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HOMOSEXUALITY AND  
POSTCOLONIAL IDEA IN  
KABELO SELLO DUIKER'S  
*THE QUIET VIOLENCE OF  
DREAMS*



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The present article is a contribution to the issues raised by the authors of *The Aversion project* in South Africa which was to emphasize that reconciliation and healing could not occur in the absence of knowledge and understanding (Zyl 1999, 11). This article seeks to broaden the knowledge and understanding about homosexuality in South Africa today. Though homosexuality is enshrined in the 1996 South African Constitution, its understanding is never free from disgust and from aversion in South Africa. This situation is similar to how many Africans portray post-colonial theory, because of its subversive strategies. This paper examines both concepts in this paper as twin-con-

cepts. In fact homosexuality appears like the semiotic realization's ground of post-colonial ideal. Cape Town is considered as *shifter* (Jakobson 1971, 132) to the whole South African society for two major reasons: firstly, the historical symbolism of this city and secondly, the background role Cape Town plays in the narrative. In fact, Nelson Mandela was imprisoned in Robben Island, which is in Cape Town. Two years after the official dismantlement of the Apartheid regime, "Miscast" (Nutall, 1998 130) still took place there. Cape Town represents a colonial city in the history of South Africa. This symbolic Cape Town is reproduced in the fictional Cape Town where Tshepo, the main character evolving from the beginning of the novel, ends up before returning to Johannesburg.

There is a potent impetus which made this colonial Cape Town possible. Postcolonial theory names it the "dominant self". This "dominant self" has already given room to accusations made by critics since Rousseau had opposed liberty to happiness. They accused "western or modern thinking (features of that self) of having degenerated into a logic that enslaves man, ruins nature, and produces world wars and extermination camps" (Steinvorth 2009, 4). It is particularly the so called rationality that claimed its superiority over all other forms of culture that worsens the human condition. That "dominant self" has set its footprints all over so that South Africa in general, Cape Town in particular

has become one of its favourite playgrounds. This paper also looks for means to provide sovereignty to that “dominant self” (Nancy 2002, 169-170). This means to assure its subjects their independence from any type of domination or deamination in relation to homosexuality. In the final analysis, the paper discusses the conditions in which the subjects displaying the “dominant self” can become free from its engaging magnetism.

## **EVIDENCES OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN *THE QUIET VIOLENCE OF DREAMS***

Jean-Marc Moura (Moura 2000, 18) and Lydie Moudileno (Moudileno 2000, 9) insist that post-colonial readings which do not refer to the literary text lack rigor. This preliminary section briefly summarises the novel before discussing homosexuality as the central topic of the narrative.

When they came to Cape Town from Johannesburg, Mmabatho and Mark Tshepo believed they could find their way in this South African post-apartheid town. Mmabatho is forced to become a whore because all the black and white male partners she encounters deceive her. On the other hand, Tshepo missed four months of studies at Rhodes University, because of psychiatric troubles. He looked for jobs to save money for the next academic year, in vain. Adopting the nickname Angelo

for professional purposes, Tshepo finally finds a work as masseur at Steamy Windows, a homosexual industry located at Biloxi. With the money he made from Steamy Windows Tshepo finally decided to go back to Johannesburg where he takes care of street children in an orphanage, leaving Mmabatho alone in Cape Town.

Two principal elements validate homosexuality as the main object in the novel. The first is the focus of the novel on the homosexual Tshepo, which makes him play a special role in terms of Duiker's commitment to the narrative. In fact, considering his dark past, Tshepo acts like a tool through which his creator attempts a deep and serious diagnosis of the South African post-apartheid society. Tshepo's mother was killed by the father (143-44) in front of him when he was 17 years old. This trauma goes untreated because his friends deny him access to treatment. An example is Zebron who contributed in killing Tshepo's mother, participating in the realization of evil project of Tshepo's father. Zebron and his friends even raped their victim before killing her. In search of a hypothetical rescue, Tshepo develops a clinical dependence on "zol", which is cannabis. He is later brought to Valkenberg, a clinical station for patients suffering from psychiatric troubles, because he is said to be suffering from "*cannabis induced psychosis*". His stay at Valkenberg instead establishes him among terrible characters who are unable to offer him love, concern, warmth and compassion of the kind that he seriously desires:

Too much has been said about my condition, my illness, whatever it is.... I'm sick of the endless explanations that come with it, the lies and cover ups, the injustice and humiliation of it all. The indifferent nurses and that only communicate through prescriptions. Heavy prescriptions that dull your senses and seem to drain life force out of you. [...] What does "cannabis induced psychosis mean"? There is more to it than that. This is what the medical profession will never understand. I'm looking for a deeper understanding of what happened to me, not an easy answer like cannabis induced psychosis. And why don't they just say it if they truly don't understand what happened? Why blame it on cannabis? (Duiker 2001, 9-10)

Almost two months after his arrival at Valkenberg, Tshepo is moved to Ward 2. This geographical movement is similar to his mental evolution according to psychiatrists. Meanwhile, he went back one day to deregister from Rhodes University, where he was supposed to appear since one month and a half. Two months of stay at Ward 2 gives the practitioner the occasion to attest Tshepo's health. He is thus discharged from Ward 2. Later, he moves into a small apartment which he shares with Chris Swart. The latter along with his friends rapes him.

One thing is obvious from the position given to Tshepo in the narrative. He functions as a radiance that the author moves in all "dark" places found in Cape Town in particular and in actual South Africa in general. Therefore, all the characters he mixes with, except those who

are already dead, like the late mother, carry some evil traits whose justification can easily be found in what Ndebele terms "the anonymity to which the oppressive system consigns millions of oppressed Africans" (Ndebele 2006, 15). This remark makes the narrative to appear as a radical attempt to record the psychological consequences of the apartheid system on today's South Africa. Because of its manichean nature, the apartheid system was progressively able to manipulate the thought and to paralyze the imagination, driving South Africans in a kind of eschatological environment in which the Tshepos and his set of people appear to be in their proper soil. The fact that Ayi Kwei Armah's fiction *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* appears to be Tshepo's favourite novel (Duiker 2001, 177) clearly shows that he is fully aware of the misery Black South Africans still go through in the new context. But, like Sigmund Freud had shown the imagination of a whole community can never be paralyzed for long by moral laws imposed on them through education, because each human being involved in that community bears an "unconsciousness" which, Lacan perceives in the passion of knowledge or, simply put, the passion for freedom (Lacan 1986, 374). From the Freudian perspective, Steamy Windows appears to Tshepo as a manifestation of the "unconsciousness". In fact, it is in this homosexual industry that Tshepo finally finds an employment left for persons like him in his society. Its significance in terms of recurrence of the happenings that

take place there is the second element that gives evidence of the centrality of the novel on homosexuality.

At Steamy Windows, Tshepo disappears under the name Angelo. His colleagues are Storm, Samuel, West, Carington, Francois, Adrian, Cole and Sebastian. Shaun is their boss to whom they pay R90 daily for studio fees and R60 fees weekly. He engages in sexual activities exclusively with white males and scarcely white female clients. The choice of Tshepo's job enables Duiker to shed a broad light on the type of personalities involved in the homosexual industry. All the clients are very rich people from South Africa or from abroad. They are:

bankers, businessmen, lawyers, stockbrokers, analysts, chartered accountants, pharmacists, engineers, doctors, surgeons, architects, editors, journalists, writers, poets, artists, academics - generally people with serious education, money and influence. (Duiker 2001, 299)

More than the half of the whole volume of the narrative is devoted to highlighting what happens indoors at Steamy Windows. Also, terminology common to the gays' customs appears in this second part of the narrative with more emphasis. Not only names like Oscar Wilde, James Baldwin, Martina Navratilova, George Micheal, David Geffen, Michel Angelo, Alexander the great, da Vinci (253) are mentioned as ancestors for the employees at Steamy Windows, but also terms like "blow job" (Duiker 2001, 237), "Gay SA. Magazine"

(Duiker 2001, 233), “*big cocks*” (Duiker 2001, 303), “*KY jelly*” (Duiker 2001, 333), and “*wank*” (Duiker 2001, 335) are used many times by characters in the narrative. This is a visible testimony of the serious lexical fieldwork the writer must have carried out before or while writing the novel.

It is important to insist on the fact that Tshepo himself gets into the homosexual industry at Steamy Windows desperately. This is justified by the answer Tshepo gives to Alex, one of his clients, when he asks him whether he couldn't take the “*massage thing*” further so as to open his own studio: “*No thanks. This is just a stop-over job. Who knows maybe I'll pursue journalism after all*” (Duiker 2001, 277). Tshepo's answer in this relation clearly suggests that the success of homosexuality in South Africa has social quantifiable origins. Poverty and unemployment of many black South Africans, which has also been portrayed by an author like Phaswane Mpe (Mpe 2011, 122) as an excuse for the animosity black South Africans reserve to black *Makwerekwere*<sup>1</sup> in their country, explain why these black South Africans, like Tshepo in the narrative, engage themselves in the homosexual underworld. Tshepo's feelings when he returns to Johannesburg confirm that he is not just a simple character, but he is more of a tool that the writer uses to mediate a serious discussion on the phenomenon of homosexuality which excels particularly in Cape Town:

In Jo'burg everyone knows me as Tshepo. I left Angelo behind in Cape Town, still roaming its streets and exploring the underworld. I don't think I will go back there for a while. I have too many wounds that need to heal. (Duiker 2001, 452)

To conclude this preliminary section, it clearly appears that homosexuality is of major concern in Kabelo Sello Duiker's narrative *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*. As a central topic of the novel, each character is given the occasion to display their own perception on homosexuality. Homosexuality is therefore another aesthetic device which helps the writer to portray the various cultural behaviours associated to this issue not just in Cape Town but in South Africa as a whole.

## **CULTURAL BEHAVIOURS ASSOCIATED TO HOMOSEXUALITY IN *THE QUIET VIOLENCE OF DREAMS***

*The Quiet Violence of Dreams* displays many cultural mind-sets which give homosexuality its specific nature in South Africa. Firstly, Homosexuals are labelled as “moffies” and “faggots” by black South Africans. The denomination ‘moffie’ is an Afrikaans term used by South Africans to denote a homosexual person (Zyl et al. 1999, 51). By calling homosexuals so, they see

themselves as pure while portraying homosexuals as deviants. By so doing, they fail to acknowledge some fundamental truths which the novelist highlights:

The first universal human beings were born of three sexes from the Sun, Earth and Moon. There were men, women, and hermaphrodites, each of the three sexes doubled over and united as a whole. At some point in the unknowable past they were brutally cleaved in two, doomed to go through history suffering the violence and anguish of separation, constantly longing to be reunited with the lost half of the self, the better self. Being cut in half resulted in the forms of heterosexuality from the hermaphrodites and homosexuality in both female and male forms, the amnesia of the brutal separation mutating into bisexuality in others. And since then, we have all suffered the same fate. That is why some of us are what we are. That is why we are called moffies and faggots. Perhaps we took secret oaths with ourselves before we got separated, so that we would stubbornly remember that we were incomplete, the clue being that it is someone of our own sex. Perhaps we are the coarse self searching for the refined self, or vice versa. (Duiker 2001, 380)

When Tshepo monologues with his dead mother, he tells her how the evil father has left him looking for himself in “a world of vampires” (379). This association of *Steamy Windows* to the world of vampires by Tshepo, gives a clue as to how the black community represents homosexuality. Like the devotees of the “aversion therapy” would have said, homosexuals are just sick patients that need potent treatment for conversion to heterosexuality (Zyl et al. 1999, 80-82).

Secondly, for whites Afrikaners, homosexuality finds its origins in what Dorrit Cohn terms “the inner life” of the human being. This particular level of human life is hidden under the deep darkness of the human flesh and blood (Bony 1981, 15). Homosexuality appears in this relation as some natural disposition that surfaces from the lacks, or troubles that the characters practicing it today had gone through in their earlier tribulations. A good example is West whose father divorced the mother when he was still a little boy. This father attached himself to homosexuals who taught the son:

to dress properly, to use roll-on instead of tonnes of cologne and nothing under the armpits... to hold a magnum of champagne properly, to serve wine, to carve duck, to eat a lobster, to be a considerate guest, to jump-start a car, to introduce [him]self with a firm but gentle handshake (Duiker 2001, 295).

These are little things that his poor mother never could have taught him. West further believes that homosexual industry makes him understand that human being can get spoiled any time they do not find some external consideration or attention from the internal wounds such as the ones he himself had been prey to. For desperate people like him, *Steamy Windows* implies the chance to avoid self-destruction as evident in his words:

Perhaps me landing up in Steamy Windows was life saving me from self-destruction. I was going nowhere. I was drinking. I was clueless. I'd like to think that I'm a different person now that I've grown up a bit. Certainly, my worldview is wider. Life has many possibilities. We will never run out of options, of different ways of being, living, surviving. (Duiker 2001, 297)

This explanation unmistakably shows that homosexuality from West's point of view pertains to more of a strategy for survival.

Also, Tshepo, representative of the poor Blacks (203), sees homosexuality as a wonderful opportunity to make money. In the preselection interview with the owner of the sex industry, Tshepo is asked whether he is able to perform sex with same sex clients. The following is his reaction: "Ja, I'm keen. I can do this. I say, excitement up at the prospect of all the money I can make" (206). Tshepo's reaction is a convincing evidence of the fact that for him, it is the lack of money that propels him to the homosexual industry and to homosexuality. The reason behind this choice is to save money so that the following year, he could study and become "a someone" (Duiker 2001, 270).

Finally, some of the clients come to Steamy Windows because their spouses or husbands starved them sexually. The industry owner is profoundly aware of this

situation. That is why he advises the newest colleague to bathe the client himself, to treat him/her well, talk to him/her, and make him/her feel special if he wants to make real money (Duiker 2001, 236). West tries to imagine why this set of important personalities always come to Steamy Windows. It is because, at their marital places, they lack what is offered to them at Steamy Windows:

I think they come here because they know they will be appreciated, held in esteem. At home I imagine they are unhappy with their wives. They don't seem to understand what they really want, or if they do it is of no interest to them. This is what I see when I look at these men. (Duiker 2001, 293)

While discussing the female clients who visit Steamy Windows, West makes it clear that they "usually want a genuine escort to take them somewhere nice while their rich husbands are overseas on business or they are in desperate need of a fuck, [or because] a cruel husband cheats them or starves them sexually" (Duiker 2001, 293).

Even though West speaks on behalf of their clients, homosexual industry at Steamy Windows appears like a kind of dustbin which retains all the odd deeds or mistakes derived from frustrations and starvations faced by individuals in the society. It is an essential resting place where the worried or computerized psyche finds

instantaneous peace. This is the reason why Duiker views the homosexual industry as a very serious issue from which better future in South Africa is possible. This point of view is voiced when West says: "What we do, it is very serious, you know. We are not just fucking these men for money. That is what I wanted to tell you. We are doing important work here. You will see that. They are showing us things, telling us things for the times ahead" (Duiker 2001, 244).

This means that the Post-Apartheid South Africa has to take in to consideration that aspect of homosexuality if something great is to be achieved in the building process of the rainbow Nation. In such conditions approaches similar to the monolithic aversion therapy which was implemented on homosexuals in South Africa ascertain a kind of fixity regulating the mind-sets of South Africans when they deal with homosexuality. Unable to valuably take part in the "semiological revolution" (Herman 2004, 119), they fail to make good use of the various possibilities any denomination, situation or labels always offer. They enter into a process of the shocking coagulations of the being (Glissant 1997, 25) to become vulnerable and easily malleable like objects or tools in the hands of any kind of internal or external stream. Analysing this terrible approach which has subjected humanity to many years of slavery and colonialism, Edward Said comes to the conclusion that the semiological revolution needs to go its way and reach labels like identity, woman, nature or culture some-

times taken for granted. These labels need to undergo that revolution because:

No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. (Said 1994, 336)

From the elucidation of the various cultural behaviours associated to homosexuality in Duiker's narrative, it appears that homosexuality is used by characters involved as a means either to mediate or to articulate their own "self". As a single concept, homosexuality finally unite at the symbolical level very diverse and even conflictual beliefs, feelings and ideologies. Before coming to the characteristics of that "self" the discussion of how South Africa corresponds to the present global world guarantees a wider contextualization of that so called "self".

## **DISPLAYED POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: A MICROCOSM OF THE PRESENT GLOBAL WORLD**

In *Critiques et Vérité* Roland Barthes suggests that fiction writer deserves to be seen as a thinker because to write a work of fiction is already to organize the world (Barthes 1966, 33). Barthes' position in relation to

the act of writing gives way to very diverse models of reading, on condition that the models used bring out the world organized by the writer. The actual global world is made visible through the fictional post-apartheid South Africa displayed in the narrative. Situated in the postmodern era, the actual global world is characterized by telecommunications, world market, numerically and digitally controlled tools and aesthetically intensified marketing tactics. According to Philip Wexler, all these postmodern elements validate the idea of the present world as being typified by dedifferentiation, blurring of boundaries and disintegration of separate domains (Wexler 1990, 168).

In the novel, the diversity of people working towards the prosperity of the homosexual industry at Steamy Windows is a valid argument to consider this microcosm like representative of the whole world in its contemporary constellation. One can conclude that at Steamy Windows, not only skin but also national boundaries are blurred. Not only Blacks and Whites work in Steamy Windows together, but also the customers come from all over the world. Tshepo makes it clear to Mhabatho who thinks he is a racist:

I work with a guy from Senegal. (...) I mean just because the Germans and French and all the other white nationalities that come here blend into the background I don't hear you saying anything about them. There's an influx of people from ex-Eastern Bloc countries to Cape Town. A lot of Russians and Czechs. (Duiker 2001, 263)

In relation to the marketing tactics, workers at Steamy Windows are labelled in such a way that they attract as many clients as possible. West for example is labelled as follows: "Kalahari West, dark hair, blue eyes, rugged marine looks, 1.75 m, 85kg, 8 inches uncut" (Duiker 2001, 292). Essential details are given on him so that even clients, who may be reluctant to long descriptions, could be attracted by him. In Steamy Windows as described in the novel, the market is exposed to any reader. In fact, not just the whole industry is a market place, but also the workers there are given the identity of goods whose utility depends not on them, but on their various clients. When for example it is said about Sebastian that a client *booked* him (Duiker 2001, 270), it means he has lost his status as human being and has become a simple tool for sexual release of their customers.

These few examples clearly show that the fictional South Africa displayed in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is a credible reproduction or representation of the actual world. But that world is not just a postmodern world. It is also a globalized one. In his book entitled *La création du monde ou la mondialisation*, Jean-Luc Nancy discusses two different approaches of globalization. Underpinning his discussion upon Foucault's concept of "biopolitics", Nancy views globalization firstly like a process that over-empowers technology and limits or progressively kills life's possibilities in human beings

(Jean-Luc Nancy 2002: 143). Secondly, globalization is a shared or a mutual exposure (in terms of making them visible) of cultural particularities to the whole world. This type of globalization sustains diversity and even protects oppositions and differences (Nancy 2002, 173).

The South Africa reflected in Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* illustrates both types of globalization validating the idea of South Africa as being a microcosm of the globalised world. In a monologue at Steamy Windows, Tshepo shows how white South Africans, even in the context of the Rainbow Nation consciously refuse to abandon their superiority complex of those Apartheid days:

South Africa doesn't 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. I'm black and I'm proud of it, even if it is a bit silly to remind myself...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. (Duiker 2001, 419)

As Nancy would have said, "life's possibilities" of these white South Africans have already been killed off. That

is the reason why they keep on reminding Blacks that they are not human beings, or if they are accepted as human beings, it is on condition that they help Whites prove themselves that they are of a superior nature.

The other aspect of globalization is reflected in the novel in many ways. Homosexuals and heterosexuals move for example together in the narrative. The relationship between the heterosexual Mmabatho and the homosexual Tshepo is a vibrant illustration. They are both from Soweto and from the same African tribe. Although they have different sexual orientations, they evolve peacefully in the same environment. In *Angels*, a gay bar near Biloxi (another famous gay bar), where Tshepo goes on a Saturday, what he finds there illustrates the diversity in which each culture shows off freely:

In *Angels* I find familiar black and coloured faces [...] I sashay to the dance floor when a groovy R&B number by Janet Jackson comes on. [...] In the middle of the dance floor the guys have formed a small circle while two people dance in the middle. It is a coloured and black thing. White guys in Biloxi like to dance in their own galaxies. I lounge in a chair and watch people. Two black guys French kiss next to me. [...] They are my age [...] They go to the dance floor. I watch them dance kwaito style. I watch them dance and probably think of home Soweto. (Duiker 2001, 417-418)

Not only coloured people, but also westerners with

their respective cultures meet each other in the above quotation. Western culture shows out through some music appliances used in the dancing bar or through Janet Jackson. As descendant of the Negro Blues, the groovy R&B played by Janet Jackson here betrays the culture of the oppressed Black slaves, which also displays itself in the same environment. The passage above also outlines a parallel between the music played by Janet Jackson and the kwaito music the two young black guys next to Tshepo enjoy.

In fact, being a South African popular music style consisting of a rowdy mix of local rhythms like bubblem, and international ones like hip hop, R&B and raga, the kwaito music in the passage is given a similar identity to the music played by Janet Jackson. In such conditions, differences are erased and music is given an impersonal status that can lead to unusual confusions about who among Westerners or Africans has the control over those two music styles played in the same bar and at the same moment. In making the oppositions invisible as evident from both kwaito and groovy R&B, the globalised world as displayed in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* does nothing other than protecting only those oppositions and disparities.

Furthermore, the various identities associated with South African towns finally establish South Africa as a place where oppositionalities and disparities are pro-

tected. An example is given in the following paragraph:

Cape Town is very white, the influence of European traditions like coffee shops and bistros is inescapable. In some places in Cape Town you don't feel like you're in Africa. And this is what they call progress; obliterate any traces of the naive cultures. Jo'burg is different, the other cultures more aggressive to the domination of white culture. [...] In Cape Town there are certain places where you know you are not welcome and the patrons make you feel like an outcast. The culture of having a good time, of jolling is different in Gauteng. In Jo'burg people hang out. In Cape Town people go out. In Cape Town people are into drumming, doing their charts and doing drugs. Cape Town tries too hard, it looks too much to the West for inspiration when there is enough inspiration in Africa. (Duiker 2001, 420)

In the same country, cities do not have same identities. Johannesburg's identity is even contrapuntal to Cape Town's in the above quotation. While Cape Town illustrates the first aspect of globalization, Johannesburg displays the characteristics of the second aspect of globalization. These evidences of globalization in the fictive South Africa highlight the fact that, South Africa in Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* could be considered as a microcosm of the globalised world of today, where very conservative cultures cohabit with rather innovative approaches or cultures. This ambivalent situation will be discussed in the following section.

## **MULTIPLICATION OF HYPOTHETIC NEW IDENTITIES: A COUNTER POWER TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE “SELF” AS SUGGESTED BY HOMOSEXUALITY AND POST-COLONIAL IDEA**

Many critics have legitimately chosen to set themselves against post-colonial discourse. Jeremy Weate (Weate 2003, 27-56) and Stephen Ellis (Ellis 200, 670-671) for example condemn Mbembe of cynicism, because the terminology he uses in his seminal book *On the Postcolony* does not match the standard terminology of the so called radical authorized tradition of thought (Mbembe 2000, XXI). What these critics fail to perceive in relation to post-colonial theory is that, this theory constitutes a set of concepts and attitudes orientating the individual towards a concrete transformation of him/herself like that of his/her immediate environment. Applied to literature, post-colonial theory explores the various antagonist interactions between the “self” and the “other” and insists on the hybrid or open nature of identities or cultures. This conception of post-colonial literary criticism is also advocated by the authors of *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* when they posit that:

Postcolonial literary criticism focuses specifically on literatures produced by [writers] in the context of colonial domination, most notably in Africa, Asia and the

Caribbean. Building on knowledge of the institutions of western education and the hybrid nature of culture, post-colonial analysis explores the complete interactions and antagonism between native, indigenous, or 'pre colonial' cultures and the imperial cultures imposed on them. (Cain et al. 2001, 26)

By analysing the complete interactions and antagonism between native and imperial cultures, postcolonial criticism elaborates many concepts, which enable the postcolonial critic to name or to locate the various faces of domination, which are shaped by the hegemonic and very innovative "dominant self". Mimicry (Bhabha 1994, 102-22), binaries of black skin and white mask (Fanon 1974), or master and subject (Haraway 1991, 183-201), or rearticulating the archaic (Bhabha 1994, 123-138) are some significant terms developed by postcolonial scholars to identify the various manifestations of that hegemonic and innovative "self". Each terminology finds an illustration in Duiker's narrative though in a challenging relationship to the other "self" that gives the issue of homosexuality its relevance. A glaring illustration is that homosexuality at Steamy Windows permits Cole to discover that black South Africans do not really have the power in the actual configuration of their society. Speaking to his black colleague Tshepo, he comes to the conclusion that:

This whole brotherhood is a clever gimmick. Very convenient because it works. [...] You're only useful as long

as you bring in money [...] This thing is about power and about who has it and who doesn't. We don't have it. They come here, they pay. Okay, so we choose what we want to do with them, but we don't really have any power. It's just sex cleaned up, given a better look. You see that, don't you? (Duiker 2001, 346)

Cole validates the statement sustained by many young black South Africans that the few nouveau riches who have taken over the power in South Africa are just constructions of the dominant "self" who mislead many naïve observers about the real owner of the power in today's South Africa. In fact, they are kind of "Black Skin White Masks" or "Coconut" as Kopano Matlwa (2006) terms it.

Many black people are irritated with the idea of homosexuality. According to Angelo, this is because Blacks' culture exerts much pressure on them. This situation does not enable them to feel free or to be on their own, because the culture generated by their ancestors is taking control over them so that Angelo sees them like schizophrenic dancing queens by night who are rigid grey suits by day (331). The comment he makes on black men in the street brings out the various clichés attached to the perception of homosexuality in Africa:

The ones that recognize me look away. Or they give me a dirty look so that I mustn't come by and say hi. I wouldn't anyway. But I'm always struck by how angry they seem to feel about liking men. (Duiker 2001, 331)

Even though the anger mentioned here can refer to Monga's idea of anger (Monga 1996), the problem with this specific anger is that black men's anger here is not fully assumed by them, but borrowed from a past that doesn't meet their present-day realities. Anger chains them down to become means to the attainment of their ancestors' wills. Therefore what they do is simply a rearticulation of the archaic like Bhabha terms it. What they fail to understand is that if a (gay) man marries to satisfy society's prejudice, he is not the only one who is unhappy, but spreads unhappiness to his wife and children too ( Zyl et al. 1999, 52). One of the challenges for freedom from domination in the future is for the colonial "dominant self" to move to a "sovereign self" that is rational in the sense that it is always opened to difference or to the movement (Nancy 2002, 169-170). It is never fixed on any kind of absolutism. In the words of Glissant, it is a "self" which "ne saurait se figer, s'arrêter, s'inscrire dans des essences, dans des absolus identitaires" (Glissant 1997, 26).

Tshepo's experience from his professional homosexuality permits him to point out significant questions in relation to this new "self":

[...] Is it possible to draw a sincere meaning from all the things that I have known from black and white culture? [...] Is it possible to feel South African and not to always source my culture to a particular race group? Can I claim Afrikaans, Coloured tsotsitaal, Indian cuisine or English sensibilities

as my own? Am I a sell-out, an Uncle Tom? [...] Isn't that a bigger transgression than going beyond the boundaries? Will whites ever really hear us? And will we blacks always be on the defensive? Is it possible to be comfortable with each other as we are, not wanting to alter each other? [...] And us blacks, do we still look up to them instead of standing as equals? [...] Do we steal and pillage from whites because we are getting revenge or have become victims of our own bitterness and anger? [...] Perhaps we are moving into the territory of the oppressor. Perhaps one day whites will also speak about us with the same despicable nostalgia that we reserve for apartheid and its days. When blacks were in power, they might say. (Duiker 2001, 347-349).

In the same line with Tshepo here, Lacan (Lacan 1986, 208) and Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1994, 107) conceive artificial boundaries, necessarily provisory morals or laws like very important sites for they offer any individual or any society the possibility of transgressing them. Postcolonial critics underpin this ambivalent situation of boundaries when they keep insisting that imperialism (consequence of boundaries in a broader sense) has consolidated the hybrid nature of culture on a global scale. Homosexuality as a notion, which gives room to various understandings in South Africa is therefore a perfect exemplification of the postcolonial cultural hybridity. The awareness of this hybridity guaranties understanding of all types of different cultures or identities and reinforces the vigilance of the strong or perfect person on the meaning of survival in the actual context where the world is becoming or

has become everybody's soil. As the twelfth-century's monk from Saxony Hugh of St. Victor puts it, the strong or perfect person achieves independence and detachment by working through attachments, not by rejecting them (qtd. in Said 1994, 336). South Africans in general, Blacks in particular must therefore learn to attach themselves to homosexuals and stop giving them a dirty look (Duiker 2001, 331) because they are an illustration, among others, of the hybrid and open nature of human identity.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to investigate what gives the post-colonial theory its insight in a globalized world. Underpinning on the phenomenon of homosexuality in Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, the study validated the focus of post-colonial theory on processes of domination not just to expose its paradoxical creativity, but also to highlight the hybrid and open nature of all cultures. Homosexuality, by cutting across boundaries reveals itself as a visible sign of the subversive strategies employed by post-colonial writers (Ashcroft 1989, 33). By displaying around its meaning very divergent conceptions, reprimanded homosexuality under study has illustrated how "marginality... becomes an unprecedented source of creative energy" (Ashcroft 1989, 12). In a globalized world, the above

study can contribute to sharpening our awareness of the many possibilities that the human nature encompasses in order to realize oneself everywhere, or in any situation one finds him or herself. Any subject living in this globalized context therefore has to see him or herself like a literary discourse with its "virtualités"<sup>4</sup> or simply put, its many possibilities for survival. To consider oneself like the literary text is to empower oneself and to be ready to carry out a new "grand narrative", completely the opposite of the one Edward Said deconstructs in *Culture and Imperialism*. It is only from that strategic site, that the self translates into practice Zakes Mda's condition for the liberation in the future which he puts in the mouth one of his character's: "everyone ... comes from somewhere else" (Mda 2000, 39).

## NOTES

1. South African slang which means foreigners or strangers.
2. Cohn, Doritt. (1981) Foreword to *La Transparence Intérieure. Modes de Représentations de la Vie Psychique dans le Roman* by Tzvetan Todorov. Trans. Alain Bony. Paris, Seuil. 9.



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