

Old Oppressed and New Oppressors: Citizenship and Xenophobic Discourse in Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome To Our Hillbrow*

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ABSTRACT

Xenophobia is documented as a grave, international collective phenomenon, it is prevalent in South Africa due to the economic and social degeneration and the static state of poverty of people after emancipation. The rise of xenophobia after the eradication of apartheid in 1994 was an outcome to the state politics of citizenship and the failure of the government to achieve the promises of democracy. Previous studies attribute xenophobia in South Africa to social and economic problems while its rise was a result to poverty and economic decay only. This article argues that the rise of xenophobia in South Africa is the outcome of the political discourse of citizenship and exclusiveness. Thus, the study aims to demonstrate that xenophobia is stimulated and triggered by state discourse of South African officials including police officers and Home Department agents drawing on Michael Neocosmos' Citizenship reading. The article concludes that xenophobia in South Africa is triggered and maintained by the state politics and the governmental discourse.

Keywords: Xenophobia; Citizenship; South Africa; Mpe; Discourse; Foreigners.

Introduction

Xenophobia is increasingly recognized as a serious, worldwide social phenomenon. "Xenophobia" comes from the Greek words *xénos* 'fear' and *phóbos* 'stranger' or 'guest'. Interestingly, the second connotation, 'guest', has lost its validity. It is translated as 'fear of strange'. In his book *Dictionary of Psychology and Allied Sciences* (2009) M.S. Bhatia defines Xenophobia as "an irrational and excessive fear of strangers or strange (foreign) cultures, which can often become converted into intense, Jingoistic patriotism and/or racial or cultural prejudice" (453). In the *Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology* (2009) David Matsumoto states that Xenophobia is:

An abnormal fear of strangers or people from different countries, cultures, subcultures, ethnicities, social classes, or any other identifiably different social group. In both humans and other animals, it is often associated with territoriality, and those perceived as intruders are met with hostility and sometimes physical aggression (584).

Xenophobia appeared in South Africa as a reaction to the economic decay and the unchanging state of poverty of people after liberation. The failure of the government to achieve its promises after the collapse of apartheid led people to be xenophobic against African migrants. South African people lived a very long life of oppression, humiliation, and racism under the apartheid era.

In South Africa, xenophobia has grown since the 'independence', alongside the escalating number of newcomers flooding into the state. Outsiders encountered harassment, humiliation, rape and even killing. There were hatred insolences against immigrants apprehended by segments of the natives. Such approaches of hate towards foreigners

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were directed against individuals specifically approaching from other African states (Hopstock & de Jager 2011). Several scholarships were conducted in post-apartheid South Africa have recognized sturdy, pervasive, undesirable attitudes and antagonism towards foreign citizens living in the state (Nyamnjoh 2006, 81). Nyamnjoh captures the meaning of xenophobic violence in the state by labeling it as “intense dislike, hatred or fear of others who are foreign”.

The biggest and most horrific attack was in May 2008 in one of the cities of Johannesburg. It rapidly blew-out through the state. The assailants were South African natives who pursued black African migrants (Matsinhe 2011, 295). Previous studies have reported many xenophobic attacks that regularly happen in South Africa. Hundreds and thousands of alien immigrants were stalked, assaulted and murdered as a result of the violent attacks in the state. Xenophobia has been an abject of research since 1994 in South Africa. Several social studies have reported about xenophobic attacks and violations against the black people from neighbouring countries (Harris 2002, 170). Thus, previous research explored the economic and social reasons for the xenophobic violence in the state. The current article, however, aspires to investigate the state politics and the governmental discourse of the state and their roles in generating and escalating the xenophobic violence and hatred attitudes across the country.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow (2001) by Phaswane Mpe represents the dilemma of Black individuals, citizens, and foreigners, to establish a new identity in the newly democratized South Africa. The novel won the Commonwealth Writers Award, his debut work, and received critical acclaim. It propelled his career and made him one of the best novelists of post-Apartheid. In her article *Locating Identity in Phaswane Mpe's Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2005) Carrol Clarkson focusses on how identity issue is highlighted by Mpe as a reaction to place as a physical and a linguistic inscription in the novel. In her paper, the researcher highlights the dissolution of traditional deliberations of home and community and how they pose a challenge to the individual's competence for individual obligation (2005, 451), and missed to explore the plight of foreigners and the xenophobic violence in South Africa

In the same sense, Davis tackles the issues of human rights in the novel in her article, *Contagion, Cosmopolitanism, and Human Rights in Phaswane Mpe's Welcome to my Hillbrow* (2013), she explores the relationship between the stranger as multinational refugee, social exile, city resident, and HIV positive individual and illness in the novel. Davis adds that Mpe's characters are connected to a trope of contagion, hopelessness, ferocity, and AIDS are all conveyed among characters as forms of infection. Thus, according to the study, Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* provides an essential pattern of such an articulation (2013, 99). The study also draws on the cosmopolitan theory and is concerned with the issues of disease, contagion, and human rights subjects which makes it different from my study in the topic and conceptual framework.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow was under the focus in "*Precarious Cosmopolitanism in O'Neill's Netherland and Mpe's Welcome to Our Hillbrow*" (2013) by Pier Paolo Frassinelli and David Watson. In their study, the researchers propose that the text reveals an important approach to cosmopolitanism. They elaborate that South African novelist Phaswane Mpe's novel calls us to reconsider the concept of countrywide society from the perspective of the bounds and eliminations this construction makes. According to their study, the novel emphasizes the formation of a sequences of narrative strategies that localize the story at the same time within and outside both the geopolitical borders of the nation and the conventions of realist fiction (2013, 6-9). Hence, the article focuses on the notions of cosmopolitanism, belonging and national identity and missed to explore the state politics in South Africa.

Rebecca Fasselt in *Towards an 'Afropolitan Deixis': Hospitality and 'You' and 'We' Narration in Phaswane Mpe's Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2014) explores the spatial politics implied in the practice of hospitality towards African foreign citizens. The research emphasizes on how "hospitality towards African migrants is denied, contested and extended in the diverse and complex spatial arenas depicted in the text" (Fasselt 2014, 99). Along these lines, previous studies on the selected text did not offer convincing materials on the xenophobic violence in South Africa and the state politics of the country. The current article aspires to fill in the gap of scholarship on the xenophobic violence and to locate its reasons under the shadows of the new democratic government in the state.

In his book *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (1996), Mahmood Mamdani recognizes the significance of citizenship and the variances between the citizen and the foreigner. Mamdani, both cautiously and effectively, has defined the prevalence of binaries that control the atmosphere of Africa. Despite being mindful of the harms of such dichotomization, Mamdani nonetheless surrenders to it. The dissimilarity between subject and citizen on which his mission rests, in itself strengthens a binary demonstration. Mamdani explains how colonialism controlled and preserved structures of authority through the scheme of indirect rule and reorganized dictatorship.

In the same sense, Pal Ahluwalia in book *Politics and Postcolonial Theory* asserts that citizenship provokes also spirits of dedication, with solid faithfulness to the flag and associations which are correspondent with the country. In contemporary civilizations, he suggests, citizenship means that one is permitted access to state resources, besides he is allowed to take part in the political race (1996). So, the formation of citizenship is constructed upon the confession that individuals have more than individual identity, that inside community individuals occupy a diversity of positions, depending upon situations at a specific point.

Sadiq in his article *Postcolonial Citizenship* states that Postcolonial citizenship is the “status, and the rights and obligations associated with it, of individuals and groups in independent, often multi-ethnic, states formerly controlled by European colonial powers” (2017, 179). The concept of Citizenship was organized by a past of colonial regulation and the inherent authority variances and communal mechanism implied in European colonial schemes. The concept of citizenship was applied in the political, and postcolonial fields.

Michael Neocosmos explores the concept of Citizenship in his book *From Foreign Natives to Native Foreigners* (2010). The concept was developed as a postcolonial approach to highlight the transformation of the imperial subjects to postcolonial citizens. Neocosmos developed the concept of Citizenship and conceptualized the prevalence of xenophobia in South Africa and its consequences on black African foreigners living in South Africa. The concept of Citizenship has rarely been applied to literary texts, especially on South African novels and thus needs to be far more examined.

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Neocosmos is a contemporary critic who lives in South Africa. He witnesses the incidents of xenophobic violence and his theories are far more accurate and credible. In this sense, I find Neocosmos more suitable and can best support and back up my analysis. Neocosmos is the author of *From Foreign Natives to Native Foreigners, Explaining Xenophobia in South Africa* (2010), in his book he conceptualizes the reasons behind the appearance of xenophobic violence in the post-apartheid era. He states that “xenophobia should be understood as a political discourse and practice”. The history in South Africa is closely associated with the method in which citizenship was perceived and struggled over in the past 50 years at least (Neocosmos 2010, X).

The organized gap in treating strangers and natives in South Africa for a very long time has affected the decision for who should have rights and who should not. Neocosmos insists that “the various political actors in this country have allowed its political culture to provide the foundation for xenophobic and inter-ethnic violence”. (Neocosmos, 2010, 3). Neocosmos declares that Xenophobia is a “discourse concerned with a process of social and political exclusion of some groups of the population”. This segregation is recurrently perceived as indispensable for the animation of the nation in that the ‘Other’ must be excluded (2010, 13). This segregation is a governmental practice in that the government practices a dominant part in this procedure, and only governmentally vulnerable and ostracised populations can be generally excluded. Thus, the government will decide who is a citizen and who is not, who is involved in society and who is excepted (2010, 14).

Neocosmos affirms that:

Citizenship now became reduced to indigeneity and formalised by legislation. It now became overwhelmingly

formed by state prescriptions rather than popular ones. Nevertheless, this required the defeat of popular-democratic ideology and politics and its replacement by state politics which rapidly achieved hegemonic status. This state-nation formation perforce had to exclude those not seen as belonging to the nation as defined by the state, in other words 'foreigners' (Neocosmos 2010, 60).

This procedure delivered one of the circumstances within the formation of authority associations for post-apartheid xenophobic violence. Government regulation and practice, the previous banning movement, the latter left unreconstructed from the apartheid age, have functioned within a discourse and system which not only have abridged citizenship to indigeneity and repudiated a history to movement, but also "enabled state arbitrariness towards 'foreigners' through the excessive power provided to state personnel and the reproduction of racism in a modified form" (Neocosmos 2010, 60-61).

Thus, Neocosmos confirms that:

Indeed state practice and some legislative assumptions are indeed inherited from the past... xenophobia as practised by state institutions cannot simply be understood exclusively in those terms. It is clear that South African legislation has systematically provided the basis for a hegemonic xenophobic discourse within the country. The roots of the problem are to be found within the constitution itself which actually distinguishes between two categories of people: citizens and persons. The distinction means that not all people within the country are interpellated in the same manner. Some are said to have rights which others do not have (2010, 82-83).

The level of xenophobic violence practiced within the authority of the post-apartheid government is life-threatening and is unfailingly shown by all investigation. Neocosmos states that the dangerous power of government executives over the vulnerable, whether essentially alien or not, has been precisely identified to be a mere continuance of apartheid subjugation, while migration legislature allows the extension of a pass-like system. Xenophobic violence is thus an organizational feature of government discourse and attitude, not an unintentional manifestation. In reality, a hegemonic xenophobic governmental discourse ascended in cycle with the establishment of the post-apartheid government (Neocosmos 2010, 108).

Neocosmos insists that xenophobia as an attitude of more or less open form of discrimination and subjugation is widespread in the state and not restricted to people living in informal settlements. It is also a widespread phenomenon among the middle-class and particularly among state employees, as is the expression of prejudices towards Africans from the continent (2010, 118).

Neocosmos affirms that:

The criminalisation of migrancy, the xenophobic public culture among politicians since the early 1990s, the failure to develop genuinely democratic legislation and the hiding behind notions of 'Fortress South Africa' in devising existing legislation, the widespread xenophobic culture among the civil service and the police, the exploitation of the vulnerable in the country, the appalling practices at the Lindela detention centre, the xenophobic opportunism of local politicians and the absence of alternatives, have all contributed to the creation of a hegemonic xenophobic political subjectivity (Neocosmos 2010, 142).

Neocosmos (2008: 588-9) notes that the administration and new lawful judgments have been strengthening a xenophobic discourse, condemning strangers of stealing "our jobs, our houses, and our women", while African refugees are made "fair game for those in power to make a quick buck". The result, argues Neocosmos, has been the over empowering of officials now capable of lauding excessive control over "extremely vulnerable people" so that

bribery, extortion, and corruption become not only possible but regular practices”. So one could argue that xenophobia is not solely a primary manifestation of mass indignation, but a politics, which, in “rainbow” South Africa, is encouraged, or at least channeled, by sections of the government elite and its civil servants, with ‘politics’ becoming a zero-sum game among the elites.

DISCUSSION: CITIZENSHIP AND XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE IN THE TEXT

The novel centers on a South African student, to become a lecturer later, Refentse and his journey to Hillbrow from Tiragalong, South Africa. Refentse, during his visit to Hillbrow, unearths the abuse, exploitation, rape and other types of xenophobia that Africans living in Hillbrow suffer from. He asks for the help of his cousin to be his guide in the city. In a reference to Neocosmos and his claim against the governmental officials, Cousin is a policeman in Hillbrow and his character is an example of a negative outlook towards foreigners in South Africa. Furthermore, it is ironic that Cousin is a policeman and represents the governmental discourse yet, accused of actions that run contrary to ‘rainbowism’ and human rights. Cousin, as representative of state politics, is found to be an offender and, according to Neocosmos, a stimuli for xenophobia (Mahori 2011, 42).

Thus, the characters such as Cousin represent a sector of society that scowls upon the foreigners, an attitude that is criticized by the author. Regularly, Cousin accuses the foreigners of being beggars however, they do not beg anything from him. Although the author says that, “...but, they do not beg anything from you and Cousin” (Mpe 2001, 12), the importance is that they do not beg anything from the disdainful Cousin and so his insolence towards them cannot be anything except sentiments of exclusion and citizenship, in Neocosmos’ terms. Accordingly, Mpe emphasizes that these accusations are no more than stereotypes and mere justifications for the disappointment of the state in the post-apartheid era to achieve their promises of prosperity and democracy.

Being a policeman, Cousin represents the governmental discourse and the state politics' of the post-apartheid era. His intolerance towards foreigners extends to a degree that he criticizes and forbids Refentse from greeting them and that indicated the presence of the new oppressors in South Africa. He tells Refentse “[H]ey you! You do not go around greeting every fool in Hillbrow” (12). As such, feelings and sentiments of hate and intolerance are shown and practiced by officials. Mpe's choice of Cousin as a policeman is not a coincidence, he intends to unearth the practices of exclusion and citizenship that Neocosmos claimed dominant in the governmental discourse of post-apartheid South Africa. Moreover, Mpe exposes that targets of official xenophobia and popular dismissal are, according to Cousin, blamed for taking jobs from citizens and “responsible; not just for the physical decay of the place, but the moral decay” (17). In other words, foreigners are alleged guilty for most of the communal misfortunes that plague society (Green 2008, 334).

SOUTH AFRICANS AS OLD OPPRESSED

South Africans lived a long time of oppression under colonialism and apartheid. The text exposes the lives of citizens under apartheid and its colonial system. Mpe, through the narrative, uncovers the process of the role exchange of citizens from oppressed during apartheid to oppressors in the post-apartheid. The text indicates the reason behind the appearance of xenophobic violence in the state as the concerns that foreigners stealing jobs that South Africans would otherwise occupy. This is why Mpe denies this job-stealing argument elsewhere through the voice of a character. Several years later, Thabo Mbeki, the leader of the African National Congress, used the same words in condemning the 2008 attacks on foreigners, affirming that certain aliens were better qualified than South Africans and consequently contributed positively to the South African economy and refuted previous claims and rumors that African aliens were robbing people of jobs (Rafapa and Mahori 164). An indication that scarce resources and ongoing poverty are not due to the presence of foreigners. However, poor management of resources, corruption, and apartheid system continuity, along with Neocosmos, are considered as the main reasons behind prevalence of xenophobia in the state.

Moreover, in the narratives, Refentse supporting Neocosmos' argument, states that cases of killings and other criminalities committed in Hillbrow do not certainly initiate in the corrupted city, but are the result of a failure anywhere else to resolve clashes harmoniously. Failure to distribute the wealth and land for example, or to achieve a prosperous future of people living in South Africa (Clarkson 2005, 454). Refentse adds that "hadn't we better also admit that quite a large percentage of our home relatives who get killed in Hillbrow, are killed by other relatives and friends-people who bring their home grudges with them to Jo'burg" (18). These statements demonstrate the innocence of the black foreigners from most of the crimes and corruption in the country and at the same time uncover the failure of the government and its role in triggering the xenophobic violence across the country.

As such, the xenophobic discourse masks is the reality that many of the evils blamed on the migrants are a result of inner dislocations resulting from South Africa's speedy appearance as a provincial, and progressively international, commercial capital (Davis 2013, 105). In other words and based on Neocosmos' notions, the failure of the government to achieve the promises of prosperity and economic growth has generated the sentiments and attitudes of xenophobia. As South Africans are afraid to blame officials for that failure, they direct their anger towards the most vulnerable categories in the community, the migrants.

Targets to perpetual police aggravation and dependent on prohibited vocations such as prostitution and drug trade for their income, the *Makwerekwere* occupy a situation unpleasantly similar to that of black natives under the apartheid administration (Davis 2013, 104). The term *Makwerekwere*, Mpe's narrator explains, "derives from *kwere kwere*, a sound that their unintelligible languages were supposed to make, according to the locals" (20). The term's stresses on the migrants' language alteration climax their social illegibility. As such, within this xenophobic atmosphere, foreigners are seen as voiceless bodies, accessible for sex and other forms of work since they are vulnerable and naked in front of the state politics of nationalism and exclusion, in Neocosmos terms, that blames them for almost all the social ills in the society. Thus, these conditions indicate that South Africans are changing their roles from old oppressed to new oppressors, stepping into the positions of the whites, treating the black foreigners as they were treated under apartheid.

Refentše, the tongue of the author, in a dispute with Cousin stresses that many of the *Makwerekwere* "were fleeing their war-torn countries to seek sanctuary in our country, in the same way, that many South Africans were forced into exile in Zambia, Zaire, Nigeria, and other African and non-African countries during the Apartheid era" (19). Refentše is disgraced by the awareness that his cousin sexually exploits and gathers bribes from refugees distressed to stay out of detention, knowing that they have no choice to legitimate protection if they are caught. As he desperately remarks, "No one seemed to care that the treatment of the *Makwerekwere* by the police and the lack of sympathy from the influential Department of Home Affairs ran contrary to the human rights clauses detailed in the new constitution of the country" (23).

Refentše's cousin nonetheless feels that these foreign Africans, especially Nigerians, are not only responsible for the city's "crime and grime" (17) but are allegedly the transporters of AIDS (20) which is the governmental discourse of the state, giving citizens the chance to blame, humiliate and violate the foreigners for these mischiefs. The relative ease with which Refentše walks the streets of Hillbrow, then, is a luxury that many African immigrants do not experience. Moreover, refugees are forced to co-exist with inter-African migration and to fight for survival in poor city areas (Mari 2012, 275).

Along with Neocosmos argument, Mpe demonstrates those police officers, Home Affairs Department and "black agents of Apartheid state...black police officers contorting bribes from fellow black accused of political and other dissents" (19). Notably, Mpe exposes exploitation at the highest stages of society where we find the security organization and the Department of Home Affairs, as members of government, embracing within their ranks dishonest officers. In the narrative, we are informed that Cousin and his associates would detain foreign black subjects, *Makwerekwere*, and "drive them around Hillbrow for endless periods of time" (21). The outcome of such repeated drives contains Cousin and his colleagues getting "oceans of rands and cents from these unfortunates, who found very

little to motivate them to agree to be sent back home” (21). The horrific limits of corruption within South African authorities are conveyed by the hyperbolic reference to bribe money as “oceans of rands and cents” (21). The South African discourse of citizenship and exclusion, police and Home Affairs practices have systematically provided the basis for a hegemonic xenophobic discourse within the country.

Mpe portrays the strangers as abandoned targets of the condition is obvious in the compassionate attitude of his account of the strangers as “these unfortunates” (21). The performance by the police in Hillbrow can only result in a cruel sequence of exploitation in all its expressions. When the authorities that be are the agents of exploitation, we can anticipate that this will lead to anguish communal prejudice. What Mpe is ridiculing with such a portrayal is the inappropriate accusation of strangers for the ethical and environmental deterioration of Hillbrow. In the same way that everything in the past was attributed to apartheid, today social distress is blamed “spectacularly” on the outsiders (Rafapa and Mahori 2011, 157).

SOUTH AFRICANS AS NEW OPPRESSORS

The once “politically oppressed South African blacks are now portrayed as the new oppressors of Africans from outside the country, thus making the notion of a new and different South Africa a very premature one” (Hlongwane 2006, 69). Along with Neocosmos, South African citizens suffer from frustration, disappointment, and indignation due to the false promises of the government. Therefore, they need to express their anger and disappointment, and their buried feelings of humiliation and oppression. The only available channel for such feelings was the foreigners as they were close at hand and politically uncovered. In this sense, Mpe highlights the changing roles of citizens from old oppressed into new oppressors.

Much of the violence that is portrayed in the novel is performed by South African citizens. Incidents of rape of black African women are committed by the black cops which verifies Neocosmos’ claim that xenophobia and its attendant violence are triggered and maintained by governmental state politics, in an indication that South Africans have turned to new oppressors in the post-apartheid state. Seeing that the South African officials are being xenophobic against foreigners, the native citizens will be triggered and motivated to act violently against foreigners. Mpe states that “Some of womenfolk bought their temporary freedom to roam in the Hillbrow streets by dispensing under-waist bliss” (21). These insolences by such a figure as the police service are opposing the values of inclusiveness and rainbowism (Rafapa and Mahori 2011, 163), which corroborates Neocosmos’ conceptualization about xenophobia. While discovering wrongness with community for abusing aliens, Neocosmos agrees with Mpe and sees the indifference of South Africa’s public organizations like Department of Home Affairs and police service towards strangers as the main trigger to the xenophobic violence and practices of exclusiveness and citizenship, and as running “contrary to the human rights clauses detailed in the new constitution of the country” (23).

What Refentše does not over-simplify, though, is the corruption of black South African policemen like Cousin. The narrator explains that:

Refentše could not forget all those black agents of the Apartheid State, playing their various roles with a mastery that confounded the minds of even the State itself. Black police officers contorting bribes from fellow blacks accused of political and other dissents. Black police and security forces hitting fellow blacks mercilessly for crimes that were often not committed (19).

More importantly, Mpe highpoints the continuity of the apartheid system performed by ‘black agents’ of apartheid through what Ahluwalia calls the ‘indirect rule’ (Ahluwalia 1996). The text also exposes the changing roles of South Africans from old oppressed to new oppressors. Mpe, along with Neocosmos, asserts on the vulnerabilities of citizenship and exclusiveness in the very beginning of the text, as xenophobic violence breaks out. Mpe makes excuses for the behavior of the Hillbrowans and blaming the state at the same time stating that the crowdedness and misery of

the zone and immoral police maintain violence (Hunt 2006, 119). The moral background portrayed through Mpe's description mirrors a post-liberation disappointment, devaluing the ultimate of a just society apprehended in rainbow-nation imagery (Barris 2009).

Along with Neocosmos, the text spots that discourses of the "New South Africa" and the "African Renaissance" are significant in the discussion of xenophobia as both are in common circulation and yet contradict each other at the point of nationalism." African Renaissance "is defined in terms of continental borders rather than national barriers". "In this discourse, an African identity, and not a South African identity, predominates" (Harris 2002, 176). In contrast, "Nationality is a fundamental feature of the New South Africa discourse and a South African identity prevails" (Harris 2002, 177). The conflict offered by the two discourses illustrates South Africa as a pretender in dealing with xenophobia, because in the progress of chauvinism and citizenship, xenophobia takes root and escalates, while African Renaissance "underplays national boundaries and emphasizes regional and pan-African cohesion in terms of economics, culture, growth and development" (Makgoba 1999). As such, the text could be interpreted as a definitive text, as the stylistic approaches that arise from the novel both critique the post-apartheid fresh spatiality and negate that "democratic rainbowism" which has become a hegemonic discourse in post-apartheid culture (Mari 2012, 267).

In a reference to Neocosmos' warnings that South Africans feel superior to other Africans, Refentše's mother told her son "that if you did not part from Lerato you were no longer your mother's son" (40). Lerato, a Hillbrow woman from Nigerian father living in Hillbrow is "part of the victimised group" (24). Refentše's mother did not welcome this relationship and always rejects the reality of her son's connection with Lerato, who is African but is regarded as inferior because of her contaminated African origin (39–40). Moreover, Refentše's mother, due to publicized stereotypes about Hillbrow women and feelings of hatred believes that "all Hillbrow women were prostitutes, who spent their nights leaning against the walls...serving as both advertisements and sexual commodities" (39). Lerato's relationship with Refentše is predestined to fail from the beginning because of her African origin. South Africans due to their xenophobic attitudes believe that they are superior to fall in love or marry someone from African roots.

Lerato witnessed the pressure on 'the bone of her heart' after he came back from his mother. No appetite to eat and no signs of love, Lerato 'knew immediately that things were not right' (49). She called in his best friend, Sammy, to discuss Refentše's condition but unfortunately, they ended up both in bed. Refentše could not go back to his mother because he did not listen to her words, he has "to face the consequences alone" (40). Mpe addresses Refentše saying "Since love, friendship and motherhood did not provide any possibility for sanctuary in your own need, you began to look at the positive sides of suicide" (40). Refentše commits suicide for one part due to the pressure of his mother to leave Lerato because of her African origins.

The narrator informs Refentše that People of Hillbrow believe that "you committed suicide because your mother had bewitched you" (43). Thus, they decide to necklace her. "They put large tyres around her neck and poured generous quantities of petrol unto her body. Then someone gingerly lit a cigarette before throwing the match into her hut" (43). Lerato from the other side could not handle her fault in the suicide of Refentše, she took lethal pills and dies as well. Refentše, his mother and Lerato meet in heaven after their death. Interestingly, after all the stories about the Makwerekwere, Africans and the xenophobic attitudes against them, Mpe offers hints of reconciliation and acceptance at the end of the narrative. Lerato and Refentše's mother meet in heaven and express their acceptance to each other with a 'gentle smile' despite the xenophobic sentiments that Refentše's mother had for her and all African migrants when she was alive in Hillbrow.

The novel attempts to redefine the community and to widen a sense of humane value that South African should commemorate. At the same time, however, it casts doubt on whether this romanticized society can be accomplished. A civilized society symbolized by both hybridity and similarity. However, Minesh Dass (2004, 165) remarks that this humane initiating is restricted by the reality that the characters attain it only once they are deceased, and are by delineation incapable to live it. Their self-realization is consequently embodied in an interestedly provisional style. The narrator states that:

You did not know how that part of the story had come about. Had you known, you would perhaps have forgiven your Lerato, instead of taking that spectacular route to the world of the Ancestors. You have since come to learn the facts because Heaven affords you the benefit of retrospect and omniscience. (2001, 47).

In sum, South Africans, the old oppressed, were disappointed by the governmental management of the state in the post-apartheid. The promises of a better life, redistribution of land and wealth and the 'rainbow nation' were all unaccomplished. Subsequently, natives could not direct their anger and indignation toward the sources of these disappointments, they targeted foreigners because they were the most vulnerable faction in society. In this way, the old oppressed have turned to new oppressors since they started to humiliate, abuse, burn and murder foreigners for the ills in their society. It is difficult to avoid the negativity written into such postponed ethical determination. It is accurate that the text does signal towards a rainbow nation and reconciliation between foreigners and citizens, towards the perfect of an objective and humane society that welcomes everyone who lives on the South African soil. However, even as the text assumes such resolution and "Rainbowism", the opportunity of accomplishing it is negated by its subsequent recounting (Barris 2009, 46). Thus, there is, here, neither indication of Nelson Mandela's "rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world," nor of a reunited community under such practices of exclusion and citizenship against foreigners.

CONCLUSION

Xenophobia is an ongoing and challenging phenomenon around the world. In South Africa, xenophobic violence against black foreigners was at the climax after 1994. Previous research argued that reasons of xenophobic violence in South Africa are economic and social. Yet, the current study concludes that in addition to economic and social factors, there are state politics and governmental discourse that trigger and stimulate xenophobia through hatred speeches and xenophobic attitudes. The article concludes xenophobic violence in the novel is maintained and practiced first by government representatives and officials and sustained by their practices. Moreover, the study closes with low chances of Rainbowism due to the pessimistic ending of the novel. No signs of reconciliation between natives and foreigners were noticed which reduces any possibility of a reconciled society due to the state politics and the xenophobic governmental discourse.

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المظلومون القدامى والظالمون الجدد. المواطنة وخطاب الكراهية في رواية "اهلا بكم في مدينتنا هيلبرو" لي فاسواني مبي

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ملخص

تم توثيق كراهية الأجانب كظاهرة جماعية دولية خطيرة ، وهي منتشرة في جنوب إفريقيا بسبب التدهور الاقتصادي والاجتماعي وحالة الفقر السائدة لدى الناس بعد التحرر. كان ظهور رهاب الأجانب بعد القضاء على الفصل العنصري في عام 1994 نتيجة لسياسة المواطنة الحكومية وفشل الحكومة في تحقيق وعود الديمقراطية. تعزو الدراسات السابقة كراهية الأجانب في جنوب إفريقيا إلى المشكلات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية و أن ظهورها كان نتيجة للفقر والانتحاط الاقتصادي فقط. لكن يجادل هذا المقال بأن ظهور رهاب الأجانب في جنوب إفريقيا هو نتيجة الخطاب السياسي للمواطنة عدم الشمولية وبالتالي ، تهدف الدراسة إلى إثبات أن رهاب الأجانب يتم تحفيزه وتنشيطه من خلال خطاب الدولة لمسؤولي جنوب إفريقيا بمن فيهم ضباط الشرطة ووكلاء وزارة الداخلية بالاعتماد على قراءة المواطنة مايكل نيوكوسموس يخلص المقال إلى أن كره الأجانب في جنوب إفريقيا يتم تحفيزه وتغذيته بواسطة سياسات الدولة والخطاب الحكومي.

الكلمات الدالة: رهاب الاجانب، المواطنة، جنوب افريقيا، مبي، الخطاب الحكومي، الاجانب.

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