

# BEYOND RACE, FICTIVE AND ILLUSORY: K. SELLO DUIKER'S THIRTEEN CENTS AND THE QUIET VIOLENCE OF DREAMS

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## Abstract

*The world has been distressed for centuries. Almost all nations have experienced all sorts of traumatic events and feelings in time. Among those nations, the Blackman seem to be the most unlucky and ill-fated, suffered from traumatic disasters. However, among those black nations, the natives of South Africa have been the most piteous. Their misfortune began with the oppression and persecution of white European colonists and settlers on natives. Those natives were not allowed to have equal rights with white people and to share same environment in public premises. The natives put up resistance against the racial and colonial practices of white settlers which excluded them from all living spaces; that culminated in the democratically elected government in 1994. Today their exclusion and violent racialism still go on and they are still subjected to inferior treatment by (post)colonial dominant white powers as shown in most post-apartheid narratives. This study aims at explicating how Duiker has reflected on the trauma, black people of South Africa have experienced as a consequence of racist practices. As Duiker's works make eminently clear, the era of struggle literature is over in South Africa. Today, the country is contending with the complications of freedoms. A racial divide once enforced by law has become an economic divide that falls mostly along racial lines. Everyone is profoundly uncertain of his place. This paper is informed by an old-fashioned liberal humanist vision and demonstrates clearly that a nation is a place where people can only consider themselves as one entity belonging to the same nation if and only if, they are willing to accept one another. If such a will is absent, then division and hatred become the norm as demonstrated by Duiker's characters.*

**Key Words:** Race, Fictive, Beyond, Duiker, Narrative

## Introduction

Racism is rooted in alterity—that is, in the act of creating difference and otherness—a phenomenon that cannot be separated from the identity process. Identity and alterity go together in the never-perfect exercise of establishing boundaries between "us" and "them;" inventing categories of naming, and in so doing, exercising power. In the first, social relationships are racialized (ascribing superiority or inferiority) and exclusion is expressed in racist attitudes, such as prejudice, and in racist practices, such as discrimination, segregation, and exploitation of the other. This may even reach the point

of ethnic cleansing, genocide, or the planned exercise of a racist political program. Penelope Andrews contends that in the wake of the newly democratic South Africa, only the urgent task of abolishing apartheid and designing the new non-racial order occupied the attention of the architects of the new South African democracy(326). The leading parties to the negotiations, namely the African National Congress and the National Party, had political and legal differences about the shape and substance of the post-apartheid order. The impulse to think beyond race, to produce a paradigm that enables an alternate, transformative, view of social arrangements is an old, but by no means, unimportant project. There was, however, a general consensus that racism, in all its manifestations, needed to be eradicated. The demand for a non-racial South Africa is the common ground that unites a wide range of forces for change. More than a decade after the celebration of the first democratic elections in South Africa—an event that sealed the end of apartheid—new forms of discrimination can be identified in discourses and violent acts. In every human society, there is the tendency and temptation for one group to think that it is superior and more important than the others. In fact, this tendency is very visible in racialised and ethnocentric societies where one culture or race tends to dominate the others. According to Julie Frederikse, “to be democratic, the future South Africa must be non-racial: that premise is fundamental” (3). Race as category, functions according to Ania Loomba as “one of the most powerful and yet most fragile markers of human identity; hard to explain and identify and even harder to maintain” (121). While skin colour is taken to be the prime signifier of racial identity, the concept of 'race' receives its meaning contextually and in relation to other groups and hierarchies such as gender and class. It is a relational concept and it is therefore important to link according to Paul Gilroy, “the various sites in which oppression is felt...by a concept of racism, understood not as a separate or external feature of society but as an integral element in the system or process...” (116). Anderson cited in Bryson, defines race as “...a social structure, constructed through social interaction and manifested in the institutions of society, interpersonal interactions, and the minds and identities of those living in racially based social orders”(51). It is in this sense that the concept of race is adhered to in this study rather than in the biological sense of the word. Bhabha comments that, “...the epidermal schema is not... a secret. Skin, as the key signifier of racial and cultural difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognized as 'common knowledge' in a range of cultural, political and historical discourses, and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies”(78). At its most basic level, race is a concept, which opines Howard Winant “*signifies and symbolizes socio-political conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies*” (270). In South Africa, says M.J. Daymond, “given our specific history of apartheid, there is not only a challenge to universalism, there is also a need to uncover hidden power relations ...simultaneously with efforts to establish a community of purpose within the recognition of 'difference’” (xix). Rather than being a matter of personal identity or characteristics, racism in the words of Alex Bryson, is “a source of social identity and power which involves relations of domination and oppression” (52). It identifies specific groups as racial groups within a hierarchy of

inferiority or superiority and within this hierarchy; the dominant racial group exercises power in order to discriminate against subordinate groups. Duncan et al also believes “Racism can be considered as a set of ideas and discursive and material practices aimed at (re)producing and justifying systematic inequalities between 'races' or racialised groups” (2). The preamble to the 1996 Constitution — perhaps the most significant document to emerge from the post-apartheid period, if not the country's entire history — says, in the words of Rachel Donald, “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity”(Retrieved DEC 3 2006). The unity is willed: not quite a facade but not quite a foundation, either.

### **South African Heritage**

The history of apartheid can be interpreted as the history of an attempt to control population movement, through the creation of internal borders, the construction of the homelands and of "independent states" for certain sectors of the population, together with a de-nationalization and re-nationalization of domestic population based on racist criteria of exclusion. The economic purpose was to achieve growth on the basis of huge disparities of wealth and power and to assign roles to individuals according to racial identities imposed by an authoritarian state. The dismantling of apartheid put in motion a new process of nation building whereby, although in a provisional way, the discursive authority of the state fixed the borders and the meaning of the nation. Numerous practices—including symbolic and cultural resources used and interpreted by government officials, politicians, community leaders, and the mass media—turned to influence official policies in order to produce a national identity. An important element in the redefinition of national identity in the words of Sheila Croucher, “is related to immigration through the establishment of a given immigration policy, which is in turn determined by citizenship” (642-3). Post apartheid literature moves away from the exterior binaries and the protesting voice to a preoccupation with the inner, the intimate, the individual, and the intermingled ordinary. It is, Andries Oliphant argues, a move away from “instrumentality” to “explore the new freedoms promised by the transition” (27). A new generation of novelists like Phaswane Mpe and Sello Duiker took up this newfound freedom and were seen as creative pioneers at the beginning of the new century, not only because of the focus of their fiction on contradictory entanglement of new and old, but also because they were seen to be “more formally innovative.”(32).

The apartheid government's racial allocation of resources in education, health, welfare, housing and many other areas of government spending ensured that black people were locked into a spiral of dispossession, dislocation and poverty. Not only did the system racialise the availability of resources from government spending, but a labyrinth of laws and policies ensured that black South Africans' private access to economic resources via employment, property ownership and other private economic activity was severely circumscribed.

The laws and policies which regulated the movement of black labour and access to housing, with their deleterious impact on family life, cemented the economic inferiority of black South Africans. The apartheid state was typified by rigid racial segregation and stratification in which whites occupied the most favoured positions in the racial hierarchy, followed by Indians, 'coloureds' and Africans. This racial hierarchy was reflected in government expenditure in a host of areas. In classic divide and rule mode, the South African government ensured this rigid segregation through various racially restrictive legislations. Social interaction and marriage was also severely restricted by legislation. It is for this reason that the campaign against race is of special significance in those societies where racial categorization has significant purchase, where race is at the root of societal conflict, where the very history of the locale is over determined by race. This paper explores the construction of an antiracist/ racialized politics in the new, South Africa, structured by specific, historicized racial hierarchies. It examines the entanglements of race as it obtains on the terrain of the nation's politics, conceived here in both its electoral, (post-apartheid) constitutional formation, and in its extra-parliamentary, anti-apartheid articulation. The researcher wonders going by the characters in the novels under the present study how we can think politically beyond race in a society where race thinking pervades all aspects of life. Exponentially, in the words of Grant Farred, "race is always, politically and philosophically speaking, in play in South Africa" (55). In South Africa, to think politically is to think racially and, possibly, racist, so precarious is the epistemological slippage between the two concepts. In the apartheid past South African identities were experienced differently, because they were firmly racialized – the "fundamental divisions" were different, ensuring that the new process of constructing a post-apartheid shared identity will be equally arduous, working against and along racial fault lines that the new nation is only beginning to map. It requires a process of suturing which it is finding incredibly difficult to do – necessarily so, one might add. It is in this way that arguing against race, working for its institutional death, means nothing.

### **The Illusion of Non-Racialism**

Sello Duiker's life straddled the dying days of apartheid and the post-1994 period. He was born in the iconic Johannesburg black township of Soweto, the place synonymous with the student revolts of 1976 that helped break apartheid's stranglehold on the country. His parents wanted their firstborn to be well educated. They sent him to a reputable Roman Catholic school in a neighbouring "coloured" area. In an interview with Bafana Khumalo he says, "it was at [this] time, "[that] I was becoming aware of my race. I discovered that in the coloured community there was a lot of politics around hair, the smoothness and the colour."(22). As a schoolboy in his teens in the equally turbulent 1980s in Soweto he says in another interview with Victor Lackay, "he was witnessing necklacing [and] kangaroo courts"(19). Duiker, like all South Africans, lived with the legacy of violence resulting from more than three and a half centuries of colonial and apartheid domination and divide-and-rule.

In both his first novel, *Thirteen Cents* and his more recent *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* Sello Duiker, I will argue, desires to live in a world devoid of the questions of race but the reality of racialism constantly intrudes pushing one to think that non-racialism is an illusion in South Africa. It is arguable that Duiker desires a world free from the shackles of racial segregation setting his works at the turn of the millennium when South African democracy and its constitution holds out the promise of equality and freedoms. Told from Azure's and Teshpo's perspectives, Duiker weaves the narratives that lays bare the exploitation, racial and sexual politics found just under the surface of South African society.

Cape Town stands as the premier tourist destination in Africa, popular among Western visitors who are drawn to the area's warm climate, beautiful landscape, and the natural environment. The city's prevailing mythic image, however, conflicts with late South African writer K. Sello Duiker's perception. He described how he experienced Cape Town in an interview with Victor Lackay saying, "I immersed myself in the culture of Cape Town, but in the end I had to run. I was too absorbed; I needed to escape. It was just meant to be a stopover" (20). His statement here comes across as light criticism whereas his literary works more vehemently problematize the city. In his first two novels, *Thirteen Cents* and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, Duiker's characters experience a Cape Town that would make the city's tourists reconsider their choice of destination. In particular, Duiker appears ready for the city to come to an apocalyptic end. Duiker's issue with Cape Town seems to lie in the covert ways the city operates, as evinced by his novels. In *Thirteen Cents*, Duiker concludes by depicting a Cape Town apocalypse during which natural forces destroy the city and its inhabitants. In *Thirteen Cents*, Duiker seemingly transgresses the binary categories of black and white to explore broader themes of crime, corruption and homosexuality as experienced by Azure. Yet, due consideration is still given according to Shaun Viljoen to "race and how it affects the lives of the characters in the novel" (xxii). Racial identity and hierarchy comes to the forefront of the novel when Gerald believes that Azure likened him to a [kaffir](#) and when Vincent attributes Allen's unhinged violence to his inability to conceal his coloured blood.

*Thirteen Cents* was published a mere six years after the first democratic elections, when Duiker was twenty-six years old, to critical acclaim and wide readership inside South Africa and abroad. Azure's position as a twelve-year-old who turns thirteen in the novel situates him on the threshold of the world of adults and subjects him to the rites of passage that induct him into particular forms of adulthood—in this case a particularly exploitative, destructive social order. He is a critical outsider to this world and continually resists incorporation—"Grown-ups are fucked up," he asserts (42). It is this significant turning from boyhood to manhood, this becoming thirteen to which the title alludes, that positions him as a critical commentator moving into and out of the dominant matrix of hierarchies and power. Azure's physical appearance is as unsettling as is his narrative positioning. His blue eyes, to characters like the gang leader Gerald, are anomalous, given his dark skin, and provoke and interrogate stereotypical ideas of

race, identity, and social hierarchy. Azure troubles the main racial categories of apartheid identity, “white,” “coloured,” and “black”—he is none of them and at the same time all of them. Not only do his looks defy inherited racial classification, but his dress sense has no regard for conventions that are racially associated. Azure's childhood friend from Johannesburg and one of his few protectors, Vincent, warns him that Gerald is out to get him: “He thinks he's white because he's got straight hair and a light skin. If you show up with those shoes and your blue eyes, he'll kill you. He'll say, Who the fuck do you think you are? Trying to be white?” (39–40). *Thirteen Cents* is as much about Azure's interrogation and exploration of the temporal and spatial dimensions of his urban world as it is about the social and sexual dimensions. One of the other men that pay Azure for sex in the novel falls into the same pattern despite claiming to be different. He is a married man called Mr. Lebowitz who hires Azure while his wife and children are away. In addition to the sexual favours, Mr. Lebowitz plays classical music for Azure and tells Azure about his investment banking career. Edgar Nabutayni states that by interacting with Azure in this way, Lebowitz “cultivates a veneer of respectability that a contrast starkly with what he really is – a mere exploiter” (46). While he does warm up to Lebowitz, Azure is not surprised when the man changes behaviour after being confronted with the reality of Azure's life.

When Lebowitz asks if Azure needs more pillows to sleep, Azure's answer triggers him:

“Will this pillow be enough? I can get you another one if you want.”

“No, it's fine. Actually I like sleeping without one.”

“The street, I can hear him thinking, but his maddening manners prevent him from saying it” (107).

Azure can see Lebowitz getting angry at the thought of Azure's daily conditions. The unsettling notion causes a slight hostility in him toward Azure, who is ousted from the room immediately and subsequently ousted from the house the following morning. Lebowitz's actions further support Nabutany's claim that “notwithstanding the socially interactive connection between Azure and Lebowitz in this episode, Azure is still that 'flea-infected dog' whose sexuality is all that has allowed him to cross divide between post-apartheid luxury and its ugly twin, urban poverty” (46). Apart from the sexual exploitation, men like Lebowitz castigate Azure to the underbelly of Cape Town in order to retain a sense of peace. In the final third of the novel Azure makes two ascents up Table Mountain, which rises out of the heart of Cape Town and towers above it. These episodes are marked by insistent movement up and out of the cityscape and again down and into its innards as Azure tries to overcome the debilitating forces that engulf and consume him on the streets. Not only does his quest for a life of belonging beyond these destructive forces allow him to literally rise above them, but according to Vijoen, “it also helps him imagine, through intensely sensory, hyperrealist dream sequences, a different genealogy and a new city as the old is being destroyed before his very eyes” (xvi).

Unlike *Thirteen Cents*, Duiker does not destroy Cape Town in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, but apocalyptic notions still pervade the novel. The book mostly covers the lives of characters so captivated by Cape Town that they seem blind to the evil in their

midst. Near the end, however, Tshepo wanders to a township on the city's margins and realizes Cape Town's secrets. Upon this revelation, Tshepo describes an irredeemable city that has fallen from grace and envisions impending destruction:

No matter, our luck has run out. The forces of light and darkness have united in an unholy marriage that will cleanse the ugliness that we are left with. For even darkness aspires for better, higher...It is too late for talk and fancy words. The bell tolls past midnight. Someone is blowing the ancestral horn heralding the end of time, history. (436-437)

*The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, tells the story of Tshepo, a young black university student who winds up in a mental hospital, given the diagnosis “cannabis-induced psychosis” and unable to make sense of his life, his inner turmoil a reflection of a broader societal confusion. He eventually turns to prostitution. The novel also examined the melding of black and white through consumer culture. In the tempo and euphoria of the new rainbow nation Duiker wrote:

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. On the dance floor ... people only care that you can dance and that you look good... (274).

Despite most critics' avowal that Duiker's novel is not particularly concerned with race and its resultant issues and the euphoria of the above quote, Tshepo, his friend Mmabatho and Azure constantly interrogate race and encounter racism in one form or another. As can be seen, Duiker has carefully crafted the introductory paragraph of the novel, and its firstperson narration by Tshepo, in order to give the reader an idea of the crux of the story. As in *Thirteen Cents*, Duiker in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* further explores the concept of racial injustices and societal dysfunction as Tshepo, as well as the other characters in the novel, all display signs of psychological challenges which, in some cases, affect these characters' abilities to deal with life in post-apartheid society. Tshepo, in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, is said to suffer from cannabis induced psychosis; however, it is evident that there is more to his mental illness than cannabis, as his psychological issues are so severe that these result in him experiencing identity issues as well. Tshepo himself avers:

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 (10).

In the first chapter narrated by Tshepo the reader is merely presented with the idea that he could have experienced some sort of traumatic experience which has permanently scarred his psyche. This is in line with Frantz Fanon's point in *Black Skin, White Masks*:

It can never be sufficiently emphasised that psychoanalysis sets as its task the understanding of given behaviour patterns – within the specific group represented by the family. When the problem is a neurosis experienced by the adult, the analyst's task to uncover in the new psychic structure an analogy with certain infantile elements, a repetition, a duplication of conflicts that owe their origin to the essence of the family constellation (141).

This quotation from Fanon thus helps one in understanding Tshepo's situation in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*. Tshepo moves from being a cannabis-induced psychosis patient at Valkenberg psychiatric hospital to a waiter at the Waterfront to a male prostitute at Steamy Windows- a brothel for gay sex. His quest is to make sense of the present and the past-a very violent past- exposed later in the novel when he tells Mmabatho about the tragic night that his mother was murdered. Hence, from the sequence of events recounted by Tshepo in the novel, it is his mother's death that seems to have the most impact on his emotional anguish. He even mentions to Mmabatho that “he lost it” on the day of his mother's funeral. He blames his father who he describes as, “a big mafia boss now, stinking rich. I don't like to speak about him, that's why I tell people he died in a car accident with my mother. I suppose I felt like an orphan the night she died” (78). A sense of family is finally regained when he joins the young men working at the brothel and the bond that exists among them, black and white, is likened to a “PreRaphaelite Brotherhood”(256), until racism exposes that sentiment as fraudulent, a just another ploy to keep up efficient production and profits. Shaun, the manager of the brothel, comments to Tshepo about the strange behaviour of a difficult client who has just been with Angelo (Tshepo's trade name). The incident is narrated by the protagonist:

So that's why he was like that. For a minute I thought he was going to go kaffir on us last night,' Shaun says and looks up suddenly. 'Sorry, I didn't mean it like that'.

I'm shocked, offended. The word has always stung, but I smiled to dismiss the comment. The bubble had to burst sometime I say to myself, my mind still reeling from the word (285).

Tshepo's yearning for acceptance entails others seeing him in the same way he looks at them— “I have become comfortable with seeing people before naming their race” (343). This impulse towards wanting to live beyond race, in a truly non-racial society, according to Viljoen is “constantly frustrated by the reality of racism and the questions of race” (51). Thus, in the very paragraph he states this desire to see beyond race, he also immediately adds, 'but that does not mean I am not aware of their race', and also, “I have gone deeper into my blackness” (343).

Tshepo felt absorbed in gay life and the brotherhood it seemingly displayed until he is excluded from a gay pub because he is black. He says: “I feel... naive for ever fooling myself that gay people are different. They are white people before they are gay” (343). Racism has once again belied the notion of a gay fraternity. Duiker most importantly

focuses on the inner feelings of the characters as he makes extensive use of the interior monologue technique. In this way the reader is able to experience the thoughts and feelings of the characters. One character whose inner feelings are clearly and extensively displayed is Tshepo. From the beginning of the novel Duiker allows the reader into the mind of this character, thus providing insight into his psychological turmoil. One such instance is when Tshepo muses, "I'm bleeding in the dark. This is what my life has come to" (25). Tshepo's inner thoughts here highlight how he feels as if he is psychologically wounded. This is particularly evident in his use of the word "bleeding". Therefore Tshepo's inner dialogue also elaborates on psychological damage caused by the horrific incidents that he encounters in his life which have inflicted psychological damage on his psyche. In his notion of racial identity, he includes racial stereotypes and how these racial stereotypes impact on the characters and their behaviour.

One of the principle differences between *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and *Thirteen Cents* is Duiker's narrative method. In *Thirteen Cents* he presents the reader with one character's point of view: the story is told through the experiences of Azure. However, in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, the story is told through multiple characters' perspectives, therefore giving the reader a better understanding of all the characters in the novel as well as a first-hand account of all their experiences and the societal issues that they face in the post-apartheid society. Duiker's narrative is filtered through the consciousness of the standpoints of ten different characters in the story, namely the perspectives of Tshepo, Mmabatho, Zebron, David, Patrick, Akousia, Chris, West, Angelo and Sebastian. Therefore, the reader is not presented with a biased opinion from one character regarding societal issues and sexual struggles. The reader is presented with the viewpoints of several of the characters; even the secondary characters are given the opportunity to express their plight and experiences. This multi-focal approach is interesting, as it allows the reader to get a better understanding of Duiker's fictional world, providing a more thorough and well rounded account of post-apartheid society and the effects on not just one character, but on various characters. For many of the characters the expectations defined in terms of race have a negative effect on them, as they feel that they ought to act and behave in a certain way in society. Mmabatho emphasises this point in a conversation with Tshepo. She says: "Ja, but you know what it's like in Cape Town. If you're black and you don't do the whole darkie thing then they say you're trying to be white and all that crap" (33). Thus, this places additional pressure on the characters to adhere to social expectations in order to avoid social prejudice and scorn. Furthermore, this also emphasises the fact that characters are under continuous scrutiny by other members of society. This is an aspect that most characters are consciously aware of and are constantly reminded of while living their everyday lives. Mmabatho illustrates her frustration regarding these expectations in the quote: "'Doesn't it bug you though, that people are so narrow-minded? If you're black you can't listen to rock or go surfing or wear anything you like. You have to fit into this and that'"

(34). Therefore, in some cases, this contributes to some of the characters' anger, anxiety and identity issues in the novel.

Prejudice as exposed in this novel is as two-dimensional as it is not only in white's minds, but in the blacks as well. This is exploited through for example, in the bigoted hostility of Mmbatho to Makwere-kwere, a black foreigner. Attacks in the words of M. Monare quoted in Monica Cejas “against so-called “illegal foreigners”—including legally recognized refugees —early in the 1990s were growing and confusing their pattern, affecting even black South Africans who “look” like foreigners” (475). The oddest aspect of this phenomenon is that black male South Africans (principal victims of apartheid's racist regime) become especially violent against “foreigners.” The subtle use of the term “illegal foreigners” helps to criminalize migrants coming from African countries, who are blamed for South Africa's high crime and unemployment rates, as well as for the spread of AIDS and other diseases. Instead of more neutral terms like “undocumented” or “irregular” migrants, they are first of all defined as what they are not: non-South Africans, noncitizens. This very act of not naming them suggests the intention of excluding them. Intolerance is also expressed through physical abuse and the denial of basic human rights. Next is that directed by blacks towards blacks who do not adhere to social expectations? Example is the hostility towards Mmabatho for dating Arne, a white guy and later falls pregnant with his baby. There are many instances in the novel where race differences and racial issues are highlighted where for example, some clubs are deemed for white people and others are more suitable for blacks. On the long run, Tshepo sees himself not as a psychotic man or a black man or a gay but rather a rich combination of intermingling identities but still wonders if, “it is possible to feel South African and not to always source my culture to a particular group? Can I claim Afrikaans, Coloured tsotsi taal, Indian cuisine or English sensibilities as my own” (347) ?

### **Conclusion**

The desire to think beyond race is, however, a double-edged sword. It marks the ambivalent process of mobilizing against racism and yet working within – and against – established racial categories. Race, and racism, is, for this very reason, not only dialectical, it is epistemologically foundational. It constitutes the very architecture within which the debate about race takes place: race cannot be transcended. It is impossible to be “against race” without, as it was, “doing” race – as a theory of politics or as a way of accounting for its deleterious ontological effects. It is for this reason that Paul Gilroy, despite being against race, acknowledges how ambivalent, contradictory and potentially destructive (to historical subalterns) such an imagining might be: “the dramatic gestures involved in turning against racial observance can be accomplished without violating the precious forms of solidarity and community that have been created by their protracted subordination along racial lines” (13).

In *Thirteen Cents* Duiker depicts a violent racial society as seen through the eyes of Azure, similarly, in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* violence and racism is also an integral part of the society as this is an inescapable part of most of the characters' lives in the text. In fact, there are many parallels between the life lived by Azure and Tshepo's life, which is also pervaded by violence and his exposure to violence at an early age. Institutionalized violence is a fundamental part of both these characters identities. Tom Odhiambo reaffirms this point: "In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* it is the childhood of Azure that is transformed into the youth of Tshepo – the older protagonist also lives in Cape Town and experiences life in circumstances quite similar to those of Azure" (86).

"Post"-racialism, however contentious such a condition might be, constitutes the dialogic project of recognizing race as the primary discourse to be at once engaged and disarticulated; post-racialism cannot be achieved "without violating the precious forms of solidarity and community" – practices essential to sustaining a black bio-politics in moments of degradation, disenfranchisement, or repression. Within the discursive project of transcending racial affect and effect, race is centred even in the attempt to oppose it. Hence the paradox: race is constitutive and yet it can only be epistemologically liquidated – which is to say, worked through and beyond as a philosophical terrain – upon the terms of its historically racist making. Race is a politics that in-forms, and de-forms, even in the efforts to disarticulate it, to take it apart, and render it socio-politically null and void. Unlike the Morrisonian "white girl," in Farred "non-racialism cannot be summarily "killed," unlike the "rest" of Paradise's convent women, its fulfilment cannot be postponed indefinitely. It has to have a presence, however ghostly, unhomed, or unachievable, in a society in which race functions as the founding myth" (68).

In South Africa, race and racism constitute an impermanent conundrum, a conceptual incorrigibility in and for a society trying to imagine itself as non-racial. Blacks continue to live, materially, in the time before – in the conditions of the original struggle except that the state is now governed by their, physiognomically speaking, representatives. For the expanding class of black subalterns, race is not only the dominant language of their social existence, it is the lingua franca of their lives: non-racial citizens in a world still stratified by the inequities of the racist past; philosophically non-racial, economically racialized, negotiating not so much between the present and the past as between the past and its double-edged, shadowy, as-yet unformed future. In South Africa race and class has historically been mutually constitutive. Thinking them discretely has never really, except for the interregnum that was 1990 to 1994, been a viable political option. Mbeki returned to this theme a couple of times in his short "Speech at the Youth Conference on Nation- Building" in 2000, "The racism . . . defined black people as sub-human, barbaric, incapable of sharing the same moral norms as the white minority, incapable of being civilized – and therefore menacing, requiring to be watched, contained and tamed at all costs" (2). Post-apartheid society in 1994, where black "enthusiasm" contrasts sharply with a "certain degree" of white "unease," announces the revitalization of

racialized discourse, affect, and identity. Race lives even as it is being constitutionally buried.

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