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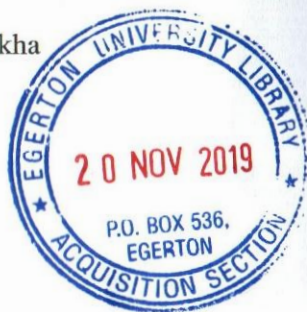
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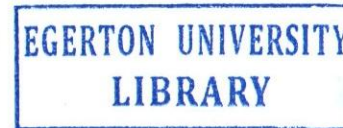
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**"Broken Temporalities of the 'New' South Africa": A
Variegated Rainbow Nation in K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet
Violence of Dreams* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our
Hillbrow***

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Abstract

*Post-apartheid South African literature examines a country which has a history of racial violence engendered by apartheid, and the resultant ambivalent cultural identities. In this article, K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* are examined as novels which envisage the confusion and vulnerability of the South African youth arising out of broken homes occasioned by the apartheid past and living through a disorienting present. Focusing on fractured narratives of individual disorientation of characters, the article reads the embrace of an expressive subculture as an attempt by the youth to fit into the economic, social, cultural and political uncertainties in the Rainbow nation. The article builds on the confluence of race and class in the social formation of post-apartheid South Africa to illuminate youth unsettlement and disappointment with the transition.*

Introduction

K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* are two post-apartheid novels that largely mirror South Africa's transition from apartheid to black majority rule. Set in the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg respectively, these novels, while ostensibly celebratory of urban post-apartheid freedom for blacks, re-echo the complex path to black urbanisation, especially by a youthful South African population. The two texts reveal the violent aftermaths of the apartheid system. The article focuses on Duiker's and Mpe's young characters living through the transition from the divisive apartheid regime to the Rainbow nation. It interrogates the

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“border lives” of the South African youth, lives that communicate individual disorientation and a “tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the ‘present’”, in the post-apartheid dispensation (Bhabha, 1994: 1). It examines the post-apartheid gloom of a young generation without stable families occasioned by violence and destitution. The violent manifestation of youth resistance, as Van Der Vlies (2006: 121) and Raditlhalo (2005: 100) attest to, is the effect of marginalisation and deprivation in post-apartheid South Africa.

What is significant is that the South African youth grew through the transition period traumatised and brutalised by the apartheid regime, and experienced the hopelessness at the unmet expectations of the post-apartheid era. They are the “lost generation” of the 1990s who suffered political, economic and social exclusion during apartheid, and who feel entrapped by their economic, social and political circumstances in the new dispensation (Seekings 1996: 103). Their lives reveal the enduring social fractures of black and marginalised communities that lived through forced removals and other forms of (spatial) dislocations of the apartheid system. In post-apartheid society, youth resistance is revealed through disruptive behaviour, and has been uniquely and largely fashioned through alternative subcultures in predominantly urban environments. In Duiker’s novel, the South African youth, growing up in ghettos and experiencing sexual and physical violation in cramped informal spaces, envisage homosexuality and other forms of cultural expression, as offering them a unique form of individual being. However, as the article shows, this embrace of an alternative subculture is incongruous to the expectations of freedom in a “post-racial” South Africa with a confluence of class and racial dynamics, thus complicating the youth’s attempts to make sense of their contemporary life.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the future of the black children of the townships and other formerly segregated areas are broken apart by poverty and neglect. With the end of apartheid, and with the opening up of cities, young black people moved to urban centres with the desire for education and work. Consequently, the rural areas have remained as places of despondency and wretchedness. Rural black South Africans in the “New” South Africa look at their kin working away in the cities as a security for their survival (Ashforth, 2005). They feel that they are entitled to ask for proceeds from kinsmen in the city. Mpe envisages the problems of family reciprocity and entitlements that establish the poor rural economies as dependent on the new system of rural-urban black South African worker. Having grown up in the rural areas of

Tiragalong, which the apartheid system relegated to poverty and deteriorating agricultural production, Mpe’s young characters residing in Hillbrow are faced with the daunting task of improving the lives of the dependent families back in the village. This is the situation of the black South African economy which establishes networks of kinship ties between urban and rural areas “where relations are premised upon principles of reciprocity” for wealth (re)distribution from family members working in the city (Ashforth, 2005: 32). On the other hand, Duiker’s novel features youths from privileged backgrounds. It explores the social dynamics and the incongruities surrounding the growing black middle class in post-apartheid South Africa. In this respect, Duiker offers a complementary perspective on the stereotypical “South African” distinction between black and white, that whites are rich, while the blacks are poor. Significant in Duiker’s novel is the representation of characters who are victims of family violence and break-up, and the resultant confusion and vulnerability. Consequently, these characters are both victims and aggressors of violence in the “New” South Africa. In the novels, sexual violation and other forms of violence are a metaphor for the attendant social pathologies such as xenophobia, crime, drug and alcohol abuse. Linking xenophobic violence in South Africa to perception of black economic disenfranchisement, this article contextualises the hatred of foreigners to the existence of economic and racial disparities.

The novels visualise the post-apartheid society in two ways. Mpe reconstructs the apartheid spaces of neglect envisioned through the underdeveloped rural areas. This perspective looks at the borders between the rural and urban South Africa, drawing in it the stagnating and muddled in-between spaces that have remained as legacies of apartheid. Mpe shows the ambiguities of a transition, envisioning a “new” apartheid of rural South Africa where traditional attitudes and practices have remained as a watermark of the old apartheid. Because this novel also critiques traditional attitudes, the “New” South Africa is rendered through a microscopic lens of self-questioning and conscious stock-taking of the past. As texts that speak to the urban imaginary and the redefinition of the South African cities, Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* and Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* build up South African cities as symbolic landscapes. These novels provide exposés of highly tensile spatial structures of Johannesburg and Cape Town respectively. In this engagement, the article visualises South Africa’s urban spaces, of the privileged suburbs/ rich neighbourhoods, and of the neglected and the poor peripheral, predominantly black areas. Mpe’s and Duiker’s texts are located within a body of black South African writing that takes on the black experience, especially in the portrayal

of the poor and disparaged spaces such as the rural landscape and run-down cityscapes. This is the “black story” that is projected in the new black post-apartheid writing as anticipated by Donadio (2006), revealing a growing corpus of black writing that portray blacks’ experiences with delicate sensitivity after apartheid. Black South Africans, whether from poor backgrounds or from elitist ones, are all subjected to the complex legacies of apartheid in a country embracing a new constitutional order. These texts encompass the contradictory nature of South Africa today.

Exploring an Alternative Youth Subculture: The Utopia of the “New” South Africa

Duiker and Mpe bear witness to the ambiguous building of the Rainbow nation. The two writers belong to a generation of young South Africans who lived through the eclipse of apartheid to witness the fledgling democracy grow. They reflect the discordant realities of young South Africans who grew out of the violence and destitution of the apartheid system. South Africa’s youth subculture reveals this tensile and ambiguous transformation. Recognising the importance of a youth subculture to a country’s social formation, Hebdige contends:

The complex interplay between the different levels of the social formation is reproduced in the experience of both the dominant and the subordinate groups, and this experience, in turn, becomes the “raw material” which finds expressive form in both culture and subculture. (1979: 84-5)

Hebdige locates a subculture within a form of “generational consciousness” that arises out of polarising and disjunctive pasts. Hebdige draws from the suffering of the youth and working class youth cultures after the Second World War in Britain, which parallels the way in which the South African youth grew up through the apartheid system. As is the case with respect to the British youth, South African youth have demonstrated a breakaway attitude from the past “on the plane of aesthetics in dress, dance, music: the whole rhetoric of style” (45). There is a conscious attempt to create unique codes “to discern the hidden messages inscribed in code on the glossy surfaces of style, to trace them out as ‘maps of meaning’ which obscurely re-present the very contradictions they are designed to resolve or conceal” (45). Hebdige draws our attention to the need to read, decipher and interpret South African youth aesthetic forms.

In significant ways, Duiker represents the crisis of youth identity in post-apartheid South Africa. This is the dilemma represented by his protagonist, Tshepo. In his post-racial aspirations, Tshepo looks for a different aesthetic mode when he identifies with Cape Town’s “club culture”, a mode that is not inflected by race. As he shares with Mmabatho, Tshepo believes that Cape Town’s joints and clubs offer a unique opportunity to “get away with being yourself” because there is a carefree atmosphere that appeals to cultural inclusiveness (Duiker, 2001: 3-4). He notices that these social places signify a cohesive environment in which a confluence of cultures may offer a glimmer of peaceful co-existence. Black people co-exist peacefully with the whites as they embrace the rhythms of the ghetto’s “kwaito” music. Tshepo aspires for racial inclusiveness and cohesive harmony, despite the legacies of racism:

When you go out in some places in Cape Town no one really cares that you’re black and that your mother sent you to a private school so that you could speak well. No one cares that you’re white and that your father abuses his colleagues at work and calls them kaffirs at home. (34)

Tshepo’s embrace of “club culture” is, therefore, an attempt to accept an inclusive Rainbow nation where race and its negative connotations have been discarded in favour of a freer non-racial democracy. Tshepo believes in an inclusive society, where youth style and “club culture” become the new narrative to replace race:

People want to be seen eating croissants at a chic coffee shop at the Table View, rollerblading in Clifton or going for aromatherapy in bohemian observatory ... so that colour becomes secondary to the person you present. They want to say ah you’re cool and not ah you’re black or white ... You must know all these things and more in a culture pushing to be hybrid and past gender and racial lines ... These are things that define club culture in Cape Town, not racial politics. (35)

Looked at in this way, Tshepo’s view of “club culture” is in line with the nation’s ideals of multicultural and multiracial acceptance. This is the belief that underlies his wish for an alternative style to reflect “a culture pushing to be hybrid and past gender and racial lines”. In this respect, Tshepo seems to be advocating for a class-based consciousness on a matter of youthful style in the hope that it would help erase the tendrils of race. This reflects Hebdige’s view that a subculture is motivated by class at the economic and ideological level (1979: 75). This is the advocacy that Tshepo shares:

In some clubs a person will chat you up because you know what drum & bass is and can dance to it while appearing sexy, not because you match the same race group like some arbitrary prerequisite ... They want to live out their Train spotting odyssey of excess in a culture rapidly blurring the borders between the township and the northern suburbs ... Some people are just sick of the expected. Me Tarzan, you Jane has become monotonous. People want to make their own references about who they are and where they fit in or not. It's not enough to simply offer them certain variables, hoping that they'll fit in there somewhere. And Cape Town is not what it used to be. Foreigners have left their imprint on our culture. (34)

While Tshepo, Mmabatho and others find Cape Town's "club culture" as providing them with a new urban expressive culture envisioned through the recognition of style and cultural inclusiveness, Chris embraces Cape Town's Rastafarian culture as a form of escape from the oppression and economic depression of the "New" South Africa. His acceptance of the ideals of Rastafarian culture parallels his own hatred for whites, whom he constantly blames for oppression and slavery.

Chris identifies easily with the expressive ghetto culture that speaks to the many levels of colonial/ apartheid oppression and economic exploitation meted out to the ghettos, including the Cape Flats where he grew up. He fits into the Rastafarian culture as envisioned by Hebdige (1979). He is a Rastaman, "the living repudiation of Babylon (contemporary capitalist society), refusing to deny his stolen history [...]. By a perverse and wilful transformation, he turns poverty and exile into 'signs of grandeur'" (34). Chris takes Tshepo to Khayelitsha township, where he (Tshepo) finds the peaceful and respected rastas celebrating their blackness with ganja in an environment with an assortment of rainbow colours (159). Later, when Tshepo is booked at the police station, he meets the members of this culture, and is "stuck by their rigid sense of duty and how easily they seem to see the truth from lies, evil from good. They speak with pragmatic wisdom, of ghetto experiences that have forced them to look inward too much" (186). Tshepo, however, does not approve of this subculture's acceptance of "the jagged knife of repression", and their stoic acceptance of suffering, appearing more as a "forgotten people... ancient remnants of old Africa" (186, 188, 189).

Tshepo, finding no solace in the "club culture" and in the Rastafarian culture, turns to the gay culture. His quest for a liberating subculture is envisaged in

his acceptance of homosexuality. This mirrors his search for cultural inclusiveness as promised in the Rainbow nation's constitution. Munro (2007), in her reading of queer identities in the "New" South Africa, and especially in the inclusion of gay rights in its democratic constitutionalism, notes:

South Africa's transition to democracy involved the attempt to create a "rainbow" nationalism, marked differently from most postcolonial nationalisms, which is not attached to one ethnic identity and explicitly includes gay people as citizens. (754)

Munro is referring to South Africa's inevitable embrace of "non-racial" democracy, which recognised the various races of the country as equal. The embracing of gay rights was largely seen as expressing the quest for freedom, especially in a unique country, where the growth of the city, the movement of migrant labourers, and sexual restrictions among races produced what Munro terms "unruly sexual cultures" (2007: 753).

Munro notes that *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is a "coming out novel", and connects the novel's overriding theme of homosexuality to the conception of the "New" nation, arguing that it attends to the:

economies of sexuality into a more direct engagement with "rainbow" nationalism. This book is a late transition era meditation on the disorienting effects of becoming "gay" in the new South Africa, which also insists on the possibility of self-fashioning through queer sex. (756)

Notably Tshepo's gay culture emanates from his experiences of the "club culture". The clubs that he visits embrace the "New" nation's gay freedom. There are many gay bars and cafés, mostly at Green Point, including the Detour, Angels and the Ganesh, where the gays and the lesbians frequent. There is also the "massage Parlour", Steamy Windows. Duiker's characters find the Ganesh, "an idiosyncratic cafe-cum-bar tucked away in the heart of Obs" (71), as a charming spot for youngsters to while away their time as they drink and enjoy themselves. It is a place that speaks of a relative sense of cohesion among the various subcultures residing in Cape Town. It is a place where the "sexually ambiguous", the lesbians and the gay are to be found (182). The same gay-club atmosphere is to be found in Biloxi bar, "a decent disco pub in the heart of the gay district", located in Green Point, Cape Town's gay area (298).

Tshepo turns to homosexuality as a “last solution”, coming at a time when he desperately needed a job and was frustrated by his lack of chances to get employed (204). He walks the city without any success. So he books himself into Steamy Windows, a massage parlour and a business unit in the heart of Green Point. Here, he meets West, an educated Afrikaner young man who not only feels liberated through gay sex but has been made financially secure. Apart from visiting places, paying his university loans and making investments, West is a testimony of the financial security that this massage parlour promises (294-5). For Tshepo, the “massage parlour” is a “stop over” for other bigger things (277). He is excited at the prospect of making money. Furthermore, Tshepo manages to put behind himself his violent sodomy by Chris and his friends from Pollsmoor.

The youth’s embrace of expressive subcultures in the “New” South Africa is, however, not without fissures. In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, the youths find their escapism to club, Rastafarian and gay culture ultimately unsatisfying. The novel embodies the contradictory nature of the post-apartheid nation. Despite striving for an “ideal of the Rainbow”, there are legacies of apartheid that have resisted erasure.

Tshepo’s acceptance of his gay sexuality is an attempt to communicate his private need for a world of acceptance and inclusiveness. As he informs his dead mother in his demented state, his leaning towards a “queer” life is a “survival mechanism” in an attempt to make sense of his psychosis (140). This is especially because, as he attests, he has had an “incomplete childhood”, having grown up as a fickle asthmatic child and having survived a terrible evil visitation at their home that drastically changed his outlook on life. Steamy Windows is symbolically tied to Tshepo’s quest to understand himself and his suffering. Initially, then, he creates a world of inclusiveness in his mind. He envisions the gay culture in the light of a new beginning, a new direction. Sebastian, his Steamy Windows colleague, also shares this dream:

It’s as if life is engineering a group of people who’ve trumped over the worst, the ugliest prejudice, the worst bigotry, on every level of society. Perhaps it is preparing them for something else, bigger challenges. This is one of the prejudices that cuts across racial, social and cultural boundaries. (253)

Steamy Windows gives a glimmer of hope for a better South Africa, but as Tshepo soon finds out, this dream of inclusiveness is utopian: the kind of racial, social and cultural inclusiveness so wished for by Sebastian is a facade.

When whites mistreat Tshepo and deny him change at New Yorkers, an all-white gay bar in Green Point’s gay district, he realises that the gay “brotherhood” that he had always thought of as “liberated” and untainted by racism did not in fact exist. He also realises that gay whites “are white people before they are gay” (343). Tshepo then wonders:

Cape Town never ceases to remind us who we are. When we leave the sanctuary of our Utopia at work we become pigments in a whirlpool of colour. In the centre it is lily white. On the edges of the whirlpool the other colours gather like froth and dregs. (343-344)

Tshepo comes to the realisation that “race is ... the modality in which class is ‘lived’, the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and ‘fought through’” (Hall, 1980: 341). In spite of class differences, race dominates the country’s social and economic relations. Tshepo realises that the Rainbow is mottled and variegated. Cape Town is still an exclusive preserve for whites. It is “very white, the influence of European traditions like coffee shops and bistros is inescapable ... there are certain places where you know you’re not welcome and the patrons make you feel like you are an outcast” (420).

Tshepo painfully discovers that the gay world that he had so readily accepted as a “brotherhood” is racist. When Shaun, his white boss at Steamy Windows, mentions the taboo word among the blacks, “kaffir” – Tshepo is “shocked, offended. That word has always stung” (286). Tshepo is “shattered, having so readily embraced them as brothers” (286). In retrospect, he wonders why crimes committed are always primarily presupposed to have been committed by blacks, and the coloured (349). Tshepo reflects upon the fact that black clients do not come to him at Steamy Windows, preferring to go to the whites. Racial relations have tended to reflect the earlier ingrained and stereotyped attitudes and prejudices, with race getting privileged in economic terms. With this stagnation in racial relations, Tshepo decides to leave the massage parlour. He has learned that he had been living in “a different mask”, in a self-defeating racial utopia (320).

Tshepo does understand that race is still a relevant signifier in South Africa’s social relations, but he chooses to downplay its significance in favour of a class-based consciousness that recognises equality among cultures. He attests to this view at Steamy Windows on what he says about his culturally diverse friends: “I don’t think of them in terms of race groups, but that does not mean

I'm not aware of their race" (343). Yet, the alternative he identifies with is a privileged, materialistic attachment to the changing local and global consumer culture that he embraces through dress labels.

The youth have fallen victim to a capitalistic society that has put a price tag on their lifestyles. Tshepo chooses the "club culture" of Cape Town that identifies him with the kind of labels that they wear. At Steamy Windows, he has to discard his fascination with the "flea market" in favour of imported / expensive brands. It is the motivation that makes him, and other gays, go for designer "Soviet jeans", "Gucci shirts" in a world where "Designer labels are the new Esperanto" (34). Irlam (2004: 710) argues that "the new South Africa is a space delivered over the commodification in which race is ... a question of market value". This is the kind of materialism that is espoused in Cape Town's "club culture".

As already argued in this article, the South African youth exhibit anxiety and vulnerability played out through a dualistic behaviour that mirrors the country's democratic constitutionalism. In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, The South African black youth show their avowed love for South Africa through sports. However, their celebrations are also eerily marked by violence and death. In the novel, youthful sports fanatics throw away bottles out of their high-rise apartments in Hillbrow without caring for the multitudes swarming the streets. Aside from reported deaths from such acts, a driver swerves in ecstasy, killing a child in the frenzy:

Most people, after the momentary stunned silence of witnessing the sour fruits of soccer victory, resumed their singing. *Shosholoza* ... sounded its melodies from Wolmarans Street, at the fringe of Johannesburg downtown, to the head of Clarendon Place, at the boundary of the serene Parktown suburb. *Shosholoza* ... drowned the choking sobs of the deceased child's mother. (2)

By suggesting that the whole of Hillbrow is under violent sports frenzy, Mpe portrays a near occult scene. It is at the point of madness at such celebrations that the damning contradiction of the "Rainbow" nation is witnessed. A similar incident did in fact occur to Refentše when he and his friends got robbed in June of 1995, and a car they had borrowed "was successfully redistributed" by the black robbers (22). Paradoxically, then, the whole of Hillbrow was jubilantly singing because the Springboks, the South African rugby team, had won the Rugby World Cup. When the novel opens, the narrator addresses the

dead Refentše, and does not regret the 1998 Bafana Bafana's loss to France, considering that a win would have been a disaster in Hillbrow (1).

In Mpe's novel, the song "Shosholoza" is sung by sports fans to show their valiant support of their football and rugby teams. This song, as Jensen finds out, is a symbol of a compassionate "New" South Africa (2012: 92). However, the song is also sung during the burning of witches. Mpe mimics this dual response to democracy when he combines the killing of a young child by a spinning car with the singing of this song by an unfeeling crowd celebrating a sports win, drowning the cries of the deceased child's mother (2). This song espouses the promise of togetherness in the "New" South Africa, but it also mimes the betrayal of democracy. Celebration and death are post-apartheid South Africa's siamese twins, conjoined at the hip.

Duiker and Mpe use tropes of magic realism in their texts to emphasise a collapsing world where torture and confusion among cultures reign supreme. Slemon (1995: 411) argues that the use of magical realism is "metonymic of the postcolonial culture as a whole" which is, in Bhabha's words, "disjunct and displaced", sustained by what Slemon calls the "disjunctive language of narration" (Bhabha, 1994: 9). In the narrative strategy of these texts, there is a sustained use of metonyms and metaphors to narrate South Africa's postcolonial condition. The tropes of madness and suicides, earthquakes and erupting volcanoes, violent and ghostly dreams and the utopia of Heaven, offer a template in which the "double vision" of the Rainbow nation can be read. The fantastic elements are infused into the thematic structure of these texts.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow opens with the narrator providing a surreal reference to Refentše, a character now dead (1). Mpe's narrator speaks to and about many of the novel's characters who are either dead or faced with the immanent possibility of dying. Death becomes a metaphor of South Africa's colonial / apartheid condition which seamlessly finds expression in the post-apartheid/postcolonial era. During the apartheid era, many writers and lecturers, politicians and social workers were taken through "magical acts" by the apartheid regime. The heinous crimes of apartheid are remembered through the "grisly details, draped in tears, from the testimonies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, of South African policemen enjoying their beer and braai while black dissenters roasted alongside their roasted meat in the heat of a summer day" (19). In a social formation where death has become a narrative of physical and mental dislocation, Mpe bares post-apartheid South Africa's horrific deaths and killings to show that the

transition has remained largely as a narrative of disappointment in its echoing of the violent past. On what are clearly examples of racially motivated crimes and violence by the angry blacks in post-apartheid South Africa, Mpe narrates:

There were other chilling stories of what happened in the *Kitchens*. Of white madams raped and gagged by their South African garden boys... of white men found hanging like washing waiting to dry ... of whites killed simply because they were wealthy... of whites hacked to death simply because they were white, an embodiment of racial segregation and black impoverishment, irrespective of their political allegiances and economic affiliations. (22-23)

In the novel, however, Mpe's dead characters are given a new lease of life as the narrator is able to take us to Heaven, their abode after death. Heaven becomes a place of interrogation of individual earthly causes of death. It is also a place of retrospect. It provides a utopia of a different South Africa. Heaven enters into the narrative as a thematic template to highlight the salient themes of witchcraft, AIDS, and xenophobia.

Duiker also uses magical realism in his novel to suggest a world without hope. Tshepo dreams of beasts and destruction. He paints a picture of a soulless, serpent-infested, collapsing world. In the dreams, Tshepo is alone in a world of vampires, falcons, jackals and wolves, all in a horrific frenzy baying for human flesh and blood (140, 367, 379). These coalesce into dreams of the horror of poverty, want and confusion in squatter camps and townships. Sebastian, Tshepo's colleague at Steamy Windows, also dreams of chaos, doom, confusion among cultures and AIDS.

The Quiet Violence of Dreams and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* embody the "New" South Africa as a neurotic space in which local South Africans muddle through the nation's inconsistent transition to the Rainbow. Many of the nation's attendant pathologies, such as suffering, death, suicide, indifference and seclusion present a confusing and hallucinatory environment for the characters. This is especially manifested in the characters' points of view on the "New" nation's sharp economic divides, between the minority whites and the majority blacks, between squatter camps / townships / rural areas on the one hand, and the inner cities and rich suburbs, on the other in the capitalist structure of South Africa's social formation.

Mad Futures: Decoding the Madness of South African Capitalism

In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Duiker uses psychosis as a corollary to the inconsistencies in the transition from apartheid South Africa to the "New" South Africa. In this novel, mental delusion is revealed through the frenzied thoughts of the characters as they sift through the problems bedeviling the "New" South Africa.

Tshepo is booked at a mental asylum hospital immediately after his mother's sexual violation and murder, as well as his sodomy, and again, later at Valkenberg Mental Hospital, where he is diagnosed with "cannabis induced psychosis" after his drug-addiction problem (9). In the hospital Tshepo is portrayed as a psychotic patient who leads a solitary life. He is a character who goes through pangs of depression and loneliness. He understands that his sickness is a result of "the lies and cover-ups, the injustice and humiliation of it all", and blames the circumstances of his past life as having contributed to the incarceration (10).

Valkenberg Mental Hospital emerges as an image of "disciplinary power", as a purgatory of evil. It is South Africa's psychiatric asylum previously used by the apartheid system to house deranged inhabitants (Filippi, 2011: 627, 630). Instructively, this panopticon still towers in the "New" South Africa, an indication of the continued evil long after apartheid. It still provides asylum to many mentally dislocated individuals, most of whom are notable professionals who all live and walk in a delirium "anonymously", and those already "certified", which means, "they can't drive, they can't vote, they can't open a bank account" (Duiker, 2001: 49, 135). A majority of these patients while away their time as they see their dreams go to waste.

In South Africa's imagination, Valkenberg is, in Foucault's words, "a space of exclusion" where "symbolic inhabitants", namely "[the] madmen and the disorderly", are confined in, away from the gaze of the "normal" society" (1977: 199). Valkenberg does not offer any consolation. Those at Valkenberg are the forgotten, living at the fringes of the "New" South Africa. Zebon sarcastically captures this non-inclusiveness in the Rainbow when he laments that those at the asylum suffer away "so that people can sleep safe at night ... because the really sick people are locked away ..." (46).

As an image of corruption and decay, Valkenberg satirises the "New" nation as a country with no possibility of redemption and escape. The nurses understand very little of their patients, most of whom only "act along" to

reinforce their prescribed illnesses. The more problematic patients are taken to the “Kulukutz”, a place of seclusion and solitary confinement with dehumanising conditions that are only comparable to apartheid’s mistreatment (23, 26, 110). It is a place where patients contemplate violence and murder. Zebon deliberates murdering his nurses at the very hospital, which, ironically, was supposed to cure his murderous instincts. It parodies South Africa’s failure at social integration. Tshepo affirms that Valkenberg “has horrors and that it doesn’t work”. It is an institution that leaves “mental scars” behind, which include non-acceptance in jobs and within circles of friends (122). Because Tshepo is a former patient, he finds it hard to continue with his studies. Furthermore, he loses his temporary job at a café in Waterfront because the manager gets wind of his Valkenberg experience (198).

Tshepo repeatedly turns to his mother in his psychosis. He shares with her the terrible things going on in his country. He tells of a picture of a wounded people, of confusion among families and the loss of their children, of political corruption and class divisions, of difficult labour relations, of gangsterism and of the violence painting the urban streets of South Africa. He conjures up images of hardship, strife and oppression visited upon the poor and the downtrodden. Shortly before he is picked up for booking at Valkenberg from Wynberg where he lived with an immigrant family, Patrick, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, notes of him:

He is serious. Everything affects him: Whites, their whining about post-apartheid South Africa, the new government and its corruption, fat politicians, drug lords, the police and opportunistic heists, pollution, nuclear testing, the price of food, the cost of living, the poor, the rich, the disabled, the aged, the mountain, the stars and moon ... (139)

The problems of the “New” nation are ingrained in Tshepo’s consciousness. This overindulgence in the many of South Africa’s challenges lands him the second stint at Valkenberg mental hospital. In a scene akin to what happens in Hillbrow in Mpe’s novel, Tshepo throws away his stuff from his balcony in the belief that he is “ridding the world of evil” (99). Tshepo attributes his insanity to the cruelty existing in South Africa’s social relations. Tshepo’s depression and madness are a result of failed dreams. He reflectively complains: “I live with too many questions, crying dreams, I mourn too many missed opportunities and failed relationships” (59). When he finally joins Steamy Windows, the gay massage parlour in Green Point, he comes to realise the maddening and overbearing contradictions in the “New” South Africa. The

relationship between the rich and the poor is dialectically related to class and racial tensions. While being gay for money accords him a privileged economic position, he notices the entrapment of predominantly black areas in poverty and violence.

Tshepo’s Steamy Windows experience with a number of his upper class clients hints that class and race are intertwined. He travels with Alex to the affluent suburb of Hout Bay, one of South Africa’s expensive residential areas. Alex is a rich white architect and an executive. All the time, Alex humiliates him. He is contemptuous and condescending towards him because he is black and poor, his education notwithstanding. In a world where whites primarily believe that blacks are gay because of poverty, Tshepo goes through a similar experience with another rich young man, Oliver. After picking him up from Steamy Windows, Oliver drives his black Jaguar to Camps Bay, another expensive suburb at the Atlantic seaboard. Tshepo is taken to an expensive “chic nouvelle cuisine restaurant”, where they meet Oliver’s friends, who all appear “in their thirties, rich and spoilt, probably the children of the wealthy ... their arrogance and self-assuredness pervasive in their manner” (370). Afterwards, Oliver takes him to his mansion, a building of an “unusual European façade ... in Monaco’s neo belle époque style” at the residential suburb of Llandudno, where, together with his friends, they participate in sex orgies, “the decadence of the obscenely rich” (371).

In the story by Mmabatho about a class-conscious professional black woman spoken to condescendingly at a Pick ‘n Pay shopping mall at the V and A noyal at Waterfront by white women, Tshepo notes that the “colour thing” is there, but also, it isn’t there. It is a mutating virus coughed out through class. Where class meets race, race rears itself over it. In the “New” South Africa’s social formation, race manifests itself in social relations, with the whites believing that blacks are still the low-class citizens, despite some blacks being in the class of “nouveau riche ba bo darkie” (138). Tshepo’s initial hope of a liberated South Africa through a class-based consciousness is thwarted by the understanding that old habits have failed to die away. He believes that, “everyone has got their own agenda”, and reminds Mmabatho about the racial stagnation in the country:

[T]his is South Africa and don’t fool yourself thinking that Cape Town is liberal. Some of the worst bigots and hypocrites come from Cape Town. Old Money, Mmabatho, they don’t want us, they never have and they never will. Do you know how hard it was for them to watch apartheid and all their privileges go? ... Whenever you get lots of rich people, you can be

sure that they will be as conservative as hell ... my theory of Cape Town is that you get a lot of rich people, Germans, French, Jewish, Muslim, Italians and of course a few of the nouveau riche ba bo darkie. And then the majority of the people is working class ... there are all these obscenely rich people who don't even know what to do with their money and then you have Gugulethu and the Cape Flats on the other side ... the rich own everything, the courts, the cops, the politicians, the works. (138)

At the economic level of post-apartheid South Africa's social formation, there are marked contrasts in the distribution of wealth. Tshepo notes that in some parts of Cape Town, there are those who are "obscenely rich", on the one hand, and those at the "Gugulethu and the Cape Flats" who reek of an "offensive scent of poverty and neglect" on the other (138, 207). Tshepo comes to the realisation that class may not be an explanation for the ongoing exploitation of the blacks in South Africa. He reasons that class is not a solution to racial problems:

Even when I have looked my best and spoken in my best private school accent, I have confronted the harshest, the crudest prejudice from whites. They probably felt it their duty to remind me that I'm nothing but a kaffir who talks like a larney. That is how it feels when people are rude to you for no reason other than your different complexion. We still have a long way to go. (419)

He continues:

South Africa does not give you a chance to feel good about yourself, if you're not white, at least historically. Having gone to multiracial private schools made a difference, but my journey into myself and the true nature of people has been no different from that of township blacks, trying to find their place, their voice. (419)

Instructively, Tshepo sheds off his class-consciousness in favour of the more "open" global "culture" in his own terms:

I can't follow the whites, they are heading for the abyss with stupid pride. The coloureds are waiting for their own coloured messiah. The Indians will only tolerate you if you eat their hot food and laugh at their jokes. And the new blacks are too angry and grab everything for themselves. I don't think they see clearly. (438)

In this social formation, divisive social relations exist along class and racial lines. Blacks, whites and other cultures exist as separate social groups, and this

is often reflected on the economic level. This shows that class tensions in South Africa are still grounds of contest, expressed through a continued struggle within the capitalist relations. Cole, Tshepo's colleague at Steamy Windows, reminds Tshepo that the rich control power. He comes to understand that the rich and the powerful meant the whites. When Cole elucidates to him that class is power, it is a foregone conclusion that the ruling class is still the white class. This is reflected in Hall's argument that "at the economic level ... race [takes] its distinctive and 'relatively autonomous' effectivity", that emerges as the major defining factor in class relations (1980: 339).

In South Africa, class operates on a racially structured social formation. Hall (1980: 340) opines that in order to analyse the confluence of race and class, it is important to understand that race becomes a mechanism in which class stratification is accomplished. South Africa's classes were hierarchically ordered by apartheid, and sustained by enforced legislations, including the creation of borders between black townships and Cape Town's northern suburbs whose blurred edges Tshepo takes note of.

Burawoy in his discussion of the confluence of class, race and colonialism, advances that the form of colonialism witnessed in South Africa exhibits a kind of "pluralism" in the way in which a "colonial superstructure" manifests itself by "differential incorporation into the central institutions and by a ruling ideology or dominant value system which justifies that differential incorporation" (1974: 528). Here, Burawoy looks at class as being determined by the economic base and ideology. Colonialism/apartheid structured South Africa's classes in a differential sense, creating different and fractured cultural groups.

In the apartheid era, colonial expansion was undertaken in the context of maintaining the interests of the white ruling class so that the kind of political and economic structures set up in the decades-long apartheid were very strong. In the end, the whites were able to maintain a steady and growing capitalism, one that, in the post-apartheid era, has proved difficult to break. Tshepo understands that blacks have always been at the bottom of the class structure, set up historically, in fact, by the many landless African peasants who worked for the whites and in mines, and those who walked into the cities with a pass to do menial jobs.

Class structure in South Africa's social formation is complex. As observed above, the issues surrounding the rich versus the poor invariably coincide with those concerning relations between whites and blacks respectively. But the distinction in post-apartheid South Africa is blurred. In post-apartheid South Africa, a number of blacks have taken advantage of the new leadership to get rich, and/or amass wealth. This shows that in post-apartheid South Africa, it is difficult to explain class stratifications based on race alone. Emerging groups such as the black middle class cannot fit into the earlier system of South Africa's economic relations.

Burawoy (1974: 543) observes that "the logic of economic growth in South Africa lies in the creation and extension of the black middle classes". Writing before the end of apartheid, Burawoy must have foreseen that a growing black middle class may be the way to even up with the white bourgeoisie in post-apartheid South Africa. Ironically, even with a substantially growing black middle class in South Africa, poverty and other social ills have continued to grow. The economic privileges so enjoyed by this black middle class have made them live alongside whites in expensive neighbourhoods, and shop in the expensive V and A nogaal in Waterfront, as represented in Duiker's novel (138). This has happened at the expense of the majority of the black population.

What, then, is the nature of this South African capitalism which Tshepo, a knowledgeable former Rhodes University student, blames for the economic problems of South Africa? As Duiker's Tshepo finds out, the rich in South Africa are members of a capitalist economy who still live in exclusive preserves now not set by law but by economic advantage. Blacks may go to Clifton or other expensive suburbs but the prohibitive rates may put a hold to their ambitions of living there. Those in the townships lack the material base to reconstruct their lives and develop. Consequently, despondency and lack abound in townships and black squatter settlements. Mpe sets his novel in the (post-apartheid) poor rural economy of Tiragalong that is dependent on the city economy, particularly on those who have gone to the cities to look for education and employment. Hence, even though apartheid has ended, there principally remains an economic contradiction between the economies of the rich owners of production and the poor townships / rural areas.

Duiker's Tshepo walks down the township in an attempt to find answers to the maddening confusion in his country. Tshepo, like Mpe's Refentše, burdens himself and is overburdened by the problems and challenges facing his

country. While Refentše finds suicide as a "relief", Tshepo chooses to suffer to the point of madness:

Everywhere I go I look. I feel like I'm decoding madness, wrapping my brain around it, facing it, making it easier to see, to understand, giving it a name. Maybe it is called capitalism, making money for the sake of making money, not building communities. With capitalism, it seems someone has to lose, someone has to be the underdog, someone has to play the poor bastard that holds up the structure, so that the rich can be rich. Maybe the problem isn't capitalism, maybe it's the elites who run the structure. Maybe it's the stifling class system that keep us all rigid in our places, everyone behaving, everyone going as far as their lives allow them. (432)

Tshepo makes a powerful statement about the nature of the contradictions facing his country. His experiences at Steamy Windows with rich clients from Clifton, Hout Bay and Camps bay, contrast markedly with the kind of life that black South Africans live in the same city, in formerly segregated parts of Cape Town.

Walking in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is a metonym for escape from the hopelessness and the vagaries of life. The world outside Valkenberg is equally cruel and unfeeling for those like Tshepo. Tshepo avers that their feet "are sore from having walked into all the wrong places and having spoken to all the wrong people" (54). In his psychotic state, Tshepo also walks the streets and is haunted by witches, wizards and strange apparitions (93). His walking enunciates the evil and the oppression in various parts of Cape Town.

Tshepo's walk around the city decodes crime, violence, poverty, unemployment and a host of other challenges facing contemporary South Africa. As his feet graze the streets of Cape Town, Tshepo communicates to us the social and economic underpinnings of the various inhabitants of Cape Town. In Mpe's novel, the ghastly and gory scenes and reports in Hillbrow point to the enduring violent aspects of this part of the city of Johannesburg. Car jackings, robberies, murders, rapes and deaths are prevalent in Hillbrow. Even formerly secure places such as the suburbs are no longer safe. There are criminals on the prowl in Sandton and other upper class residential areas. Refentše narrowly escapes getting knifed "at the Hyde Park, near Sandton", in spite of Hyde Park's "lily-white reputation for safety and serenity" (22).

The privileged whites and the black middle-class are also targets of South Africa's crime waves. As seen in Mpe's novel, the affluent can appropriate spaces for themselves by facilitating their movements to other areas of the cities. "Big, forward-looking companies" move away from the "monster", referring to Hillbrow, to "northern suburbs such as Sandton" (2-3). This relative seclusion by the white and the black middle classes has created monstrous in-between places and spaces. Because the rich have the means of production, they can facilitate their spatial mobility to other places. They can also afford to gate themselves. This contrasts markedly with the shanties and shacks in Alexandra where Mpe's Piet lived, and in Nyanga and Khayelitsha, where Duiker's Chris was brought up.

In South Africa in the post-apartheid era, spatial appropriation reflects class and racial differences. In that regard, it can be argued that class has insulated the white and the black middle class. The townships and squatter camps remain as places of entrapment. Those in poverty-stricken areas turn to violent crime, accentuated by perceived feelings of disenfranchisement.

The proliferation of violent spaces in South African townships directly emanates from the economic problems that predominantly affect these poor areas. Despite the promises of the transition, for example, Cape Flats has remained as a dirty slum, "a complicated underground sewerage system", where poverty and want breed violence, especially sexual violence, like what we see in Chris (155). Tshepo's and Chris's train journey to Khayelitsha township is also a symbolic journey to the putrefaction in the townships of South Africa. The sadness and unfriendliness from the residents there contrasts markedly with the carefree suburban life that Tshepo lived off while at Steamy Windows. As Tshepo walks into the bowels of the township, the maze and the confusion of slum life invites back his earlier mad thoughts (429). Despite his sore feet and blisters, he walks the whole length of the township, taking in the suffering of the millions of desperate and frustrated black South Africans.

Duiker's Tshepo also enunciates the unemployment and hopelessness afflicting the youth in post-apartheid South Africa, especially in cities. In his joblessness, Tshepo walks aimlessly to the train station. He notes South Africa's gaping problems of street children, the poverty and the frustration of having to walk down the city's streets in search of a job:

For two weeks I walk up and down Cape Town's restaurants looking for a job as a waiter ... They tell me either that there are no posts or

that they are looking for a woman, or is that someone white? ... I even tell them that I will work in the kitchen or scrub floors. I swallow my pride and force myself to walk the merciless streets up and down Tamboerskloof, Clifton, Gardens, Obs, Green Point, Sea Point, Mowbray, Claremont and Rondesbosch. (203-204)

Tshepo walks down nearly the whole length of Cape Town; from the citycentre to the suburbs and to the places along the Atlantic seaboard without any respite for a job – any job. Tshepo's option is to take the "only possible thing left" – to work for a "massage parlour" at Green Point, which means being gay for money (204).

In this dystopia, Tshepo sees the nation as being in a convulsive moment. There is more evil: "The story is unfolding, that there is more to come. A monster is rising" (95). It is maddening to see that capitalism has produced desperate lots at Nyanga, Khayelitsha and other townships who "lived through '76, Casspirs, detention, Botha, and now this, everyone grabbing as much as they can for themselves ... Too much money and a small ruling elite ..." (430). For those travelling from the townships to the city, the poor roads and the inefficient transport network may earn one with a reprimand "for what you people are like" and constant lateness may earn one a sack as the (white) bosses "only make money, they don't build people" (432). Much the same way as they were in the 1960s during the apartheid era, Nyanga, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Alexandra and the Cape Flats have remained black spaces of neglect and desolation.

As Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* shows, blacks and whites do not stand on the same economic ground in relation to capital. Duiker builds upon the complexities of the distribution of economic resources, showing how its skewed pattern has favoured new patterns of socio-spatial and demographic disagreements. In this novel, the danger of South Africa's form of capitalism is brought to the fore.

Disavowing the Rainbow: Dystopias of the "New" South Africa

In the two novels, the protagonists, namely Refentše and Tshepo, speak for the "New" South Africa. They are imbued with nationalistic tendencies to brood over the direction that the nation is taking. In Mpe's novel, the "New" South Africa's problems neurotically impinge on the protagonist's consciousness. Refentše's drinking sessions in Hillbrow are punctuated by brooding as his mind sifts through his and nation's problems. His suicide emanates from both

private and national pent-up emotions and betrayals. On an ideological level, Refentše dies for his country. Several “chilling haunting echoes” force him into suicide (27). Refentše dies a few years into democratisation. In very telling passages, Mpe deliberately avoids end-mark punctuations to suggest the nervous thoughts that catalyse Refentše’s depression and suicide:

And so when you come to this part of your journey to embracing the seduction of suicide the spinning of cars the prostitution drug use and misuse the grime and crime the numerous bottles diving from flat balconies giving off sparks of red and yellow from mid-air reflection of streets and flat neon lights only to crush on unfortunate souls’ skulls ... Bohlale and the Hillbrow child dying as they hit the concrete pavements of Johannesburg Refilwe rewriting the version of your living and Tiragalong condemning both you and the Bone of your heart the scarecrow woman of your fiction stifled by the repressive forces of the democratisation and Hillbrow and Tiragalong flowing into each other in your consciousness ... (61)

Refentše’s wheezing thoughts all point out the contradictions of “democratisation” that have produced his suicide. He finally succumbs to the lure of suicidal thoughts (79).

The slow pace of change in effecting the promises of the democracy is the subject of the two novels. Post-apartheid South Africa has frustratingly and maddeningly failed to bring justice and equality especially on the economic front. Instead of focusing on the “most pressing concerns” of the post-apartheid era that Cousin in Mpe’s novel intimates, South Africans, especially those at high echelons of power, have kept themselves hidden within “the conspiracy of satellites and clandestine societies ... stealing [our] dreams, preying on [our] hopes and doing terrible things in the name of God” (Duiker, 2001: 61).

The new democratic government has failed to make reparations for economic justice in the manner in which they promised when they fought against the apartheid regime. South Africa’s democratic transition has largely been discoloured by “politicians fattening up on the hopes of people” (94). Tshepo is bitterly sarcastic of the national leadership: “I see old men tired of protest leading us further into darkness laughing and joking the way they did in the sixties while the world was getting drunk on free love” (94). The corrupt ruling elite are “indifferent to the greed of banks and the humiliation of an empty stomach ... [and are] fraternising in parks in broad daylight with

gangsters and drug lords” (95). The nation’s vicious cycle of oppression and economic slavery continue to dog the predominantly black poor.

In the same vein Zebron and Chris reject the notion of a “New” South Africa and the democratic ideals espoused in the country’s constitution. Zebron believes that he is not part of the democratic rainbowism that his country espouses. He parodies Tutu’s idea of democratic inclusiveness when he claims: “We’re not all God’s children. In here God doesn’t exist...I am the forgotten who lies rotting in a barrel of fermenting apples” (23, 45). Chris, too, understands that he is not part of the Rainbow promise, considering in part that he is not educated and that he has spent nine years in Pollsmoor prison for murder (155).

Chris claims: “All that Mandela and all of them are talking about now is the new syllabus and new school-goers. No one is interested in where I’m going. I’m just Chris who got out of Pollsmoor. I’m just an outie” (156). The youth criticise the new black elite for their failure to alleviate suffering in the townships and in other neglected areas. This is essentially the blame that Tshepo covertly levels against the black leadership of South Africa:

There is nothing grand, poetic or tragic about our lives, our failure. The poets have lied to us. The historians soiled honour. We will meet our demise with the smallness of our lives. Our heroes have been clowns, charlatans, they have led us further into blindness. I don’t believe in anyone anymore. (437)

Looked at from this perspective, it is possible to understand why Zebron and Chris are dismissive of South Africa’s founding fathers such as Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu. For them, the future holds little promise because their leaders gave in “too soon” to the whites. They believe that the leaders should have righted the economic wrongs before accepting to take on the mantle of leadership. Chris is particularly incensed that Mandela and “his cronies” have “put down his people” (164).

In a witty and satiric tone, Mpe delves into the political and cultural legacies of apartheid that make the conception of a “New” South Africa premature. Mpe uses Refentše’s narrative to reveal that South Africa’s recent democracy is in fact encapsulated in new forms of segregation and divisiveness. In post-apartheid South Africa, the envisioned reconciliatory gesture of contritely asking for forgiveness is no longer emphasised in the Rainbow. Implied in Mpe’s novel is the failure of the aggressor to ask for forgiveness from the

victim, a failure captured by a refusal to accept to pay the price of committing an offence. Bohlale's resolve to ask for forgiveness from Sammy, because of her own betrayal of him by having a clandestine relationship with Refentše, is cut short by her death. It is a death that cuts short her repentant remonstrance: "We must confess and apologise to Sammy about what we did! What kind of friends are we, Refentše, who could just lead themselves into temptations like that?", a position that Refentše unashamedly rejects (52). For Refentše, it is "not that easy" to apologise. Instead, he entertains the thought of writing about the incident to "find relief" from his "guilt and grief". When he does write, it turns out to be a story about HIV/AIDS, the stigma in the rural areas and xenophobia. Hence the narrative of confession and forgiveness in the nation-building project of the Rainbow is discarded in favour of the "more pressing concerns", the emergent national problems of the post-apartheid South Africa. This shows the mutating "rhetoric of urgency" of the many overbearing and overpowering problems in South Africa today (Bethlehem, 2001: 365).

The nation's avowed constitutional democracy and cultural equality is also put into question. Despite the fact that the constitution elevated all the local languages into official status, including Sepedi, cultural repression witnessed during the apartheid era continues. Mpe decries the failing post-apartheid dream of cultural freedom and inclusiveness. The unpublished Sepedi novel written by Refentše's heroine in his (Refentše's) novel is rejected by publishers because it is considered linguistically inappropriate. The narrator observes:

The woman of your fiction, Refentše, was writing in 1995, one year after the much acclaimed 1994 democratic elections; one year after the overthrow of the political and cultural censorship, and of the damaging and dishonest indoctrination ... where arid Bantustans ... became homelands, where any criticism of apartheid thinking became a threat to public morals; where love across racial boundaries became mental instability ... [...] in 1995, despite the so-called new dispensation, nothing had really changed. The legacy of apartheid censors still shackled those who dreamed of writing freely in an African language. (57)

Mpe unearths the fallacy of the "so-called new dispensation" that downplays and suppresses the dreams and aspirations of South Africans, especially the black ones. A story about HIV/AIDS, xenophobia and stigma would have been appropriately presented in a local language. This would have allowed for a wide readership by the local Sepedi people from Tiragalong and elsewhere suffering from the problems that the novel addressed. Not only would it have

contributed to the stock of Sepedi literature in the spirit of cultural recognition, but also to "important discussions of life in South Africa", given that HIV/AIDS and xenophobia were topical in the nation (58). Mpe, in the novel, writes out the social and cultural effects of HIV/AIDS among the black South African population. In the novel, he is emphatic on the stigma associated with the disease.

In her personal interviews with Mpe, Yvonne Vera and other Southern African writers who were widely believed to have succumbed to HIV/AIDS, Attree (2010) attests to the widespread AIDS infection rate in Southern Africa that was claiming a huge chunk of the youth population. Matshikiza (2005), eulogising Mpe's death, considers *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* as an "elegy for his [Mpe's] own life". The novel becomes a testimony of the power of narrative in releasing pent-up emotions for Mpe, as it also happens for his characters, Refentše and Refilwe. Attree also notes:

When the associated social and cultural implications of infection with HIV are considered, fictional representations contribute significantly to our understanding of the impact of HIV/AIDS on communities and individuals. (5)

Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* represents AIDS as the new mass killer of the South African youth involved in casual and unprotected sex, often in drunken stupor. Although Mpe's characters abhor gay sex and would certainly frown at Duiker's openly gay characters, the high incidences of HIV/AIDS in the novel point out that the disease is more widespread in heterosexual relationships. Mpe's narrator opines that it is the moral depravity and decadence in Hillbrow that is responsible for the spread of the virus. This is conceivably suggested by the thoughtless and uncontrolled sexual liaisons in the novel. There are "semi-naked souls" everywhere in Hillbrow (11). Most of the social contacts appear to find completeness in physical and sexual acts. Therefore, it must be "the bizarre sexual behaviour of the Hillbrowers" and their carelessness that is to blame for the spread of AIDS (4). As Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* also reveal, AIDS infections are reportedly high in the townships and black squatter settlements and in predominantly black, poor areas (376, 430). In *Steamy Windows*, the "massage parlour", AIDS also "lurks quietly" in the minds of the gay youth. Many of them, however, understand the real threat of AIDS and insist on using condoms as a means of protection (223, 407, 313).

Mpe portrays South Africans' social entanglements and provincial misunderstanding of HIV/AIDS. Traditional healers sourced from as far as Blantyre, Malawi, crudely preside over treatment of "mysterious diseases" in rural South African villages as most of these rural South Africans do not seek hospital treatment (Attree, 2010: 9, 10). As it turns out, these "strange diseases" are often cases of HIV/AIDS which the villagers erroneously blame on witchcraft: "Mysterious diseases, in Tiragalong's view, could only result from a mysterious cause: witchcraft" (45). Tshepo's neighbour is suspected of having bewitched her husband and her illicit lover "both of whom had died some years previously of mysterious diseases" (45).

Welcome to Our Hillbrow unearths traditional systems and beliefs that have countered the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Rural South Africans are ignorant about the disease. In the novel, many villagers who are infected are ignorant of their HIV positive status:

It was easy to be ignorant of this, because this disease lends itself to lies. Such people were thought to have died of flu, or of stomach-ache. Bone throwers sniffed out the witches responsible, and they were subsequently necklaced. (121)

South African rural blacks kill innocent people under the guise of eradicating witchcraft. Refentse's mother, grieving the loss of her son, is necklaced by the villagers who blamed her for bewitching him. When Tshepo is struck by lightning soon after graduating from the university, a neighbour is suspected of sending lightning to strike him in her jealousy, and is subsequently killed. Piet, who "did not even know how to mix herbs for his ordinary cold", is blamed for bewitching a relative, and is later knifed by hired killers and left on the pavement of Alexandra (78). *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* highlights South Africans' beliefs in bone-throwers, and the ugly and violent consequences that go with that.

The Quiet Violence of Dreams and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* exemplify the powerlessness and vulnerability in the violent spaces of South Africa. In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, local South Africans are prejudiced against those from Hillbrow or from the cities generally. The "New" South Africa is a space in which extreme otherising has marked its tumultuous history. South Africans, especially the local black South Africans, are united in their hatred of foreigners. The xenophobic treatment of foreigners by the local South Africans has cast grey shadows in the promised Rainbow dream of inclusiveness.

Xenophobia: A New "Apartheid"?

Duiker and Mpe bear witness to xenophobia in South African cities showing how African immigrants now live on the margins of the Rainbow, the same way the black South Africans did during the repressive years of apartheid. In South Africa's new social formation, pluralism has accentuated cultural divisiveness. The treatment of foreigners, especially those from specific African countries, has counteracted the avowed inclusiveness in the country's professed democratic rainbowism. *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* both underscore the "New" nation's divisive otherness and exclusion, a narrative that is evinced in a number of studies about xenophobia and xenophobic violence in South Africa.

Nkealah's (2011) study about the commodification of the female body in the 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa is useful in this analysis. Nkealah traces xenophobia to the township of Alexandra, and its spread to other parts of South Africa, such as Durban and Cape Town. This was a major wave of attested xenophobic violence directed at black Africans from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and other parts of Africa in South Africa's major cities. Nkealah observes that this violence was economically motivated as it was fuelled by "the competition for scarce resources within a multiethnic community" (124). In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, foreigners "from Mozambique Zaïre Nigeria Congo Ivory Coast Zimbabwe Angola Zambia from all over Africa..." are fleeing from their "war torn countries to seek sanctuary here in our country" (18, 19). The majority are exiles seeking refuge from the political circumstances of their countries in the same way native South Africans fled to their countries during the apartheid era. In Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Akousia, from Nigeria, and Patrick, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, are representative of African immigrants fleeing from economic limitations and civil war, to South Africa in search for relative peace. They are examples of what local South Africans in the novels call "makwerekwere", a word "derived from kwere/kwere, a sound that their unintelligible foreign languages were supposed to make, according to the locals" (Mpe, 2001: 20). It is indeed a vulgar and derogatory term that can be equated to the apartheid "Kaffir" reference to black people by the whites.

The "New" South Africa is no place for a reciprocal kind of love: the exiles from other African countries are now objects of hate in the period of democratic rainbowism. Duiker and Mpe contextualise this hatred directed at foreigners as being hinged on the failure of the post-apartheid government to fulfil the promises of the democratic transition to local black South Africans.

Through Tshepo and Mmabatho's dialogues, it is revealed that the hatred directed at black foreigners is in fact deeply entrenched in the society. Mmabatho's hatred for foreigners is constructed around the physical attributes of foreigners, most of whom are easily distinguishable based on their darker complexion as compared to local South Africans. In effect, local South Africans demonstrate their "racism" towards these "darker" foreigners.

Mmabatho and Tshepo visit stalls in Cape Town where these foreigners, "a community of hawkers and informal stall owners", sell their wares because Tshepo wants to buy a bag (260). Although there are locals selling their wares alongside these foreigners – as Mpe's novel also affirms, Mmabatho is visibly drawn to the foreigners, because they are "dark and tall and with features that don't really blend with the general population" (260). The "strange" foreigners cannot easily "blend" into the Rainbow. Then, she warns him: "You must be careful of makwere-kwere" (260), a caution she repeats when she bids him goodbye on his way out to Johannesburg later in the novel: "Don't go out in funny places. Hillbrow is full of Nigerians and Makwerekwere... and they sell drugs" (451). Mmabatho insists that black foreigners are dangerous and exploitative, warning him that the foreign hawkers simply "want [his] money so that they can sell [him] something cheap that will break as soon as [he] get[s] home" (260).

Mmabatho distances herself from these African foreigners, whom she clearly considers as the Other, the "them". She observes:

We spend about fifteen minutes at the station. Tshepo keeps going to them. Them with their funny smells and accents. I don't like them. A friend of mine who stays in a block of flats dominated by them tells me that they bring strange diseases into the country because they insist on performing their queer rituals even though this isn't really Third World Africa ... always selling imitation goods [and] ... always together like a group of thugs hatching a conspiracy. (260-261)

When Tshepo meets one of these hawkers, Mmabatho aversively and racially profiles him. She estimates that the man's "small dubious-looking pouch hanging round his neck" contains "muti" (witchcraft) that is used to "drug [them] to buy their wares" (261). Her assurance that she does not mind the man's complexion is paradoxical, given her description of him as a "blue-black man" in her previously conceded hate (261). Tshepo finds the bag from this man, and Mmabatho evaluates it. She knows that the bag is "nice ... finely crafted and with no silly impostor names", but she contradicts herself by

arguing that they are still "pathetic imitations of established, popular brands" (261). After Tshepo haggles over the price and pays up for it, Mmabatho believes that he has been "ripped" off. The jaundiced view that she has of black foreigners cannot be tempered by her realisation that the foreigner was neither exploitative of Tshepo (he would have been "ripped" off if he had gone to a "proper shop" belonging to a native South African) nor selling "imitations".

The misgivings that Mmabatho has in respect of the foreigners are all motivated by the jealous belief that these blacks are making money at the expense of the locals. Refentše's unnamed cousin reinforces these arguments in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. For Cousin, there are "more pressing concerns" that "makwerekwere" are responsible for in Hillbrow, including "the crime and grime ... for which he held such foreigners responsible; not just for the physical decay of the place, but the moral decay..." [and] "like the AIDS that they transport into the country" (17, 20). Cousin believes that the black Africans should stay in their own countries and sort out their problems "rather than fleeing them; South Africa has too many problems of its own" (20). The local South Africans specifically blame black foreigners for the economic problems in post-apartheid South Africa, especially as a reason for youth unemployment. Absolving white foreigners from blame, Mmabatho observes: "All I'm saying is that these guys [black foreigners] come into the country and okay *I'm not going to say the obvious thing that they are taking jobs away*" (263, my italics).

The treatment that black South Africans received during the apartheid era is the same treatment that black foreigners from elsewhere in Africa receive in the Rainbow. In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, Cousin is benefitting economically from his ill-treatment of illegal foreigners who often had to bribe their way to get "false identity document[s]", or exchange sexual favours, in return for freedom (21).

The treatment accorded to black foreigners point to the fissures in the Rainbow dream. Irlam (2004: 699) argues that the unease witnessed in the "New" South Africa is a product of failed nationalism. He argues:

One observes the rise of a certain cultural chauvinism and sometimes even ethnic nationalism that was notably absent during the apartheid era, but became highly volatile in the violent clashes during the period of the transition between 1990 and 1994.

South African nationalism enshrined in an appeal for African unity and inclusiveness has instead led to a rise in extremism and disunity. Black South Africans have moved away from a belief in Rainbow multiculturalism into a narrower "South-Africa-for-native South-Africans-only" mentality. Native South Africans have conceptualised an ethnic form of nationalism that has blotched the democracy's aspirations for a united nation with a shared destiny.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated how K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* explore the metaphor of inclusiveness as suggested in the Rainbow, showing how they capture the slow and inconsistent pace of transition to a new South Africa. The article suggests that the texts disavow post-apartheid South Africa's utopia of a united, non-racial democracy by use of gory and ghostly mental images and portray a dystopian South African society faced with imminent collapse. It has been argued that these texts explore narratives of rupture concomitant with youthful deaths and diseases, such as of HIV/AIDS. In this regard, the vulnerability of the South African youth has been demonstrated as they live in what Duiker's Tshepo considers the "Train spotting odyssey of excess in a culture rapidly blurring the borders" between race and class, the townships and the suburbs, native and foreigner, and other socio-economic dichotomies (34). The article has also shown how South African youth culture is a manifestation of a wider symbolic and aberrant post-apartheid society.

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Moral Decadence and Moral Prescription for a Sick Society in Joseph Situma's *The Mysterious Killer*

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Abstract

This paper argues that Joseph Situma's novel The Mysterious Killer (2001) negotiates the dichotomous path of an ailing and a healing nation through a juxtaposition of amoral and moral characters. The paper interrogates the exemplary life of Rachel, a young woman who defies the wisdom of cultural dictates to speak about the mysterious killer disease that is bound to wipe out the entire community unless they embrace and internalize change. Her action heals the wounded society smarting from the pains of losing loved ones. This is contrasted with Yamo, a sleek criminal and a drug baron who profiteers from human trafficking of prostitutes in cohort with law enforcement authorities, and thereby perpetuating ailment in the society. The paper concludes that the novel emerges as a major critique of the decadent social institutions and retrogressive cultural practices and hence is an agent of healing in the wake of the social crisis precipitated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Introduction

Arguably, the postcolonial nations, especially the African ones, have been ailing right from the period of gaining their official independence from the colonizers. What had been hoped to be emerging nations that would bestow on a people formerly dehumanized and sickened by colonial excesses and human dignity and a healthy milieu for the exploitation of their potential comes out as entities that do not fulfill the promise.

As the Cameroonian theorist Achille Mbembe has argued of the postcolony, that entity that "identifies specifically given historical trajectory – that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonization and the violence which the colonial relationship, *par excellence*, involves" (1992: 3), it