speaking, South Africa is rich in events that have shaped its history. Closely associated by bloody ties to several European countries through its white population, this country has fascinated the world in many struggles. Most notably, the struggle against Apartheid for equality and dignity.

The segregationist system of Apartheid is an example of competition between social groups for political favors. It is astonishing to note the lack of attention paid to the economic foundations of this atrocious social construction, when one knows the extreme abuses of human rights that Apartheid has engendered, in reality; this segregationist system was born out of the class struggle, race and ethnicity.

Mine Boy has a whole world of knowledge, wisdom, and perspective, where the reader has the ability to go there and live vivid scenes. It is considered a central book in drawing attention to the discrimination and racism that people of African descent face; it is often cited as the first African novel in English to draw international attention.

Class struggle is the most flagrant topic in the novel, Abrahams' depicted the effects of the economic organization on the social structures in a Marxist frame; he tried to eliminate borders and differences within a single society. That confirms his attitude towards racism and class discrimination in the South African society.

Peter Abrahams choses the lower class, and the popular values that capitalism could not exterminate, he manipulated his characters to serve his aim, He allowed his characters to suffer, to effectively promote his ideas of social justice., he wrote about tragic personalities , their main concern was to survive in a wild, new and unknown world, In the sake of survival.

Race has been and still is a main feature South African history and society. South Africa is a complex mixture of different races, cultural identities and languages. Race is also a main topic in the *Mine Boy*; Abrahams introduced racial segregation during the Apartheid period in his novel

This work, bringing together the reality of South African society through literature, focuses on one of the most important terms in the Apartheid era, race or ethnic groups: how did one go from a common conception of the term "race" in the sense of Lineage, to the most racist uses under the Apartheid policy? Paving the way for the ideology of racism, Abrahams used a decisive way for explaining how a raciological discourse is formed and how it can be limited.

Narratively, *Mine Boy* contains a male black protagonist who, while directing the socio-historical action of the strikers, does not bring, at the end of the novel, any real change in the relations of capitalist production. In general, workers admire and faithfully follow the black protagonist. The protagonist acts individually or with others, in such way to fundamentally change the social characteristics of the racial discrimination.

Abrahams provides an analysis of the dialectical and organic relationship between race and class in the South African society during Apartheid. He shows how the division of social classes structurally strengthens racism. Abrahams emphasizes on the importance of the class struggle and racial factors in politics and imperialism. The important thing one can notice is that the racial question is related to the question of social class, Abrahams recognized this and formulates the reality that race determines men's social class, men's fate.

We conclude from this study that both race and class were substantial in shaping the South African society. Apartheid has served to privilege one section of the population while excluding others based on their race, their skin color, and has divided society into classes. The relation between race and class is that almost all of the poor working class are blacks, unlike whites who are the wealthy upper class, also that race determines one's social class and fate, that is why white people gave themselves the authority to oppress blacks and treat them severely; on the basis that they are the elite, and the non-whites are inferior, it was blacks' fault since they have accepted this racist discrimination without any objection, or even trying

to make a change, Hence, Abrahams predicted that it would get worse, especially with the widespread of the repulsive racism in the South African society. He manipulates his characters to play such a dramatic role to convey the readers and the society, to revolt against the racial discrimination that the blacks or the working class were living in; by telling the story of Xuma who was able to get rid of his blackness and his class position, which were the main cause of being oppressed, a black poor man fulfilled his desire for getting a better life, and made the black voice heard after many hard struggles.

Stylistically, Abrahams' simple language presents his own experience. He uses a simple language that distinctively describes the struggling of black people in order to live a normal life. In this dissertation, we have provided an overview of the aesthetics of Peter Abrahams' language by analyzing his portrayal and description of racism and class through the different pages of this novel.

Mine Boy is a call for the blacks, it enforces them to revolt against the bad social values that is imposed by the whites in Johannesburg, as well as accept their blackness worth, help others and always try to be good persons first, this is the key needed by blacks to fortify themselves against the evil of racism and class.

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المخلص

يسلط هذا العمل الضوء على نوع الحياة التي عاشها أبناء جنوب إفريقيا السود تحت سيطرة الحكم العنصري، وتطلعات السود لعيش حياة أفضل، بعيدا عن صور التمييز والطبقية التي صورها لنا الكاتب بيتر أبراهام من خلال رواية "فتى المنجم". قسمنا هذا البحث إلى فصلين ؛ فصل نظري خصصناه لقراءة سريعة في التاريخ والأدب الجنوب أفريقي معرجين إلى سيرة الكاتب ورحلته الأدبية، ثم إلى شرح مفاهيم العرق، والعنصرية والطبقات الاجتماعية ؛ لنخلص بعد ذلك إلى شرح نظرية ماركس والنظرية العرقية. أما الجزء الثاني فقمنا من خلاله بدراسة وتحليل الرواية عن طريق إبراز مختلف الأحداث التي صور الكاتب فيها مختلف أشكال التمييز العنصري والطبقية الاجتماعية التي يعامل السود على أساسها في جنوب إفريقيا و استنباط العلاقة ما بين هاتين الظاهرتين. وكيف واجهت شخصيات هذه الرواية مختلف المصاعب لرسم حياة أفضل. وقد توصلنا في نهاية هذا العمل إلى أن العرق هو من يحدد الطبقة الاجتماعية للفرد، مصيره وقدره، لهذا أعطى البيض انفسهم الأولوية لاضطهاد السود الذين قاموا بتقبل التمييز العنصري دون أي اعتراض أو محاولة لصنع التغيير، إضافة إلى أن الكاتب أبراهام عالج ببراعة شخصية "زوما" ليقنع القراء وأفراد المجتمع ويدعوهم ليقفوا ضد التمييز العنصري الذي عانى منه السود عن طريق سرد قصة "زوما" الذي تمكن من التخلص من التمييز على أساس العرق والطبقة الاجتماعية رغم كل المتاعب والمصاعب التي واجهها إلا أنه تمكن من إسماع صوت الرجل الاسود.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العرق، العنصرية ، الحكم العنصري، الطبقة الاجتماعية