REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL FORMATION IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

DECLARATION

This Master of Arts thesis is my original work and has not, wholly or in part, been presented for an award of a degree in any other university.

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AM18/2358/09

RECOMMENDATION

We wish to confirm that this thesis has been prepared under our supervision and is presented for Examination as per the Egerton University regulations with our approval.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my father Samwel Kiprotich Soi, and my mother, Elizabeth, for their love, admiration, adoration and friendship. Thank you for surrounding me with your love.
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I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Professor Emilia V. Ilieva, for her insightful appraisals and detailed evaluations during the entire research process. I have been exceedingly fortunate to have a considerate supervisor who cared so much about my work, and who responded to my questions and chapter-evaluations so promptly. My greatest appreciation is due to her for her perceptive corrections; her unfailing attention; her passion for my work; and her constant encouragement and kindness. Thank you for guiding me out of overwhelming impatience. I am grateful for having passed through your able hands. This academic adventure is far more articulate because of your resolute insistence on quality. I cannot easily quantify your attention to me and my work. May God bless you abundantly. I am also grateful to Dr. Joseph Walunywa, my second supervisor, for his incisive critique and insistence on a clear intellectual vision; for his fruitfully engaging discussions; and for his underlining between the lines. I have profited from your corrections. Your mentorship has provided me with an opportunity coherent with my long-term career goals. Thank you for your guidance. I am equally grateful to Dr. Dishon G. Kweya, who co-supervised at the initial stage, and guided the development of the first chapter. You provided critical perspectives and intellectual discussions that shaped this research. Thank you for your support. Thanks are also due to Prof. Fugich Wako, for his steadfast encouragement; for pointing out the intellectual path that sets my horizon. And to Prof. Wangari Mwai, for her cheerful inspiration. You saw it that my dreams went beyond Maseno University. I also recognise the constant support of my colleagues, Grace and Christine, and all my friends, including Philip, Kones, Hilda, Ruto, Japhan, Evans, Felix, Philemon and Godwin, and my dad-in-law, David. You have been the best to me. I would like to thank Egerton University for giving me the chance to serve at the Department of Literature, Languages and Linguistics. The completion of this thesis owes a lot to the opportunity. Finally, I thank my wife, Bernice, for her constant encouragement, unfailing support, steadfast love and exceeding patience, even when she had had to attend to our adorable daughter in my absence. I express very profound gratitude to you for understanding, as I took leave from what also mattered most to us. Above all, I give thanks to God for his enduring love, for life, and for strength to finish this work. Thank you, Lord, for shining your light on me.
ABSTRACT

Post-apartheid South African literature is turning its attention away from an exclusive preoccupation with race, to ponder the vaster socio-political and cultural terrain that has been in the making since the end of apartheid. The study sought to investigate the ways in which post-apartheid South African literature engages with the increasingly complex social formation of the “New” South Africa. It outlined the South African post-apartheid reality in a historical and social context; demonstrated the representation of the unfolding of the process of building the Rainbow nation; and accounted for the paradoxes in the pursuit of the Rainbow dream. The study operated on the assumptions that South African literature grows out of a culturally, economically, psychologically, politically and ideologically complex social reality; that the building of the Rainbow nation has been a slow process marked by inconsistency; and that South Africa today is a site of paradoxes inherited from the unresolved cultural, economic and political contradictions of the apartheid era. The study focused on four novels: K. Sello Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001), Phaswane Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001), Zakes Mda’s *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002) and J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* (2000). The study used the postcolonial theory. Postcolonial strategies assisted in the analysis of economic inequalities, political and cultural imperialist effects of apartheid/colonisation. Achille Mbembe’s critique of the postcolony was used to explain post-apartheid South Africa’s post-colonial status. Homi Bhabha’s theorising on national culture explained the borderlines of South Africa’s changing nation-space in the light of emerging identities. Constructivist research methodology was used in the study. The novels provided the primary data. A range of scholarly work and other secondary material augmented the primary data. Data was analysed interpretively. The findings of the research led to the conclusion that the four texts exhibit that the inequalities inherited from apartheid entangled the nation’s transition to the “New” South Africa; that these inequalities structured a society that is not only limiting but also inconsistent with the Rainbow dream; that the persistence of social, economic and political problems, and the re-emergence of cultural, racial and class tensions reveal a fractured post-apartheid present; that South African literature, in its transformative vision, has represented South Africans’ endeavour to live with each other, and to create a responsible future, intimating hope. This study helps to re-examine the South African nation after apartheid, and speculates the Rainbow nation’s future prospects and opportunities for social cohesion and multicultural harmony. It also contributes to the appreciation of cultural diversity in an increasingly transnational and migrant world.
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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Apartheid: Racial segregation which was enforced by the white government in South Africa in 1948 and was sustained by laws.

Ideology: The “themes, concepts and representations through which men and women ‘live’, in an imaginary relation, their relation to their real conditions of existence” (Hall, 1985: 672).

Immorality Act: The Immorality Act (1950-1985) was one of the first apartheid laws in South Africa which forbade sexual relations between whites and non-whites (Zulu, 2006).

Multiculturalism: Is understood in the South African context as a result of interactions among the whites, ethnic diversity of blacks, coloureds, Indians, and migrants.

Rainbow Nation: The post-1994 South African society in South Africa envisaged a new beginning after apartheid, and the anticipation of a free society modelled along a democratic tradition that recognised diverse races and peoples under the banner of a Rainbow.

Social formation: Is a “structure in dominance” which shows how society is organised. Social formation sees the structure of society as a whole and encompasses the cultural, economic, political and ideological dimensions of a society (Hall, 1985: 91).

South Africa’s cities: Is used in the study to refer to Cape Town and Johannesburg. These two cities are considered as a microcosm of the urban society of post-apartheid South Africa.

Space: Is “both the space of the literary multicultural imagination of the nation-in-formation and space in the sense of changing (peri) urban areas” (Myambo, 2010: 94).

Subculture: The “expressive forms and rituals of ... subordinate groups.” A subculture exhibits tension(s) between dominant and subordinate groups (Hebdige, 1979: 2).

The “New” South Africa: Is contemporary South Africa after apartheid. The quotation marks in the word “New” mean that legacies of apartheid persist (Cooper, 2005: 37).

The National Imaginary: The future after apartheid, represented through new narratives of socio-cultural, economic and political transformation (Gagiano, 2004: 815; Murray, Shepherd & Hall, 2007).