

## The Consequences Of Getting Unequal Systems, Bad Treatments, And Violence Triggering The Blacks To End Apartheid System In South Africa In Slovo's Film *Catch A Fire*

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**Abstract:** This analysis is aimed to make the readers aware of being able to respect for the value of independence and all effort to struggle it during the Apartheid era which is long and painful. There are some problems which become the focus of this study, First is unequal systems, bad treatments, and violence done by the White to the Blacks, and their effects. Second the Black's survival and struggle to achieve their independence during apartheid system. The writer chooses Post Colonialism approach to analyze this film because it has the nearest and strongest relationship with the message inside the film, The writer also focuses on the White's colonialism to the Blacks and Blacks' effort to abolish Apartheid system as one of colonialism discourse applied on their land.

**Keywords:** Apartheid System, Catch a Fire, South Africa

### INTRODUCTION

As a work of art, literature is different from others such as dancing, craving, painting etc. it also has a power to make people get closer to God. By learning literary works by heart people are able to look and feel how precious God's creations are. Besides that, literature also has a function to relate among people to others. People can share their mind, ideas, and feeling through literary works because literature is purposed as a medium to connect one with other for many purposes such as entertaining, sharing etc. Literature has a power to open the readers' eyes to feel the literary works. Besides can also feel what the writer feels through his/her work of art.

*Catch a fire* film is a film which based on true story made by Phillip Noyce as a director and written by Shawan Slovo as the script writer. The film tells about how the Blacks struggle to get their rights of freedom from the Whites. The writer wants to share to the readers of what she got from this film such as self-reliance from the main characters, Patrick Chamusso and his family as black people. At the time the Blacks are colonized by the Whites due to their efforts the Black can finally abolish the colonizer's system that has been applied for a long time. Patrick Chamusso is a good father who works at Secunda oil refinery in South Africa. The apartheid system began in 1950s and it tied 25 million of the Blacks. At that era the Whites called Boer or Bass become superior to the Blacks who are the owner of that land. Patrick actually does not want to have troubles with the Whites but when bombing happened at Secunda oil refinery, he was accused as the bomber. Consequently he got many

physical and mental abuses and not only happened to Patrick himself but also to his family. As the result Patrick felt hurt and against the Whites by joining the communist group, a rebellion party named African National Congress (ANC).

The writer watched this film for many times in order to be able to comprehend and analyze this film by using chosen approaches. Through her study, the writer wants to the first, describe the unequal systems, treatments and violence of the Blacks from the Whites. The second, elaborate the effect of unequal system, bad treatments and violence of Apartheid system and the last, analyze how the Black survive and struggle for reaching their freedom and ending the Apartheid system in their country.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **A. Post-Colonialism Theories**

The writer performs some theories that would give the information to be discussed deeply and also use many sources and references related to the theories. The theory is Post-colonialism. The theory is post colonialism. This theory has a closed relation to this film. The Whites was the colonizer and did bad treatments to the Black. The Whites become more superior to the Blacks.

The terms post-colonial derives from the prefix “post” and the word “colonial”. These words have many definitions and also have a closed relation to other words. Every expert has different ideas about the word “colonial” and here the writer would elaborates the word “colonial” based on one pioneer that she comprehends and agrees with. Sarah Brouillete (2007) in her articles *Post Colonial 101* defines that: “colonial is a long process most concentrated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: expansion of the major European powers into the rest of the world, establish foreign territories/ settlement”. Becoming an independent country from the colonizer needs a long time to achieve and takes a hard effort to raise it. Post colonialism theories provides many terms such as racism which is dealing much with superior and inferior races. In these terms, the Whites are usually able to colonize some races such as Negroes, Yellows and Indian.

Racism is also happened as a part of Apartheid system. Racism and discrimination are quite the same as both of them want to be superior and powerful in other people's land. Anup Syah (2000) in his article Racism runs deep defines racism as follow “Racism is the belief that characteristics and abilities can be attributed to people simply on the basis of their races and that some racial groups are superior to others. It is also a very touchy subject for some people.” Racism can happen in everybody's life where they live in a place under control by a

dominant one and as the minority group they must follow the rules made by the majority. Racism support discrimination and it is a powerful weapon to scare and press the inferior not only in the form of conflict and war but also in politics and economy.

To change the tyranny system like racism needs much more time. It needs self-control to be a brave person to protect the minority. The Blacks' life was never free from the unequal system under the Apartheid era. The unequal system and violence made their life under fear and sickness. The unequal treatments by the White happened almost in all aspect of their lives. The violence that attacks them can influence half of the Blacks to mimic the Whites. They usually support the Whites and they are in the Whites' side. Fortunately, there is still the Blacks' spirit and in many of the Blacks' hearts to against the Whites and fight for the country.

### **B. The Apartheid System**

South Africa is located in Africa continent. In this continent there are more than one million people living and there are many states which are in conflict. Based on the statistic data of world population from United Nation it is said that there are millions of people live in Africa and the number of population rising up to 1010 million of African. Unfortunately, the raising numbers of population is not in line with the better wealth and health of Africans.

According to James Mc Enteer (2010) in his article Living in District 9 - South Africa Abolished Apartheid and Will Host the World Cup in June. So where's The Glow? It tells that in 1940s apartheid system became the country's official policy and at that moment the Blacks struggled for the unfair justice and the segregated system. He shows that the "dominant" race could pay for the policy and on the contrary the Blacks must follow the unequal policy as slaver.

Apartheid system is one from many forms of colonialism in the world. Apartheid derives from the term apartheid comes from the Africans word for "apartness". This term is used as a political slogan of the National Party. There are many countries in Africa continent, but only South Africa which is dominantly controlled by the colonizer because it is the capital city and having a lot of recourses. Apartheid system was abandoned from Africa in 1990 caused by economic pressure. In 1994 the country's constitutions was rewritten and free general election was held for the first time in South Africa in which the first elected president was Nelson Mandela

To be a free country needs a hard effort and it is not easy to against the Whites who are more superior in quantity and quality. The number of the Whites is more than the Blacks

and they have better intelligence than the Blacks. The Blacks lived full of suffering and pressure from the Whites at the period when Apartheid system began.

### **South African's life under the tyranny of Apartheid system**

There are some systems called laws which are really unequal happened between the Blacks and the Whites and these laws make the Blacks feel as second class people in their own land. In fact the Whites treat the Blacks as badly as they got many abuses and bad treatments. These are some bad and unequal treatments which are done by the Whites to the Blacks

Discrimination Quoted from A Feminist Glossary of Humanity Geography (1999). means the action of being treated, unfairly, unjustly or unequally The Whites strictly remove balances for the Blacks. The Whites create many laws to create the Blacks under their power. According to Alonford James Robinson in his article Apartheid, Social, and Political Policy of Racial Segregation and Discrimination it is written that the word discrimination later referred to "separate development which put all citizen into racial categories,

1. Bantu (The Blacks African)
2. The Whites
3. Colored (mixed race)
4. Asian (India and Pakistan)

African people had followed all of the Whites' laws and these laws really made African people live in dullness, poverty and getting infected disease because of lacking of good health treatments The Blacks description of life is really not the same as the Whites. These differences create a lot of segregations between them. The segregations happened almost in all fields of the Blacks life such as economy, social, education, governance system and politics.

#### **a Economy**

According to James Mc. Enteer (2010) in the Article Living in District 9 tells that at the Apartheid era most of the Blacks were unemployed and if they had a job, they were just permitted to work not in their living areas but they had to work in other areas during the specific hours. As the Whites was the owner and the Blacks was labor they must come on time to office in early morning by public transportation while the Whites were having exercise on the street and came to office late by their car. Millions of African people lived by lack of basic services such as running out of water or electricity, segregation of public need

like a division rest room for the Whites and the Blacks in a work place. The Whites workers paid ten times higher than the Blacks workers did.

b. Social

The Blacks African must live under high class people and as the second class they did not get the best services from government According to Joshua Miller Ph.d (2007) in his article Medical Apartheid: The dark History of Medical Apartheid Experimentation from Colonial Times to the Present health services which were given were also really different from the Whites as high class people such as a segregated hospital and its facilities including Apartheid medicines which were just given for the Blacks. These medicines they had were low quality medicines. The Whites and the Blacks were living in separated building where in the Blacks' building there were no psychologists, psychiatrists or occupational therapist available

c. Education

Education also becomes a part which is separated by the Whites Not only their parents but also the children must feel the inequality system and the pain of colonialism. Education has an important role in children development as good education can make children grow well. But unfortunately the Blacks children cannot get best education according to Achille Mbe Mbe (2007) in his article Passage to Freedom because the education set up was based on the racial colored education, Indian education, and Bantu education. Bantu education just covered the lesson of serving the Whites. It is a lesson for a servant class.”

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Unequal system, Bad Treatment and Violence towards the Blacks**

The Blacks who are the second class people always live with second class facilities under the Whites. The Whites control many aspects of the Blacks' life by the system so called Apartheid system. Apartheid system reflects clearly the segregations between the Whites and the Blacks' life. The segregations happened in the Blacks' cover all of their life such as segregation of education, public services and job fields and they make a big difference and distance among them. In *Catch a Fire* movie, it described the Blacks' suffering under the tyranny of Apartheid systems.

## **1. The Unequal systems are done by the Whites to the Blacks**

The Whites dominate the Blacks by using apartheid system and apply it in every aspect of the Blacks' life. This system makes the Blacks' life getting suffering. These are the aspects which are dominated by the Whites under the name of Apartheid system.

### **a. Social Stratifications**

The system is deliberately made to classify the unequal life of the Whites and the Blacks. The Blacks are still belonging to lower class people no matter what their jobs are and how rich they are. The Boers always think that all the Blacks are not rich enough and have nothing. It happens to Patrick as the quotation below:

Police: What's this?

Patrick: that's my camera, bass!

Police: whose car is it?

Patrick: my car, bass!

Police: where are going Patrick?

Patrick: I wanna go home, baas!

Police: where do you get money for this car and good camera?

Patrick: No, Baas. I work. I have a job. I am a foreman baas. I work at Secunda

Police: Let's check him!"(Seq: 07:55)

Picture 1: Patrick was being sweeping by the Whites' cops



Living as the second class people, the suffering that the Blacks get from the Whites is that they must survive to live in a poor condition, wearing bad clothes, having a low class job. This suffering even continually happens to their next generations.

The social stratifications happen to the Blacks' life and it really makes them feel unequal with the Whites. The Whites never stop labeling the Blacks as the second class people after them. This negative assumption never ends until the Blacks can against and break the Whites' regulations.

b. Economy

In *Catch a Fire*, Patrick is a foreman in Secunda oil refinery, an important place that is able to produce a big income for the progress of Africa. Unfortunately, Patrick's country is living under the Whites' control so even though Patrick has an important role in Secunda he is still poor and unable to make his wife, Precious buy luxurious furniture. The situation happens when Precious invites Patrick to a furniture shop. Precious keeps on asking to Patrick about his position and the salary which are imbalance.

Precious: it's the suite of my dreams, Patrick. Hmm...?

Patrick: (looking at the price label.) then get a job and buy it yourself.

Precious: A job? Is that what you want Patrick? Patrick, when people come to visit and we sit in that room, I am ashamed.

Patrick: (smiles at Precious)

Precious: Baby, you're a boss man now. A foreman

Patrick: Precious, we can't afford it. (Seq: 00:17:43)

Living with unpretentious life with luxurious furniture can make Patrick happy. Even he is still hired with a cheap salary but he and his family feel safe, and enough with the limitation.

## 2. Bad Treatments are done by the Whites towards the Blacks

The Whites assume that all the Blacks are terrorists because of that the Whites treat them as their enemies. All the Whites' do is to protect themselves from the Blacks' attacks. The Whites do sweeping to the Blacks in every side of the city to make sure they don't bring any guns or weapons. The Whites do sweeping rudely to Patrick and all the Blacks.

Patrick and his family are investigated rudely by the Whites when they are driving to their city. They push him to the ground and checked all over his body. At the same time, Patrick looks two the Blacks men are shot by the Whites because the tried to run. (Seq: 09:33:00)

Picture 2: The sweeping were done by the Whites to the Blacks



The sweeping is always done by the Whites in order to succeed their goal to able to rule the Blacks' country. The Whites want to take advantage from the Blacks' power. They are the Whites' servants, slavers and cheaply paid labor.

### **3. Violence is done by the Whites to the Blacks**

The Whites legitimate all of the ways to disclose and break down the terrorist action. Violence becomes their effective ways to investigate the terrorist group. All of the tricks are done to get The Blacks' confession about AN (African National Congress), The Blacks' rebellion group to fight for their independence.

The Whites keep saying the words to make the Blacks feel down by mocking and humiliating. This can be shown by the scene when Colonel Nic Vos caught and interrogated Patrick related to bombing in Secunda.

Patrick is with Nic Vos's in his car drove to Vos' house, with the tied hands and closed eyes.

Nic Vos: Between you and me Patrick Apartheid can't last 25 million Blacks, 3 million White people. We're underdogs. We're the ones under attack. (Seq: 35:22:00)

The Whites' arrogance makes the Blacks feel powerless. This negative character becomes their weapon to easily control the Blacks.

The Whites are going to do everything in order to force the Blacks can make a confession and give information about ANC. The Whites' steps to get information from the Blacks by arranging some steps, the first step the Whites find out the target and then they seek a lot of information related to this group. They also try to get information about the most important person in the target's life.

Picture 3: Nic Vos tried to get closer to Patrick's wife





The man like Patrick who always looks so strong cannot do anything when his beloved wife abused by the Whites. Precious is got physical abuses and treated impolitely by the Whites. Her skin becomes bruised and Patrick make a lie tells that he is the bomber in Secunda.

Patrick: Precious, (looking at Precious sadly). What have done to you?

Precious: (cannot say anything and looks so traumatic) Patrick sobbing

Patrick: (Hugging Precious) I'm sorry (Patrick cries) Nic Vos! I'm talking to you, Nic Vos! I'll stand up in court and this is what I will say. After the game I fetched the boys to school in Ermelo. I went to Secunda. After that I opened the east perimeter fence.

Precious: Patrick stops! (Precious is screaming)

Patrick: no one saw me. I was there ten minutes and I was gone. You can do anything you want to do with me but you must release my wife What kind of man are you who do these things to a woman? What kind of man are you?

(Nic Vos looks at Patrick carefully after that he is gone) (Seq 00:43:15)

Picture 4: Nic Vos showed the picture that showed Patrick is the bomber of Secunda



The abuses done by the Whites toward the Blacks are purposed to anyone without looking the sex and age. These abuses are getting worse and more despicable when it is done in front of the Blacks children or their beloved people as that moment will be recorded in their mind and it can be a long traumatic thing for them in their life.

Johnny is Patrick's best friend who is arrested because Chammuso comes to his house at night. Chammuso becomes the Whites' target after the second bombing in Secunda which is done by him. Johnny gets abuses from The Whites and Sixpence, his beloved nephew is arrested and forced to watch his uncle gets violence cruelly by The Whites until Johnny dies (Seq:01:15:00)

The Whites never think over about violence they have done to their victims. In fact, the result of their violence will give a big effect even for children that are still pure from a negative side of life. Children need a long time to be able to forget their traumatic feeling after looking at their father being abused by the Whites. The Whites are irresponsible due to the fact that their violence toward the Blacks children makes them are traumatic.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Catch a fire is a film based on true story It tells about Patrick's spirit which is hot and it is symbolized as a fire and this phrase can be meant as a big risk for Patrick as his decision to join in a communist party just like catch a fire which can burn himself sometimes. The setting of this film is in the era of Apartheid. Apartheid system is a form of colonialism in South Africa from 1950 and ends in 1990. It is done by the Whites to the Blacks and tied 25 million of the Blacks Apartheid system was applied successfully and controlled most of all the Blacks' aspects of life such as economy, politic, and education,. This system also influences a lot with racism because all people who are living in that land are categorized into some classes according to their complexion. The highest class, called the leader, is the Whites' class, whereas the lowest class, called Bantu, is the Blacks' class. As the lowest class, the Blacks always get bad treatment and abuse from the Whites

The Blacks' life under Apartheid system is full of suffering and misery. They get such unequal systems, bad treatments and violence from the Whites. Unequal systems happen in the form of segregations. As the leader and the owner of the land the Whites get more priorities than the Blacks. The segregations happen in the Apartheid era, for instance the segregation of job field where the Whites who have good intelligence always get comfortable position and facilities as the boss which is called boss in South African term On the contrary, the Blacks just become their servant.

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